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East Asia's Nuclear Future: A Long-Term View of Threat Reduction

Brad Roberts

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BACKGROUND: The Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) was founded in 1998 to integrate and focus the capabilities of the Department of Defense (DoD) that address the weapons of mass destruction threat. To assist the Agency in its primary mission, the Advanced Systems and Concepts Office (ASCO) develops and maintains an evolving analytical vision of necessary and sufficient capabilities to protect United States and Allied forces and citizens from WMD attack. ASCO is also charged by DoD and by the U.S. Government generally to identify gaps in these capabilities and initiate programs to fill them. It also provides supprt to the Threat Reduction Advisory Committee (TRAC), and its Panels, with timely, high quality research.

ASCO ANALYTICAL SUPPORT: The Institute for Defense Analyses has provided analytical support to DTRA since the latter's inception through a series of projects on chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons issues. This work was performed for DTRA under contract DASW01 98 C 0067, Task DC-6-1990.

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PREFACE

Since the formation of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency it 1998, IDA has provided analytical support through the Agency's Advanced Systems and Concepts Office (ASCO). In fiscal year 2001, the ASCO commissioned a study from IDA on strategic stability in East Asia. Its purposes are to examine long-term nuclear risks in Asia and to pose the strategic question embodied in DTRA's charter: what can be done to reduce those risks and potential threats? IDA also was asked specifically to examine how an understanding of these questions might inform the thinking of the new Administration as it moves to implement its commitment to ballistic missile defense (BMD) and reductions in the nuclear arsenal, and as it considers possible changes in arms control strategy.

This Northeast Asia stability study has resulted in three IDA papers:

"Northeast Asian Strategic Security Environment Study,"
Katy Oh Hassig.

"China-U.S. Nuclear Relations: What Relationship Best Serves U.S. Interests?"
Brad Roberts.

"East Asia's Nuclear Future: A Long-Term View of Threat Reduction,"
Brad Roberts.

This document is item three on that list. In preparing this paper, the author has benefited from extensive interaction with analysts in the United States and East Asia., including fellow members of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP). Valuable comments on earlier drafts of this paper were provided by Ralph Cossa of Pacific Forum/CSIS, Michael McDevitt of the Center for Naval Analyses Corporation, Rodney Jones of DTRA, and the author's IDA colleagues Virginia Moncken, Katy Oh Hassig, Gerald Epstein, Victor Utgoff, and Larry Welch. The author assumes full responsibility for the final contents of this essay and the arguments presented here.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bush administration has committed itself to the effort to construct a new framework for stability and security suitable to the new, post-Cold War environment, a framework that will encompass to the maximum extent possible cooperation with others. How might a view of the East Asian security environment, and especially the view of U.S. friends and allies there, inform the effort to deploy ballistic missile defenses, pursue nuclear reductions, and adjust arms control strategies? How might a view of the challenges of long-term nuclear threat reduction in the region inform U.S. policy development?

A. STABILITY AND SECURITY IN THE EAST ASIAN ENVIRONMENT

This paper begins with a survey of the debate about the requirements of security and stability in East Asia after the Cold War. It identifies four different camps, each with its own definition of stability, as:

- a balance of power, principally between China and the United States;
- continued progress toward a regional security order based on cooperative or common security principles;
- the absence of significant defections from existing strategic alignments;
- preservation of the nuclear status quo.

For analytical purposes, this study defines East Asian strategic stability as a balance that

- permits changing relations of power among states in the region without war;
- reassures states that significant departures from the status quo are unlikely, or at least predictable, and can be managed so that they are not disruptive or particularly threatening;
- enables progress toward more cooperative approaches to security; and
- reassures states in the region that they need not more aggressively hedge against unanticipated strategic developments.

The study also discovered among American experts a lack of consensus about the relationship between stability and security in the region. The conventional wisdom holds that stability and security are common gods and that, from an American perspective, a more stable Asia makes America more secure. But that perspective is not shared by all.

Some adhere to the view that stability is impossible in so dynamic a region, and America's job is to promote desirable change. Others adhere to the view that stability won at the price of U.S. insecurity is too expensive. Still others express the view that complaints about U.S. initiatives as destabilizing are nothing more than the usual reluctance of U.S. allies to follow the U.S. lead.

B. EAST ASIA'S NUCLEAR LANDSCAPE

For many U.S. security analysts, the nuclear problem in East Asia is defined solely by the nuclear challenge in North Korea. This is far too simple a view. Cold War nuclear confrontation between the Soviet Union and United States had a significant Asian dimension, and the end of the Cold War caused the virtual disappearance of this dimension of the Asian nuclear dynamic. But the nuclear history in the region significantly transcends the U.S.-Soviet dimension. Many of the states of the region have had nuclear ambitions in the past, ambitions that could conceivably be re-ignited in the future—including U.S. allies such as South Korea and Japan, as well as Taiwan. None of Asia's subregions is free of nuclear proliferation risks—even Southeast Asia. The major power nuclear overlay is an important additional factor, which may both generate and react to nuclear developments in the regional subsystems. The circumstances exist in Asia for dramatic shifts in the nuclear status quo. There are a lot of nuclear dominoes that could fall in Asia, along with nuclear wildcards and nuclear flashpoints.

C. ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

In the usual policy debates, it is common to depict proliferation as an all-or-nothing proposition—either things continue to progress toward eventual global nuclear disarmament, or everything falls apart in a way that everyone ends up with nuclear weapons. In East Asia, the potential alternatives are more subtle. The paper identifies five such alternatives:

1. piecemeal erosion of the existing nuclear order;
2. a wholesale collapse occasioned by widespread proliferation;
3. triangular reemphasis among the major nuclear powers (China, Russia, the United States);
4. preservation of the status quo;
5. nuclear rollback.

This review of alternative nuclear futures illuminates the types of defections from current nuclear practices that are possible in East Asia, and the types of stability consequences they might have. The analysis also emphasizes the hedging behaviors clearly present in Northeast Asia and more widely evident in the region, and the tensions between an uncertain balance of power and the halting progress in creating multilateral institutions for security management.

D. REDUCING LONG-TERM RISKS

How can the United States shape the regional security dynamic in ways that promote stability and nuclear choices there that bring preferred futures into being? Historically, the United States has pursued two separate but complementary paths towards these ends. On the one hand, through its foreign and security policies it has sought to shape the regional security dynamic so as to minimize the pressures for states in the region to acquire nuclear weapons. On the other hand, it has sought to address nuclear proliferation challenges with policy tools specifically crafted for that purpose.

Over the decades, U.S. regional security and nonproliferation policies have been marked by elements of both continuity and change. The early policy decisions of the Bush administration suggest both elements. On regional security, it seeks to maintain a strong U.S. presence in the region aimed at containing threats to the peace and providing a stable balance of power, while also promoting political-economic reform and integration. But it has also signaled its intentions to rejuvenate alliance relationships and increase support for Taiwan, while also treating China in "a more straightforward fashion." On nonproliferation, the administration has signaled its commitment to the nonproliferation regime and to the strategy of dialogue with North Korea. But its initial signals on the depth of its commitment to formal arms control have been mixed. A central strategic question for the Bush administration is how its new strategic paradigm can be made to reinforce the key elements of continuity in U.S. strategy. How can it pursue new strategies on BMD, nuclear reductions, and arms control in ways that reduce long-term nuclear risks and threats within the region, to U.S. interests there, and to the United States itself?

E. IMPACT OF U.S. STRATEGIC INITIATIVES ON ASIA

As U.S. experts have debated the impact of BMD on international stability, they have tended to focus on the impact of such defenses on the evolving U.S.-Russian strategic relationship, on the emerging strategic relationships with missile-armed rogues,

and on the "linkage" of the United States to its allies, primarily those in Europe. Asia has figured little in this debate, except to the extent that North Korea happens to be located there. The paper elaborates best-case and worst-case impacts of U.S. initiatives on East Asia.

In the notional best case, BMD helps to prevent rogue proliferation from changing the rules of the game in Asia with new acts of aggression, to reinforce the credibility of U.S. security guarantees and extended deterrence, to reassure allies, to dampen proliferation pressures (especially among U.S. friends and allies), to reinforce the effort to reduce nuclear risks, and to maintain a forward military presence in Asia and thus the balance of power there. In the notional best case, the United States and its friends and allies in East Asia are able to enjoy these benefits without having generated counters at the major power level—in the strategic postures and foreign policies of China and Russia (and to a certain extent India)—that would undermine these benefits. U.S. initiatives succeed in the best case in shaping Asia in ways that roll back existing nuclear risks and challenges in the region or that at least preserve the status quo.

The notional worst case encompasses a series of changes to nuclear stability in Asia wrought by an unfolding defense/offense "race" between China and the United States and its spillover effects on other actors in the region. In the worst case, BMD sets off a chain reaction leading to more robust nuclear modernization by China, India, Pakistan, and Russian than would otherwise have been the case. It leads Beijing and perhaps Moscow to abandon arms control strategies for shaping the Asian security environment. It makes a military move by Beijing against Taiwan more likely. It precipitates the competitive acquisition of BMD by Asian states. And it aggravates the challenges of controlling nuclear weapons and materials. In this worst case, U.S. initiatives shape Asia in ways that accelerate the erosion of the existing nuclear order, perhaps precipitating even its collapse.

The *potential* benefits and costs of BMD to Asian stability and security are *both* rather impressive. The *likely* benefits and costs cannot be precisely calibrated at this time. There is a good argument that the negative consequences are being exaggerated in the worst case. BMD may be getting the blame for developments in the Asian landscape that are occurring, irrespective of U.S. choices. The benefits of the best-case may also be exaggerated. It may well be that the deterrence and reassurance benefits envisaged by BMD supporters will be realized even as the "arms race" consequences envisaged by BMD opponents are felt. The difficulty in calibrating likely as opposed to potential

benefits and costs is that the impact of BMD will depend centrally on choices not yet made in Washington, Beijing, and Moscow.

F. GETTING THE BEST CASE, AVOIDING THE WORST

U.S. policy development should be guided by the following principles:

1 Bolster the credibility of U.S. deterrence strategies of the DPRK and across the Taiwan strait with a movement away from reliance solely on the threat of retaliation and toward reliance on a mix of punishment and defense.

2 Reassure U.S. allies and others that Washington understands the impact of its security strategies on Asia; that those strategies will enhance their security, both short- and long-term; that blunting the rogue missile threat can be done without aggravating challenges at the major power level; and that Washington seeks their partnership in shaping its basic security strategies.

3 Avoid motivating China to undertake a "race" with the United States and to challenge U.S. interests in Asia and elsewhere.

4 Focus on achieving policy consensus in the Washington-Moscow-Beijing triangle that sustains nuclear risk reduction among them as well as their leadership of the global treaty regimes.

With these principles in mind, what are the implications for U.S. strategy?

Implications for the BMD Strategy: Proceed with limited BMD but do so in a way that provides the necessary reassurance. In the transatlantic alliance relationship rather than the transpacific one, the Bush administration has sought to address allied concerns about the potentially destabilizing consequences of BMD in two ways. First, the president has emphasized his commitment to extend the defense over those allies. Second, he has sought a dialogue with Moscow that holds out the prospect of continued U.S.-Russian cooperation in the strategic realm. These approaches will provide less reassurance of America's East Asian allies than of its European ones. Limited BMD has gained wide but not deep support among U.S. allies and friends in East Asia. Deeper support appears unlikely, especially for a more robust defense explicitly aimed at denying China a secure retaliatory capability. Indeed, it is likely to cause allies in East Asia to somewhat distance themselves from Washington—and to increase their reliance on hedging strategies. In sum, the central question for America's allies in East Asia is how limited a defense does the United States intend to pursue vis-à-vis China? And what, if any, kind of assurance can be provided that such limits would be maintained?

Implications for the Nuclear Reductions Strategy: In the U.S.-Russian strategic relationship, the Bush administration has argued that potentially harsh Russian responses

to BMD can be minimized by proceeding with deep cuts in strategic nuclear forces, thereby reassuring Moscow that Washington is not exploiting BMD and Russian weakness to gain new advantages at the strategic level. Can deep cuts offer similar promise in minimizing the potentially destabilizing aspects in East Asia of BMD? The balance of U.S.-PRC strategic nuclear forces is obviously of a character entirely different from the U.S.-Russian one and thus cuts seem to promise few or none of the reassurance benefits vis-à-vis China that they appear to offer vis-à-vis Russia. Private discussions with East Asian experts suggest also some concerns that Washington's commitment to deep cuts may prove short-lived and that Washington may seek strategic superiority in deployed offensive forces at some future time (on interpretation of U.S. motives drawn in part from U.S. rejection of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty). The fact that Washington proposes to conduct such reductions on a unilateral basis only reinforces the criticism common in Asia today of the perceived unilateralist tendencies of the Bush administration. In sum, the central question for America's allies in East Asia is whether Washington is willing to pursue such reductions in a way that provides the benefits of transparency and predictability that they desire.

Implications for the Arms Control Strategy: East Asian experts have generally been resistant to seeing the United States "move beyond" the constraints of the ABM treaty and Washington has faced an uphill challenge there as elsewhere in persuading them of the benefits of doing so. East Asian reactions to Bush administration decisions on the ABM treaty will be shaped by the extent to which some framework between Washington and Moscow remains in place, whether an adaptation of the current one or something new. But for East Asians, the arms control strategy question is not simply a question about the U.S. commitment to the ABM treaty. From their perspective, the bilateral U.S.-Russian process is merely an overlay across a broader and more complex arms control landscape in the region encompassing various local, regional, and global mechanisms. When policymakers in Washington talk about moving away from arms control as a Cold War relic, this raises questions in East Asia about the fate of this more comprehensive treaty regime. In sum, the central arms control question for America's allies in East Asia is whether Washington is in fact committed to replacing existing approaches with new and improved ones—or simply seeks an escape from restraint.

This analysis points to a fundamentally new arms control strategy question for East Asia: might arms control play some constructive role in managing China's reactions to U.S. defense/offense strategies and to developments in the U.S.-Russian strategic relationship? If China objects deeply to the direction of U.S. policy, it can take a number

of actions harmful to U.S. interests. These simply begin with a build-up of nuclear forces such that a larger percentage of the American public falls within range of Chinese delivery systems. Additionally, China could return to more egregious proliferation behaviors of its own, adopt a harsher line toward those in East Asia that align themselves with the United States, and provide military assistance to adversaries of the United States. Washington has an interest in not paying these costs to pursue the kinds of changes at the strategic level that it considers necessary and useful.

Washington has essentially three options for responding to China's response to BMD (a build-up to sustain/restore credibility of its retaliatory force). It can choose to:

1. Trump PRC modernization with a defense large and capable enough to defeat the emerging PRC force;
2. Tolerate the current level of mutual vulnerability as an enduring principle of U.S.-PRC nuclear relations;
3. Hedge, by committing itself in principle to tolerate the Chinese build-up without restructuring BMD to respond to it, on certain conditions.

As of summer 2001, the Bush administration appears to prefer option three. The dilemma posed by option three is that Beijing is likely to believe that it is only a masquerade for option one. Particularly if Washington commits itself to the open-ended pursuit of a multi-layered BMD, China seems poised to interpret such a pursuit as promising ultimately U.S. supremacy—and eventual U.S. nuclear blackmail.

If Washington chooses to allay Beijing's concerns, how might it do so? To allay Moscow concerns, the administration has emphasized deep cuts on the offensive side and presidential statements that "Russia is not our enemy." Secretary of State Powell has made similar statements about China, and the dialogue begun with his July 2001 trip may prove helpful in reassuring China on this point. But to gain the benefits of predictability in the U.S.-PRC strategic relationship and the reassurance benefits for U.S. allies, some type of political agreement about the nature of future force developments could prove useful. This will depend at least in part on Washington's willingness to somehow codify a commitment to limited defense.

G. CONCLUSIONS

When it comes to the Asian stability consequences of U.S. defense, offense, and arms control choices, *how* the new administration proceeds is almost as important as *what* it decides to do. Dialogue is important in its own right, as the early initiatives of the

administration already suggest. The Asian debate about BMD is rife with misperceptions and the new administration should do everything it can to understand what fuels them if it seeks the cooperation of friends and allies there. As a new administration, it enjoys the benefits of starting afresh, which it can exploit by listening and explaining in ways that a long-seated administration cannot.

A. INTRODUCTION

In prior studies on nuclear multipolarity and asymmetric conflict done at IDA for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), the potentially central role of developments in Asia in shaping the nuclear future emerged as a prominent theme. The multipolarity study examined new stability issues associated with a more complex nuclear world. One of its primary conclusions was that "the nuclear future will be written in Asia," given the increasingly complex offense/defense interactions there among the United States, China, and Russia, as well as the dynamic interplay of this tripolar core with Asia's regional subsystems, where potential departures from the nuclear status quo are numerous.[1] The asymmetric warfare study examined how the strategies of potential U.S. adversaries might evolve over the next decade. One of its primary conclusions was that China's operational, doctrinal, and strategic approaches to asymmetric engagement of the United States in a confrontation over Taiwan could come to dominate the thinking of other U.S. adversaries seeking to coerce Washington through threats backed by weapons of mass destruction.[2]

This follow-on study was initiated by DTRA to examine long-term nuclear risks in Asia and to pose the strategic question embodied in its charter: what, if anything, can be done to reduce those risks and potential threats? The focus was narrowed to East Asia as a point of departure. IDA was also asked specifically to examine how an understanding of these questions might inform the thinking of the Bush administration as it moves to implement its commitment to ballistic missile defense and reductions in the nuclear arsenal, and as it considers possible departures in arms control strategy.

