

## Extended Deterrence and Strategic Stability in Northeast Asia

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### Abstract

A changed and changing security environment has created interest in Northeast Asia in the role of U.S. extended deterrence and the requirements of strategic stability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. North Korea's continued progress in developing long-range missiles and nuclear weapons brings with it new challenges, as does China's progress in military modernization and its increasingly prominent regional military role. The Obama administration is pursuing a three-part strategy to: (1) comprehensively strengthen the regional deterrence architecture, (2) preserve strategic stability with China (and Russia), and (3) cooperate with allies towards these ends. In recent years, Japan and the United States have taken significant steps to strengthen their cooperation for deterrence and stability, with positive results. The regional deterrence architecture is strong and getting stronger, especially with the introduction of non-nuclear elements such as ballistic missile defense. Japan's contributions to this regional deterrence architecture are significant and increasing, and add credibility to U.S. security guarantees. As Japan and the United States continue to work together to advance this strategy, they face a number of emerging policy questions. Four such questions are likely to attract significant attention in both Tokyo and Washington in the coming months and years. First, on missile defense of Japan: how much is enough? Second, on conventional strike: what should Japan contribute, if anything? Third, on the U.S. nuclear umbrella: is more tailoring of the U.S. posture required for Northeast Asia? Fourth, on strategic stability: can China, the United States, and Japan agree on the requirements? The analytic communities in all of the interested countries can help generate the new insights needed to advance policy objectives.

### Introduction

In Northeast Asia, extended deterrence and strategic stability have regained an importance not known since the darkest days of the Cold War. This is a natural result of developments in the security environment. North Korea's continued progress in developing long-range missiles and nuclear weapons brings with it new challenges, as does China's progress in military modernization and increasingly prominent regional military role.

As these challenges have emerged, it has been necessary and appropriate to

return to analytical and policy frameworks developed for the earlier era. In that era, extended deterrence was a term used to describe the protection of U.S. allies provided by the nuclear policies and capabilities of the United States. This nuclear umbrella was intended to both deter and assure—to deter the Soviet Union from attacking the vital interests of the United States and its allies and to assure those allies that the United States could and would stand by its commitment to assist in their defense in even the most extreme circumstances. Today, the nuclear umbrella has the same purposes—to deter and assure. But the context is entirely different, and the tools of extended deterrence are no longer just nuclear. Also in the Cold War, strategic stability was a term used to describe the relationship of mutual deterrence between East and West; the situation was deemed stable if each side had confidence that the “balance of terror” would be maintained because the other side would not ever (1) see advantage in initiating nuclear war or (2) seek or be able to alter that situation by expanding its military forces. Today, the ingredients of strategic stability are much less clear, especially in the U.S.-China relationship, which is unique in various ways.

The work of updating these analytic frameworks has begun inside and outside government and has proceeded in parallel with the work of updating policy frameworks. To meet the new challenges of extended deterrence and strategic stability, the United States has set out a comprehensive agenda, following close consultations with its allies. From a U.S. perspective, this is a global challenge, requiring policy approaches that comprehensively address problems in Europe, the Middle East and East Asia. After all, in each region there are new challenges associated with the proliferation of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles and with neighboring major powers. The United States is committed to adapting regional deterrence architectures for 21<sup>st</sup> century purposes and to strengthening extended deterrence to meet new challenges. It is also committed to working to maintain strategic stability with Russia and China even as it adapts regional deterrence architectures.

From a U.S. perspective, such efforts are not inconsistent with the effort to strengthen nonproliferation and make continued progress toward the ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons. In fact, the very opposite is true: failure to ensure extended deterrence and strategic stability could seriously set back nonproliferation and disarmament efforts. Failure to ensure effective extended deterrence could encourage new proliferation by two types of states: (1) challengers to regional order, emboldened by the success of North Korea and Iran in negating U.S. extended deterrence and (2) U.S. allies, worried by the perceived ineffectiveness of U.S. extended deterrence. The cascade of nuclear proliferation long feared by the United Nations

Security Council could result from a significant failure of extended deterrence. Similarly, failure to ensure strategic stability could result in new forms of nuclear competition and even arms racing among the major powers, with a corrosive effect on the nuclear non-proliferation regime and on their willingness to cooperate on problems in the nonproliferation regime. In sum, deterrence and stability are essential to the effort to deepen international nuclear order and continue practical steps toward the long-term goal of nuclear elimination. This recognition informs the balanced nuclear strategy set out in the Obama administration's Nuclear Posture Review of 2010 and in the twin commitments of the government of Japan to lead global efforts for nonproliferation and disarmament while also strengthening deterrence. It also enjoys support in Japan. As Yukio Satoh has argued, "to reaffirm the concept of extended nuclear deterrence at this stage should not be taken as retrogression. It is a necessary step to solidify a strategic basis for the efforts to attain a world free from nuclear weapons."<sup>1</sup>

This paper provides an overview of issues of extended deterrence and strategic stability from the perspective of the U.S.-Japan alliance. It begins with a review of key developments in the security environment in terms of their relevance for nuclear deterrence and stability. This section of the paper highlights some of the key issues in updating the cold war conceptual inheritance. The paper then describes the comprehensive strategy of the United States and the contributions of Japan to that strategy. The paper then turns to the future. Arguing that the tasks of strengthening regional architectures and preserving strategic stability are long-term tasks, the paper identifies four issues that are likely to be the focus of continuing discussion and analysis within the U.S.-Japan alliance (and more broadly) over the decade ahead. The paper provides some initial insights on each issue with an eye to encouraging further analysis within the U.S.-Japan security studies community. The paper closes with some conclusions about the nuclear security of the U.S.-Japan alliance. The United States is confident that deterrence is effective today and will remain so over the coming decade. It is also cautiously optimistic that strategic stability can be preserved. It is important for Japan's expert community to understand the basis of this U.S. confidence.

#### A Changed and Changing Security Environment

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<sup>1</sup> Yukio Satoh, "A Call from the Goal: A Japanese View on Nuclear Disarmament," presentation at the inaugural conference of "Global Zero," Paris, France, December 8, 2008. See also "Reinforcing American Extended Deterrence for Japan: An Essential Step for Nuclear Disarmament," *AJISS-Commentary*, No. 57 (Tokyo: Association of Japanese Institutes of Strategic Studies, February 2009).

The renewed interest in extended deterrence in Northeast Asia follows from the emergence of a nuclear-armed North Korea with long-range missiles. Although the precise time when such capabilities will be operational is a matter of uncertainty and debate, sooner or later North Korea will have the ability to strike targets in South Korea, Japan, and the United States with both conventional and nuclear warheads and perhaps also chemical and biological warheads.<sup>2</sup>

There is also uncertainty and debate about the strategic intentions of North Korea's leader. On the one hand, he may intend to utilize these capabilities to deter military action by the U.S.-RoK alliance and to advance negotiations with the United States on a peace treaty that secures the North Korean state and regime for the long term. The following statement by Kim Jong Un, for example, seems to align with such intentions: "the time has gone forever when enemies threatened and intimidated us with atomic bombs."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, North Korea has also stated that "Japan is always in the cross-hairs of our revolutionary army and if Japan makes a slightest move, the spark of war will touch Japan first."<sup>4</sup> This hints at an aggressive purpose—to employ nuclear threats to coerce its neighbors, to cover provocations at the conventional level, and perhaps even attack its enemies.

These North Korean capabilities and intentions pose three kinds of risks for Japan. First, North Korea may conduct further provocations by non-nuclear means, including perhaps against Japan. Second, there may be unwanted escalation on and off the Korean peninsula if and as North Korea's leaders miscalculate and generate reactions from those attacked that potentially lead to war. Third, there may be outright aggression by the North. After all, its national strategy remains guided by the ultimate goal of reunifying the peninsula under its control. With nuclear weapons, Kim Jong Un may believe he now has the ingredients of success: an ability to take Seoul hostage with conventional and perhaps chemical weapons, to threaten attacks on Japan if it allows the United States access to bases and, if that fails and the regime's survival comes into question, to threaten attacks on the American homeland if the

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<sup>2</sup> See *Military and Security Developments Involving the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 2012, Annual Report to Congress*, Office of the Secretary of Defense, February 2013.

<sup>3</sup> As cited in "The Korean Peninsula: 'Nuclear Weapons State' North Korea Aiming to Become an Economic Power, RoK Seeking active Deterrence Capability," *East Asian Strategic Review 2013* (Tokyo: National Institute for Defense Studies, 2013), p. 147.

<sup>4</sup> "North Korea states 'nuclear war is unavoidable and declares first target will be Japan,'" *Express* (Tokyo), April 12, 2013. See also Max Fisher, "Here's North Korea's official declaration of 'war,'" *Washington Post*, March 30, 2013.

United States does not settle for peace on Kim Jong Un's terms.<sup>5</sup> These are new kinds of risks that the U.S.-Japan alliance has not so far had to address. North Korea's ability to strike at Japan with No Dong missiles presents a qualitatively different problem from the cold war problem presented by Soviet missiles such as the SS-20 pointed at Japan.

The possibility of outright aggression by North Korea cannot lightly be dismissed. Leadership in Pyongyang appears firmly committed to its reunification agenda. As one authoritative study has noted, failures of deterrence are not uncommon and typically occur when one or more of the following three factors is present: when the weaker state is highly motivated, when it misperceives some facet of the situation, and when the stronger state has some element of vulnerability.<sup>6</sup> Given the mix of capability, motivation, and misperception evident in Pyongyang today, it is important that the deterrence posture of the United States and Japan be credible for this possibility. As argued above, a failure of deterrence here could have wide-ranging repercussions for other challengers to regional order and also to the credibility of U.S. security guarantees more generally.

The conceptual inheritance of the Cold War provides two key ideas to help understand this new challenge. The first is "de-coupling:" the risk that the United States might choose not to defend an ally abroad because its own homeland would be vulnerable to nuclear attack. In the 1960s, concern about de-coupling spiked among allies as the U.S. homeland first became vulnerable to attack by Soviet nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles. North Korea's emerging capability to put the U.S. homeland at nuclear risk again generates concern among allies in Northeast Asia about de-coupling.

