

The Nuclear Dimension of the U.S.-Japan Alliance

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The Nuclear Dimension of the U.S.-Japan Alliance Morton H. Halperin

Note: This paper was completed prior to Morton H. Halperin joining the U.S. Department of State as Director of the Policy Planning Staff.

ABSTRACT

The US-Japan military alliance is overlooked as a crucial element for either promoting or discouraging nuclear proliferation. Future developments in the alliance will be a major determining factor for whether Japan decides to pursue an independent nuclear weapons capability. This paper looks at how US nuclear policy would affect Japan's nuclear decisions, and concludes, contrary to conventional wisdom, that US sponsorship of a nuclear-free zone for Northeast Asia would be the most effective means of preventing Japan from going nuclear.

There is no guarantee that Japan would not pursue a nuclear option under the right circumstances, especially if the US either moves closer to China or withdraws from Asia altogether. Historically, the debate in Japan over whether to develop nuclear weapons has not centered around the credibility of the US nuclear deterrent, but rather around the belief that possession of a nuclear weapons arsenal would allow Japan to pursue an independent role in world affairs. Thus US policy toward its alliance with Japan will be a major determining factor in Japan's nuclear future, along with such considerations as the possible development of a Korean nuclear capability or an expansion of Chinese nuclear capability.

In addition to its bilateral relations with Japan, the United States' overall nuclear policy will be a major determining factor in Japan's nuclear choices. Current US nuclear policy exhibits a fundamental contradiction between the United States interest in building up its own nuclear policy

and its support of efforts for global nonproliferation. This contradiction can be overcome by stigmatizing nuclear weapons use through moving toward a no-first use policy and relying on the UN Security Council to respond to any nuclear weapons use.

1. Introduction

Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons is increasingly cited as one of the most important, if not the most important, objective of U.S. policy in the post-cold war period. Speaking before the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council in December 1997, for example, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said, "I trust we also agree that the gravest potential threat to our security in the next century may come from beyond Europe, from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction."¹ Furthermore, both NATO and the G-8 have emphasized the centrality of the proliferation problem.²

Specifically, U.S. officials suggest that the greatest danger to U.S. national security is the acquisition and use of nuclear weapons by rogue states or terrorist groups against the United States or its allies.³ Despite policymakers' professed beliefs, however, operational and procurement policy for nuclear forces remains focused on deterring a deliberate surprise attack on U.S. territory by the strategic nuclear forces of Russia.⁴ The strategic nuclear forces remain on alert ready to be targeted and fired at a range of military targets in Russia.

However, any realistic appraisal of nuclear dangers would suggest that **neither** rogue states/terrorist groups nor a deliberate Russian attack is the right focus if the goal of U.S. national security policy is to prevent the use of nuclear weapons anywhere in the world. The most immediate danger is that India and Pakistan will stumble into a nuclear war following their nuclear tests and their apparent determination to deploy nuclear forces. A second danger will continue to be that Russian missiles will be fired on the United States by accident or as a result of unauthorized action. Over the longer run, these threats will be eclipsed by the danger that the non-proliferation regime will collapse and other states will develop nuclear weapons. A terrorist threat should, in my view, become a matter of serious concern only if there is much wider dispersal of nuclear weapons among states stemming from an open collapse of the non-proliferation regime.

Preventing nuclear proliferation depends on addressing the problem not only on a global basis, but also region by region in key areas of the world. Specifically, preventing further proliferation in Northeast Asia- and in particular, in Japan- is the subject of this paper.

If conflict is to occur among the major nuclear weapons powers, it is most likely to take place in Northeast Asia. The United States, Russia, and China all have substantial military forces in the region as well as major stakes in the area; in addition, there are many sources of potential conflict among the three and their allies within the region, including the future of both the Korean peninsula and Taiwan, and control of both natural resources and territory in local seas.

Not only do these three most active nuclear weapons states confront each other in this area, but it is also the home to four other states - Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and North Korea - that have contemplated the development of nuclear weapons and have the capacity to develop a serious nuclear weapons capability.⁵ Thus, there is no doubt that the future of nuclear weapons in the international system will be determined in substantial part by what happens in Northeast Asia, and the future of international politics in this area will have a major impact on efforts to control nuclear proliferation.

In order to understand the non-proliferation policy options - and their interaction - in Northeast Asia, this paper will first examine the purposes for which the United States maintains nuclear weapons

and explore alternative scenarios for the development of U.S. nuclear policy; it will then examine choices for the Japanese nuclear program.