Accordingly, this paper proceeds as follows. It begins with an exploration of stability and security in East Asia. As the White House has stated, "We intend to continue working with friends and allies to create a new framework for security and stability that reflects the new strategic environment."[3] What is that environment in East Asia? What is the meaning of stability there? What is the security dynamic? And what can the United

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[1] Brad Roberts, *Nuclear Multipolarity and Stability*, IDA Document D-2539 (Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, 2000), p. 35.

[2] Brad Roberts, *Asymmetric Conflict 2010,* IDA Document D-2538 (Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, 2000), p. 19. See also a classified summary of a day-long symposium exploring China's potential role as an asymmetric adversary published as Brad Roberts, *China and Asymmetric Warfare,* IDA Document D-2525 (Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, 2000).

[3] "Administration Missile Defense Papers," White House, July 11, 2001.

States do to shape that dynamic in ways that promote stability? The first section of this paper provides an overview of key themes. A central conclusion here is that the potential for defections from the nuclear status quo is real, and concern about those potential defections is a significant source of instability.

The paper then surveys nuclear risks in East Asia. Taking a long-term perspective, it paints a picture of numerous uncertainties, wildcards, and potential nuclear dominoes. This section concludes with an elaboration of alternative WMD futures in the region, encompassing both positive and negative possibilities.

The paper then considers how the United States can facilitate the continued reduction of nuclear threats in the region and shape the environment so that new nuclear risks do not emerge over the long term. Elements of continuity and change in the transition from the Clinton to Bush administrations are discussed here. This section includes an evaluation of the possible impact of U.S. initiatives on the regional nuclear dynamic, both best case and worst case.

On the argument that the United States should seek best-case and avoid worst-case outcomes, the paper then goes on to identify priorities and challenges for U.S. threat-reduction strategies. It elaborates specific implications for U.S. strategies on ballistic missile defense, nuclear offense, and arms control.

B. STABILITY AND SECURITY IN THE EAST ASIAN ENVIRONMENT

What is stability in East Asia? What is the security dynamic? The first phase of this project sought answers to these questions through an extensive literature survey and exchanges with regional analysts and policymakers. No simple answers emerged from this process, rather, we found a multiplicity of views. For sake of analytical simplicity, we have organized them into four primary camps.

One camp defines stability as a balance of power. And in East Asia, that balance has entered a very dynamic phase. China is rising—or perhaps only returning to the prominent role it played before the rise of the West and before its own turmoil of the last three centuries. Its rise brings with it fundamental questions about whether China is a status quo or a revanchist power. Russia is in decline, which brings with it growing uncertainty about the stability consequences of the power vacuum in Asian Russia. Japan is reemerging as a normal power, but in a faltering process that brings with it twin fears of a militarist Japan and of a Japan that is chronically weak and fails to normalize. Korea's prospect remains uncertain—does the next decade bring reunification, war, or

continued stalemate? Regarding the United States, there is little doubt about capability, but there are many questions about will. Will it remain engaged in the region? Will its engagement be expressed unilaterally or cooperatively? Are its alliances there in service merely of U.S. hegemony and PRC containment, or of some larger, common purpose? And seen from a balance of power point of view, there is a continuing question about whether other nations will balance or bandwagon with changes in American or Chinese power. By this view, instability is defined as a major change to the balance of power, such as the emergence of a sharp U.S.-PRC stand-off and with it an element of bipolarity, dividing East Asian players into different groups, a further tilt of the power equation in the U.S. favor, alternatively U.S. withdrawal and East Asian readjustment, or the reemergence of a regionally assertive Russia. For those who define stability in the region in terms of a balance of power, the security dynamic can be summarized simply as the interplay of rising and falling powers.

A second camp defines stability as continued progress toward a regional security order based on cooperative or common security principles. This camp tends to emphasize the following aspects of the Asian security environment. The end of the Cold War brought with it new opportunities for Asia and a broad interest in new security approaches. Few in East Asia want to see a regional order built on a balance of power alone, believing that this portends a harsh U.S.-PRC stand-off in which they will be trapped. Interest has been expressed across the region in improving the habits of cooperation in dealing with common challenges such as maritime piracy and peace-keeping. This has led to strong interest in concepts of common and cooperative security based on multilateral approaches to dialogue, transparency, conflict prevention, ad hoc institution building, and economic integration. In the last decade, there has been some progress in generating new approaches, though only limited success—and more so in Southeast Asia under the aegis of the ASEAN Regional Forum than in Northeast Asia. By this view, instability equates with the failure to make continued progress in maturing multilateral processes, or the eruption of internal instabilities or international flashpoints that bring military confrontation (as in the South China sea). For this camp, the security dynamic consists of the interplay of a fluid balance of power and the slow maturation of multilateral institutions and processes.

A third camp defines stability as the absence of significant defections from existing strategic alignments by any regional actor. This camp tends to emphasize the potential that decision-makers in East Asia could take actions to sharply redefine perceptions and challenges in the region. Examples are numerous. Beijing could decide

that it must act now to resolve the Taiwan issue by military means. Taipei could decide to declare formal independence. Seoul could join a low-level federation with Pyongyang. Pyongyang could undertake major military provocations. Tokyo could withdraw from its alliance with the United States and expel U.S. troops. Washington too is a factor here, were it, for example, to decide to repeal the Taiwan Relations Act, to adopt a strategy of containment of China, or alternatively to unilaterally withdraw its forces from Japan and Korea. By this view, stability equates with the absence of such defections. And the security dynamic consists of the complex interplay of decisions made in national capitals—often for largely domestic and thus perhaps unexpected reasons—about foreign and defense policy, in combination with catalytic events.

A fourth camp defines stability in primarily nuclear terms. This camp tends to emphasize the following aspects of the East Asian security environment. The end of the Cold War brought a draw-down of U.S. and Soviet/Russian nuclear forces in the region, but so too rising concern about the long-term nuclear prospect in Asia. This concern is driven by four factors. The first is the chronic failure of efforts to resolve the North Korean nuclear situation. The second is the nuclear tests in South Asia and the prospect of nuclear arms racing and crises there, with spillover effects to other subregions. The third is strategic modernization by China and the intersections of that effort with the nuclear programs of India and Russia and the ballistic missile defense program of the United States (and its East Asian allies). The fourth is the development of commercial nuclear fuel cycles in a number of Asian states, bringing with them both latent weapons capabilities and debates about the "true intentions" behind such programs. Growing concern about the viability of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and associated regimes has served as a reminder that the NPT closed the door on many nuclear programs and/or ambitions in the region. For this camp, stability is defined as the absence of new incentives for countries in the region to make adjustments to their strategic postures, defined as encompassing nuclear, latent nuclear, and non-nuclear military means. The security dynamic consists of the interplay of hedging behaviors.

These four camps emphasize different aspects of a single problem and thus there can be no easy choice among them. For purposes of this study, we have simply combined insights from the various perspectives to generate the following definitions.

For analytical purposes, East Asian strategic stability can be defined in terms of a balance that:

1. permits changing relations of power among the component parts without war;

2. reassures states that significant departures from the status quo are unlikely or at least predictable and can be managed so that they are not disruptive or particularly threatening;
3. enables progress toward more cooperative approaches to security; and
4. reassures them that they need not more aggressively hedge against unanticipated strategic developments.

The East Asian security dynamic is shaped fundamentally by:

1. uncertainty about U.S.-PRC relations;
2. the tension between an unstable balance of power and halting progress in creating overlapping multilateral institutions;
3. a lot of hedging behavior by states that conceive a possible future need for nuclear capabilities, whether new or (in the case of China) enhanced; and
4. the interaction of unresolved historical issues, global political and economic processes, and domestic political factors.

This survey encompassed views of both American and Asian experts. In our interactions with American experts, our inquiry was extended to explore the connections between stability and security. Here too we encountered a variety of opinions—strikingly so. The conventional wisdom holds that stability and security are common goods and that, from an American perspective, a more stable Asia makes America more secure. But this perspective is not shared by all. Some adhere to the view that stability is impossible in so dynamic a region, and America's job is to promote desirable change. Others adhere to the view that stability won at the price of U.S. insecurity is too expensive. Still others express the view that criticisms of U.S. initiatives as destabilizing—as, for example, on the BMD question—are merely the usual complaints of feckless allies and have no merit. The lack of consensus on the relationship between stability and security is an important finding of this investigation.

With this view of the Asian security environment, how can the United States best achieve the president's ambition to create a new framework for security and stability that reflects the realities of this environment? How can it shape the regional security dynamic in ways that promote stability—and desirable change? How can it facilitate the further reduction of existing nuclear risks in the region, while also shaping the environment so that new nuclear risks and threats do not emerge over the long term? Answers to these questions require a clearer view of those risks, which is the subject of the following section.

C. EAST ASIA'S NUCLEAR LANDSCAPE

Most overviews of the global nuclear proliferation problem point to only one important risk in East Asia—the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea).[4] This is far too simple a view of the East Asian nuclear landscape.

The advent of the nuclear era—as emphatically announced in 1945, of course, with the use of nuclear weapons by the United States *in* East Asia—brought with it a surge of interest in such weapons in the region. As noted above, the creation of the NPT led many states to curtail or at least redirect those interests. Working essentially North to South in an expansive definition of East Asia, the following summary reviews some essential features of nuclear history and potentiality.[5]

Nuclear Ambitions Past, Present, and Future?

South Korea: The Republic of Korea also has had a long-running interest in nuclear power generation and evidently occasional interest in nuclear weapons. It reportedly attempted to acquire nuclear weapons technologies prior to joining the NPT in 1975 and curtailed its weapons program in response to U.S. pressure.[6] It continues to have a strong interest in the development of an ability to reprocess some of its growing spent fuel stockpile, which could conceivably be diverted to weapons purposes. As an ally of the United States, it is the beneficiary of a nuclear-backed guarantee of its security.

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[4] Whether or not North Korea succeeded in acquiring a nuclear device or two, and its potential to exploit surreptitious reprocessing activities to assemble additional ones, is hotly debated, as is the possibility that compliance questions will ultimately be resolved through sustained political engagement. This paper does not review these matters, as they are well rehearsed elsewhere. For further on this topic see Michael Mazaar, *North Korea and the Bomb* (London: Macmillan, 1995); Ralph A. Cossa, *Monitoring the Agreed Framework: A Third Anniversary "Report Card"* (Honolulu, Hi.: Pacific Forum CSIS, October 1997); Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy With North Korea* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998); David Albright and Kevin O'Neill, eds., *Solving the North Korean Nuclear Puzzle* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Science and International Security, 2000); and Henry Sokolski, "Implementing the Korean Nuclear Deal: What U.S. Law Requires," Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, June 1, 2000.

[5] These country reviews and the following discussion of alternative futures draws heavily on a research paper on "Asian Nuclear Futures" originally prepared in 1998 with IDA internal support. Aspects of that paper were subsequently published externally as part of an essay on nuclear proliferation in Asia coauthored with a Chinese scholar. See Brad Roberts and Shen Dingli, "The Nuclear Equation in Asia," in Burkhard Schmitt, ed., *Nuclear Weapons: A New Great Debate,* Chaillot Paper 48 (Paris: Western European Union, 2001).

[6] See "Seoul Planned Nuclear Weapons Until 1991," *Jane's Defence Weekly,* April 2, 1994, p. 1; Selig Harrison's discussion of South Korea in "Japan and Nuclear Weapons," in Harrison, ed., *Japan's Nuclear Future: The Plutonium Debate and East Asian Security* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996), pp. 3-5; and Mack, *Proliferation in Northeast Asia*, pp. 19-23.

Wildcard—Reunified Korea: Looming on the horizon is another important nuclear question: the nuclear status of a reunified Korea. Whether in the next few years or the next decade or two, divided Korea seems likely to pass into some new status, whether federal, confederal, or formal unification under the constitution of the Republic of Korea (South Korea). Whatever its guise, evolution of the political structures on the peninsula would bring with it a very important question about the nuclear status of the successor entity. Would a reunified Korea seek to keep whatever nuclear weapons capabilities the North might have brought into being? Would it formally foreswear such weapons in perpetuity? How would its nuclear status dovetail with its security orientation: would it seek alignment with the United States, China, neutrality, full autonomy?

Japan: Japan is a non-nuclear party in good standing to the NPT and its nuclear energy infrastructure is subject to extensive inspections by the IAEA. In formal alliance with the United States, Japan's security is ultimately guaranteed by the U.S. nuclear umbrella (although U.S. nuclear weapons are not deployed there). Despite these facts, the risk that Japan might acquire nuclear weapons has long been whispered in Asia, along with the fear that it will rise again to seek military preeminence there. Japan's non-nuclear status dates to its experience as the only victim of nuclear attack and also to its anti-war constitution. In 1968, then-Prime Minister Sato offered a pledge on the floor of the Diet that "Japan will not manufacture or possess nuclear weapons or allow their introduction into this country," a pledge that was subsequently formalized in a resolution and which has been reaffirmed by each subsequent government.

But Japanese leaders have also had a difficult time dispelling doubts about Japan's true nuclear weapons intentions. At approximately the same time that Sato issued the "three no's," he commissioned a secret study to examine whether it would be possible and desirable for Japan to develop independent nuclear forces. Reportedly, the study concluded that such developments were undesirable but also that there were "no technical impediments" to such forces, especially given the accumulation of plutonium envisioned in Japan's civilian nuclear power program.[7] Sato himself is quoted as arguing privately less than three weeks after his Diet statement that "I do not regard it as a complete system of defense if we cannot possess nuclear weapons in the era of nuclear weapons." Two years later, Yasuhiro Nakasone, then director of Japan's Defense Agency and a future prime minister, argued in a White Paper that "in view of the danger of inviting adverse

[7] These and subsequent points are taken from Harrison, "Japan and Nuclear Weapons," pp. 3-44.

foreign reactions and large-scale foreign war, we will follow the policy of not acquiring nuclear weapons *at present*" [emphasis added].

The lack of full consensus on Japan's non-nuclear status may have been reflected in its tardiness in signing the NPT (it was one of the last important states to do so when the treaty originally opened for signature), its delay of six years in ratifying the treaty, and its original reluctance to embrace unconditional and indefinite extension of the NPT in the lead-up to the review and extension conference in 1995. To be sure, Japan's attitude toward the NPT has a great deal to do with the extensive commercial burdens it carries under IAEA safeguards (nearly one in four IAEA inspection hours is spent in Japan). Moreover, Tokyo became a strong supporter of NPT extension well before the conference itself. But to a certain extent, Japan's hesitations on the NPT reflected concerns about the treaty's efficacy in ensuring that the number and identity of nuclear weapon states would remain unchanged—a strong Japanese desire.

From a purely technical point of view, Japan is today the preeminent model of a state with a virtual weapons production capability.[8] It has a substantial nuclear energy sector generating a growing stockpile of plutonium (under full safeguards).[9] It also possesses the requisite engineering and scientific expertise to quickly assemble a nuclear arsenal.[10] And it has advanced missile systems and satellites in production for commercial purposes. These capabilities generate concerns in the region about Japan's potential future intentions, concerns that no amount of reassurance from Japanese politicians seem able to dispel. Little notice is taken, however, of the growing opposition to nuclear power in Japan as a result of its very high expense and a number of recent accidents.[11]

Taiwan: Leaders in Taipei have periodically hinted at nuclear weapons ambitions and occasional U.S. pressure has played a major role in inhibiting such ambitions. In 1995 President Lee Teng-hui acknowledged that Taiwan had planned to acquire nuclear weapons in the past and stated that "we should re-study the question from a long-term

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[8] Michael J. Mazaar, "Virtual Nuclear Arsenals," *Survival*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Autumn 1995).

[9] Motoya Kitamura, "Japan's Plutonium Program: A Proliferation Threat?" *Non-Proliferation Review*, (Winter 1996), pp. 1-16 and Eiichi Kahehara, "Japan's Plutonium Policy: Consequences for Nonproliferation," *Non-Proliferation Review* (Fall 1997).

[10] One indicator of this ability is the heavy use of supercomputers by Japanese facilities engaged in research on nuclear energy and physics. By one tally, at least eight supercomputers are in use. See http://www.netlib.org/benchmark/top500.html.