The second key idea is "the stability-instability paradox." This reflects the fact that newly nuclear-capable states often become more assertive at the conventional level because of their confidence in being able to deter a strong adversary response with their new nuclear means. As North Korea has gained confidence in its strategic

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<sup>5</sup> The nature of such a conflict remains under active exploration in the U.S. analytic community. See for example Keir Lieber and Daryl Press, "The Next Korean War," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 92, No. 3 (May/June 2013); Lieber and Press, *Coercive Nuclear Campaigns in the 21st Century: Understanding Adversary Incentives and Options for Nuclear Escalation* (Monterey, Calif.: U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, March 2013); Lieber and Press, "The Nukes We Need: Preserving the American Deterrent," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 6 (November/December 2009), pp. 40-41; Bruce W. Bennett, "Weapons of Mass Destruction: The North Korean Threat," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Fall 2004), pp. 79-108; and Bennett, *Uncertainties in the North Korean Nuclear Threat* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Defense Research Institute, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> See Barry Wolf, *When the Weak Attack the Strong: Failures of Deterrence*, A RAND Note (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1991).

deterrent, it has become more aggressive at the conventional level, as multiple provocations vividly demonstrate, including most prominently the sinking of the Cheonan in March 2010 and the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in November 2010.<sup>7</sup>

The changing security environment in Northeast Asia is further complicated by simultaneous developments in China's military modernization and military role.

Clearly, this is a different kind of strategic problem from that posed by North Korea. China and the United States are not enemies; indeed, they are committed to developing a relationship that is positive, cooperative, and comprehensive. China and the United States (and Japan) have many competitive interests but also many cooperative ones, especially in the economic domain. There are potential military flashpoints, but none has reason to fear outright invasion by another; most analysts assess the plausible pathways to major war as few or none, although there are growing concerns about armed clashes that might escalate into a war no one might have sought. Moreover, China became a nuclear power before the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty came into existence and the world has long since recognized it as a nuclear weapon state.

But China is also re-making its nuclear posture. It is modernizing its force, which has also brought a diversification of delivery systems and an increase in the number of nuclear weapons, especially of those weapons capable of reaching the United States. This modernization occurs in the context of a broader military modernization effort that gives China its own capacity for power projection into neighboring waters and in the new domains of cyber and space, with significant negative implications for a U.S. military strategy that depends on forward presence and maritime preeminence. China's leaders and experts make the case that these new military capabilities are defensive in nature and, in particular, that its modernization of its nuclear force is aimed at maintaining a "lean and effective" deterrent under the no-first-use doctrine that remains credible in the context of improving U.S. conventional strike capabilities and missile defenses.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For further discussion of these Cold War concepts, see Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (July 1984), pp. 461-495. See also Snyder, "The Balance of Power and the Balance of Terror," in Paul Seabury, ed., *The Balance of Power* (San Francisco, Calif.: Chandler, 1965), pp. 196-201 and Robert Jervis, *The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), especially pp. 29-34.

<sup>8</sup> See *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2013* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2013) and also summaries of multiple Track 1.5 U.S.-China dialogues on nuclear issues available at [www.csis.org](http://www.csis.org). Subsequent characterizations of Chinese expert community views in this paper are also drawn from Track 1.5 dialogues. This paper adopts the

The United States is concerned that China's nuclear modernization will result in a much more effective force that is far less lean and thus is more threatening to the United States and its allies. It is concerned that China may further build up its nuclear force to achieve a position of relative parity with the United States (and Russia) as one more signal of the shift toward a more multipolar world. The United States is concerned that China may abandon its no-first-use nuclear doctrine and the practice of minimum nuclear deterrence; this concern was reinforced by the absence of any explicit reference to no-first-use in the spring 2013 update to China's defense white paper.<sup>9</sup> It is concerned also with the lack of transparency about the current and future size and main elements of China's nuclear forces. It is also concerned with the lack of transparency about potential changes to the mission(s) of the Second Artillery as the People's Liberation Army modernizes and changes. It is further concerned with the possibility that new forms of competition in the cyber and space domains may result in significant miscalculations and misperceptions of interest.

China's experts consider many of these concerns to be unfounded. They point out that China's tradition of nuclear minimalism is deeply engrained and clearly reflected in a small force, a non-provocative doctrine, and a reluctance to give a prominent place to nuclear capabilities in the strategic relationship with the United States. They note China's refusal to be drawn into an arms race.

From the perspective of the U.S.-Japan alliance, China's military modernization raises concerns about both de-coupling and the stability-instability paradox. On de-coupling, the growth in China's long-range nuclear strike forces may be seen as increasing the risk for the United States of coming to Japan's defense in a confrontation with China. On the stability-instability paradox, China's growing confidence in a modernized deterrent that can credibly withstand a preemptive strike by the United States may encourage China's "creeping expansionism" and greater assertiveness in advancing its claims in the maritime environment (and elsewhere).

It is important to note that China has its own analysis of the stability-instability paradox. In the thinking of China's expert community, the

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following usage for 1.5: because Track 1 is used to characterize dialogue among government officials and Track 2 to characterize dialogue among non-officials, Track 1.5 is used to characterize dialogues that bring nongovernmental experts together with governmental officials participating in their private capacities and speaking on a not-for-attribution basis.

<sup>9</sup> For discussion on this matter, see James M. Acton, "Is China Changing Its Position on Nuclear Weapons?" *New York Times*, April 18, 2013 and Yao Yunzhu, "China Will Not Change its Nuclear Focus," *China and US Focus*, April 22, 2013, available at [www.chinausfocus.com/peace-security](http://www.chinausfocus.com/peace-security).

modernizing strategic posture of the United States (specifically the introduction of conventional strike capabilities and ballistic missile defense) has increased U.S. confidence in conducting preemptive strikes on China and has encouraged a new boldness among U.S. allies in the region and greater assertiveness in advancing their claims in the maritime environment (and elsewhere), compelling a defensive response from China.

These two developments in the security environment have resulted in what one study has called a “security deficit” for Japan: “In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Japan’s security surplus is slowly shifting toward a deficit...The United States and Japan could lose their nearly exclusive dominance over the conflict escalation ladder in the region.”<sup>10</sup> To ensure that deterrence remains effective in a changed and changing security environment, the United States and its allies must address a number of specific new challenges spanning the spectrum of potential deterrence contingencies. First, to meet the deterrence challenges of the highest-end nuclear contingencies, the strong continued coupling of the United States to its allies in Northeast Asia must be ensured. Second, to meet the particular deterrence requirements of an escalating regional crisis when an adversary attempts to test the resolve of the United States and its allies just at or below the nuclear threshold, credible means are needed to signal their combined and collective resolve to stand together in defense of their interests. Third, to meet the particular deterrence requirements at the lower end of the escalation ladder, the United States and its allies must become more effective at deterring conventional provocations, where nuclear threats may not be seen as credible or helpful. Fourth, the United States and its allies must strengthen deterrence of North Korea while maintaining maintain a stable balance of conventional power with China but without slipping into a more competitive cycle of military modernization (that is, an arms race) with China that sets back the political relationship and increases the prospect of armed confrontation. Fifth and finally, the progress of the United States and its allies in meeting these challenges must be clearly and widely recognized within the region.

In the citation above on “security deficit,” note the emphasis on “slow” and the future conditional tense (“could lose”). The shift has not yet been completed and the loss has not been realized. Despite their progress, North Korea and China have not yet completed their projects or come to dominate potential future escalation. Whether they are successful in shifting the U.S.-Japan alliance into “deficit” depends not just on

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<sup>10</sup> James L. Schoff, *Realigning Priorities: the U.S.-Japan Alliance and the Future of Extended Deterrence* (Cambridge, Mass.: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 2009).



what they do but what the United States and Japan (and South Korea) do to preserve deterrence and stability. This is the focus of the next section.

#### U.S. Strategy

The Obama administration set out its approach to these problems in its early strategic policy reviews: the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, the Nuclear Posture Review, and the Ballistic Missile Defense Review. These reviews reflect the administration's recognition of the emerging challenges to extended deterrence and strategic stability. They also reflect an assessment that such challenges are not unique to Northeast Asia; they are evident also in the Middle East and the Euro-Atlantic security environment. Hence the administration has set out a global approach that is then locally applied. That approach has three main elements: (1) comprehensively strengthen regional deterrence architectures, (2) work to preserve strategic stability with Russia and China, and (3) cooperate closely with allies towards these ends.

#### On Comprehensively Strengthening Regional Deterrence Architectures

Regional deterrence architectures have multiple components and the Obama administration is committed to strengthening each of them. It is working to:

1. Ensure a solid foundation of strong alliances that are active, focused
2. Maintain a balance of conventional forces favorable to allied interests
3. Deploy and improve ballistic missile defenses, both regional and U.S. homeland
4. Improve conventional strike capabilities
5. Tailor the nuclear element to specific geographic and historical requirements
6. Ensure resilience in cyber and space

This paper will not discuss all 6 components in detail. Components 1 and 2 are familiar topics in the bilateral alliance. Component #6 is less familiar but of rising interest in the expert and policy communities.<sup>11</sup> The focus of this paper is on items 3, 4, and 5, which are discussed in more detail below with an emphasis on future analytical tasks.

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<sup>11</sup> For the results of high-level Obama administration policy reviews, see *Cyber Policy Review: Assuring a Trusted and Resilient Information and Communications Infrastructure*, White House, May 29, 2009 and *National Security Space Strategy*, White House, February 2011.