After discussing these scenarios, the paper will propose U.S. policies designed to ensure that Japan remains both non-nuclear and confident that the U.S. nuclear umbrella will deter nuclear attacks on Japan, while strengthening prospects for cooperative security in Asia.

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1 Statement at the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council Meeting, Brussels, Belgium (17 December 1997). [Back](#)

2 For example, see Martin Butcher, "NATO Formulating New Strategic Concept," *BASIC Reports* 66 (23 October 1998) and "The Birmingham [G8] Summit: Final Communiqué" (17 May 1998). [Back](#)

3 For example, see Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's remarks at the Town Hall Meeting, Ohio State University Columbus, Ohio, (18 February 1998); remarks by the President in his Address to the 51st General Assembly of the United Nations (24 September 1996); and remarks by Samuel R. Berger, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, at The Wilson Center, Washington, D.C. (18 June 1996). [Back](#)

4 See, for example, the statement by Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research Toby T. Gati before the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (5 February 1997). [Back](#)

5 For information about Japan's nuclear capability, see Selig S. Harrison, "Japan and Nuclear Weapons," in Selig S. Harrison, editor, *Japan's Nuclear Future: The Plutonium Debate and East Asian Security* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996): 3-44; and Taewoo Kim, "Japanese Ambitions, U.S. Constraints, and South Korea's Nuclear Future," in Harrison, *Japan's Nuclear Future*: 93; for information about Taiwan's nuclear capability, see Leonard S. Spector with Jacqueline R. Smith, *Nuclear Ambitions: The Spread of Nuclear Weapons 1989-90* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990): 60, 315-16n. [Back](#)

2. American Nuclear Options I

The U.S. government continues to wrestle with what nuclear policy and nuclear force structure make sense in light of the post-cold war situation and the increased attention to the problems of nuclear proliferation. The basic, available options for U.S. policy include: maintaining the status quo with minor changes; adopting a program to stigmatize nuclear weapons and to drastically reduce nuclear arsenals and reliance on nuclear weapons; and increasing reliance on nuclear weapons, especially to deter and respond to a range of actions by rogue states.

Before discussing these options, it is important to consider the purposes for which the United States might use nuclear weapons, as well as U.S. objectives in addressing the problems of nuclear proliferation.

The range of purposes (explained below) for which the United States might seek to use its nuclear weapons includes: deterring deliberate nuclear attacks on the United States, preventing accidental or unauthorized nuclear attacks on the United States, deterring nuclear attacks on U.S. allies, deterring conventional attacks against U.S. allies, and deterring the actions of rogue states or

terrorists.

1. Deterring Deliberate Nuclear Attacks on the United States

Deterrence is the fundamental purpose for which the United States retains nuclear weapons.⁶ During the cold war, as the Soviet Union built up its capacity to launch a nuclear surprise first strike against the U.S. homeland, the United States devoted very substantial resources to developing a nuclear force capable of surviving a massive Soviet attack and delivering a devastating blow against a broad range of military targets in the Soviet Union. Until very recently, the U.S. goal was to "prevail" in such an encounter, but this unattainable objective has finally been abandoned.⁷ This minor change notwithstanding, U.S. nuclear policy continues to focus on deterring a deliberate surprise attack on the United States, including by threatening, and planning, to launch forces on warning of such an attack.⁸

However, especially since the end of the cold war and the withdrawal of Russian military forces from central Europe, the possibility of a deliberate nuclear attack on the United States has been greatly reduced from its already very low levels. No Russian objective in Europe or Asia could possibly rise to the level that Russian leaders would view launching a surprise attack as a rational and justifiable act in the context of the interest at stake in any specific conflict or in overall U.S.-Russian relations. Furthermore, China lacks the capacity to launch an attack aimed at destroying the U.S. capacity to retaliate and does not appear to have any motive to fire its relatively small nuclear force at U.S. territory; France and the United Kingdom lack either the capability or the interests. Finally, U.S. arms control policy- especially the SALT and START negotiations- has been designed to reduce and to shape the Soviet and then Russian nuclear arsenal so as to reduce the capacity for a surprise first strike, further decreasing the possibility of a deliberate nuclear attack on the United States by a nuclear weapons state.⁹

Recently, there has been much talk in the United States about the danger of a deliberate nuclear strike by a rogue nation.¹⁰ However, the policy debate centers on the desirability of deploying an ABM system to seek to shoot down missiles after they've already been fired at the United States, rather than on the means to deter the development of such capabilities or their use.