[11] Robert A. Manning, "PACATOM: Nuclear Cooperation in Asia," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Spring 1997), pp. 221-222.

point of view."[12] On this and other occasions, the United States reportedly has pressured Taiwan to refrain from seeking to acquire nuclear weapons and the requisite technologies and material[13] and on this occasion again President Lee responded with a promise not to pursue nuclear weapons.[14]

Taiwan's nuclear strategy has been described by Gerald Segal as one of "nervous and intense ambiguity."[15] It is a member of the NPT, despite its special international status (Beijing has sought to deny Taipei participation in most international venues). But Segal reports assertions by Taiwanese officials in summer 1998 that "existing weapons-grade materials could be weaponized in 3-4 months."[16] The quantities available must be sharply constrained by the fact that Taiwan possesses neither enrichment nor reprocessing facilities on a commercial scale. It has a substantial nuclear energy infrastructure and is thus accumulating significant quantities of spent fuel. It does not operate reprocessing or enrichment facilities necessary to generate weapons materials, but it has at times expressed an interest in having the same right to reprocess as Japan. Full-scope IAEA safeguards are applied in Taiwan (with Beijing's support), although it ceased to be a *de jure* member of the IAEA when Beijing took Taipei's place in the United Nations.

Indonesia: In 1964 and 1965, various statements were made by senior Indonesian officials, including President Sukarno, indicating that Indonesia would be acquiring nuclear weapons. Indonesia reportedly sought the assistance of a number of countries and may have taken steps to develop a test site. There also has been some speculation that Jakarta may have secured a Chinese commitment to test a Chinese device in Indonesian territory that Jakarta could call its own, plans that may have fallen apart with the coup and countercoup that eventually brought Suharto to power.[17] As the only country in

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[12] Alice Hung, "Taiwan: Taiwan Says It Will Study Need for Nuclear Arsenal," Reuters, July 28, 1995.

[13] David Albright and Corey Gay, "Taiwan: Nuclear Nightmare Avoided," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (January/February 1998); Mack, *Proliferation in Northeast Asia,* pp. 7-11; Garrity, "Nuclear Weapons and Asian-Pacific Security," p. 49; and Kent E. Calder, *Pacific Defense: Arms, Energy, and America's Future in Asia* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1996), p. 74 [also published as *Asia's Deadly Triangle: How Arms, Energy and Growth Threaten to Destabilize Asia Pacific* (London: Nicholas Brealey, 1996)].

[14] Cited in Joyce Liu, "Taiwan Won't Make Nuclear Weapons, Says President," Reuters, July 31, 1995.

[15] Gerald Segal, "Taiwan's Nuclear Card," *Asian Wall Street Journal*, August 4, 1998.

[16] As reported in ibid.

[17] The United States was concerned enough about the possibility that Secretary of State Dean Rusk brought it up with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko at a meeting in September 1965. See Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation during USSR Foreign Minister Gromyko's Dinner for Secretary Rusk, October 1, 1965, Foreign Relations of the United States 1964-1968, Vol. XI, p. 250. Further details taken

Southeast Asia with a nascent nuclear power industry, Indonesia is sometimes mentioned as a country of long-range nuclear weapons concern. The economic and political crisis has undoubtedly greatly forestalled the investments that would bring such capabilities into being.

Australia: Canberra was reportedly attempting to procure nuclear weapons from Britain in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and then moved to develop indigenous production capabilities before joining the NPT in 1972.[18] Concerns about possible Indonesian nuclear ambitions in the 1980s reportedly led to a debate within the Australian government on a recommendation to seek to "reach the threshold of being able to assemble nuclear weaponry…in the shortest possible time," for which contingency plans were allegedly developed, but not approved.[19]

The Major Power Overlay

China exploded its first nuclear device in October 1964; since then, it has invested steadily but comparatively modestly in its nuclear forces.[20] For nearly three decades, China's nuclear delivery means consisted almost exclusively of medium-range bombers and intermediate-range, liquid-fueled ballistic missiles, generally capable of striking Russia, most other Asia-Pacific states, and U.S. bases in the region.[21] It has slowly acquired a limited number of nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of

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from a chronology assembled by Jim Walsh of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the John F. Kennedy School of Government of Harvard University. See also Robert M. Cornejo, "When Sukarno Sought the Bomb: Indonesian Nuclear Aspirations in the Mid-1960s," Nonproliferation Review, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Summer 2000), pp. 31-43.

[18] Jim Walsh, "Surprise Down Under: The Secret History of Australia's Nuclear Ambitions," *Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Fall 1997), pp. 1-20. The article surveys newly released materials from the Australian National Archives.

[19] Andrew J. Mack, *Proliferation in Northeast Asia*, Occasional Paper No. 28 (Washington, D.C.: Henry L. Stimson Center, July 1996), p. 2.

[20] For an overview of China's nuclear history and modernization effort see Robert Manning, Ronald Montaperto, and Brad Roberts, *China, Nuclear Weapons, and Arms Control* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2000); John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *China Builds the Bomb* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998); Jonathan D. Pollack, "China as a Nuclear Power," in William H. Overholt, ed., *Asia's Nuclear Future* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1977), pp. 35-66; Chong-pin Lin, *China's Nuclear Weapons Strategy* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1988); Holly Porteous, "China's View of Strategic Weapons," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (March 1996), pp. 134-136; and Rodney W. Jones, "Principal Purchases and Recipient Countries—South Asia," in Andrew J. Pierre, ed., *Cascade of Arms* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution and World Peace Foundation, 1997), pp. 305-339.

[21] R. Norris, et al., *Nuclear Weapons Databook* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994) and Rodney W. Jones, et al., *Tracking Nuclear Proliferation* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1998), pp. 49-67.

striking the United States, and is reported to have deployed 18 or so such (liquid-fueled) missiles over the last couple of decades.[22] It has not publicly articulated a specific doctrine of nuclear deterrence vis-à-vis the United States, although there is a record of debate about nuclear deterrence in China.[23] It has long pledged not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. But it conditions this pledge with the proviso that this does not prohibit the first use of nuclear weapons on its own soil (although there is little evidence of a substantial stockpile of nuclear systems tailored for this purpose or of a doctrine for tactical nuclear fire support of ground forces).[24] This is read by some analysts to infer a willingness to use nuclear weapons to defeat an invasion, and by others to infer a willingness to use nuclear weapons to recover the 'renegade province' of Taiwan.

Today China is investing to expand its nuclear weapons infrastructure while also developing two new generations of advanced, solid-fuel ICBMs with multiple warheads, as well as a new ballistic missile submarine, in order to create a more flexible operational force. As then-Secretary of Defense William Perry observed in 1995, China "has the potential to increase the size and capability of its strategic nuclear arsenal significantly over the next decade."[25]

China has joined the formal nuclear nonproliferation regime in steps, beginning with the IAEA in the 1984 and continuing with formal accession to the NPT in 1992 and membership of the IAEA's Zangger Committee in 1997.[26] This represents a fundamental turnaround from its prior stated support of nuclear proliferation as a way to level out the

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[22] Walter Pincus, "U.S., China May Retarget Nuclear Weapons," *Washington Post,* June 16, 1998, p. A-10.

[23] Alistair Iain Johnston, "China's New 'Old Thinking': The Concept of Limited Deterrence," *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Winter 1995/96), pp. 5-42 and Johnston, "Prospects for Chinese Nuclear Force Modernization: Limited Deterrence Versus Multilateral Arms Control," *The China Quarterly* (June 1996), pp. 548-576. For a Chinese reply arguing that China is not moving toward limited deterrence, see Hongxun Hua, "China's Strategic Missile Programs: Limited Aims, Not 'Limited Deterrence'," *Non-Proliferation Review,* Vol. 5, No. 2 (Winter 1998), pp. 60-68. See also various chapters on China in John C. Hopkins and Weixing Hu, eds., *Strategic Views from the Second Tier: The Nuclear Weapons Policies of France, Britain, and China* (La Jolla, Calif.: University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, 1994); Litae Xue, "Evolution of China's Nuclear Strategy," in Hopkins and Hu, *Strategic Views from the Second Tier*, pp. 167-189; and Michael Pillsbury, ed., *Chinese Views of Future Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 1998).

[24] Ibid., plus Tai Ming Cheung, "The New Bomb Makers," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 16, 1989, pp. 26-28 and Bill Gertz, " China Adds 6 ICBMs to Arsenal" and "China Conducted Missile Test During Clinton Visit," *Washington Times*, July 21 and 22, 1998, respectively.

[25] Secretary of Defense William Perry, *Annual Report to the President and the Congress* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1995), p. 83.

[26] China has thus far declined to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group which, unlike the IAEA and NPT, is not based on treaties. China's aversion to cartel-like arrangements not founded in international helps also to explain its reluctance to join the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

distribution of power in the international system. Hopefully it also represents a reversal of its aid to Pakistan's nuclear weapons program.[27] China is also a signatory of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, although its eventual status in the CTBT regime is unclear in the wake of the October 1999 decision of the U.S. Senate not to offer its consent to U.S. ratification. Beijing had made its own ratification contingent on ratification by Washington. After signing the CTBT, it announced a moratorium on such tests.

Russia too is an Asian power. It shares the longest interstate border in the world with China—and one of the shortest with North Korea. Russia and Japan are maritime neighbors and express competing claims to sizeable island territories. During Soviet days, Moscow maintained a very large Asian military presence—including nuclear weapons. The nuclear reductions begun in cooperation with the United States have had an important impact on the disposition of Russian nuclear forces in East Asia. Reductions began with the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), which resulted in Soviet/Russian withdrawal of shorter- and intermediate-range land-based missiles from the region, many of which (including the SS-20 force) had been targeted against China and other East Asian states.[28] In 1991 and 1992, the Soviet Union, then Russia promised to take unilateral steps to withdraw most non-strategic nuclear forces from military units in the field, including naval vessels, into central storage. Although the United States promised and implemented parallel steps to withdraw such forces from the region, questions remain about Russia's actual progress.[29]

The United States is the final piece in this nuclear puzzle. With the end of the Cold War, the United States has undertaken a number of steps to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in Asia. These include formal and informal arms reduction agreements with the Soviet Union/Russia, as well as the efforts to secure a non-nuclear Korean peninsula, to promote Chinese participation in the nuclear nonproliferation effort, and to dissuade Taiwan from pursuing capabilities that could be used in a future weapons

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[27] China has committed itself to cooperate with Pakistan on peaceful nuclear transitions, subject to IAEA safeguards. It has also committed itself not to sell Pakistan nuclear technology (conforming to Zangger Committee guidelines) that is not under safeguards. China's September 1997 formalization of export control regulations largely conformed to the practices of the Nuclear Supplier Group states.

[28] Patrick J. Garrity, "Nuclear Weapons and Asian-Pacific Security: Issues, Trends, Uncertainties," *National Security Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Winter 1998), p. 60. See also R. Norris, et al., *Nuclear Weapons Databook*, Volume V (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994).

[29] Mack, *Proliferation in Northeast Asia*, p. 4; Joshua Handler, "Russia's Pacific Fleet—Problems with Nuclear Waste," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (March 1995), pp. 136-140; and Jones, *Tracking Nuclear Proliferation*.

program. Its alliance relationships with Japan and South Korea also are generally credited with having a positive nonproliferation impact, by dampening any incipient pressures to achieve an independent nuclear deterrent or to undertake provocative defense planning against one another—or by China against one or both.[30] And it has spear-headed the cooperative threat reduction initiative with Russia—fears of 'loose' Russian nuclear warheads, materials, and expertise are felt in Asia as in the transatlantic community.

IDA's FY00 study of nuclear multipolarity and stability described an emerging tripolarity among China, Russia, and the United States, as driven by China's strategic modernization, Russia's re-embrace of nuclear weapons after a period of de-emphasis, and the move to deploy ballistic missile defenses by the United States.[31] That tripolarity is evident in a geopolitical sense, in that there is an on-going process of balancing and "bandwagoning" that began in the Cold War, but grew muted in the era of intense superpower competition, but has reemerged in significant form today. But that tripolarity is also evident in a strategic sense, in that decisions in each capital about the necessary strategic posture are made with an eye on potential reactions in the other two. Beijing worries about the impact of U.S. BMD on the credibility of its own deterrent—and about possible Russian reactions to U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, including threatened reconstitution of intermediate-range nuclear forces, which would pose a direct threat to China. Moscow worries about how to elicit U.S. restraint while its own forces shrink for budgetary reasons—and about the need to hedge against a possible rapid Chinese build-up.[32] Washington worries about efforts by Moscow and Beijing, whether separately or in partnership, to deny it the benefits it seeks in limited defense.

From an Asian nuclear perspective, the central question about the impact of this tripolarity relates to China's choices. If China modernizes its strategic force in ways that keep it small but modern, and build up just enough to restore the credibility of its deterrent against a limited U.S. defense, then China's neighbors may not be too concerned. But China could seek other goals for its strategic forces as it modernizes, goals which would generate significant regional repercussions. It might, for example, seek a more overt form of regional missile dominance. Or it could state explicitly its desire to build something analogous to the French *force de frappe*—something large

[30] M. Lyall Breckon and Thomas J. Hirschfeld, *The Dynamics of Security in the Asia-Pacific Region,* CRM 95-172 (Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analyses, January 1996).

[31] Roberts, *Nuclear Multipolarity and Stability,* pp. 12-20.

[32] See Alexander A. Pikayev, "The Rise and Fall of START II: The Russian View," A Working Paper of the Carnegie Endowment Non-Proliferation Project, No. 6, September 1999.

enough to tear off the arm of any aggressor. Or it could seek to replace Russia as the world's second nuclear power.

Other Factors in the Asian Strategic Landscape

Neighboring subregions: This analysis has focused on East Asia and the major power overlay as a way to illuminate the complexities of the Asian nuclear landscape. The situation is in fact even more complex. Asia consists of multiple subregions, of which Northeast and Southeast Asia are but two. In South Asia, the nuclear capabilities of India and Pakistan were amply demonstrated by the tests in May 1998, and their future ambitions have emerged as a subject of much debate.[33] In Central Asia, it is important not to overlook the nuclear history and potential of the former republics of the Soviet Union. For decades, after all, they were integral parts of a state with a robust nuclear arsenal. One country in the region—Kazakhstan—had nuclear weapons based on its soil when it became independent, but cooperated in the removal of those vestiges of the Soviet arsenal to Russia, or in their dismantlement subject to the elimination procedures of the START I treaty. Some of these countries also have vestiges of the old Soviet infrastructure for biological and chemical warfare and for long-range missiles—potentially useful to them as a foundation upon which future capabilities might be constructed.[34]

These subregions are important not just because of the local nuclear questions but because of the potential spillover effects of nuclear developments in one region to another—and because they all neighbor China. An intensification of nuclear arms racing in South Asia, and obviously nuclear war there, would have repercussions for the security perceptions and nuclear hedging behaviors by others within reach of their delivery systems (and others as well). A renewal of nuclear interest in Central Asia would be seen in East Asia as signaling another significant loss for the nonproliferation regime. A breakdown of nuclear order in Northeast Asia would likely be felt in Southeast Asia, in the form of new pressures to resurrect former nuclear programs. And China, because of

[33] See for example the special issues of *Arms Control Today* (May 1998) and the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (July/August 1998), Jaswant Singh, "Against Nuclear Apartheid," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 5 (September/October 1998), pp. 41-52; Gregory S. Jones, *From Testing to Deploying Nuclear Forces: The Hard choices Facing India and Pakistan,* Issue Paper 192 (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2000); Sumit Ganguly, *Potential Indian Nuclear Forces Postures,* Cooperative Monitoring Center Occasional Paper 19 (Albuquerque, N.M.: Sandia National Laboratories, January 2001); Ashley J. Tellis, "India's Emerging Nuclear Doctrine: Exemplifying the Lessons of the Nuclear Revolution," National Bureau of Asian Research, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2001)

[34] *Nuclear Successor States of the Soviet Union: A Status Report on Nuclear Weapons, Fissile Materials, and Export Controls* (Washington, D.C.: Monterey Institute of International Studies and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 1998).

its central place in Asia, both geographically and politically, would feel the effects of nuclear developments in each of these subregions. And, in reverse, its own nuclear choices would have effects in the subregions.[35] Its nuclear relationship with India, for example, deserves more intense scrutiny by those wishing to understand Asian nuclear futures, as that relationship is being transformed with strategic modernization by both countries.[36]

This survey of the past and present of nuclear weapons in Asia points to a number of general conclusions.

First, nuclear weapons activities in Asia span the entire history of the nuclear era—from the 1940s to the present. Cold War confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States had a significant Asian dimension, with the deployment of large numbers of nuclear weapons and delivery systems in the region. The end of the Cold War caused the virtual disappearance of this dimension of the Asian nuclear dynamic. But the nuclear history in the region significantly transcends the U.S.-Soviet dimension.

Second, despite the current focus on the nuclear risks associated with North Korea, none of Asia's subregions is free of nuclear proliferation risks. Even Southeast Asia has seen some consideration and active pursuit of nuclear weapons capabilities.

Third, circumstances exist in Asia for dramatic shifts in the nuclear status quo. Having pursued nuclear weapons capabilities at one time or another, or having developed nuclear means of power generation, many states have the infrastructures and expertise that could be turned to the purpose of weapons production. Some have also taken steps to ensure their access to the necessary fissile materials.