Because U.S. security strategies come and go with each new administration in Washington, in a pattern familiar to close allies, it is important for Japan (and others in the region) to appreciate the depth of bipartisan support for the main outlines of this strategy. To a significant extent, these have been mainstream American defense policies since the end of the Cold War, though with increasing focus and alignment among the individual components. The George W. Bush administration laid down some significant markers in this strategy, including the introduction of both missile defense and conventional strike as key elements of the whole (what it called the “new triad” of strike capabilities, both nuclear and non-nuclear strike, defenses, and a responsive infrastructure). This continuity of purpose in the changing American political system is a testament to the commitment of the United States to stand by its interests and its allies and to maintain a credible deterrent in a changed and changing security environment.

The Bush administration also gets credit for introducing the word “tailor” into the nuclear vocabulary. In the Cold War, the United States had a single nuclear deterrence strategy that was essentially global in its application. In today’s more complex security environment, with very different challenges for which nuclear deterrence is relevant, it is not possible to think that “one size fits all”—that the United States could have a single nuclear deterrence strategy that would be equally effective in different regions and relationships. Accordingly, the Bush administration defined a requirement to tailor deterrence to unique factors in each region and relationship, including history, geography, political context, etc., which the Obama administration embraced.<sup>12</sup> The 2010 NPR clearly attests to the priority the Obama administration attaches to strengthening extended deterrence as part of an updated approach to nuclear strategy aligned with 21<sup>st</sup> century requirements.

The comprehensive approach to strengthening extended deterrence clearly embeds the nuclear component of the strategy in a larger policy construct. As one analyst has described it, “the nuclear umbrella has become the pinnacle of a security dome.”<sup>13</sup> The United States has set out this comprehensive approach as opposed to relying on nuclear means alone for three basic reasons. First, the threat of U.S.

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<sup>12</sup> M. Elaine Bunn, *Can Deterrence Be Tailored?* INSS Strategic Forum No. 225 (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, January 2007).

<sup>13</sup> Wade L. Huntley, *Assessing the Impact of Low Nuclear Numbers on Strategic Stability: The Cases of Japan and South Korea* (Monterey, Calif.: U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, December 2012), p. 21. See also James L. Schoff, “Changing Perceptions of Extended Deterrence in Japan,” in Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes, eds., *Strategy in the Second Nuclear Age* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2012).

nuclear use may not always be credible in the eyes of the individual(s) the United States might seek to deter. Some enemy may convince itself that there are forms of nuclear attack (or other forms of attack) that fall beneath the U.S. response threshold. For example, an enemy might believe that nuclear attack primarily to generate electromagnetic pulse effects on nearby conventional forces might escape a U.S. nuclear response. This could be a serious miscalculation but, from a deterrence perspective, this scenario highlights the value of supplemental non-nuclear elements in the deterrence architecture.

Second, whether or not nuclear threats are credible, the non-nuclear components of this strategy offer valuable deterrence benefits. For example, ballistic missile defense of the U.S. homeland mitigates de-coupling risks by greatly reducing if not eliminating risks run by the United States in defending its allies. And ballistic missile defense within the region protects key assets from an enemy's preemptive strikes, enables offensive operations to begin at a time of our choosing rather than the enemy's, and raises the scale of attack that an attacker must attempt if it wants to overwhelm the defense (severely limiting the credibility of threats to launch a small number of weapons while holding more in reserve). These strategic benefits help to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in regional deterrence architectures even while a core element remains, given the fundamental role of nuclear weapons in deterring nuclear attack.

Third, the United States flatly rejects mutual vulnerability as the basis of the strategic relationship with states like North Korea and Iran that violate international obligations, destabilize their regions and threaten their neighbors, and threaten the United States with nuclear attack. The global security environment would become deeply unstable if such states were to conclude that they are free under their own nuclear umbrellas to coerce their neighbors and commit aggression.<sup>14</sup>

#### On Working to Preserve Strategic Stability with Russia and China

The Obama administration has defined this as a common goal but it is pursuing different (“tailored”) approaches toward each country. It is a common goal because there are many similarities in relations between the United States and Russia and the United States and China. Russia and China are not enemies of the United States. But nor are they allies. Each bilateral relationship reflects the fact that there

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<sup>14</sup> In writing about nuclear weapons and rogue states, Thomas Henriksen has argued that “this ultimate weapon in despotic and perhaps apocalyptic hands arouses legitimate apprehension among other powers.” See Henriksen, *America and the Rogue States* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), p. 2.

are today many shared interests in the economic, political, and even security realms. A further similarity is uncertainty about the future of these relationships: will they improve or will they worsen (and if that might happen, how much should we hedge?). Despite this uncertainty, political leaders in all three capitals profess a commitment to work to continue to improve relations and to deepen cooperation in areas of shared interest. Additionally, in each bilateral relationship there are potential military flashpoints, implying that deterrence plays some role in these relationships. From the perspective of the Obama administration, stability and transparency in the military-to-military relationships with both countries are requirements for continued improvement in political relations.

But the differences in the two bilateral strategic military relationships (U.S.-Russia and U.S.-China) are as important as these similarities.

The United States and Russia are arms control partners committed to preserving a relationship of stable mutual deterrence as they continue to reduce together the large nuclear arsenals constructed during the Cold War in a verifiable way that provides strategic predictability to others. This relationship is codified in the New START Treaty, which remains in place until it expires in 2021 (or in 2026, if it is extended once for 5 years, as permitted in the treaty). The United States and Russia are also exploring the requirements of strategic stability in an on-going dialogue and working to improve the relationship between Russia and the West in the context of the NATO-Russia Council. This arms control process is built on mutual recognition of the fact that the United States and Russia are nuclear peers. As the Obama administration has clearly noted, Russia is the only nuclear peer of the United States.<sup>15</sup>

With China, there is no arms control partnership, no dialogue on strategic stability, and no common endeavor also involving U.S. allies to improve relationships. There is no tradition of coming to terms together with the requirements of strategic stability, as Washington and Moscow have done through decades of arms control. Only in recent years have Washington and Beijing made any progress in defining a common vocabulary and common set of concepts for conducting a dialogue on these matters.<sup>16</sup> There is much greater uncertainty about the future scale, scope, and function of China's nuclear force than of Russia's.

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<sup>15</sup> *Report on Nuclear Employment Strategy of the United States*, June 19, 2013, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Track 1.5 dialogues have contributed significantly to this process. See also the *English-Chinese, Chinese-English Nuclear Security Glossary*, a joint product of the Chinese Scientists Group on Arms Control (CSGAC) of the Chinese People's Association for Peace and Disarmament and the Committee on International Security and Arms Control (CISAC) of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. Available at [http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/cisac/pga\\_050966](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/cisac/pga_050966)

China's recent assertiveness in the maritime environment is a source of concern and debate in Washington as in Tokyo.<sup>17</sup> But experts in America are less ready to embrace the stability-instability paradox as explanatory. After all, there are potential explanations other than rising Chinese confidence in its nuclear posture. These potential explanations include China's rising confidence in its conventional forces, the strong strain of anti-Japanese nationalism in China, and/or a political calculation that the United States is reluctant to defend Japan in maritime disputes and thus there is a moment of opportunity to drive a wedge into the alliance.

To better understand China's nuclear policies and posture, China's concerns about developments in the U.S. strategic military posture, and Beijing's perceptions of the security environment, the Obama administration—like its two immediate predecessors—has sought official dialogue with China on these topics. And like its two immediate predecessors, it has been disappointed in China's failure to engage, so far. While it waits, the administration has not spelled out in any detail its views of the requirements of strategic stability. It prefers to do so in an official dialogue. Moreover, it sees stability as something that the United States cannot define unilaterally. After all, China's own views of what is stable, and the steps it takes to preserve its view of stability, will impact the stability of the strategic relationship. The administration has benefited from the insights gained from Track 1.5 dialogue, as has China, but it does not see unofficial dialogue as a substitute for official dialogue. Tracks 1 and 1.5 should be complementary.

#### On Cooperating Closely with Allies

In the assessment of the Obama administration, efforts to strengthen extended deterrence and preserve strategic stability require close cooperation with allies. After all, these efforts involve not just shared benefits but also shared risks and shared responsibilities.

In Europe, the United States has helped lead NATO through a significant re-crafting of its overall approach on these matters. Over the last 3 years NATO has reworked and updated its Strategic Concept, refreshed its agenda in the NATO-Russia Council, and conducted a comprehensive, year-long review of the alliance's deterrence and defense posture, which was released in unclassified form at the Chicago summit in spring 2012.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> There is also debate among U.S. experts about just how assertive China has become. See Alastair Iain Johnston, "How New and Assertive is China's New Assertiveness?" *International Security*, Vol. 37, No.4 (Spring 2013), pp. 7-48.

<sup>18</sup> See *Deterrence and Defense Posture Review, 2012*, available at:

In the Middle East, the United States continues to work with multiple allies to strengthen the deterrence posture in the Persian Gulf and to otherwise mitigate the destabilizing effects of Iran's continued development of nuclear and missile capabilities.

In Northeast Asia, bilateral processes have been built to help advance cooperation. The United States and Japan founded the Extended Deterrence Dialogue in 2010. Also in 2010, the United States and the Republic of Korea founded the Extended Deterrence Policy Committee. The United States also regularly consults with other allies in the regions on these matters. The purposes of these processes are to institutionalize sustained leadership focus on these issues, to enable active policy discussion and development where needed, and to ensure sustained progress on practical agendas of cooperation.

In Japan, a forceful advocate for such a bilateral U.S.-Japan process has been Yukio Satoh, arguing in 2009 as follows: "If the credibility of the U.S. commitment is the question at issue, it is Japanese perceptions that matter. The U.S. commitment to provide extended deterrence to Japan has been repeatedly affirmed by presidents, including President Obama, and other senior officials in agreed documents. Nevertheless, Japanese misgivings and doubts about American commitment persist...it is important for Tokyo to be officially engaged in consultations with Washington on deterrence strategy, including nuclear deterrence. Without such consultations, the Japanese government, let alone the public, will have to be speculative about the credibility of U.S. commitment. That U.S. strategic thinking is undergoing epoch-making changes makes such consultations more important."<sup>19</sup>

From a U.S. perspective, some improved trilateral dialogue among the United States, Japan, and South Korea would make a welcome addition to this framework of activity. A great deal is being accomplished in the separate bilateral tracks, but the challenges of managing escalation in a regional political-military crisis would likely involve all three allies, though each in different ways. This points to the value of cooperation in peacetime to better developed shared concepts and approaches and where possible also the needed policy and operational coordination. The United States recognizes the political barriers to such trilateral coordination but is eager to take practical steps as possible to advance cooperation.