2. Preventing Accidental or Unauthorized Nuclear Attacks on the United States

The attempt by both Washington and Moscow to deter nuclear attacks by threatening and planning to launch a nuclear strike-on warning of attack if not in advance-has created the danger that these forces, kept on hair trigger alert, will be launched as a result of miscalculated, accidental, or unauthorized use. Leaders in both countries are regularly told that their nuclear forces may not survive a first strike with the capacity to carry out the necessary full retaliation. This gives rise to the phenomena of the reciprocal fear of surprise attack and the danger that a nuclear exchange will occur, even though the leaders of both countries would clearly have preferred not to use the weapons.

Thus, despite the reduced risk of a deliberate attack and the serious danger of inadvertent use, the nuclear forces of both Russia and the United States remain focused on deterring deliberate nuclear attacks.

3. Deterring Nuclear Attacks on U.S. Allies

Another major objective of U.S. nuclear forces is to deter nuclear attacks on U.S. allies, especially Germany and Japan. In Europe, this issue has generally arisen in the context of the Soviet use of nuclear threats against Germany in a crisis or the initiation of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union

against NATO forces in the field during a conventional war in Europe. In Asia, it is discussed under the rubric of the U.S. nuclear umbrella over Japan and is generally understood to be designed to prevent Russia or China (or more recently the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or DPRK) from coercing Japan by threatening the use of nuclear weapons.

Less attention has been paid to the deployment requirements of successful deterrence of nuclear attacks against allies. The assumption appears to be that an active alliance relation, coupled with the presence of U.S. military forces on the ally's territory, is the key to deterrence. In Europe, it was felt (and is still felt by some) that the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in the theater plays an important role in preventing nuclear threats or use. Furthermore, Japan leaders did not believe that they had the option of permitting nuclear weapons to be stored on their territory and had no reason to encourage debate on the issue of whether such storage was necessary to make deterrence credible.

Yet the U.S. government's explicit assurance to allies that the United States would respond to nuclear attacks against them by using nuclear weapons is, in my view, not only consistent with-but necessary to-a successful policy to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. If the United States suggested that its security guarantees to treaty partners did not include responding to nuclear attacks with nuclear weapons, the credibility of the guarantee as a whole would be called into question and allies would need to consider whether they needed to develop their own nuclear forces. Moreover, such guarantees are wholly consistent with the notion that the United States cannot ask other states to refrain from developing nuclear weapons unless it limits its own policy to "using" nuclear weapons only for the purpose of deterring their use by others.

4. Deterring Conventional Attacks against Allies

The deterrence of conventional attacks against allies is often lumped together with the deterrence of nuclear attacks on allies with the label "extended deterrence," and the United States has reserved the right to use nuclear weapons in response to conventional attacks on its allies by states possessing nuclear weapons or allied with a nuclear weapons state.

It is important to keep these two objectives separate, since the effort to deter conventional attacks by nuclear threats has important implications for efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. If the United States is asserting the right to initiate the use of nuclear weapons to respond to conventional attacks on its allies, it is not in a credible position to insist that other states, not protected by U.S. guarantees, give up the right to use nuclear weapons in response to conventional aggression against their territory.

Historically, the United States never seriously contemplated the use of nuclear weapons in Asia to deter or respond to conventional attacks except during a brief period at the end of the Eisenhower administration, when U.S. military policy viewed nuclear weapons as "conventional" and presidential guidance provided that the authority to use nuclear weapons would be granted during any protracted conflict. However, since 1961, U.S. policy has emphasized the need to deter **conventional** threats by conventional means and planning has proceeded on that assumption. Nevertheless, the United States has insisted on maintaining the right to respond to a conventional attack against itself or its allies by initiating the use of nuclear weapons, if the state committing the aggression is a nuclear weapons state, is not a party in good standing of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) or is a state allied with a nuclear power. Whether the Clinton administration now applies this exception to its no-first use policy to the DPRK is unclear. The administration does not view North Korea as in full compliance with the NPT in that it may possess some weapons-grade material, and it now believes that in certain situations, North Korea remains allied with Russia or China. This ambiguity notwithstanding, the administration appears to have made separate commitments not to threaten the use of nuclear weapons on the Korean

peninsula.

5. *Detering the Actions of Rogue States or Terrorists*

Detering the actions of rogue states or terrorists is a relatively new objective for U.S. nuclear forces, emerging most clearly in the post-cold war period. It can take a number of different forms.