In sum, there are a lot of nuclear dominoes that could fall in Asia. The existing distribution of nuclear weapons and capabilities—what might be termed the nuclear status quo—could be altered radically. Some states motivated to acquire new or improved capabilities could finally fulfill their ambitions. Other states with latent capabilities could move toward virtual programs and move up to the weaponization threshold. States that have foresworn nuclear weapons could reverse policy course. Yet others with little or no

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[35] The impacts of developments in China's nuclear posture on the regional subsystems, and the reverse dynamic, are explored in further detail in Roberts, *Nuclear Multipolarity and Stability*.

[36] See Vijai K. Nair, "The Chinese Threat: The Sword of Damocles Over India," unpublished paper (2001) and Ming Zhang, "India's Blasts and China's Reactions," remarks at a conference on the Impact of the South Asia Nuclear Crisis on the Non-Proliferation Regime, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, July 16, 1998. The full proceedings are available on the internet at the Endowment's website: www.ceip.org/programs/npp/sasia1.htm.

past interest in nuclear weapons could exploit a loosening market in technologies, materiel, and expertise to put together new programs—or perhaps simply to acquire weapons made elsewhere.

D. ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

What alternative paths can be conceived for the future of nuclear weapons in Asia? How might these various pieces of the puzzle interact to create different types of outcomes? In the usual policy debates, it is common to depict proliferation as an all-or-nothing proposition—either things continue to progress toward full implementation of global nuclear disarmament, or everything falls apart in a way that everyone ends up with nuclear weapons. In East Asia, the potential alternatives are more subtle.[37] This paper considers five alternatives. These are (1) piecemeal erosion of the existing nuclear order; (2) a wholesale collapse occasioned by widespread proliferation; (3) triangular nuclear reemphasis among the major powers; (4) preservation of the status quo; and (5) nuclear rollback.

(1) Piecemeal Erosion

Such erosion of the existing nuclear order would result from developments that take one or more countries toward nuclear weapons (or toward more of them, or more modern ones), but that are also largely decoupled from the larger Asian system. To be sure, any further nuclearization by an additional state would generate repercussions across the region—but in some cases those repercussions might be largely political in nature, whereas in others they might be more far-reaching. The focus here is on scenarios where nuclearization by a single state or two does not in and of itself elicit reactions by their neighbors to undertake dramatic departures from their own present nuclear practices. The possibilities of concern here are nuclear acquisition by North Korea and Taiwan. In both cases, it would seem that nuclear acquisition, while accompanied by real concern and fear in the region, would not necessarily lead to decisions by additional states in the region to acquire nuclear weapons.

In elaborating this "erosion" scenario, the focus is of course on East Asia. A comprehensive Asian view would require also some exploration of the possibilities for

[37] Alternative nuclear futures in Asia were the focus of a symposium at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu, Hawaii, on April 22, 2000, which included participants from all of the major interested countries. A summary is available at www.apcss.org/nuclear.

further erosion of the nuclear situation in South Asia that leads to heightened competition and risk, not just for states there, but others. But this is beyond the scope of this paper.[38]

(2) Wholesale Collapse

A second possible nuclear future in Asia is that nuclear anarchy would replace nuclear order in Asia. In this future, nuclear developments in individual countries would not be isolatable from the region more generally. If a reunified Korea were to acquire nuclear weapons status, for example, it is difficult to imagine that this would not generate intense pressure on Japan to match this development, as well as countering responses by China and perhaps Russia. Whether Japan would actually follow is much debated.[39] A decision to do so would be driven in part by an assessment that the United States mishandled Korean unification in a way that created a new threat to Japan and thus, whatever the credibility of America's extended deterrent to Japan, the political will would no longer exist to sustain the U.S.-Japan alliance. Given a constitution that inhibits a substantial military role and strong public opposition to nuclear weapons, Tokyo's abandonment of these principles would apparently require some fundamental alteration of Japanese domestic politics and/or of its international security environment.[40] The nuclear allergy remains strong in Japan. Public opinion is overwhelmingly opposed to nuclear weapons. Even right-wing nationalists do not posture themselves as nuclear hawks.[41]

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[38] Where might India and Pakistan head from here? They appear now to be at the proverbial fork in the road. Down one route is a series of steps associated with creating and deploying small nuclear forces, including perhaps both strategic and tactical weapons as well as multiple air, ground, and perhaps maritime delivery systems. Down the other fork lies a freeze on further development of their weapons and perhaps strategic posture, enhanced confidence-building measures, and some type of negotiated cap on nuclear dispositions, perhaps to include adherence to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a future Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. See Neil Joeck, *Maintaining Stability in South Asia* (London: Oxford University Press for IISS, 1997), Adelphi Paper No. 312; Ramesh Thakur, "Next to Subcontinent Face-off, Cold War Looks Safe," *International Herald Tribune,* July 20, 1998; Peter R. Lavoy, "South Asia's Nuclear Revolution: Has it Occurred Yet?" in Raju G.C. Thomas, ed., *The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime: Prospects for the 21st Century* (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1998), pp. 260-71, and Devin T. Hagerty, *The Consequences of Nuclear Proliferation: Lessons from South Asia* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998).

[39] Gerald Curtis, "Japanese Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy," unpublished paper delivered to the 39th annual conference of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 11-14 September, 1997, Singapore, p. 18. Henry Kissinger has argued that North Korean nuclearization would inevitably lead to Japanese nuclearization, whatever its relationship with the United States. See Kissinger, "Why America Can't Withdraw From Asia," *Washington Post*, June 5, 1993.

[40] Shinichi Ogawa, "U.S. Nuclear Forces and Japanese/Western Pacific Security," in Patrick J. Garrity and Steven A. Maaranen, eds., *Nuclear Weapons in the Changing World: Perspectives from Europe, Asia, and North America* (New York, N.Y.: Plenum Press, 1992), pp. 145-164.

[41] Many right-wing militarists in Japan are on the record as opposing movement to the nuclear option. See Calder, *Pacific Defense*, p. 79.

Moreover, the circumstances that would lead to a willingness in Washington to provide political and military cover to a nuclear weapons program in Japan are difficult to envision.[42]

Nuclear acquisition by Japan would certainly invite very substantial adverse foreign reactions. As discussed in further detail below, China would view such a development with dark misgivings. Memories of Imperial Japan's invasion of Manchuria and its butchery as an occupying force remain strong in China, as elsewhere in Asia.[43] Chinese leaders would assume that Japanese nuclear forces would have one primary target—China. Koreans too would view such developments with concern, whether as separate states or a reunified one, as Japanese-Korean relations remain overshadowed by the legacy of Japanese imperialism. There is also a potential military flashpoint between Japan and South Korea in the form of competing claims to the Takeshima/Tokto islands; an incident flared up sufficiently in February 1996 to lead to cancellation of a presidential summit between the two countries. Others in the region, ranging from Russia to Indonesia and perhaps Australia, would also be intensely uncomfortable with what a nuclear-armed Japan might mean for stability in Asia.

A second potential development that could lead to collapse of the existing nuclear order would be nuclear war over Taiwan. Were nuclear weapons to be used by one side or the other in an effort to reunify Taiwan and the mainland by force, proliferation incentives could be given a sharp boost. If Taiwan were successfully to use nuclear weapons in war to defeat invading forces or coerce Beijing into accepting a stalemate, observers in other countries could well conclude that the utility or necessity of such weapons had been "proven." Of course, a peaceful resolution of the conflict and clear continued international safeguarding of residual nuclear capabilities could have a positive impact on global nonproliferation prospects.

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[42] For additional discussion of Japan's nuclear options, see Matake Kamiya, "Will Japan go Nuclear? Myth and Reality," *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Autumn/Winter 1995) and Curtis, "Japanese Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy," p. 20. Valuable supplemental discussions of Japanese perspectives on nuclear security can be found in two unpublished papers: (1) Ryukichi Imai, "Japan's Nuclear Policy: Retrospective on the Immediate Past, Perspectives on the Twenty-First Century," a discussion paper prepared for a meeting on nuclear issues cosponsored by the Research Institute for Peace and Security of Japan and the Atlantic Council of the United States, Washington, D.C., March 22-26, 1998, and (2) Mike M. Mochizuki, "Japan's Nuclear Policy and Regional Security," a discussion paper prepared for the Center for National Security Studies of the Los Alamos National Laboratory, June 1994.

[43] Gerrit W. Gong, ed., *Remembering and Forgetting: The Legacy of War and Peace in East Asia* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1996).

A third factor in this equation of nuclear breakdown is the balance of power between China and the United States. A perception that the balance is breaking down would have significant repercussions for the nuclear question in East Asia. If, for example, Washington were to withdraw U.S. military forces from East Asia, many states would feel the need to find new counters to China's military influence and attempts at coercion. It seems not inconceivable that both Indonesia and Australia would cope with U.S. withdrawal from the region by resurrecting nuclear ambitions. Alternatively, if India or China (or Australia) were to deploy nuclear capabilities targeting Indonesia, Jakarta might opt to develop a deterrence posture of its own, whatever the U.S. role in the region.[44] Analysts in the region also speculate about the possibility that Southeast Asia would emerge as a zone of competition for nuclear influence between China and India.

(3) Triangular Re-emphasis

A third possible future in Asia is that proliferation pressures within the subregions will not give rise to new nuclear states, but instead, the former nuclear stand-off between the two superpowers will be succeeded by a new nuclear stand-off in Asia among the three major nuclear powers—China, Russia, and the United States. This would require some retrenchment of relations among the major powers in a way that reverses the U.S.-Russian nuclear de-emphasis and reductions process, or that convinces China that it must substantially expand its arsenal rather than join the reductions process. Conflict in Central Asia could erode the present, fragile Russian-Chinese amity. A souring of relations between the United States and China could increase Chinese interest in enhancing the viability of its nuclear arsenal, while also fueling arguments in the United States that China must be deterred. Such a souring would make less likely the cooperation on North Korea, Taiwan, and nuclear nonproliferation and transparency that is essential to preventing those issues from generating proliferation pressures.

(4) Nuclear Status Quo

Contrary to the expectations of many, the old status quo in Asia prevailed for a very long time—until nuclear acquisition by India and Pakistan. President John F. Kennedy's prediction of 30 or more nuclear powers within a couple of decades did not come to pass. Thus there is at least a conceivable possibility that the new status quo will long survive as well. Under this scenario, restraint would continue to prevail among the

[44] John B. Haseman, "Indonesia's Security Strategy in the Post-Cold War Era," unpublished paper for the Los Alamos National Laboratory, June 1994. See also Garrity, "Nuclear Weapons and Asia-Pacific Security," p. 74, footnote 38.

major powers, the new nuclear powers would refrain from the further development of their nuclear capabilities, and none of the other countries of concern would see it as necessary or find it possible to acquire nuclear weapons.

An aspect of the status quo that has received little attention so far is the widening gap between the number of countries capable, from a technical point of view, of producing nuclear weapons, and the number actually doing so. The latent capabilities much commented upon in the discussion of Japan's 'virtual arsenal' are in fact increasingly common in the region. We can only speculate about the extent to which such latent capabilities are actually being pursued in the region as a hedge against the breakdown of the current security order and with surreptitious progress in developing rapid break-out capabilities. With the diffusion of nuclear energy through the region, the growing trade in nuclear technologies and materials, and the increasing availability of nuclear weapons expertise globally, the region as a whole is in transition to a time when most if not all states will have a latent capability to construct a nuclear arsenal—and some in a very short period of time. That time may not be very far in the future. Especially if a plutonium-based energy economy takes hold in the region, the potential for a rapid proliferation of nuclear weapons would be much enhanced. By one count, civilian nuclear power programs in the region could produce a total of between 455 and 621 tons of plutonium by 2020.[45]

This latency phenomenon is visible not just in the nuclear domain, but also in the chemical, biological, and missile domains. Quite a few states in the region have military programs and/or capabilities in these areas. Certainly, the number of states with arsenals of such weapons is far smaller than the number of states with the scientific and technical expertise to build them.[46] Moreover, unlike the nuclear domain, where access to special nuclear materials may not be possible for all countries, the raw materials for chemical

[45] The higher number represents the total tonnage produced if all current nuclear power development programs are fully realized. The lower number represents tonnage produced by current power plants, and additional ones for which contracts have been signed. David Von Hippel and Peter Hayes, "Two Scenarios of Nuclear Power and Nuclear Waste Production in Northeast Asia," presentation to a working group meeting of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, Washington, D.C., May 1997. See also Victor Gilinsky and Hiroyoshi Kurihara, "Reactor Grade Plutonium: The Debate Over Its Military Potential," in Harrison, ed., *Japan's Nuclear Future*, pp. 74-83.

[46] U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, *Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Assessing the Risks*, OTA-ISC-559 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1993) and *Technologies Underlying Weapons of Mass Destruction,*OTA-BP-ISA-115 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1993). See also *Proliferation: Threat and Response*, Office of the Secretary of Defense, November 1997, and Brad Roberts, *Biological Weapons Proliferation in Asia* (Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, 1999).

and biological weapons are readily available and widely used for legitimate commercial and public health purposes.

In short, the status quo holds risks of its own.

(5) Rollback

A final viable alternative in Asia is that nuclear restraint will be embraced by a larger number of actors with more far-reaching results. It is at least conceivable that the negotiations with North Korea could finally reach a point that the international community satisfies itself that nuclear risks there are gone. Or Korea could reunify in a way that removes the nuclear question. China too might opt for more far-reaching restraint. Instead of continuing as the only NPT-recognized nuclear weapon state engaged in a build-up, it might opt to freeze its current activities and undertake new obligations to reduce those forces concurrent with reductions by the other nuclear weapon states. Peaceful resolution of the Taiwan Strait conflict is not out of the question.

In this scenario, deep nuclear reductions by the United States and Russia, in conjunction with these other factors, could significantly ameliorate the proliferation incentives born of a fear that the future holds a highly competitive and dangerous period of intense nuclear realignment.

This review of alternative nuclear futures illuminates the types of defections from current nuclear security practices that are possible in East Asia, and the types of stability consequences they might have. This analysis has also illustrated two other factors. One is the hedging behaviors clearly present in Northeast Asia as in the region more generally. The other is the tension between an unstable balance of power and the disappointing progress in creating multilateral institutions for security management.

E. REDUCING LONG-TERM RISKS

Let us return to the key strategy questions posed at the opening of this paper: How can the United States shape the regional security dynamic in ways that promote stability? How can it facilitate the continued reduction of existing nuclear threats in the region and shape the environment so that new nuclear risks do not emerge over the long term? Historically, the United States has pursued two separate but complementary paths toward these ends. On the one hand, through its foreign and security policies it has sought to shape the regional security dynamic so as to minimize the pressures for states in the region to acquire nuclear weapons. On the other hand, it has sought to address nuclear

proliferation challenges with policy tools specifically crafted for that purpose. In short, it has promoted regional security and nuclear nonproliferation. Early policy decisions of the Bush administration can be interpreted as significant departures in U.S. strategy. This is of course a reminder that U.S. policy has been marked over the decades by elements of continuity and change in both its regional security and nonproliferation strategies.

On regional security, the central principles of U.S. strategy have become well defined over nearly six decades of post-World War II engagement. First, Washington seeks to maintain strong alliance relations in East Asia (it has five formal allies there—Japan, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, and Australia—and one former ally and close friend, Taiwan). By providing defense guarantees to these countries and extending a nuclear umbrella where necessary, these relations have helped dampen nuclear proliferation incentives for these countries. Second, Washington seeks to contain threats to the peace where possible and confront and defeat them where necessary, as for example in Korea. By responding to such threats, the United States enables states in the region to worry less about defense and focus more on internal developmental needs. Third, Washington seeks to maintain a balance of power with China. By doing so, it again frees others in East Asia from the need to worry about how to perform that balancing role. Fourth, it seeks to promote political-economic reform, modernization, and integration. By doing so, it hopes to overcome the traditional sources of conflict in the region and thereby ease demands for nuclear-based security.

The Bush administration has signaled the key elements of its East Asian regional security strategy.[47] It seeks to rejuvenate alliances in the region, with Japan as "the primary essentiality." Its commitment to bilateral relations in the region is promised not to come at the expense of multilateral engagement, whether in the security, economic, or political realm. It promises to treat China "in a straightforward fashion"—with respect but not excessive deference, and not as a partner in all things. It plans to increase support for Taiwan and to increase attention to Southeast Asia.

[47] Much of the following is taken from not-for-attribution briefings by administration figures—and from their Senate confirmation testimony. See also Kurt M. Campbell and Mitchell B. Reiss, "Korean Changes, Asian Challenges, and the U.S. Role," *Survival,* Vol. 43, No. 1 (Spring 2001) and Donald Rumsfeld, "Strategic Imperatives in East Asia," Fourth Annual B.C. Lee Lecture, Heritage Foundation, March 3, 1998. It should also be noted that a very broad spectrum of views exist within the administration on Asian policy, and especially on China, and there are some who argue for historically quite significant departures in U.S. policy. Whether those voices will gain the upper hand on any particular issue cannot be predicted.