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[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_87597.htm?mode=pressrelease](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87597.htm?mode=pressrelease)

<sup>19</sup> Yukio Satoh, "Agenda for Japan-US Strategic Consultations," in *Major Powers' Nuclear Policies and International Order in the 21st Century*, Report of the NIDS International Symposium on Security Affairs 2009 (Tokyo: National Institute for Defense Studies, 2010), p. 25

Further from a U.S. perspective, partnership with allies in three different regions provides many opportunities for cross-fertilization. To varying degrees, analysts and policy makers pay attention to developments in other regions with an eye to their local implications. Analysts in Japan have examined multiple developments in Europe for their impact on the East Asian security environment. NATO's nuclear debate has been of interest in Japan. Michito Tsuruoka, for example, sees an opportunity for a nuclear policy dialogue between experts in Japan and Europe: "despite considerable differences in their respective security situations, the two communities [transatlantic and Asian] face similar challenges concerning extended deterrence" and interaction between the two communities "might create fresh perspectives and new policy dynamics."<sup>20</sup> NATO's proposal that Russia re-locate tactical nuclear weapons away from the Euro-Atlantic security environment has sparked concern in Japan, as it appears that NATO is seeking to export its problems to East Asia, much as it seemed ready to do in the early 1980s when many in NATO advocated for re-location of Soviet nuclear-tipped intermediate-range nuclear forces to somewhere East of the Ural mountains (where they might have targeted Japan).<sup>21</sup> Yukio Satoh has argued that: "the Strategic Concept adopted at NATO's Lisbon Summit in 2010...fell short of what Japan had expected of NATO: a global perspective from which to address the issue of nuclear weapons."<sup>22</sup>

NATO's missile defense policy and posture are also of interest in Japan. The role in Europe of the advanced interceptor being co-developed by Japan and the United States is of course of interest to Japan, not least because of the constraints on technology transfer inconsistent with the peaceful purposes of the constitution. Some Japanese experts look for signs of NATO appeasement of Russia, concerned that this would encourage China's expectations of being appeased. Ken Jimbo has argued that "China is closely watching these [NATO BMD] discussions and Japan does not want Beijing to get the impression that rollback of Tokyo's missile defense plans are an option."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Michito Tsuruoka, *Why the NATO Nuclear Debate is Relevant to Japan and Vice Versa*, Asia Program Policy Brief (Washington, D.C.: German Marshall Fund, October 2010).

<sup>21</sup> Michito Tsuruoka, *Relocating Tactical Nuclear Weapons? A View from Japan* (Tokyo: Tokyo Foundation, May 2011).

<sup>22</sup> Yukio Satoh, *The Emerging Security Nexus between Japan and Europe*, Clingendael Asia Forum (The Hague: Clingendael Institute, April 20, 2012).

<sup>23</sup> Ken Jimbo, "Japanese Perceptions of Obama's Nuclear Twin Commitments," Commentary, *Japan Times*, March 5, 2009.

European analysts seem less focused on Northeast Asia as a region where extended deterrence lessons might be drawn, but there are important exceptions to this rule. For example, U.S. management of the spring 2013 North Korean crisis has been examined by Polish analyst Lukasz Kulesa; he concluded that NATO should seek to avoid strategic surprise with “more frequent consultations...regarding the decision-making process, the strategy, preferred tactics, and a cost-benefit analysis of potential opponents, which in the NATO context should impact the work of contingency planning.”<sup>24</sup>

The United States can serve as a bridge among its allies on these matters but should also welcome more direct dialogue between allies in Asia and Europe on issues of extended deterrence and strategic stability. In Washington there is a rising appreciation of the ways in which gains or losses for extended deterrence and strategic stability in one region may affect another region.

To return now to an argument in the introduction, these three main elements of U.S. strategy are intended to complement and reinforce political solutions to the nuclear problem in East Asia. With an effective extended deterrent in place, the nonproliferation and disarmament effort may yet be advanced with denuclearization of the Korean peninsula—if and as leaders in Pyongyang come to understand that new capabilities bring no enduring advantages for the North and indeed bring significant new risks. And with a stable strategic balance, that effort may also yet be advanced by China’s participation in the nuclear transparency and reductions process—if and as leaders in Beijing come to believe that China’s interest in a stable security environment is best served by the practice of strategic restraint in a manner that meets the transparency and other requirements of other stakeholders in stability.

#### Japan’s Contributions to U.S.-led Efforts

Japan’s leaders have clearly recognized the importance of contributing to U.S.-led efforts and accordingly Japan’s contributions to the deterrence architecture in Northeast Asia are significant and increasing.<sup>25</sup> Each version of the National Defense

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<sup>24</sup> Lukasz Kulesa, “U.S. Extended Deterrence Weakened? Lessons Learned from the North Korean Crisis,” *Bulletin No. 57 (510)* (Warsaw: Polish Institute of International Affairs, May 2013).

<sup>25</sup> This recognition preceded the latest efforts by the Obama administration. In May 2007, Japan endorsed the more comprehensive U.S. approach as then set out by the Bush administration, with its increased emphasis on missile defense and a conventional balance of power favorable to alliance interests. See Keith Payne et al., *U.S. Extended Deterrence and Assurance for Allies in Northeast Asia* (Fairfax, Va.: National Institute Press, 2010).



Program Guidelines (NDPG) has reflected this comprehensive approach. The table below summarizes these contributions.

STRATEGY ELEMENTS	JAPAN'S CONTRIBUTIONS
Build strong alliance foundation	Multiple political, military, and economic aspects
Ensure a favorable balance of conventional forces	A dynamic defense force, as updated by next national defense program guidelines
Deploy, improve missile defenses	Defense of Japan plus support to US defense of US forces in region and of US homeland
Improve conventional strike	To be determined
Tailor the nuclear element	Declaratory policy (3 no's, NDPG language) plus joint deterrence analysis
Ensure cyber and space resilience	Further capability development
Sustain leadership focus	Long term partnership

These strategy elements, and Japan's contributions to them, are a comprehensive response to the five deterrence challenges catalogued above in summarizing the deterrence consequences of a changed and changing security environment. First, for the highest-end contingencies involving nuclear threats to the U.S. homeland, coupling is greatly reinforced; Japan's missile defense contributions in particular add credibility to the U.S. posture by helping to reduce the costs and risks to the United States of standing up to nuclear-backed aggression. Second, for escalating contingencies at or near the nuclear threshold, the tailored nuclear element provides credible means to signal combined and collective resolve; Japan's stated confidence in the U.S. nuclear umbrella helps to lend credibility to this element of the deterrence posture. Third, for contingencies at the lower end of the escalation ladder, the deterrence toolkit is being strengthened with non-nuclear means; Japan's steps to strengthen its missile defenses and further develop the dynamic defense force are essential. Fourth, this comprehensive response enables significant capability growth for deterrence without destabilizing the military balance with China, while also providing the means to preserve that balance as China take steps that upset it. Fifth and finally, this comprehensive response can be clearly and widely recognized within the region. It sends a strong political message of alliance commitment to find alliance solutions to alliance problems in a manner that is stabilizing to deterrence.

#### Looking Forward: Anticipating Emerging Policy and Analytical Questions

As the policy communities in Japan and the United States continue to work together to advance these strategies for extended deterrence and strategic stability, they

will need fresh insights from the analytic communities on many questions. This paper highlights four main questions that seem likely to be of rising interest in the coming months and years. In simple policy terms:

1. On missile defense: how much is enough?
2. On conventional strike: what should Japan contribute?
3. On the U.S. nuclear umbrella: is more tailoring required?
4. On strategic stability: can China, the United States, and Japan agree?

#### On Missile Defense: How Much is Enough?

Over the last decade, the United States and Japan have made significant progress in developing, deploying, and operating ballistic missile defenses, both separately and together.<sup>26</sup> As we now look ahead to the next decade and beyond, it will be important to ensure that U.S. and Japanese strategic objectives remain well aligned. Planning for the further development and deployment of additional capabilities must be informed by an understanding of how missile defense supports the deterrence and stability strategies of the alliance. Without such an understanding, the two are at risk of falling into an offense-defense race with China, which would prove very costly (as defensive systems are generally more expensive to produce than offensive) and foolhardy (as defense dominance is not possible) and counterproductive (by contributing to a significant erosion of strategic stability). This leads to the simple question: how much defense is enough?

The United States has provided a set of its own answers in the 2010 Ballistic Missile Defense Review. It seeks to protect the American homeland from limited strikes by regional powers like North Korea and Iran and to maintain its “currently advantageous” posture for doing so. And it has clearly stated that defense of the U.S. homeland “is not intended to affect the strategic balance” with Russia or China.<sup>27</sup> The United States also seeks to provide protection to its own forces in regions where short-, medium-, and intermediate-range missile threats are present, whatever the source of that threat, and to work with regional partners to enable their protection. Over the coming decade it will phase in new capabilities as they become available and as budgets permit. From an extended deterrence perspective, U.S. homeland defenses are essential for negating de-coupling pressures and regional defenses are essential for negating coercion of allies (and for enabling timely operation of U.S. strike capabilities).

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<sup>26</sup> A decade or so ago, such progress appeared unlikely. See for example Michael D. Swaine et al., *Japan and Ballistic Missile Defense* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2001).

<sup>27</sup> *Ballistic Missile Defense Review* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2010), p. 13.