It is sometimes suggested that warnings of nuclear retaliation should be used to deter rogue states from engaging in the "terrorist" use of nuclear or biological weapons against U.S. territory. Alternately, the threat is said to deter the use of any weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, against U.S. or allied forces or against the civilian population of a state cooperating with the United States in containing a rogue state.¹¹

Most recently, there are hints that nuclear threats might be used to deter conventional attacks by rogue states. Yet even during the Persian Gulf war, when some believed that threats to use nuclear weapons in response to the employment of chemical or biological weapons by Iraq were made and believed, President Bush had ruled out the use of nuclear weapons.¹²

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6 See Statement of the Honorable Walter B. Slocombe, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, before the U.S. Senate Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation, and Federal Services (12 February 1997), in which he asserts that "for the foreseeable future, we will continue to need a reliable and flexible deterrent." According to Slocombe, this is "entirely consistent with NATO's Strategic Concept which.... states the fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear force is to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war and 'nuclear weapons make a unique contribution in rendering the risks of aggression incalculable and unacceptable.'"Back

7 R. Jeffrey Smith, "Clinton Directive Changes Strategy On Nuclear Arms; Centering On Deterrence, Officials Drop Terms for Long Atomic War," *The Washington Post* (7 December 1997): A1. Back

8 See statement of Edward L. Warner III, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Threat Reduction, before the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee (31 March 1998). The same strategies are reiterated in the U.S. Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen's *Annual Report to the President and the Congress* (1998). According to chapter five of this report, a new Presidential Decision Directive, issued in November 1997, states that "The United States will not rely on a launch-on-warning nuclear retaliation strategy (although an adversary could never be sure the United States would not launch a counterattack before the adversary's nuclear weapons arrived)." Back

9 START I limits each state to 6,000 nuclear warheads; START II would further reduce capacity to 3,000-3,500 for each state. START II was signed by Presidents George Bush and Boris Yeltsin in January 1993 and ratified by the U.S. Senate in January 1996, but has not yet been ratified by the Russian Duma. Tentative goals for START III have been set by Presidents Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin at 2,000-2,500 warheads per state. David Hoffman, "Troubles Invigorate Debate on START II; Russian Crisis Saps Budget for Missiles," *The Washington Post* (19 November 1998): A42; and Jim Hoagland, "The Russia Deal," *The Washington Post* (22 November 1998): C07. For a detailed summary of START negotiations and nuclear arsenals see: William M. Arkin, Robert S. Norris and Joshua Handler, *Taking Stock: Worldwide Nuclear Deployments 1998* (Natural Resources Defense Council: March 1998). Back

10 This is clearly reflected in Under Secretary Slocombe's assertion, "One cannot survey the list of

rogue states with potential WMD and conclude there are not any threats of a gravity requiring the option of nuclear deterrence." (12 February 1997).Back

11 See, for example, remarks by Anthony Lake, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (24 May 1996), and a press briefing by Mike McCurry and Robert Bell, at the White House (11 April 1996), in which they discuss the treaty of Pelindaba, creating an African nuclear weapons free zone. Back

12 This policy is explicitly stated in James A. Baker III with Thomas M. DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995): 359; also see Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict: 1990-1991* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1993): 288-9; and Colin Powell with Joseph E. Perisco, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1995): 485-6, 503-4. Back

3. American Nuclear Options II

Keeping in mind this range of purposes for which the United States might seek to use its nuclear weapons, there are three basic, available options for U.S. policy: 1) maintaining the basic current U.S. nuclear policy, 2) stigmatizing nuclear weapons and drastically reducing nuclear arsenals and reliance on nuclear weapons, and 3) reemphasizing the role of nuclear weapons, especially in dealing with rogue states.

1. Current U.S. Nuclear Policy

One option for the United States is to maintain its current nuclear policy with minor changes to respond to specific needs. The current policy has remained in place for more than forty years despite an inherent contradiction: on the one hand, the United States has sought to build up its own nuclear capability and to reserve the right to threaten to use-and to use-nuclear weapons whenever it believed that its interests could be advanced by doing so. Yet on the other hand, the United States has sought to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and has taken steps to advance that goal, such as through the NPT, which had the potential to undermine U.S. efforts to rely on nuclear weapons for a range of security needs.¹³

Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war, U.S. nuclear policy still exhibits this tension. While taking steps to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and while drastically reducing its deployment of nuclear weapons abroad and at sea, the United States continues to assert the right to use nuclear weapons first in a variety of situations, including in response to conventional attacks by a nuclear weapons state or any country allied to a nuclear power. Furthermore, nuclear weapons are still stored in Europe and the U.S. government approaches all efforts to create nuclear free zones with caution. Finally, the United States refuses to begin negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons, proclaiming that nuclear deterrence will be an element of U.S. policy for the foreseeable future.¹⁴ It justifies continuing to rely on nuclear weapons in large part on the grounds that its policy of deterrence contributes to nuclear non-proliferation by helping to persuade countries such as Japan and South Korea that they have no need to develop nuclear weapons.