On nonproliferation, the central principles of U.S. strategy have also become well defined over many decades of effort. Washington has traditionally led the effort to create and implement a global treaty regime controlling weapons of mass destruction. This includes both the treaties themselves (NPT, Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, and Chemical Weapons Convention), but also the various ad hoc support activities, including the Nuclear Supplier Group, Zangger Committee, Australia Group, Missile Technology Control Regime, etc. Within the region, Washington has supported the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in both Southeast Asia and the South Pacific. Washington has also sought to pursue an arms control strategy at the major power level that complements these global treaty regimes. Since the end of the Cold War, this effort has focused on reposturing and drawing down U.S. and Russian forces so as to minimize the risks of renewed confrontation—while also addressing the risk of "loose nukes."

The Bush administration also has signaled some key elements of its approach. The administration has stated its commitment to the nonproliferation regime and, as its review of policy toward North Korea suggests, intends to pursue tailored strategies to address and possibly reverse the proliferation behaviors of specific states. But its initial signals on the depth of its commitment to formal arms control generally, and to cooperative threat reduction specifically, have been mixed. And it has underscored its unwillingness to implement the undertakings of prior administrations at treaty review conferences to strengthen the treaty regime, including, for example, the CTBT and the compliance protocol as negotiated for the BWC.

The most important discontinuities evident in the transition from the Clinton to Bush administrations are obviously in the strategic realm. The president has spoken about a new security paradigm for a new strategic era.[48] The Bush administration's commitment to move forward as early as possible with ballistic missile defense deployments is unambiguous. So too is its commitment to make deep cuts in the U.S. nuclear arsenal—and to do so unilaterally if necessary. Its commitment to move away from the ABM Treaty and perhaps from the arms control treaty process more generally as a tool for promoting strategic stability also seems unmistakable.

As the Bush administration proceeds with these initiatives, how might a view of the challenges of stability and security in East Asia inform its choices about how to proceed? How might the strategic initiatives of the administration complement, reinforce,

[48] From a statement of the emerging consensus within the Bush administration about BMD, offensive reductions, and arms control, as released on July 11, 2001. See "Administration Missile Defense Papers" released by the White House on that date.

or potentially conflict with the long-standing tenets of U.S. strategy vis-à-vis the regional security and proliferation challenges?[49] More specifically, how can it move to implement its new strategic paradigm in a way that promotes a balance of power that meets the requirements noted above—that permits shifts in the balance without war, that reassures states that significant departures from the status quo are unlikely or at least predictable, that enables progress toward more cooperative approaches to security, and that reassures them that they need not more aggressively hedge against unanticipated strategic developments? How can it do so without stoking uncertainty about the drift of U.S.-PRC relations? How can it craft its policies so as to shape the nuclear future of Asia in ways that reduce long-term nuclear risks and threats within the region, to U.S. interests there, and to the United States itself?

F. THE IMPACT OF U.S. STRATEGIC INITIATIVES ON ASIA

To frame this assessment, it is useful to draw on the review of alternative long-term nuclear futures in Asia to sketch out best- and worst-case scenarios. The central question here is how might the new U.S. paradigm—and especially the move to deploy ballistic missile defenses—shape the Asian security environment?[50] In general, this question has been of more interest to Asian than to American experts, who have instead focused primarily on the impact of such defenses on the evolving U.S.-Russian strategic relationship, on the emerging strategic relationships with missile-armed rogues, and on the "linkage" of the United States to its allies, primarily those in Europe. Asia has figured little in this debate, except to the extent that North Korea happens to be located there.[51]

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[49] Ibid. Useful insights into the perspectives informing new policy initiatives can also be found in a document prepared in 2000 by many of the individuals now serving in policymaking positions. See *Rationale and Requirements for Nuclear Forces and Arms Control* (Fairfax, Va.: National Institute for Public Policy, 2001).

[50] An earlier version of the arguments in this section was presented as a discussion paper at a January 2001 conference in Delhi, India on "Toward a New Asia," sponsored by the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, and is being published in their conference proceedings. A revised version of that discussion paper is also being published in Jasjit Singh, ed., *Toward a New Asia* (Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, forthcoming).

[51] This argument is treated with some skepticism in Asia. Perhaps the best evidence to support this contention is the detailed public case for NMD made in November 1999 by the Clinton administration's Pentagon point-man on NMD, Undersecretary of Defense Walter Slocombe, which makes no mention of China and has virtually no references to Asia. The text of his remarks can be found at http://www.csis.org/html/sf991105Slocombe.html. For exceptions to this general proposition, see Joseph Cirincione, "The Asian Nuclear Chain Reaction," *Foreign Policy* (Spring 2000); John Rhinelander, "Missile Defense and East Asia," *Pugwash Online*, Workshop 261, at http://www.pugswash.org/reports; and John Berry, "U.S. National Missile Defense: Views from Asia," Center for Defense Information Issue Brief (2001).

The Notional Best Case

There is a strong argument that BMD will contribute positively to stability and security in Asia. BMD is aimed at ensuring that regional aggressors, made newly powerful and ambitious by their acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (and especially nuclear weapons), are not able to achieve a relationship with the United States analogous to the relationship of mutual deterrence that prevailed between the United States and Soviet Union. Such mutual deterrence relationships with the rogues could be quite destabilizing.

If rogue state leaders are able to prevent international responses to their acts of aggression or, failing that, can induce the leaders of those efforts to sue for peace on terms short of optimal from the point of view of regional security, then dangerous new precedents would have been established in the international system. If the existence of such defenses helps to shape such a confrontation in ways that teach "the right lessons" about WMD aggression and the value of nuclear weapons, etc., then BMD will have contributed something quite substantial to stability in an era defined in part by WMD proliferation. The "wrong answer" would entail the successful use of such weapons for aggression or a backing down by the United States and/or the United Nations Security Council in the face of nuclear threats by a rogue state. The "right answer" would entail being able to reverse the aggression and to achieve the war aims deemed politically necessary by the international community.[52] In this sense, one of the most important potential benefits of BMD may never be demonstrated, as it would take an act of aggression by a risk-taking leader to set in motion the chain of events that could make the real impact of BMD clear.

Another value of BMD would be to reduce reliance on US nuclear threats or actual attacks to achieve these results. In the absence of defenses, the United States may find itself increasingly emphasizing its nuclear weapons to dissuade, deter, and potentially retaliate for acts of aggression by states armed with weapons of mass destruction. It is difficult to see a broadening of such reliance as desirable at a time when the United States and the world community more generally are trying to reduce the perceived appeal of nuclear weapons, to cut nuclear arsenals, and to reduce Cold War-vintage nuclear risks.

[52] For more on the difference between "right" and "wrong" answers to the future wars of WMD aggression, see Victor Utgoff, ed., *The Coming Crisis: Nuclear Proliferation, U.S. Interests, and World Order* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press).

Another value of BMD would be to reduce the costs imposed in the event deterrence fails on those who step forward in a collective defense effort to redress the aggression.

BMD also promises an important value in terms of the reassurance of U.S. allies. Facing the prospect of threats and attempted coercion by neighboring nuclear-armed states, such allies might worry about the credibility of U.S. guarantees in the face of the ability of leaders of those states to threaten intercontinental nuclear attack on the United States. This would be an Asian analogue to the extended deterrence and "coupling" problems that so complicated relationships between the United States and its NATO allies during the Cold War. Indeed, such concerns have been expressed.[53] This potential reassurance value of BMD is intangible and thus difficult to quantify.

In this best-case scenario, defensive systems deployed in East Asia may have additional benefits for security and stability. If deployed to Japan, such defenses could serve as a substitute for reliance on offensive responses to a deterioration in Japan's security environment, whether North Korea's development of further means to strike Japan or China's further modernization of its theater nuclear systems posing a threat to Japan. Visible reliance by Japan on missile defenses could help to allay long-simmering regional concerns about Japan's potential nuclear ambitions.

If deployed to Taiwan, such defenses could serve to counter the build-up of short- and medium-range ballistic missiles across the Taiwan strait, now moving at impressive speed.[54] This could diminish Beijing's confidence in its ability to use military means to coerce concessions from Taipei that neither it nor Washington would like to see. That lack of confidence would thus reduce the risks of military confrontation over the Taiwan strait. Prolonging the current stalemate could serve the ultimate goal of peaceful resolution of the cross-strait issue by allowing economic interactions between Taiwan and the mainland to develop more fully—and with them, changes to the political situation. Prolonging the current stalemate would also mean that U.S.-PRC relations are not disrupted by armed confrontation—a fact that should pay dividends across the bilateral agenda.

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[53] Evan S. Medeiros, rapporteur, *Ballistic Missile Defense and Northeast Asian Security: Views from Washington, Beijing, and Tokyo* (Monterey, Calif.: Stanley Foundation and Center for Nonproliferation Studies of the Monterey Institute of International Studies, April 2001).

[54] Bruce Dorminey, "Chinese Missiles Basic to New Strategy," *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, March 8, 1999, p. 59. See also "The Security Situation in the Taiwan Strait," Report to Congress Pursuant to the FY99 Appropriations Bill, Department of Defense, February 26, 1999, and Bill Gertz, "China Targets Taiwan With 2nd Missile Base," *Washington Times*, December 8, 1999, p. A-1.

One American analyst has argued further on the reassurance value of defenses for U.S. friends and allies debating the virtue of stronger offenses:

> "Currently South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan are moving toward the development of a deterrent by punishment capabilities. Such a development could undermine U.S. nonproliferation interests in East Asia and beyond. As a result of this development, U.S. policymakers have begun to consider providing these three regional actors with missile defense which would provide a deterrence-by-denial capability."[55]

And defensive systems deployed to protect U.S. forces in the region and the U.S. homeland should enhance the ability and willingness of the U.S. public to sustain the basic power projection strategy into the region. U.S. military engagement in East Asia is fundamental to preservation of the balance of power there, especially at a time of rising Chinese wealth and ambition. Ballistic missile defense deployments—including both those in theater and those to protect the homeland—would have a potentially positive impact on the long-simmering debate about how long America will remain engaged in the defense of its interests in Asia and retain a military presence in the region that many value as preventing the reemergence of a more perverse balance of power politics in East Asia particularly. Missile defense deployments would deepen U.S. military relations with its allies in East Asia and send the message that Washington is serious when it says that it intends to remain in Asia for as long as its Asian allies wish it to do so. This is part of the reason that those seeking an eventual U.S. withdrawal from the region press vigorously against U.S. defenses.

In short, in the best case, ballistic missile defenses will help to prevent rogue proliferation from changing the rules of the game in Asia with new acts of aggression, to reinforce the credibility of U.S. security guarantees and extended deterrence, to reassure U.S. allies, to dampen proliferation pressures (especially among U.S. friends and allies), to reinforce the effort to reduce nuclear risks, and to maintain a forward military presence in Asia and thus the balance of power there.

In this notional best case, the United States and its friends and allies in Asia are able to enjoy all of these benefits of ballistic missile defense without having generated counters at the major power level—in the strategic postures and foreign policies of China and Russia (and to a certain extent India)—that would undermine these benefits. U.S. initiatives succeed in this best case in shaping Asia in ways that roll back existing nuclear

[55] David R. Tanks, "Theater Missile Defense and East Asia," in *Theater Missile Defense and U.S. Foreign Policy Interests in Asia,"* Special Report (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2000).

risks and challenges in the region or at least preserve the status quo, in the sense that no dramatic new nuclear factors emerge in the Asian nuclear equation, such as new nuclear states or major changes in relations among existing nuclear states.

In this best-case scenario, that shaping function occurs as a result of the benefits associated with U.S. initiatives. The recipients of extended U.S. security guarantees are not motivated to acquire WMD deterrents of their own. China modernizes its forces in ways that do not generate new nuclear fears or pressures for significant responses by its neighbors or the United States—and it comes into full compliance with its existing treaty obligations. Risk reduction with Russia continues to pay dividends in the region, through the safe dismantling of existing capabilities and tight controls on materials, technology, and expertise. The process on the Korean peninsula leads to a political accommodation that itself leads to confederation or more, and ultimate NBC disarmament (and confirmation thereof). And no flashpoint erupts because U.S. strategies are successful in dissuading and/or deterring challengers.

The Notional Worst Case

An important marker in the debate about best and worst case was set down by the U.S. intelligence community in a review as reported in the press in summer 2000.[56] The community's National Intelligence Estimate reportedly included—after extended internal debate—an assessment that BMD would accelerate and expand strategic modernization by China, generating roughly an order of magnitude increase in the number of deployed warheads capable of striking U.S. targets. This, reportedly went the argument, would lead India to a sharp build-up of its forces, with the necessary reply by Pakistan. Separate analysis argued that the Indian build-up would result from a "tipping" of the debate between so-called moderates and hard-liners in Delhi, in response to the presumed end of both bilateral US-Russian and multilateral arms control.[57]

This view of tit-for-tat build-ups is certainly alarming. But it also seems superficial in its focus on quantitative factors. What about qualitative ones? If and as the number of nuclear weapons in Asia increases, what should be made of the new types of

[56] Roberto Suro, "Study Sees Possible China Nuclear Buildup," *Washington Post*, August 10, 2000, p. 2; Bob Drogin and Tyler Marshall, "Missile Shield Analysis Warns of Arms Buildup," *Los Angeles Times*, May 19, 2000; Steven Lee Myers, "U.S. Missile Plan Could Reportedly Provoke China," *New York Times*, August 10, 2000.

[57] Gaurav Kampani, "How a US National Missile Defense Will Affect South Asia," a Report of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute for International Studies, May 2000. Available at http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/reports/usmsla.htr.

capabilities that are fielded? This is likely to matter at least as much as the numbers. For example:

- As China modernizes its forces, it will also change the character of those forces. Its increasing reliance on mobile land- and sea-based systems will change the operational characteristics of its force and raise questions about whether it is moving in the direction of nuclear war-fighting strategies and counter-force style mission planning.
- As India develops and fields a nuclear force, improving capabilities will bring with them improved range and increased destructive potential (especially if its arsenal comes to include thermonuclear warheads). How might Delhi think about the requirements of stable deterrence vis-à-vis a China that is growing relatively more nuclear capable? How might India's new nuclear forces be postured (on a rail-based Agni II in the Himalayas?), and to what extent would thermonuclear weapons be seen as a necessary counter to numerical Chinese superiority? What impact would the development of such capabilities have on India's own strategic doctrine?[58]
- And what about Russia? What if Russia's response to BMD is, indeed, as it has threatened, to abandon its obligations on the treaty on Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF)? Might it seek to reconstitute an INF force as a way to compensate for the military imbalance wrought by the demilitarization of the Sino-Russian border? Or might it simply abandon the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives, with the result that the draw-down of its forces in Asia stops? What counters would these Russian actions generate in China's strategic posture?

These questions are raised for the simple purpose of illustrating the fact that the issues associated with nuclear force modernization are oversimplified when they are reduced to a question of numbers. U.S. BMD may generate nuclear build-ups in Asia, as the NIE suggests, but the stability concerns generated by such build-ups would derive as much from the types of forces that are constructed and fielded as their raw numbers.

By looking beyond quantitative to qualitative factors, a broader view of the *potential* negative consequences of BMD comes into focus.

First, as already argued, it is possible that the United States and China will fall into a defense/offense arms race. China seems poised to do what it must to at last attain the credible retaliatory force it has long sought, whatever bar the U.S. sets with its BMD.

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[58] See Gregory S. Jones, *From Testing to Deploying Nuclear Forces: The Hard Choices Facing India and Pakistan,* RAND Issue Paper 192 (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2000); Ashley J. Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Doctrine: Exemplifying the Lessons of the Nuclear Revolution*, National Bureau of Asian Research, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2001); and Sumit Ganguly, *Potential Indian Nuclear Forces Postures,* Cooperative Monitoring Center Occasional Paper No. 19 (Albuquerque, N.M.: Sandia National Laboratories, 2001).

If Washington chooses to respond in a way that seeks to deny China that type of strategic relationship, then some type of competitive offense/defense "race" appears in the offing. After all, for Beijing it appears intolerable to accept the loss of face associated with the further loss of credibility of its deterrent, especially at a time of such deep concern about America in its unipolar moment, and what Beijing apparently fears is a rising likelihood of nuclear blackmail by Washington.[59]

Such an arms race would have far-reaching consequences, and not just in the bean-counting world. In both countries it would consolidate the enemy image of the other; it would probably help to settle China's debate about whether the future will bring a cooperative order or containment and confrontation. In East Asia, such a souring of US-PRC relations would be especially unwelcome, as America's allies there do not want to be enlisted in an overt and vociferous strategy of containment, just as America's allies in Europe did not want to be enlisted too conspicuously—if at all—into the Reagan administration's crusade against the Evil Empire.[60]

Second, if Washington's BMD choices (perhaps in combination with other policy choices; for example, a harder line on defense of Taiwan) lead to a further falling out in U.S.-PRC relations, China could well take actions outside the realm of nuclear forces and their disposition. Two lengthy quotations from China's disarmament ambassador, Sha Zukang, can help us to understand these possibilities.