This policy approach sends a two-part message to China. On the one hand, the United States does not seek missile defense protection against major Chinese attacks on the U.S. homeland. On the other, the United States will pursue regional missile defenses as part of a comprehensive approach to ensuring that the projection of American conventional power remains credible in the face of counters such as anti-access, area denial. This is essential for maintaining a stable balance of conventional power as China modernizes its conventional forces and grows more capable of projecting power into the maritime environment.

This U.S. approach provides a pathway forward and an answer to “how much is enough?” until such time as North Korea and/or Iran begin to deploy intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) in such large numbers as to impose upon the United States a choice of whether or not to continue to invest to maintain that advantageous position with improvements to the homeland defense posture. Significant quantitative and qualitative improvements would likely have an unhelpful impact on perceptions in Moscow and Beijing of the credibility of their deterrents, resulting in further changes to their posture that the United States and its allies might see as newly threatening.

Japan’s current plans focus on increasing the number of interceptors and launch vessels while also developing an advanced interceptor in partnership with the United States. It currently has complete missile defense protection of the Japanese archipelago, though the capacity to conduct multiple intercepts remains modest (hence the decision to increase forces). Its capabilities contribute significantly to American homeland defense, with the x-band radar at Shariki providing early tracking information for U.S. interceptors (the planned second radar will provide needed new coverage for both the United States and Japan). At some future time it may also be in a position to conduct intercepts of attacks from North Korea on the U.S. homeland under the collective defense principle, if the constitution can be interpreted to support such operations.<sup>28</sup>

Japanese experts have also set out comprehensively the arguments for the varied contributions of missile defense to deterrence, including to the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence.<sup>29</sup> And some Japanese commentators have recognized the

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<sup>28</sup> *Report of the Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security*, June 24, 2008. See also “What is Abe’s Real Motive for Collective Self Defense?” Editorial, *Asahi Shimbun*, February 9, 2013.

<sup>29</sup> See for example Hideaki Kaneda et al, *Japan’s Missile Defense: Diplomatic and Security Policies in a Changing Security Environment* (Tokyo: Japan Institute of International Affairs, March 2007); Shinichi Ogawa, “Missile Defense and Deterrence,” *NIDS Security Reports*, No. 3 (March 2002), pp. 24-55; Sugio Takahashi, *Ballistic Missile Defense in Japan: Deterrence and Military Transformation*, Proliferation

powerful deterrence signal that comes from U.S.-Japanese cooperation in this area: in the words of the *Japan Times*, “the missile defense systems is a weapons system that symbolizes the U.S.-Japan alliance...recent moves to strengthen the missile defense system indicate qualitative changes taking place in the Japan-U.S. alliance.”<sup>30</sup>

Two key questions loom for Japan as it thinks through “how much is enough?” The first is what role the advanced interceptor should play when it becomes available later in the decade. It will increase the flexibility of Japan’s missile defenses by enabling operations at longer range and from land. This will raise important questions about what role Japan’s missile defense might have vis-à-vis China, if any. This will generate concern in China about the credibility of its ability to put at risk U.S. bases in Japan, but also concern in Japan and the United States about the conditions under which China might consider attacks on Japan.

The second and related question is whether and how Japan’s missile defenses can contribute to U.S. strategies for maintaining a credible power projection strategy in the face of adversary anti-access, area denial strategies. The United States envisions an important role for missile defense in the AirSea Battle concept, including specifically for allied missile defenses. But how much of what kind and in what circumstances remain undefined.<sup>31</sup> Answers to these questions may help to inform thinking in Japan and the United States about the future of Japan’s missile defense posture.

#### On Conventional Strike: What Should Japan Contribute?

The prominent role of non-nuclear strike capabilities in the strategy for strengthening regional deterrence raises a logical question of what, if anything, Japan should contribute to this element of the strategy.

The United States has significant strike capabilities. It possesses and deploys a large number of conventional weapons that can be delivered at various ranges by different means. The United States is sufficiently capable that there is concern in both Moscow and Beijing about the possible U.S. preemptive use of such weapons in strikes

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Papers #44 (Paris, France: IFRI, December 2012); and Tetsuya Umemoto, “Missile Defense and Extended Deterrence in the Japan-US Alliance,” *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Winter 2000), pp. 135-152.

<sup>30</sup> “Is missile defense useful?” Commentary, *Japan Times*, May 13, 2013.

<sup>31</sup> See *AirSea Battle: Service Collaboration to Address Anti-Access and Area Denial Challenges*, Air-Sea Battle Office, Department of Defense, May 2013. See also Jan Van Tol et al, *AirSea Battle: A Point-of-Departure Operational Concept* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, May 2010) and T.X. Hammes, *Offshore Control: A Proposed Strategy for an Unlikely Conflict*, INSS Strategic Forum No. 278 (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, June 2012).

aimed at blinding them (by striking warning and communication systems) and otherwise impairing their ability to act (by eliminating decision-makers in so-called decapitation strikes).<sup>32</sup> But the only means it has to strike at long range very promptly is with missiles tipped with nuclear weapons. Prompt attack is of increasing deterrence value as North Korea and others deploy road-mobile systems aimed at the United States and/or its allies. Having recognized this gap in the U.S. deterrence posture, both the Bush and Obama administrations have sought to develop acquisition strategies for a Conventional Prompt Global Strike (CPGS) system, but so far without success. The Bush administration proposed to arm a small number of missiles aboard Trident ballistic missile submarines with conventional warheads (“Conventional Trident”) but the Congress did not support this proposal, as it was concerned about the risks of launching conventional weapons from a nuclear weapons platform (and the possibility that a launch would be detected, misinterpreted, and responded to by nuclear means). The Obama administration has stated that it seeks a “niche capability” for long-range prompt global strike that would reinforce regional deterrence without undermining strategic stability, but it has not defined the size or role of that niche.<sup>33</sup> Of note, the United States has foresworn the right to deploy intermediate-range land-based missiles in the context of the Treaty on Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF), so this rules out potentially valuable parts of the “solution space.”

A key emerging question is whether and how U.S. allies might contribute conventional strike capabilities to regional deterrence architectures. Of the more than 40 U.S. allies, only approximately 10 currently possess ballistic or long-range cruise missiles; accordingly, the United States treats individual allies on a case-by-case basis. The United Kingdom is the only country to have received exports of the Tomahawk cruise missile.<sup>34</sup> Recently, the United States agreed with the Republic of Korea to support an increase of the range of its domestically-produced ballistic missiles as a way to increase the robustness of its overall deterrence posture, which followed prolonged discussion within alliance processes about how to ensure an alliance solution to an

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<sup>32</sup> Alexei Arbatov and Vladimir Dvorkin, *The Great Strategic Triangle* (Moscow: Carnegie Center Moscow, April 2013).

<sup>33</sup> See M. Elaine Bunn and Vincent A. Manzo, *Conventional Prompt Global Strike: Strategic Asset or Unusable Liability?* INSS Strategic Forum No. 263 (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, February 2011).

<sup>34</sup> See *Worldwide Ballistic Missile Inventories* (on-line data base), Arms Control Association, Washington, D.C.

alliance problem that would reinforce the comprehensive alliance deterrence architecture.<sup>35</sup>

This raises a logical question about Japan's possible development of a strike capability of its own. This question has been in discussion in Japan episodically since the 1950s and with renewed focus following the Taepodong launches over Japanese territory in 1998.<sup>36</sup> It has been given renewed impetus by a recommendation by the governing Liberal Democratic Party that a future strike system be studied as part of the next National Defense Program Guidelines.<sup>37</sup> On June 4, 2013, the LDP issued a statement on the new NDPG including the following language: "with a view to further solidifying the credibility of alliance extended deterrence, the Government should launch a study on the Self Defense Forces' capabilities to strike enemy bases (which has been regarded as legally admissible) and immediately draw a conclusion, while taking into consideration neighboring countries' development and deployment of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles."<sup>38</sup>

Japan and the United States (and other interested stakeholders) are likely to have lengthy discussions about the benefits, costs, and risks of any specific proposal resulting from this study. From a U.S. perspective, there would be a number of potential benefits, including the following. Japanese strike capabilities would strengthen deterrence. This would be especially true in "gray zone conflicts"<sup>39</sup> that might erupt into armed confrontation if the alliance deterrence posture is perceived as weak or in any case where Japan might be acting alone or in support of alliance interests in a localized conflict.<sup>40</sup> Especially if Japan were to choose ballistic rather than cruise missiles, its capabilities could help to address the gap in prompt conventional strike discussed above.<sup>41</sup> Depending on the scale of capability, Japanese

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<sup>35</sup> See Scott A Snyder, *South Korea's New Missile Guidelines and North Korea's Response*, Council on Foreign Relations Asia Unbound on-line blog, October 9, 2012.

<sup>36</sup> Sugio Takahashi, "Dealing with the Ballistic Missile Threat: Whether Japan Should Have a Strike Capability under its Exclusively Defense-Oriented Policy," *NIDS Security Reports* No. 7 (December 2006), pp. 79-94.

<sup>37</sup> See "Japan Plans More Aggressive Defense," *Defense News*, May 16, 2013.

<sup>38</sup> Translation from the Japanese language original.

<sup>39</sup> The logic of this approach is set out in Sugio Takahashi, *Crafting Deterrence and Defense: The New Defense Policy of Japan* (Tokyo: Tokyo Foundation, October 2012).

<sup>40</sup> Shinichi Ogawa reflects the view of many in arguing that "it is desirable that the Japanese government return to the previous position that it would cope on its own with limited and small-scale aggression, such as attacks on offshore islands." See Shinichi Ogawa, "Conventional Deterrence and Japan's Security," *NAPSNet Special Report* (Berkeley, Calif.: Nautilus Institute, May 2012).

<sup>41</sup> For an examination of the potential role of intermediate-range conventionally-armed ballistic missiles in defense of allied interests in East Asia, see Jim Thomas, "Why the

strike forces would also play a role in enabling the AirSea battle concept and thus in maintaining an overall balance of conventional forces in the region. These capabilities would also add protection if deterrence fails. Additionally, the United States recognizes that Japan has a sovereign responsibility and right to defend itself and must prepare for the possibility that in some cases its interests will not always fully coincide with those of the United States.