> "The NMD program…is designed to gain unilateral strategic superiority by building US security on the insecurity of others. This will undoubtedly undercut the basis for its cooperation with relevant countries. How can you expect progress in [the] arms control field while you yourself are developing NMD at full speed? It's just wishful thinking."[61]

> "The NMD programme will most definitely be challenged by other countries and is bound to adversely effect the realisation of other objectives within the United States' well-calculated strategy. As the saying goes, 'you can't have your cake and eat it'….China, *inter alia*, may be forced to review the arms control and non-proliferation policies it has adopted since the end of the Cold

[59] Brad Roberts, "China," in James J. Wirtz and Jeffrey A. Larsen, editors, *Rocket's Red Glare: Ballistic Missile Defense and Strategic Stability: Consequences for the ABM Treaty* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2001). See also Roberts, *China-U.S. Nuclear Relations: What Relationship Best Serves U.S. Interests?* (Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, forthcoming).

[60] Michael Richardson, "Asia-Pacific Fears Arms Race From Bush Policies Toward China," *International Herald Tribune,* January 25, 2001.

[61] From introductory remarks by Ambassador Sha to *The Second US-China Conference on Arms Control, Disarmament, and Nonproliferation,* sponsored by the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, May 1999.

> War in light of new developments in the international situation….Over the decade since the end of the Cold War the international community has achieved remarkable progress in stemming the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery. The basic reason for such progress lies in the relative stability of the global and regional security environments, as well as the willingness of the countries concerned to resolve problems through dialogue instead of confrontation. If the United States is genuinely concerned, as it claims, about the threat to its security caused by the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery, the right thing to do would be to abandon its hegemonic mentality and behaviour, respect the legitimate security interests of other countries, strengthen international cooperation and dialogue, and shore up—and where possible build on—the international arms control and non-proliferation regime. The development and deployment of NMD and TMD systems may be able to psychologically and temporarily satisfy some people's anxiety for absolute security, but it will do little to reduce the threat of WMD and their means of delivery. Furthermore, by disrupting the global strategic balance and stability, it will destroy the basis for any progress in the field of arms control and non-proliferation, and in the end adversely affect the security interests of all countries, including the United States."[62]

How might this manifest itself? Beijing could cease to cooperate in promoting regional restraint by countries in the Middle East, South Asia, and even North Korea. It could take a more obstructionist role, frustrating U.S. efforts at the United Nations Security Council and trying to construct international political coalitions against U.S. initiatives. It could adopt a more critical attitude toward the long-term functioning of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and opt to play a far more negative role in the 2005 review conference. Worse yet, it could reopen the export taps and resume past assistance to its clients, or even expand such aid to a larger number of recipients, with the shipment of sensitive technologies associated with the production of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and their missile delivery means. It is also possible that China might opt to export to the so-called rogue states the technologies and expertise necessary to counter and penetrate the ballistic missile defenses being constructed by the United States.

Third, if it turns out that Washington formally withdraws from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and then Washington and Moscow cannot find a framework for continued cooperation in the offense/defense realm, many in Asia seem prepared to conclude that

[62] Sha Zukang, "US Missile Defence Plans: China's View," *Disarmament Diplomacy*, January/February 2000, pp. 4-6. Similar remarks were offered by He Yafei, minister-counselor at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China to the United States, in a presentation to the Carnegie International Non-Proliferation Conference, March 16, 2000.

the era of bilateral and even multilateral arms control will have come to an end. If arms control comes to be seen as a vestige of the Cold War and not as an component of an emerging cooperative security order, new pressures will come into being for states to develop more advanced hedges and perhaps to translate latent weapons capability into actual deployed systems. As argued above, the nuclear potential and ambitions of Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan, among others, remains a topic of substantial interest in Asia, and their nuclear choices will do much to shape Asia over the long term. Moreover, many would believe it urgent to respond in some fashion to the perception of America as a rogue hegemon, exploiting its moment of preeminence to escape the bonds of negotiated restraint and to gain freedom of maneuver above the international laws and balance of power that it has worked so hard to create. This could have the effect of fracturing U.S. alliances in East Asia (and Europe), thereby leading to new proliferation pressures as well as an entirely new dynamic among the major powers. Among those most heavily invested in arms control as an essential element of security is of course Japan.

Fourth, a U.S. decision to proceed with global defenses that protect forces, allies, and friends in East Asia as well as the U.S. homeland could have a profoundly disturbing effect on thinking in Beijing about its policies toward Taiwan. Rather than calming down the Taiwan issue, as envisaged in the best case scenario, BMD might heat it up. In a worst case situation, decision-makers in Beijing would conclude that they must attempt a military solution to the challenge of Taiwan before U.S. missile defenses are operational and their leverage over both Taipei and Washington is thus reduced. This could bring military confrontation—under the nuclear shadow.

Fifth, it is possible that U.S. defensive deployments could precipitate a broader proliferation of ballistic missile defenses. Little attention has been given to this possibility. Many BMD supporters generally seem of the view that BMD might be shared with others, on the argument that a defense-dominant regime for all would be good for all. But some limited BMD acquisition by China or the rogues would be seen as unwelcome by some in Washington, on the argument that such defenses would increase Beijing's willingness to take risks in a military confrontation with the United States. The competitive pursuit of such defenses in the region would have unanticipated and potentially destabilizing implications for military balances there. In China particularly there are concerns about whether renewed Russian interest in advanced defenses (as driven by the United States) might lead to the sale of such defenses to India. Chinese experts are also keenly interested in improving Indian air defense capabilities,

development efforts of the indigenous Akash and Russian RF-S300 systems, and efforts to import Israeli technologies. Furthermore, given the fact that conventionally-tipped anti-missile missiles are extremely difficult even for the United States to build, it seems possible that those in Asia seeking new defensive capabilities might conclude that they need nuclear-tipped interceptors, in the style of Soviet/Russian systems. This could reinforce competitive nuclear developments on the offensive side, even as defenses are pursued.

Sixth and lastly, the potential build-up of nuclear arsenals in response to the pressures generated by BMD would seem likely to bring with it concerns about the associated weapons control issues. Such issues are of two types. One is the command and control of the weapons themselves, a problem that has greatly concentrated the minds of the existing nuclear weapon states, increasingly so after the Cold War with the breakdown of Soviet/Russian systems. Especially when such weapons are "flushed" in time of crisis from storage depots to military sites, the possibility arises that control over one or more weapons may be lost. The so-called "loose nukes" problem of such concern in Russia today could find itself repeated elsewhere in Asia

The other control issue relates to the ultimate disposition of the materials used to create nuclear warheads. After their service lives are complete, Asia's nuclear warheads must be dismantled and the special nuclear materials stored safely for an extended period of time (if they are not recycled into new warheads). The challenges of safe and secure dismantlement and long-term storage in ways that minimize proliferation risks are only coming into sharper focus the more experience is gained in dismantling Cold War arsenals—and an intensification of nuclear competition in Asia would only bring more such problems in the future.[63] Analogous challenges associated with the safe and secure storage of fissile materials are already well in evidence in the civilian sector, given the large build-up of spent fuel by the civilian power generation industry in Asia.

The possibility that U.S. allies in East Asia could, as a result of a series of events directly and indirectly related to U.S. initiatives, ultimately choose to construct nuclear deterrents of their own stands out as a major feature of the worst-case scenario. There are some in the U.S. community who do not see nuclear acquisition by Japan or South Korea as an unacceptable price to pay for BMD—indeed, some have expressed the view that the increase in the number of nuclear-armed friends of the United States can only increase

[63] I am indebted to Michael Barletta for pressing this point on me.

the potential of the coalition that might be arrayed against an expansionist China.[64] Why not, they ask, think of nuclearization by Japan or South Korea as Americans came to think of nuclearization by Britain and France—more members of the Western club?

There are four counters to this way of thinking. First, there is no Cold War, Armageddon-like divide in Asia to compel Asians to choose sides and follow Washington's preferences. In this worst-case scenario, an independent stance vis-à-vis the United States seems just as plausible as a more closely allied one. Second, nuclear acquisition by Tokyo or Seoul (or Taipei) would de facto signal a loss of confidence in the U.S. guarantor role, as Washington is blamed for the developments in their security environment that compelled nuclearization—in other words, a failure of U.S. policy. This reinforces the point that nuclearization would likely be associated with an ending of the alliance relationships with Washington, not a strengthening of them. Third, to the extent Washington's umbrella is seen as having covered illicit weapons programs, Washington's role as leader of the global non-proliferation effort would have been sharply de-legitimized. Fourth, one of the few points of agreement between Beijing and Washington about the U.S. presence in East Asia is that it helps keep Tokyo from seeking a more independent military stance, including nuclear weapons; if that function of the U.S. presence is no longer germane, a sharper clash with Beijing over the U.S. role in East Asia should be expected. These questions of military presence will only be magnified when and if Korea reunifies.

The worst case encompasses a series of changes to nuclear stability in Asia wrought by an unfolding defense/offense "race" between China and the United States and its spillover effects on other nuclear actors in the region. In the worst case, BMD sets off a chain reaction, leading to more robust nuclear modernization by China, India, Pakistan, and Russia than would otherwise have been the case. It leads Beijing and perhaps Moscow to abandon arms control strategies for shaping the Asian security environment. It makes a military move by Beijing against Taiwan more likely. It precipitates the competitive acquisition of BMD by Asian states. And it aggravates the challenges of controlling nuclear weapons and materials.

In this worst case, U.S. initiatives shape Asia in ways that accelerate the erosion of the existing nuclear order, perhaps even precipitating its collapse. They do so by helping to precipitate an eruption of flashpoints in Taiwan or Korea and by generating a

[64] Such views have been expressed in off-the-record seminar discussions in Washington during the period of preparation of this study.

Chinese response that is confrontational vis-à-vis the United States, its military presence in the region, and U.S. allies there, with the result that China's neighbors adjust their strategies in ways that defect from U.S. preferences. In this scenario, Russia abandons the PNIs and reconstitutes INF. India moves more quickly to a large warfighting force with substantial thermonuclear capability deliverable at long range. Taiwan concludes that a more robust, overt deterrent of its own is necessary. U.S. allies resist Washington's efforts to draw them into an anti-China crusade and distance themselves from the United States. A reunifying Korean concludes that a more independent path from the United States is necessary, along with its own nuclear deterrent. Japan responds to all of this by creating its own deterrent and severing its alliance with the United States.

Possible versus Likely Consequences of BMD

Having identified *possible* consequences in these best- and worst-case scenarios, it is necessary to consider also whether they are in fact *likely* consequences—and what conditions would bring them into being.

There is a good argument that the negative consequences are being exaggerated in the worst case. More specifically, it may be that BMD is getting the blame for developments in the Asian landscape that are occurring irrespective of U.S. BMD. After all, BMD is not the only ripple on placid Asian waters. It alone cannot be blamed for the existence of profound questions about the future of arms control and nonproliferation or about the future of major power nuclear relations in Asia. To elaborate further:

- BMD may well induce China to "get bigger, faster." But as argued above, China is already getting bigger and it is doing so faster than before. This is especially true with regard to medium-range ballistic missiles. There is a quiet debate in China about whether to become the world's second strongest nuclear power that is driven by political and strategic considerations and not simply operational military concerns about the nature of the necessary responses to maintain a viable deterrent in the face of U.S. BMD.
- BMD may well influence Sino-Indian nuclear relations. But those relations are already driven by their own logic, and pressures and decisions in Delhi and Beijing are certainly going to outweigh decisions in Washington about what kind of nuclear relationship to build.
- BMD may well induce China (and Russia) to assist proliferators. But Beijing (and Moscow) have a long history of assistance to proliferators. They have done so for self-serving reasons of commercial benefit or local geostrategic balance. But they have also done so as a reaction to the U.S. unipolar moment and consonant with the view of some in Moscow and Beijing that Washington promotes nonproliferation largely as a way to extend its military dominance.

- BMD may well weaken multilateral arms control, especially if bilateral arms control as it has been known ends. But a crisis of confidence is already well developed on the multilateral realm, a crisis born of the Security Council's underperformance in Iraq; the weak implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, Biological Weapons Convention, and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; and the insults to nonproliferation done by the nuclear tests in India and Pakistan and by the failure to secure entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

In sum, Asia is not stable, at least from the perspective of nuclear and WMD issues. It is a volatile region where the drift of events points to considerable uncertainty about the future. With or without BMD, Asians and Americans face a significant challenge in preserving a balance of forces that promotes peace and stability.

Alternatively, the best case seems dependent on the proposition that the United States can pursue limited BMD without generating negative repercussions at the major power level—one of the core assumptions of the best case. How Moscow and Beijing respond to BMD is obviously central to what happens in Asia. From the perspective of East Asian stability and security, it matters a great deal whether or not BMD actually leads to an arms race with China—if such a competitive process ensues, more far-reaching consequences to BMD can be anticipated than if the U.S. and China simply float force levels to new numbers.[65] Moreover, it matters a great deal whether or not BMD actually leads to a breakdown of the arms control and reductions process.

Can Moscow tolerate new U.S. preferences and accommodate itself to a new deal that preserves some elements of arms control in a new guise? If so, bilateral arms control will continue, the major powers will cooperate to promote nonproliferation, and fears for the future of the international legal regime inhibiting WMD will be greatly eased, with very positive repercussions in Asia. If not, expect the fear of the collapse of arms control, including the NPT, to shape the hedging behaviors of states in Asia.

Can Beijing adjust to new features of the U.S. strategic posture without deeply unsettling its neighbors—and negatively affecting the debate about China in Washington? Will it be content to modernize to restore the status quo ante (meaning, approximately, retention of an ability to deliver 20 warheads through a defense onto targets in the United States)? Or will China be motivated to seek a larger *force de frappe*—or to become the

[65] For further discussion of the potential impact of China's reaction to BMD on the Asian security environment, see Brad Roberts and Shen Dingli, "The Nuclear Equation in Asia," in Burkhard Schmitt, ed., *Nuclear Weapons: A New Great Debate*, Chaillot Paper No. 48 (Paris: Institute for Security Studies of the Western European Union, 2001).

number two nuclear power on the world stage and also to counter the world's "rogue hegemon" through support of an anti-U.S. coalition?

The assessment of the possible impact of the administration's new strategic initiatives on the East Asian security environment cannot be reduced to a simple black-and-white discussion. That impact cannot be all good or all bad. Possible outcomes cannot be dismissed as impossible on the basis of an argument that they might be unlikely. The *potential* benefits and costs of BMD to Asian stability and security are *both* rather impressive. The *likely* benefits and costs cannot be precisely calibrated at this time. If the benefits of BMD are fully realized and the costs ameliorated through other foreign and defense policy initiatives with the interested states, then, on balance, the U.S. pursuit of BMD would contribute substantially to the management of long-term security and proliferation challenges in Asia. But if the benefits prove modest or illusory, and Washington is not able to gain cooperation with others to minimize costs and risks, then BMD seems likely to aggravate an already volatile situation in Asia. This line of reasoning suggests that BMD's ultimate impact on Asia will be a mix of positive and negative. It may well be that the deterrence and reassurance benefits envisaged by BMD supporters will be realized even as the "arms race" consequences envisaged by BMD opponents are felt.

G. GETTING THE BEST CASE, AVOIDING THE WORST

How might Washington approach the challenges of proceeding with its strategic initiatives in the defense, offense, and arms control realms so as to maximize benefits and minimize costs and risks in East Asia? How does the White House fulfill its ambition to work "with friends and allies to create a new framework for security and stability that reflects the new strategic environment?" With an eye on East Asia, how might it best proceed? The preceding analysis suggests that U.S. policy development should be guided by the following principles:

1. Bolster the credibility of U.S. deterrence strategies of the DPRK and across the Taiwan strait with a movement away from reliance solely on the threat of retaliation and toward reliance on a mix of punishment and defense.
2. Reassure U.S. allies and others that Washington understands the impact of its security strategies on Asia; that those strategies will enhance their security, both short- and long-term; that blunting the rogue missile threat can be done without aggravating challenges at the major power level; and that Washington seeks their partnership in shaping its basic security strategies.

3. Avoid motivating China to undertake a "race" with the United States and to challenge U.S. interests in Asia and elsewhere.
4. Focus on achieving policy consensus in the Washington-Moscow-Beijing triangle that sustains nuclear risk reduction among them, as well as their leadership of the global treaty regimes.

To translate these principles into practices that achieve desired outcomes requires a review of each of the main strategic initiatives: defenses, offensive reductions, and arms control.

Implications for the BMD Strategy

In the transatlantic alliance relationship rather than the transpacific one, the Bush administration has sought to address allied concerns about the potentially destabilizing consequences of BMD in two ways. First, President Bush has emphasized his commitment to extend the defense over those allies. Second, he has sought a dialogue with Moscow that holds out the prospect of continued U.S.-Russian cooperation in the strategic realm, albeit perhaps not in the context of pre-existing arms control measures. These approaches will provide less reassurance of America's East Asian allies than of its European ones.