From a US perspective, there are also some likely costs. For example, investments in these capabilities would come at the expense of investments in other capabilities important to the alliance, perhaps of higher priority. There would also be political costs in terms of negative reactions from others in the region, who might criticize such a step as inconsistent with the letter and spirit of Japan's constitution.

From a U.S. perspective, there are also a number of potential risks. There is a risk that China might go beyond negative political reactions to deploy new capabilities targeting Japan, such that the net effect of Japan's decision to field strike capabilities would be an erosion of Japan's security environment. There is a risk that the proposal could be so divisive politically in Japan and elsewhere as to undermine progress in other areas to strengthen regional deterrence and strategic stability. There is a risk also that autonomous strike actions by Japan could result in escalation that is unhelpful in crisis; this would be a function of the degree to which Japan develops the information, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities necessary for independent strike operations.<sup>42</sup> Further, as Japan's acquisition of strike capabilities would follow acquisition by South Korea, the message might well be taken by allies outside Northeast Asia that allies inside Northeast Asia are losing confidence in the United States to protect them, resulting in increased pressure from allies elsewhere to acquire

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U.S. Army Needs Missiles: A New Mission to Save the Service," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 92, No.3 (May/June 2013), pp. 137-144. Thomas notes that the United States has foresworn the right to possess ground-based missiles of this range in the Treaty on Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF), which bans all such ground-based missiles, whether armed with nuclear or conventional weapons. This reinforces the perception of a gap in the overall deterrence posture.

<sup>42</sup> The academic literature on alliance relations highlights the fact that allies of the United States worry about both abandonment and entrapment. See for example Victor D. Cha, "Abandonment, Entrapment, and Neoclassical Realism in East Asia: the United States, Japan, and Korea," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 44 (2000), pp. 261-291. But the United States has analogous worries about its allies—that in war they might be separated from the United States because of the risks and that in way they might act in ways that precipitate crises or escalation that the United States must then try to manage at some heightened risk to itself. A proliferation of strike capabilities among U.S. allies and partners would heighten the perceived U.S. risk of unwanted entanglement in crisis and escalation under the nuclear shadow.

strike capabilities of their own.<sup>43</sup> There is also a risk that the further proliferation of regional strike systems would put renewed pressure on the Treaty on Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF), especially if officials and experts in Moscow renew calls for Russian withdrawal so that it is at liberty to field counter-balancing systems.

This list of potential benefits, costs, and risks in the military and political domains is illustrative. Additional factors can and should be identified. Such a net assessment of at least a couple of basic options would be essential before political agreement between Washington and Tokyo can be found to move forward in this area.

#### On the U.S. Nuclear Umbrella: Is More Tailoring Required?

In recent years, there has been a good deal of “tailoring” of U.S. nuclear policies and postures to account for strategic circumstances in Northeast Asia. Looking to the future, is additional tailoring required?

The tailoring already accomplished covers both declaratory policy and capabilities. On declaratory policy, the Obama administration carefully considered the views of its allies in Northeast Asia (and elsewhere) before rejecting the “sole purpose formulation” and modifying the negative security assurance. The “sole purpose formulation” would have reduced the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. deterrence strategy to the sole purpose of deterring nuclear attack on the United States or its allies and eliminated the role in deterring attacks on vital interests with chemical and biological weapons and large-scale conventional campaigns. The result is a U.S. policy that specifies a continued role for U.S. nuclear weapons in deterring attacks on allies by non-nuclear means that threaten their vital interests. The modified negative security assurance also clarifies that states such as North Korea that leave the NPT and threaten the United States and its allies are objects of U.S. deterrence planning.<sup>44</sup> In

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<sup>43</sup> The Polish analysis cited above concludes that one lesson from the recent North Korean crisis is that the possible acquisition of strike capabilities by U.S. allies generally will be a “main bone of contention in the years to come.” Kulesa, *U.S. Extended Deterrence Weakened*, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> For Japanese analysis of the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, see Jimbo, “Japanese Perceptions of Obama’s Nuclear Twin Commitments;” James L. Schoff, *Does the Nonproliferation Tail Wag the Deterrence Dog?* PacNet 9 (Honolulu, Hi.: Pacific Forum CSIS, February 2009); Yukio Satoh, “Agenda for Japan-US Strategic Consultations,” in *Major Powers’ Nuclear Policies and International Order in the 21st Century*, Report of the NIDS International Symposium on Security Affairs 2009 (Tokyo: National Institute for Defense Studies, 2010), pp. 21-34; and Satoh, “On Rethinking Extended Deterrence,” in *Shared Responsibilities for Nuclear Disarmament: A Global Debate* (Washington, D.C.: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2011), pp. 32-35.



follow up to NPR consultations, Japan also updated its own declaratory policy, clarifying Japan's intention to play a role in countering nuclear threats rather than simply "relying on" U.S. extended deterrence.<sup>45</sup>

The bilateral dialogue about whether to maintain or modify U.S. declaratory policy was complicated in part by a language translation issue. As Yukio Satoh has noted, "discussions about the term 'first use' in Japan are somewhat distorted because of the Japanese translation of the term. The widely used Japanese term for 'first use'—'sensei-shiyo'—literally means 'preemptive use' in Japanese, while 'first use' does not always imply 'preemptive use,' particularly in contrast to preemptive 'first strike.' It is understandable that a notion of 'preemptive use' is repugnant to many, and the Japanese are no exception...However it would be counterproductive for the sake of the country's security if the Japanese people would become critical of the U.S. policy of calculated ambiguity about 'first use,' believing that 'first use' is always preemptive."<sup>46</sup>

On capabilities, the Obama administration carefully considered the views of its allies in Northeast Asia and elsewhere before retiring the nuclear-armed Tomahawk cruise missile and committing to modernize a globally deployable force of fighter-bombers equipped with nuclear bombs (called non-strategic weapons because of their association with delivery systems not defined as strategic by arms control treaties). The functions of that force are (1) to signal the shared and collective resolve of the United States and its allies to stand together in the face of nuclear coercion and aggression and (2) to enable the display and employment of lower-yield nuclear weapons with non-strategic delivery systems in support of commitments to U.S. allies. In these functions, nuclear-armed fighter-bombers were deemed more effective than submarine-delivered weapons by the NPR.

Consultations with Japan (and others) also reinforced the intention of the Obama administration to craft a Nuclear Posture Review that balances the commitments to non-proliferation and disarmament with the commitments to strategic stability and extended deterrence.

One of the most important results of these consultations was the personal engagement of the U.S. President and his clear commitment to preserve the nuclear umbrella even while reducing the role and number of U.S. nuclear weapons. From his remarks in Tokyo in November 2009: "so long as these (nuclear) weapons remain, the United States will maintain a strong and effective nuclear deterrent that guarantees

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<sup>45</sup> As discussed in Takahashi, *Ballistic Missile Defense in Japan*, p. 23.

<sup>46</sup> See Satoh, "Agenda for Japan-US Strategic Consultations," pp. 27-28.

the defense of our allies—including South Korea and Japan.”<sup>47</sup> He followed this with written guidance to the military “reaffirming the role of nuclear weapons in extending deterrence to U.S. Allies and partners and the U.S. commitment to strengthen regional deterrence architectures” and directing the military to ensure “a wide range of effective response options” drawing on both a strong strategic deterrent and the capability to forward-deploy nuclear weapons.<sup>48</sup>

Looking forward, another major review of U.S. nuclear policy and posture and another revision to Presidential guidance are highly unlikely before a new President arrives in the White House in 2016. But this does not mean that there is nothing more to be accomplished for tailoring nuclear deterrence for Northeast Asia. Indeed, the United States and Japan have already identified an agenda of topics for continued collaboration as we ensure that nuclear deterrence is well tailored for this region.

For example, effective tailoring requires changes to shared deterrence concepts as North Korea’s nuclear and missile capabilities continue to evolve, along with its own operational concepts and leadership views. It is important for Japan and the United States to continue to work together to better understand the potential dynamics of conflict with North Korea under the nuclear shadow in order to understand how to wage deterrence effectively. As one study has concluded, “as deterrence in East Asia becomes more complex and multi-dimensional, developing a more coherent and common understanding of a possible escalation ladder (and when and how to signal adversaries) becomes increasingly important...Allies need to develop a clearer common picture.”<sup>49</sup> At the governmental level, this requires close collaboration with experts in the intelligence community. In the non-governmental community, this requires conceptual investigation unconstrained by cold war models.<sup>50</sup>

Another important topic relates to the “sole purpose formulation.” The 2010 NPR committed the United States to work with its allies to establish the conditions

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<sup>47</sup> Remarks by President Barack Obama at Suntory Hall, Tokyo, on November 14, 2009. See [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov). This commitment followed on prior assurances of the United States, including most recently following the North Korean nuclear test in 2006, when Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated in Tokyo that “the United States has the will and the capability to meet the full range, and I underscore full range, of its deterrence and security commitments to Japan.” “U.S. is Japan’s Nuclear Shield, Rice Says,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 19, 2006.

<sup>48</sup> *Report on Nuclear Employment Strategy of the United States*, June 19, 2013, p. 8.

<sup>49</sup> Schoff, *The U.S.-Japan Alliance and the Future of Extended Deterrence*, p. xiv.

<sup>50</sup> The effort to tailor deterrence to North Korea has sparked a discussion among American experts about whether “tailoring” is possible when the target of deterrence, in this case the leadership group in Pyongyang, is not well understood. See Van Jackson, “Beyond Tailoring: North Korea and the Promise of Managed Deterrence,” *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (August 2012), pp. 289-310.

under which a “sole purpose formulation” in declaratory policy could be adopted sometime in the future. The United States and Japan can work together to clarify what those conditions might be and whether or how it might be possible to bring them into being.