Japan and Korea are both ambivalent about the virtues of BMD protection. As one review notes:

> "America's foremost Asian allies, Japan and South Korea, reacted with official diplomatic politeness to the president's speech proposing a broad new military system. But experts in both countries say Bush's proposal raises alarms on sensitive issues and thrusts them unwillingly into a big power dispute between the United States and China."[66]

What accounts for this reaction? Tokyo desires protection from threats by Pyongyang and also Beijing, but Japanese policymakers seek to avoid antagonizing Beijing in ways that sharply increase the military threat to Japan—and further erode an already troubled political relationship. As argued above, Tokyo's commitment to BMD research reflects in part its desire to not be seen to be relying on offensive means to

[66] Doug Struck, "Asian Allies see Hazards Ahead," Washington Post, May 3, 2001, p. A-16. For further insights into their BMD debates, see Katy Oh Hassig, *Northeast Asian Strategic Security Environment Study* (Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, 2001); Michael J. Green and Toby F. Dalton, *Asian Reactions to U.S. Missile Defense,* National Bureau of Asian Research, Vol. 11, No. 3 (1999); Medeiros, *Ballistic Missile Defense and Northeast Asian Security;* and Toshiro Ozawa, "Northeast Asia," in *International Perspectives on Missile Proliferation and Defenses,* Occasional Paper No. 5 (Monterey, Calif.: Center for Nonproliferation Studies of the Monterey Institute of International Studies in cooperation with the Mountbatten Centre for International Studies, 2001).

counter China's build-up. Tokyo is clearly concerned about China's rising power and, as its recent defense white paper suggests, perceives a rising likelihood of conflict with Beijing.[67] But Japanese policymakers are also reluctant to be drawn into a U.S.-led anti-China crusade. Too deep an engagement in a BMD posture that threatens the credibility of China's strategic force or that draws Japan more deeply into the defense of Taiwan risks putting Tokyo and Beijing on an even more confrontational path and thus is resisted by Tokyo. Washington must also account for the fact that the deeper the debate in Japan about BMD, the deeper will Japanese experts debate the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence. Washington's insistence that BMD is necessary to repair some dysfunction in the deterrent vis-à-vis North Korea has magnified concerns about the U.S. extended deterrent.[68] This is a debate that is essentially not visible to American observers. As it is also a debate about the virtues of Washington as a security guarantor, it is typically conducted in private among Japanese experts. Its private character suggests that Americans are likely to be surprised when it erupts into the open under the guise of some related issue—such as BMD.

Seoul is even more ambivalent than Tokyo. From an operational perspective, it perceives that BMD can make at best limited contributions to the protection of South Korea from attacks by the North, given the proximity of Seoul to artillery fire along the DMZ, and the DPRK's likely heavy reliance on special forces to deliver some of the potentially most punishing attacks on the ROK with chemical and biological warfare agents. And from a political perspective, Seoul is reluctant to avoid damaging relations with Pyongyang, Beijing, and Moscow at a time when there appears to be a realistic possibility for progress in stepping back from the state of near war.

For both of these allies, there was a meaningful distinction between "theater missile defense" and "national missile defense" that has now been blurred with the shift to the term "layered global missile defense." TMD protection of them from North Korea appeared to be separable from the larger strategic questions associated with U.S. NMD—including whether or not that defense is part of a containment strategy of China. At the very least, this suggests the virtue of emphasizing to them that one or more of the layers will provide protection to them. But the blurring already suggests to them the possibility of being drawn more directly into a U.S.-PRC stand-off. This suggests that the central

[67] See Japan Defense Agency 2001 Defense White Paper. See also Jason Sherman, "Japan Directs New Attention at China," *Defense News,* July 23-29, 2001, p. 18.

[68] For more on Japanese views of the Bush administration's BMD strategy, see Doug Struck, "Japan Divided on U.S. Call for Missile Defense," *Washington Post*, February 8, 2001, p. A-18.

issue for these East Asian allies is whether America's defense will indeed be limited, as promised by the administration, or will it, at the end of the day, be oriented at containing China. In Europe, the administration appears to be making progress in addressing concerns that BMD will induce reactions by Russians to bolster their deterrent that Europeans fear; it has done so by repeatedly emphasizing that the defense it seeks is limited in nature, and that the strategic transformation it intends will be pursued cooperatively with Moscow if at all possible. In East Asia, the promise of limited defense has not had such a reassuring function, as the premise of U.S. policy is that a Chinese build-up is in any case under way and cannot be "blamed" on BMD. And there has been little or no emphasis on cooperation with Beijing. The two situations are very different.

As East Asians perceive them, there are numerous potential negative consequences associated with the possibility that Washington might seek a defense that is not limited in Beijing's eyes, and is "thick enough" to deprive China of any gains in the credibility of its nuclear force even as its overall size increases. First, they fear a U.S.-PRC defense-offense "race" that generates pressures in other states, especially Russia and India, to respond. Second, they fear the chilling effect of such an "arms race" (even if it proceeds slowly by Cold War standards) on political relations between Washington and Beijing. That chilling effect would likely have spillover effects for them in the economic realm, as they are asked to take sides by both Washington and Beijing. Third, they fear that Washington would seek to draw them more deeply into confrontation over Taiwan.

A U.S. decision to pace PRC strategic modernization with countervailing missile defenses appears to violate what this author has elsewhere described as the Goldilocks rule of East Asian stability.[69] This rule states that the nations of East Asia prefer relations between Washington and Beijing that are neither too hot nor too cold, but just right—neither so harmonious that deals are cut over their heads, nor so hostile that they are asked to choose sides in every dispute, but even enough that there is an element of predictability to them and a measure of cooperation where interests are coincident. After all, the U.S.-PRC relationship largely defines the overall character of the East Asian security environment, and any step by either side that increases competition between the two necessarily brings new challenges for East Asians caught in the middle.

There is a separate but also important question about the provision of ballistic missile defenses to Taiwan. In fact, some limited defenses are already deployed there; the question is one of what improvements to make in the face of the large build-up of short-

[69] Roberts, *China-U.S. Nuclear Relations.*

range ballistic missiles by the PRC across the Taiwan strait. China objects of course to such improvements for a number of reasons. It sees the leverage it has gained through those deployments as essential to turning Taipei back from the course of independence, a course which would have brought with it war initiated by Beijing to seek to undo that independence. It seeks the ability to hold U.S. carrier battle groups at risk, which it sees as useful for dissuading U.S. intervention and compelling U.S. forces to position themselves East of the island of Taiwan rather than West, and thus in ways that weaken their operational capabilities. And China sees Taiwan's acquisition of BMD—as with the acquisition by Japan and South Korea—as only deepening America's military engagement with Taipei and in the region, a trend that Beijing would like to reverse. But experts in China have also hinted at various "red-lines" in China's posture, distinguishing between missile defense sales to Taiwan, deployments there by U.S. forces, or simply agreements between Taipei and Washington for the United States to make such protection available in crisis.

In sum, limited BMD has gained wide but not deep support among U.S. allies and friends in East Asia. Deeper support appears unlikely, especially for a more robust defense explicitly aimed at denying China a secure second-strike capability. Indeed, it is likely to cause allies in East Asia to somewhat distance themselves from Washington—and increase reliance on their hedging strategies.

Implications for the Nuclear Reductions Strategy

In the U.S.-Russian strategic relationship, the Bush administration has argued that potentially harsh Russian responses to BMD can be minimized by proceeding with deep cuts in strategic nuclear forces, thereby reassuring Moscow that Washington is not exploiting BMD and Russian weakness to gain new advantages at the strategic level. By mollifying Moscow in this way, Washington hopes also to reassure its NATO allies that its new strategic initiatives will facilitate continued nuclear threat reduction. Can deep cuts offer similar promise in minimizing the potentially destabilizing aspects in East Asia of BMD?

The balance of U.S.-PRC strategic nuclear forces is obviously of a character entirely different from the U.S.-Russian one. The United States enjoys huge quantitative advantages in terms of the number of nuclear warheads deliverable on China, and from a qualitative point of view it has capabilities for waging counterforce and extended exchanges that China cannot hope to accomplish, including the capacity for relatively low collateral damage attacks against a wide range of military targets. Moreover, there is

a potential for a preemptive strike on China's silo-based ICBM force (and its single SSBN), potentially even by conventional rather than nuclear means.[70] Cuts in the U.S.-deployed strategic arsenal of the scale being considered by Washington (2000-1500-1000) promise no substantive alteration in this very asymmetric "balance." They may buy an element of good will, by suggesting that Washington is not exploiting Russian weakness to gain new advantages, thereby implying that it is not its intention to exploit Chinese weakness. But these results are rather indirect and there is no evidence that the Chinese find them meaningful.

And Washington's East Asian allies appear little concerned about the size of the U.S. arsenal. Unlike some European allies, they have not so far expressed concern that deep cuts may somehow impair the credibility of extended deterrence. They appear to see it as quantitatively sufficient to whatever deterrence challenges that exist in the region, including China's already robust theater nuclear posture. They see such cuts as likely having little or no impact on Beijing's decisions about how to modernize its strategic forces, whatever their potential impact on Moscow's decisions. Indeed, some East Asian experts are concerned about the potential for a renewed competitive development of nuclear forces—a U.S.-PRC defense/offense or perhaps even renewed offense/offense developments, if the United States resumes development of new nuclear warhead types and China moves to deploy new-generation warheads on new-generation delivery systems. Formal collapse of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and of the nuclear test moratorium is understood in East Asia to be likely to lead to a new round of competitive developments on the offensive side that would include not just the United States and China, but also Russia, India, and perhaps Pakistan.

Private discussions with East Asian experts also suggest some concerns that Washington's commitment to deep cuts may prove short-lived. They cite suggestions that the Bush administration will parallel such cuts with renewed development of new types of warheads and delivery systems so that, in their view, it can continue to advance its qualitative advantages over the other nuclear weapon states. Reading Russian reports that the number of deployed strategic weapons may fall to 600 or fewer, these analysts see Washington's commitment to a number of 1000 or above as a cynical exploitation of Russia's fall in order to gain strategic superiority. These perceptions have been magnified by statements of some associated with the administration, prior to joining it, that a phase

[70] Chinese analysts appear greatly impressed by this potential. U.S. analysts tend to be less impressed, recalling the inability of the U.S. military to promise with high confidence destruction of the small Soviet missile force deployed to Cuba in 1963.

of deep cuts may have to be followed by a phase in which the United States moves to gain superiority in numbers.[71]

The point here is simply that promised deep cuts do little to address such concerns. The fact that the Bush administration envisions such cuts occurring in a unilateral framework only tends to heighten these concerns. After all, the perceived unilateralist tendencies of the Bush administration are much discussed in East Asia today.

Implications for the Arms Control Strategy

The administration also has signaled a new approach to arms control consonant with its new strategic initiatives.[72] As the President has stated, he seeks to "move beyond" the constraints of the ABM Treaty, in partnership with Moscow if possible, but alone if necessary. He seeks a new framework with Russia premised on openness, mutual confidence, and cooperation, including cooperation to strengthen multilateral non-proliferation measures. Many administration figures have also aligned themselves with the view that "the Cold War approach to arms control and much of its product is outmoded" because it inhibits U.S. adaptations to a changing world.[73] In conjunction with a series of administration decisions to move away from existing multilateral treaties and negotiations on a variety of topics, this has raised a broader question in East Asia (and elsewhere) about whether Washington might move away from not just the ABM Treaty but arms control approaches more generally.

On ABM, many East Asians have held the view that the treaty is "a cornerstone of strategic stability." Here, as elsewhere, Washington has faced an uphill challenge in shifting perceptions. Both Tokyo and Seoul have expressed support for the treaty even as they have expressed an "understanding" of the perspectives of the new administration.[74]

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[71] *Rationale and Requirements for Future Nuclear Forces and Arms Control*.

[72] "Administration Ballistic Missile Defense Papers," White House.

[73] *Rationale and Requirements for Future Nuclear Forces and Arms Control*, p. 16. The writings of private citizens subsequently appointed to government service are at best an imprecise guide to their policy preferences as members of an administration. But those writings also provide useful insights into the perspectives likely to shape policies. On this topic—the role of arms control in the current era—many influential members of the new administration have written extensively and in ways that portend potentially major departures in U.S. policy.

[74] Struck, "Asian Allies See Hazards Ahead."

Beijing has conducted a high-profile campaign to maintain the treaty and to "stiffen the Russian spine" against abandonment of it.[75]

East Asian reactions to Bush administration decisions on the ABM treaty will be shaped by the extent to which some framework between Washington and Moscow remains in place, whether an adaptation of the current one or something new. If Washington fails to gain Moscow's concurrence on some new framework, it should expect that the burden of Asian blame would fall on it, not Moscow, for having set in motion the chain of events that led to breakdown. The possible end of U.S.-Russian cooperation in the strategic nuclear realm raises questions for East Asians about the fate of the existing arms control measures that have helped reduce nuclear risks in that region—START, INF, and the PNIs. If existing cooperative approaches in fact end, East Asians will want Washington to takes steps to continue the draw-down of residual Soviet/Russian capabilities in the region and to inhibit Russian reconstitution of INF and deployment in Asia. They will also be concerned about possible U.S. redeployment of tactical weapons into the region in the event the PNIs collapse.

From an East Asian perspective, the bilateral U.S.-Russian arms control process is merely an overlay across a broader and more complex arms control landscape in the region. The East Asian treaty regime is in fact multidimensional.[76] One facet encompasses the global NBC treaties (NPT, BWC, CWC, and Geneva Protocol). A second encompasses the nuclear testing treaties (LTBT, TTBT, CTBT). A third facet encompasses the nuclear-weapon-free zones (in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific, with two more under discussion). A fourth encompasses other restrictions to which states in the region are party on military activities in the Antarctic, on the seabed, and in outer space, as well as military activities aimed at modifying the environment. When policymakers in Washington talk about moving away from arms control as a Cold War relic, this raises questions in East Asia about the fate of this more comprehensive treaty regime. Even if Washington remains engaged and seeks to exercise leadership, there are questions in East Asia about the potential consequences of a falling out among the major

[75] For a detailed review, see Brad Roberts, "China," in James Wirtz and Jeffrey Larsen, eds., *Revising the ABM Treaty: Seeking Strategic Stability in a World of Nuclear Danger* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynn Rienner, forthcoming).

[76] For a detailed review of the history and future of arms control in East Asia, see Brad Roberts, "East Asia," in Jeffrey Larsen, ed., *Arms Control: Cooperative Security in a Changing Environment* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, forthcoming). See also Nicholas Berry, "Fertile Ground for Arms Control in Asia," Asia Forum (Washington, D.C.: Center for Defense Information, December 2000).

powers and whether Washington alone will be able to lead the existing arms control treaty regime, especially if Beijing and/or Moscow actively undermine that leadership.

To be sure, East Asian states as a general rule have not taken on many arms control obligations that seem to entail substantial forms of restraint where they might otherwise opt to compete. Certainly they have exhibited at best uneven interest in implementing and strengthening the existing treaty regime. By and large they appear to be of the view that it is Washington's job, as the dominant force in the region, to do these things—and they look to Beijing and Moscow to support that U.S. role, whether tacitly or explicitly. But for some states the restraints are indeed substantial—including particularly those U.S. allies who have foresworn nuclear weapons. As noted above, for Japan especially, arms control plays a central role in its perception of the security environment. Concerns there about the collapse of arms control have raised broader questions about whether Washington can continue over the long term to be an effective guardian of Japan's interests if, by moving away from arms control, its actions have led to negative repercussions in Japan's security environment.[77] As the Bush administration seeks to reinvigorate the U.S. alliance with Japan, dealing with these perceptions and concerns is an important priority.

The apparent unwillingness of the Bush administration to implement measures agreed by prior administrations in treaty review conferences has also emerged as a topic of concern in East Asia. This concern encompasses the multiple multilateral endeavors noted abov,e but is more specific. The administration's rejection of the compliance protocol negotiated for the BWC raises a basic question about how the commitment of the first Bush administration at a 1992 review conference will now be carried forward, especially in the face of U.S. objections that the treaty itself is simply unverifiable. But the more pointed concern focuses on the CTBT, where the administration's preference not to support entry into force clearly runs counter to the stated preferences of many U.S. allies in East Asia. Indeed, some of those allies have argued that the CTBT must be a central part of the new administration's strategy for stability and security because it inhibits some of the most worrisome potential reactions in Asia to BMD.[78] As noted

[77] Michael J. Green and Katsuhisa Furukawa, "New Ambitions, Old Obstacles," *Arms Control Today* (July/August 2000).