A key continuing topic of debate among policymakers and experts is whether additional steps need to be taken now to strengthen extended nuclear deterrence in Northeast Asia. Various proposals have been made by experts, including for example modifications to Japan’s three no’s policy to allow future deployment based on certain conditions, improvements to U.S. military infrastructure on Guam to enable possible future deployments there of dual-capable U.S. aircraft, and creation of NATO-like nuclear consultative mechanisms.<sup>51</sup> In addition to considering individual steps that might be taken incrementally, it is useful to consider fundamentally different models for extending nuclear deterrence. In this author’s view, there are three primary models.

One is the current East Asian model, which relies on the U.S. nuclear triad of strategic delivery systems and a globally deployable force of non-strategic nuclear capabilities. From the perspective of the Obama administration, this is a strong model. The triad is highly capable of any needed nuclear employment. For the signaling of U.S. resolve in crisis, alert levels can be changed and bombers can be visibly utilized, as for example in March 2013 when they were flown into South Korean air space. For the signaling of the shared resolve of the United States and its allies, the potential deployment of non-strategic delivery systems is of potential high value (depending on the particular characteristics of a regional military crisis).

The second model is the cold war East Asian model. In this model, the triad and DCA were supplemented by the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea and aboard U.S. naval surface combatants. With the end of the Cold War, those tactical weapons were withdrawn (and most were retired and eliminated). From the perspective of the Obama administration, it would be unhelpful to return to this model today, despite calls from some politicians in the Republic of Korea.<sup>52</sup> Doing so would significantly erode the political pressure on North Korea to denuclearize, increase nuclear targeting of South Korea by the North, and add little to either the deterrence of

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<sup>51</sup> See *A New Phase in the Japan-US Alliance, “The Japan US Alliance toward 2020” 2009 Project Report* (Tokyo: Institute for International Policy Studies, September 2009).

<sup>52</sup> For more on South Korea’s nuclear debate, see Toby Dalton and Yoon Ho Jin, “Reading into South Korea’s Nuclear Debate,” *PACNet* #20 (Honolulu, Hi.: Pacific Forum CSIS, March 2013) and Jinho Park, “Response to PacNet #20 ‘Reading into South Korea’s Nuclear Debate,’” *PACNet* #21 (Honolulu, Hi.: Pacific Forum CSIS, April 2013).

the North or the assurance of the South. Additionally, the reintroduction of nuclear weapons to U.S. surface naval combatants or attack submarines is highly unlikely.

The third model is the NATO model. In this model, the nuclear forces of NATO's three nuclear-armed members (the United States, United Kingdom, and France) provide the "ultimate guarantee" of the security of NATO allies, while a sub-group of other NATO allies participate in the alliance's unique sharing arrangements, whereby the United States forward deploys nuclear bombs and together with these other countries operates dual-capable aircraft. Moreover, nuclear roles and responsibilities within the alliance are coordinated by defense ministers (absent the French minister, as France did not re-join NATO's Nuclear Planning Group when it re-joined the alliance in 2009).

From the perspective of the Obama administration, this model is well suited to Europe in current circumstances but not well suited to Northeast Asia. NATO's unique nuclear sharing arrangements reflect NATO's unique strategic challenge—convincing potential adversaries (as well as individual allies) that an attack on one ally will be treated as an attack on all 28. In the absence of such sharing arrangements in a U.S.-Japan context, there is no need for an operational planning mechanism such as that implemented in NATO's military command. There is a need for ministerial dialogue and guidance, but this can readily occur in the regular ministerial meetings; a separate mechanism is not needed because after all there is no ally to excuse from the room. To the extent improved coordination for extended deterrence was needed between the United States and Japan, the new mechanism agreed in 2010 has made a substantial start.

A final model is sometimes proposed by Japanese politicians and pundits: a nuclear-armed Japan. This is not a model of extended U.S. deterrence. The case is sometimes made that perhaps Japan could arm itself and join Britain and France as a nuclear-armed ally of the United States. It is difficult to imagine how this step might be taken in the current security environment. Britain and France became nuclear weapon states before the NPT; for Japan to do so now would require NPT withdrawal, with significant political and economic consequences. Moreover, Japan's decision to seek an independent nuclear deterrent would presumably reflect profound lack of confidence in U.S. credibility; it is difficult to see how or why the U.S.-Japan alliance would survive a Japanese decision to acquire nuclear weapons. And of course Britain and France were able to acquire nuclear weapons without generating significantly adverse reactions among their immediate neighbors in Europe, whereas Japan's

acquisition of nuclear weapons would likely generate significantly adverse reactions in Asia.

Continued analysis of these and other options for adapting the nuclear deterrence posture in Northeast Asia is necessary and appropriate in a changed and changing security environment. Japan's nuclear "identity" should be carefully considered and based on sound political and strategic assessments—as it has always been.<sup>53</sup> The United States should not shy away from such analysis. But political leadership must remain willing to make its best cases for agreed current approaches.

#### On Strategic Stability: Can China, the United States, and Japan Agree?

As noted above, the United States has set out a high-level objective vis-à-vis the strategic military relationship with China, but not a lot of specific content. In the analytic community, the meaning of strategic stability after the Cold War and the requirements of strategic stability in the U.S.-China strategic relationship are matters of intense analysis and discussion.<sup>54</sup> In fact, there are many different ideas today about the requirements of strategic stability and even whether it is a sound high-level organizing concept for the U.S.-China strategic military relationship.

The United States perceives strategic stability as potentially threatened by the expansion of both the size and the mission of China's nuclear force, China's development of robust anti-access area-denial capabilities in the conventional realm, and the emerging competition in the cyber and space domains—all in the context of a more assertively nationalist regime that sometimes pushes diplomatic crises to the brink of military confrontation. The United States worries also about a possible Chinese abandonment of no-first-use. The United States seeks credible assurances that China

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<sup>53</sup> See Kurt Campbell and Tsuyoshi Sunohara, "Japan: Thinking the Unthinkable," in Campbell et al., *The Nuclear Tipping Point: Why States Reconsider Their Nuclear Choices* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1994), pp. 218-253; Selig Harrison, ed., *Japan's Nuclear Future: The Plutonium Debate and East Asian Security* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996); and Emma Chanlett-Avery and Mary Beth Nikitin, *Japan's Nuclear Future: Policy Debate, Prospects, and U.S. Interests* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, February 2009). For a better understanding of some of the technical challenges that would face Japan if it were to seek a viable nuclear deterrent, see Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes, "Thinking about the Unthinkable: Tokyo's Nuclear Option," *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (Summer 2009), pp. 59-78. For a characterization of Japan's confidence in the Cold War deterrence framework, see "Address by Mr. Tadeshi Kuranari, Foreign Minister of Japan, 8 September 1986 (excerpts)," *Survival* (January/February 1987), pp. 84-86.

<sup>54</sup> See for example Elbridge A. Colby and Michael S. Gerson, eds., *Strategic Stability: Contending Interpretations* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College Press, 2013).

will not exploit its rising military capabilities to challenge militarily the U.S.-led regional order.

China perceives strategic stability as threatened by the combination of U.S. prompt conventional strike and ballistic missile defense capabilities. It worries about possible threats to its interests, including vital ones in Taiwan, by the increased freedom of maneuver that the United States and its allies will enjoy with a strengthened regional deterrence architecture. China seeks credible assurances that the United States will not exploit its continued military supremacy to interfere in China's interests, both vital and not. Chinese analysts have sought assurances that the United States accepts mutual vulnerability as the basis of the strategic relationship, on the U.S.-Russian model.

Japan perceives strategic stability as threatened by China's success in consolidating a modern nuclear retaliatory capability. Some in Japan are concerned that the United States will accept mutual vulnerability as the basis of the strategic relationship, thus encouraging Chinese assertiveness at the conventional level. There is also concern that quick, deep cuts by the United States and Russia might have an unhelpful side effect of tempting China to seek nuclear parity, both quantitatively and qualitatively—or actual nuclear supremacy. Japanese experts seek credible assurances that the United States is not committed to a vision of strategic stability that comes at the expense of the U.S.-Japan alliance.<sup>55</sup>

At this time, the United States has neither formally accepted nor formally rejected mutual vulnerability with China. In fact, the Obama administration does not accept any single principle as the basis of the strategic relationship with China. The relationship has become far more complex than the adversarial stand-off between East and West in the Cold War and we need principles of stability suited to the strategic realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the administration's view, China and the United States must work toward a mutual understanding of the requirements of strategic stability. Toward that end, the administration wants to put the focus of the bilateral strategic relationship on shared interests in stability and not on the divisive interests of deterrence of each by the other.

As a simple statement of fact, the United States has not so far adapted its strategic military posture in response to China's nuclear modernization. There has been no new nuclear requirement and no change to U.S. policy on protecting the homeland from limited strikes by countries like North Korea and Iran (nor has the

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<sup>55</sup> These views were gathered during informal consultations in Tokyo in spring 2013 on a not-for-attribution basis.

United States so far deployed any prompt conventional strike capability). This posture reflects an assessment that (1) China's nuclear modernization, as so far understood, is consistent with the principles of China's no-first-use policy and its efforts to maintain confidence in its deterrent amidst changing factors in China's security environment and (2) does not generate any new deterrence requirements for the United States. If that assessment changes, adaptations in the U.S. strategic posture would likely follow, just as China's development of anti-access, area-denial capabilities stimulated the AirSea Battle operating concept.