[78] From the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), see "Japan Discussion of Bush Foreign Policy," *Tokyo Gaiko Forum*, March 12, 2001 (translated April 1) and "ROK-Russia Joint Statement May Cause US 'Displeasure'," *Seoul-Tong-a Ilbo* (Internet version), February 27, 2001, translated on February 28. See also Marie McInerney, "Australia Backs U.S. Missile Scheme, Wants Arms Control," *Reuters,* May 12, 2001.

above, concerns about possible resumption of nuclear testing have a special resonance in East Asia, given both the history of testing in the neighboring region and the possibility that resumed testing would unleash a wave of testing by India, China, Pakistan, and Russia. The perceived value of the CTBT in inhibiting China's production of MIRVed warheads for its new generation missiles is especially valued.

However the Bush administration addresses these questions, perceptions, and processes associated with the inherited arms control framework, it faces a new question about whether or how to proceed with China in an arms control process. The central question here is whether arms control might play some constructive role in managing China's reactions to U.S. defense/offense strategies and to developments in the U.S.-Russian strategic relationship.[79]

By way of background, it is useful to note that Washington and Beijing have built a modest but not unimportant measure of cooperation on arms control and nonproliferation since the end of the Cold War. Over the last decade, Beijing joined the NPT, CWC, and the CTBT, while also taking steps to bring its export control and nonproliferation practices into closer accord with Washington's preferences, including especially in the realm of missile exports. Concerns remain, however, about the extent to which China has come into full and effective compliance with its treaty obligations and bilateral assurances to Washington. China has also not been a particularly effective player in the effort to deal with extant noncompliance challenges in Iraq and Iran, though it has been more helpful in dealing with the North Korean nuclear problem.[80] A formal Washington-Beijing dialogue on arms control and nonproliferation has regularly been interrupted by Beijing as a way to protest U.S. policies or actions. This past record illustrates both the possibilities and the challenges of engaging China as an arms control player.

What is it that arms control *might* contribute here? It might contribute a measure of predictability to the unfolding U.S.-PRC nuclear relationship, a measure of restraint by both sides, and a measure of reassurance of interested states in East Asia. How so?

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[79] Interim guidance from DTRA in the conduct of this project directed that IDA explore this question and provide some new perspectives in light of the emerging priorities of the new administration.

[80] See *The Second US-China Conference on Arms Control, Disarmament, and Nonproliferation*, a report of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies of the Monterey Institute of International Studies, Monterey, Ca., April 27-29, 2000. Available at the MIIS website.

Let us begin with China's strategic modernization plan.[81] China will modernize its strategic force in ways that give it high confidence of penetrating U.S. ballistic missile defenses in East Asia and around the U.S. homeland, so that it is seen to have a secure retaliatory capability. It is going to do more than simply proceed with plans to build qualitatively superior systems as replacements to existing ones—it is going to shape the parameters of its future strategic force so that it has what it considers nuclear sufficiency and credibility in the face of U.S. BMD deployments. Washington has three choices for responding to this Chinese response to BMD.

- One: It can choose to trump PRC modernization with a defense large and capable enough to defeat the emerging PRC force. If Washington chooses this course, Beijing seems likely to conclude that Washington intends to encircle and contain China and to press a radical agenda on the Taiwan issue. In this scenario, Beijing seems unlikely to cooperate further in implementing existing arms control and nonproliferation measures and would be highly reluctant to consider new forms.
- Two: It can choose to tolerate the current level of mutual vulnerability as an enduring principle in U.S.-PRC nuclear relations. If Washington chooses this course, Beijing seems likely to be more willing to cooperate with Washington on other policy matters—including possibly arms control. But Washington seems unlikely to want to codify this principle in some fashion, especially as it seeks to move away from such codification in the U.S.-Russian relationship.
- Three: It can choose to hedge. This choice would embody a commitment in principle to tolerate the Chinese build-up without structuring BMD so as to respond to it, while establishing also that BMD could be reoriented to deal with the Chinese force at some future time—as determined by China's behavior, not Washington's. One condition that could lead to a decision to reorient to trump might be Chinese modernization of its force in ways that clearly exceed the requirements of restoration of the status quo ante (before U.S. BMD) and with an eye toward achieving nuclear superpower status. Another condition could be China's proliferation behavior—whether it is helping or hurting America's effort to promote stability in regions of proliferation concern.

As of the summer of 2001, the Bush administration appears to prefer option three. This is inferred from statements to the effect that "we do not view China as an enemy and our limited missile defenses are not directed at it….we do not believe the deployment of limited missile defenses should compel China to increase the pace and scale of its already ambitious effort."[82]

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[81] Arguments in this section are drawn from the companion study prepared for DTRA in 2001, Roberts, *China-U.S. Nuclear Relations: What Relationship Best Serves U.S. Interests?* (Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, forthcoming).

[82] "Administration Missile Defense Papers," White House.

The dilemma posed by option three is that Beijing is likely to believe it is only a masquerade for option one. The Bush administration arguments noted above are entirely consistent with Clinton administration positions; thus China has heard them for many years—and not believed them. Because of this long history, the Bush administration faces a special challenge in persuading Beijing of the veracity of its public pronouncements. Beijing has expressed continued frustration with American policymakers arguing that the defense is "not directed at it" when de facto a system aimed at mid-course intercept of a small nuclear force in North Korea apparently must be constructed in such a way as to have operational capabilities against a force of the size and location of China's. The challenge of persuasion will be all the more significant if the Bush administration endorses an open-ended pursuit of a multilayered BMD. Reinforced by the message it has oft heard from Moscow, Beijing seems poised to interpret such a pursuit as promising ultimate U.S. supremacy—in short, as reflecting the choice for option one above.

A rationale for exploring new arms control strategies vis-à-vis China can be found in recognizing China's potential to react to Washington's policy choices in ways that damage U.S. interests. If China objects deeply to the direction of U.S. policy, it can take a number of actions harmful to U.S. interests. These simply begin with a build-up of nuclear forces such that a larger percentage of the American public falls within range of Chinese delivery systems. Additionally in the security realm, China could return to more egregious forms of assistance to states seeking to develop or simply acquire weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, perhaps even assisting them to develop counter-measures to U.S. ballistic missile defenses. It could adopt a harsher line toward those in East Asia that align themselves with the United States, causing them to pay an economic or political cost for siding with Washington on any given issue. It could also provide assistance to military adversaries of the United States, in the hope that this would keep Washington pinned down and "fatigued" by conflicts in other parts of the world. It could also favor European firms at the expense of American ones in gaining access to markets in China.

Washington has an interest in not paying these costs to pursue the kinds of changes at the strategic level that it considers necessary and useful. It also has an interest in insulating East Asia—and especially its allies there—from the consequences of a harsh Chinese reaction to new policy initiatives in Washington. It may be that Beijing's dependence on U.S. technology and capital markets will prove sufficient to inhibit such Chinese reactions. But reliance on the economic relationship for this political good would likely do little to address East Asian concerns about unpredictability in the U.S.-PRC

relationship. After all, the growing trade relationship promises to bring with it even sharper trade imbalances—to American disadvantage—that will bring with them new frictions and pressures.

If Washington chooses to allay Beijing's likely concerns that option three is simply a masquerade for option one, how might it do so? To allay Moscow's concerns about its intentions in the offense/defense realm, the administration has emphasized deep cuts on the offensive side and presidential statements that "Russia is not our enemy." Secretary of State Powell has made similar statements about China, though the very fact that the president has not when he has been so explicit about Russia has raised some concerns about divisions within the administration on this question. The dialogue with Beijing begun by Secretary Powell in his July 2001 trip may prove helpful in this regard. But to gain the benefits of predictability in the U.S.-PRC strategic relationship and the reassurance benefits for U.S. allies, some type of political agreement would appear to be helpful. Such an agreement would presumably specify the conditionalities on both sides associated with option three above. As they relate to restraints on and the disposition of armed forces, they are properly called arms control.

Whether such a measure proves possible or desirable seems likely to be first and foremost an issue of what happens in the U.S.-Russian arms control relationship. If ABM and START continue, or some new formal framework is agreed by Washington and Moscow, then some formal PRC arms control role would seem possible. If only tactic agreement is achieved, then formal PRC arms control seems less likely, though a tacit agreement would not be ruled out.[83] If the Washington-Moscow dialogue ultimately produces no agreement, then closer Moscow-Beijing cooperation at the expense of Washington's interests would seem likely. If U.S.-Russian agreement proves possible, Washington should expect mixed emotions in Beijing—relief that it will not have to contend with unfettered American and Russian strategic competition, but also consternation that Moscow had again sold out Beijing in favor of a deal with Washington (consternation that seems likely only to reinforce its sense of being at the mercy of a hegemonic America).

Whether a new arms control initiative with China might be in the U.S. interest is a topic that is anathema to some. Some in Washington today see any U.S. restraint vis-à-vis China as a sign of weakness and appeasement. And even if a case can be made that some

[83] For more on the connection between informal U.S.-Russian arms control measures and China's role, see Lewis A. Dunn, "Coordinated Security Management—Or Toward a 'New Framework,' " *Survival* (Fall 2001).

new measure might be in the U.S. interest, how might it be possible to persuade China that it somehow serves China's interests as well? Is Washington willing to trade off an open-ended pursuit of defense, perhaps for some limited time, as an assurance that the defense it seeks is limited in nature? Are there variants of the layered defense that could be harder for rogues to defeat and easier for China to bypass, and is the United States willing to commit itself to pursue only such architectures for at least an interim period? It is conceivable that the administration might find itself ultimately compelled in this regard to make a virtue of necessity, as Congress, American allies, or simply the technology itself make such "restraint" a de facto necessity. If that trade-off is possible, then so too is some form of mutual restraint that serves broader U.S. interests.

H. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The Bush administration has committed itself to the effort to construct a new framework for stability and security suitable to the new, post-Cold War environment. As this study suggests, the requirements of stability and security in East Asia are complex. Strategic stability there is defined principally as a balance of power that reassures states that significant departures from the status quo are either unlikely, or at least predictable, or can be managed so that they are not disruptive or particularly threatening. Uncertainty about the drift of U.S.-PRC relations and disappointment about the, at best, limited progress in achieving more cooperative approaches to common security problems in the decade since the end of the Cold War have magnified concerns about stability. This study also suggests that the requirements of stability in East Asia—indeed, the basic features of the new security environment there—are hotly debated today. Many in the region see stability and security as common goods. But in Washington especially there is an important countering view, to the effect that America's security interests require that it take steps that may be destabilizing in East Asia.

From a long-term threat reduction perspective, the form of East Asian stability that is most meaningful relates to the nuclear order there. The potential for significant defections from current strategic postures (whether partially developed, latent, or in abeyance) is evident in East Asia. There are numerous potential nuclear dominos, wildcards, and flashpoints there. This portends a possible dramatic unraveling of the nuclear order there. Preventing such an unraveling is a top U.S. priority, both because it would reflect a failure of the nonproliferation effort on a dramatic scale and because the most likely next nuclear candidates are its own friends and allies—whose nuclear acquisition would likely be intimately connected to a loss of faith in Washington.

To reduce long-term risks, the United States has historically pursued strategies combining measures to enhance regional security in combination with strategies to promote nonproliferation. The Bush administration indicates significant elements of continuity and some potentially significant elements of change from historic practices. Its initiatives at the strategic level—on ballistic missile defense, nuclear offense reductions, and arms control—are seen in East Asia as likely to have profound repercussions there. The debate about the potential consequences of new U.S. initiatives has come to be dominated, as with most such debates on departures in U.S. policy, between two camps: worst case and best case. Each camp paints a compelling picture. The United States should seek to gain best-case and avoid worst-case outcomes. This effort can be informed by a net assessment of the possible impact of U.S. choices on the Asian security environment.

Given the administration's commitment to define a strategy for security and stability that encompasses broad international cooperation, paying heed to the concerns of its allies and potential partners can pay dividends. Paying heed does not necessarily equate with according them credence or deferring to them; it does mean addressing them in a serious, substantive manner. Doing so can also be argued on the basis of the administration's own commitment to raise the profile of allied interests in Washington.

But this presents a dilemma: some of those allies are reluctant to follow where Washington wishes to lead. They seem as yet un-persuaded of the virtues of deploying (as opposed to moving toward deployment of) ballistic missile defenses. They are evidently unwilling to abandon arms control as a tool for shaping their security environment. And they are unwilling to participate in an anti-China crusade that uses BMD as a tool and cover. Some U.S. allies have expressed concerns that American initiatives threaten to erode perceptions of it as a wise and benign power committed to the use of its power there for common purposes, thereby calling into question the political foundations of Washington's military presence in Asia.

As one former foreign minister of South Korea has argued, "although there is widespread recognition of the leadership role played by America in Asian security and economics, there is also increasing ambivalence, even among America's close Asian allies, about the way Washington conducts its role as the primary power."[84] Research conducted for this project suggests that America's friends and allies in East Asia are

[84] Han Sung Joo, "A Changed Asia Meets New U.S. Administration," *International Herald Tribune,* February 28, 2001.

struggling with the same question that engage its friends and allies in other regions: in the new era, will America again prove itself as a reliable and progressive power committed to the resolution of common problems, or is it seeking invulnerability and an escape from the balance of power? For many of America's friends and allies overseas, the latter appears to be a fool's errand, as it suggests major changes in the balance of power within their region that may lead to the eclipse of U.S. influence.

To promote cooperation with its allies and others in East Asia and to minimize potential undesirable side-effects there of U.S. initiatives, the new strategy for security should be informed by three central principles. First, it should reassure U.S. allies and others that their security would be enhanced. Second, it should avoid motivating China to pursue an offense/defense race with America and other counters to U.S. influence in its foreign policy. Third, it should guide tripolar developments (U.S.-China-Russia) in ways that sustain nuclear risk reduction. These principles can help frame answers to the central strategic questions that East Asians pose about the new paradigm and strategy:

1. On BMD, how limited a defense does the United States intend to pursue in Asia—and especially vis-à-vis China?
2. On nuclear reductions, does the United States seek parity at lower numbers over the long-term—or eventual superiority?
3. On arms control, how deeply committed is the United States to replacing existing approaches with new and improved ones—or does it simply seek an escape from restraint?

On ballistic missile defenses, how limited a defense does the United States intend to pursue and what, if any, kind of assurance can be provided that such limits would be maintained? Limited BMD has gained wide but not deep support among U.S. allies and friends in East Asia, perhaps because the implications of the Bush administration's BMD approach are clearer vis-à-vis Russia than vis-à-vis China. Substantially deeper support appears unlikely, unless those friends and allies can be persuaded that a limited defense tailored to the realities of East Asia will have stabilizing consequences there. A more robust defense aimed explicitly at denying China a retaliatory capability is unlikely to garner support. Indeed, it seems certain to garner opposition, not least from Tokyo.

On nuclear reductions, is the United States seeking parity at lower numbers in some transparent and predictable way? Or might it be seeking superiority, by halting reductions short of the level that Russia might be driven to by budget realities—or later, by reconstituting a more modern force. The predictability of strategic force developments between the United States and Russia (and China) appears highly prized in East Asia, and

the possibility that the United States might be exploiting the reductions process to gain advantages at some later time hints at very unpredictable future developments as others respond to such a U.S. effort. And how unilateral an approach is the United States interested in pursuing? The perceived unilateralist tendencies of the Bush administration are much criticized in East Asia today. It is important to recognize also that U.S. nuclear reductions are unlikely to pay the stabilizing dividends in the East Asian context that they may pay in the transatlantic and U.S.-Russian context.

On arms control, how committed is the new administration to replacing existing approaches with new and improved ones—or does it simply seek an escape from restraint? East Asians interested in arms control do not, by-and-large, see it as a Cold War relic. Indeed, arms control remains a potentially valuable tool for promoting stability there. But only America can lead this process—and its will to lead is in question, given the administration's opposition to Cold War-vintage arms control and its seeming antipathy to multilateralism. If the ABM/START framework is abandoned, negative repercussions in East Asia might be minimized by a successor framework. The complete collapse of U.S-Russian arms control would be widely regretted in Asia—and blamed on Washington. The possibility for a new arms control approach to China may exist, but it will require some formalized restraint by the United States as the mechanism for reassuring China. But in Washington there are many who would attack such reassurance and restraint as appeasement.

When it comes to the Asian stability consequences of U.S. defense, offense, and arms control choices, *how* the new administration proceeds is almost as important as *what* it decides to do. Dialogue is important in its own right, as the early initiatives of the administration already suggest. The Asian debate about BMD is rife with misperceptions, and the new administration should do everything it can to understand what is fueling those misperceptions, the concerns of its allies and partners in Asia, and the interests that shape their security environment. As a new administration, it enjoys the benefit of starting afresh, which it can exploit by listening and explaining in ways that a long-seated administration cannot accomplish.

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Taking a long-term perspective, East Asia presents some of the most important nuclear challenges on the global scene. Preventing the emergence of new nuclear-armed states in the region remains a top U.S. priority. To reduce long-term risks, the U.S. has pursued strategies to promote regional security and nonproliferation, as now being updated by the Bush administration. The impact of ballistic missile defense (BMD) is hotly debated in Asia, with best- and worst-case possibilities now coming into focus. With an eye toward achieving best-case outcomes, the U.S. should tailor its BMD and arms control strategies in ways that enhance not only deterrence but also reassurance.

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