Although the Obama administration has emphasized strategic stability with China, it has also made clear that it will maintain a nuclear posture that provides effective deterrence, to "signal credibly that any perceived benefits of attacking the United States or its Allies and partners are outweighed by the costs our response would impose."<sup>56</sup> How deterrence of China will remain credible if the United States continues to reduce its strategic nuclear forces is a matter of interest in Tokyo, as is the possibility that China might see bilateral U.S.-Russian reductions as an opportunity to achieve parity (or more). As Yukio Satoh has argued, "Another point of concern from Tokyo's long-term perspective is a possibility that a combination of reduced U.S. and Russian nuclear stockpiles and increased (or not reduced) Chinese nuclear forces might change the nuclear force balance among the three countries in such a way as to have a destabilizing impact on security conditions in the Asia-Pacific region...It must be noted in this regard that the nuclear force balance between the U.S. on one side and Russia and China on the other that Washington would find acceptable for the sake of strategic stability would not necessarily be reassuring particularly to Tokyo and Seoul."<sup>57</sup>

Deep and sustained engagement between Washington and Tokyo on thinking about next steps on strategic nuclear arms control is needed. Some measure of reassurance for Japan is in the recent commitments of the Obama administration to maintain the strategic nuclear triad and to pursue further reductions in the context of negotiated cuts together with Russia.<sup>58</sup>

It is difficult to imagine that any single principle can serve as the sole basis of the strategic military relationship between the United States and China. That relationship has become far more complex than the relatively simple adversarial confrontation between East and West in the Cold War with its balance of nuclear terror and conventional stand-off. Today, new principles of stability are needed—principles

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<sup>56</sup> *Report on Nuclear Employment Strategy of the United States*, June 2013, p. 8.

<sup>57</sup> Satoh, "Agenda for Japan-U.S. Strategic Consultations," pp. 32-33.

<sup>58</sup> *Report on Nuclear Employment Strategy of the United States*, pp. 5-6.

that are suited to the strategic realities of the 21st century where, in a different political context, the requirements of stability are more multidimensional. Today, such principles must account for the interplay of offense and defense that proved unnecessary during the Cold War. They must also account for the new forms of competition evident in cyber space and outer space. And they must also account for very dynamic conventional force balances, not just between China and the U.S.-Japan alliance, but within the alliance. The asymmetry of vulnerability evident between the United States and Japan in terms of the impact of China's growing conventional capabilities is key to Japanese perceptions of instability. More precisely, some in Japan are deeply concerned that the United States will no longer provide defense of Japan in some lower-scale contingencies because challenging China's assertiveness might undermine strategic stability, essentially abandoning Japan to cope alone with defending its interest in the face of significant asymmetries in conventional power with China. The United States should not endorse a concept of strategic stability at the nuclear level that leaves its allies open to coercion at the conventional level.

In this more multidimensional context, can a single principle possibly govern our understanding of strategic stability? Is mutual vulnerability an acceptable organizing concept across all of these domains? Does China, for example, accept mutual vulnerability in the cyber and space domains, and is it seeking capabilities according to the "lean and effective" principles of the nuclear realm in order to try to induce U.S. restraint? Or does it seek capabilities beyond "lean and effective" in order to defeat the United States by crippling decisively its operations in these domains (that is, with supremacy in these domains)? Similarly in the conventional domain, does China seek a posture of simple mutual deterrence? Or does it seek to decisively negate U.S. power projection and to exploit the asymmetric vulnerability of U.S. allies in order to coerce them into ceding any point Beijing demands? To many in the United States and Japan, China appears embarked on efforts to shift the overall balance of conventional and strategic power in its favor, with decisive advantages in the new domains and the conventional domain. At the very least, this sows new doubt about whether the nuclear domain can long be the sole domain in China's overall strategic posture guided by principles of minimum deterrence.

Of course, analogous questions require answers of the United States as well. It has put down some important markers with release of its cyber and space policy reviews.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> See *Cyber Policy Review: Assuring a Trusted and Resilient Information and Communications Infrastructure*, 2009 and *National Security Space Strategy*, 2011.



This list of questions is intended to illustrate the challenge of finding a single principle to govern strategic stability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century U.S.-China relationship. But difficult though it may be to understand the requirements of strategic stability, there is broad interest in the United States, China, and Japan in ensuring that instability in this more complicated time does not turn into coercion, arms racing, and war. Indeed, in Washington and Tokyo at least, there is interest in taking on this work in a mutual way with China so that our shared progress in coming to terms with these challenges might contribute to political reassurance more generally. The fact that different ideas have taken root, as argued above, is not surprising and need not necessarily be discouraging. Many believe that a convergence of thinking is not possible; it may be that this proves to be so. It may be that thinking need not fully converge to permit success in avoiding worst-case outcomes. It may also be that some organizing concept other than strategic stability is needed for giving direction and focus to mutual efforts to ensure peace and stability among these powers.

In the administration's view, China and the United States (in consultation with Japan) can make progress toward a mutual understanding of the requirements of strategic stability. Continued dialogue at both the official and unofficial level, along with work by the analytical and policy community, is needed to continue to advance thinking and to identify areas of possible policy convergence. Patience is needed. Writing in early 2013, Thomas Schelling argued that "it took 12 years to begin to comprehend the stability issue after 1945." He went on to argue that "we all knew what we meant by stability. We usually called it stability of deterrence, not strategic stability, but we knew we did not want deterrence to be too 'delicate' and we knew that stability was a mutual goal....Now we are in a different world, a world so much more complex than the world of the East-West Cold War...Now the world is so much changed, so much more complicated, so multivariate, so unpredictable, involving so many nations and languages in nuclear relationships, many of them asymmetric, that it is even difficult to know how many meanings there are for strategic stability."<sup>60</sup>

This attests to the fact that the search for an agreed understanding of strategic stability—or for some other organizing concept—is likely to be a long-term project. It is likely to require a patience and transparency not so far in evidence.

#### On Leadership Focus

The analytical and policy agenda set out in the previous sections suggests a rich agenda of research, analysis, debate, and consultations in the years ahead. A key

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<sup>60</sup> Thomas Schelling, "foreword," in Colby and Gerson, *Strategic Stability*, p. vii.

question is whether leaders will sustain their focus. Given the reduced prominence of nuclear deterrence today relative to the Cold War and the increased prominence of other military problems, it is not surprising that leaders pay less attention to nuclear deterrence than before. After all, even though some nuclear risks have increased, the risk of all-out Armageddon has receded significantly. But sustaining a sufficient level of focus by political and military leaders has proven a challenge in the United States.

The Obama administration has been thorough in working to restore the needed leadership focus. The Nuclear Posture Review was an opportunity to generate high-level focus. The follow-on analysis of nuclear deterrence requirements in the NPR implementation study helped to sustain this focus, with sustained engagement by military leadership and the interagency community—as well as the President. New written guidance by the President ensures continued focus through the process of generating new deterrence plans in the Department of Defense. Looking ahead, there will be a challenge in sustaining the focus through the period of budget austerity, when the pressure will be strong to manage budgets to realize major cost savings without a clear view of their strategic consequences. It is not difficult to imagine intense budget debates about the cost of regional deterrence architectures, particularly in those regions where allies are perceived in the U.S. Congress as not carrying their fair share of the burden.

Sustaining leadership focus on nuclear deterrence within NATO was also a challenge, given the many roles and responsibilities of the alliance, as for example in Afghanistan and Libya. But this too has been addressed. The NATO Deterrence and Defense Posture Review effectively engaged the alliance's political and military leadership. It spoke directly to the need to sustain leadership focus. It also generated implementation activities in the planning realm that will help to sustain focus.

At present, leadership attention in Japan on nuclear deterrence is high. As noted above, this follows from leadership concern about the credibility of U.S. guarantees and from four years of high-level dialogue. Currently, both the policy and expert communities have a high degree of engagement on these matters. The longer-term question is whether this focus can be sustained through periods of political change and deepened to come to terms with specific policy challenges.

From this author's perspective, the following priorities stand out for leadership focus. The bilateral extended deterrence dialogue must be sustained on a highly substantive basis. The needed strategic dialogue with China must be created. There must be some elements of trilateral U.S.-Japan-RoK dialogue.<sup>61</sup> Lastly, Track 1.5

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<sup>61</sup> Some Japanese experts have joined many Americans in arguing for such a trilateral

mechanisms should be used to generate insights—and also to generate dialogue when Track 1.0 falls short.

### Conclusions

On issues of extended deterrence and strategic stability, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is very different from the 20<sup>th</sup>—and especially so in Northeast Asia. These issues have new context, content, and complexity. Extended deterrence is no longer focused on the Soviet threat and has become much broader than its nuclear core. Strategic stability is no longer about maintaining a stable balance of terror to avoid nuclear Armageddon and its new meaning is not well formed. The interplay between extended deterrence and strategic stability on the one hand and the nonproliferation and disarmament processes on the other has also taken on significant new aspects.

The case is sometimes made that North Korea and China are changing the rules of the deterrence game with their nuclear and missile programs. The Obama administration has a different view: the game-changers are all ours. Developments in North Korean and Chinese military postures have been long studied and anticipated, and plans have been put in place by Washington and its allies that have preserved and will preserve the credibility of U.S. security guarantees by adapting deterrence to meet the requirements of a changed and changing security environment. Regional deterrence architectures are strong and getting stronger for the full spectrum of high and low intensity contingencies and the escalatory scenarios in between. In particular, the introduction of non-nuclear elements adds important new deterrence values. Moreover, U.S. nuclear forces are highly capable and flexible—and are being modernized. Also in the administration's assessment, North Korea's nuclear threats are not becoming more credible—they are becoming less credible as the deterrence architecture grows even more robust. If North Korea crosses the nuclear threshold, it must understand that the United States will respond decisively and in a manner that protects itself and its allies. In addition, the United States sees strategic stability with China as possible, not least because it is a shared objective—but recognizes that China too must choose partnership for this purpose. Progress in these two areas helps to create some of the conditions that will reduce nuclear dangers over time and allow concrete steps to advance nonproliferation and disarmament objectives.

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dialogue. Ken Jimbo, for instance, has argued that “trilateral cooperation must be upgraded to enhance the impact and credibility of U.S. deterrence in the region.” See Ken Jimbo, “Did Deterrence against North Korea Fail in 2010?” On-line posting to East Asia Forum, August 13, 2011. See [www.eastasiaforum.org](http://www.eastasiaforum.org).

These strategic benefits of improving U.S. and allied capabilities will not be ensured over the long term without sustained focus and action by the United States and Japan. But this fact seems clear to all and the allies have organized themselves to accomplish that work.

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