Current policy on the role of nuclear weapons in addressing threats of chemical or biological weapons is not clearly articulated but appears to be roughly this: as a matter of "policy," the administration adheres to the negative security assurances associated with the NPT, which prohibit the United States from threatening to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear state party to the NPT unless it is engaged in aggression supported by a nuclear power. This position would have

ruled out the use of nuclear weapons against Iraq in the Persian Gulf War even if Iraq used chemical or biological weapons. However, the administration has declined to incorporate this "policy" into any binding international legal obligation and intimates that states that use any weapon of mass destruction might be subject to a nuclear attack.¹⁵

The nuclear policy review concluded by the Clinton administration at the end of 1997 reaffirmed these positions, although it did eliminate the requirement to "prevail" in a nuclear exchange with Russia,¹⁶ a change necessary to permit the United States to move to the levels in START III to which the president has already agreed. No one seemed to fear that this adjustment would undermine the credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrent; however, no other aspects of U.S. policy were changed.¹⁷

2. Stigmatizing Nuclear Weapons

Under this option, the United States would remove the ambiguity in its nuclear policy by seeking to stigmatize nuclear weapons.¹⁸ While stopping short of trying to eliminate all nuclear weapons in the short term, the United States would seek a world with a drastically reduced nuclear capability in which no state—including the United States—maintained nuclear weapons on alert or tried to use them for any purpose other than deterring the use of nuclear weapons by others.

Indeed, the first steps that the United States would take if it decided to move decisively in this direction would be to commit itself to a no-first use policy, negotiate no-first use agreements with any of the other nuclear weapons states willing to enter into such agreements (including China, which has proposed such an accord) and offer absolute assurances to all other states that it will not initiate the use of nuclear weapons.

To address the problem of chemical and biological weapons, the United States would make it clear that it would respond to any use of such weapons with overwhelming conventional force and that any military that used these weapons would be defeated on the battlefield and forced to accept an unconditional surrender. Furthermore, the government that ordered such use would be removed from power and those who gave or carried out the orders would be tried by an international tribunal and, if convicted, given an appropriate sentence. These warnings are both a more credible threat than a nuclear attack, which would kill many innocent civilians, and more consistent with a program to deter the use of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction.

Combined with the negative assurances would be positive assurances given through the U.N. Security Council to come to the aid of any country threatened with the use of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction. U.S. allies, including Germany, Japan, and Korea, would be given specific assurances that the United States would use whatever means were necessary to neutralize any threat of nuclear weapons use against them, including— if appropriate and necessary—by using nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack.

In the context of significant progress toward nuclear disarmament, one could imagine reaching a point in which the response even to a nuclear attack on any state was viewed as the responsibility of the international community as a whole, with the U.N. Security Council committed to take action and with individual nuclear weapons states no longer obliged to respond with nuclear weapons. Of course, what has been called "existential" deterrence would still exist. That is, the mere fact that the United States had nuclear weapons and had a treaty commitment to Japan would create the possibility that the United States would use nuclear weapons in response to a **nuclear** attack on Japan, even if it was not committed to doing so. This residual threat exists now and would exist in a world in which the United States had greatly reduced its nuclear arsenal and had committed itself not to use nuclear weapons except in response to a nuclear attack on its own territory. (One could, of course, contemplate going even further and asking the nuclear weapons states to respond with

conventional force even to a nuclear attack on their territory or only to use nuclear weapons when authorized to do so by the U.N. Security Council.)

Nonetheless, I would move very cautiously in this direction for fear of stimulating the very nuclear proliferation that we are trying to avoid. A statement now by the United States that it would rule out the use of nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack on Japan would generate very serious disquiet on the part of Japanese leaders. Many would take it as the first step in a U.S. plan to end its security commitment to Japan. The benefits of such a move are very elusive. I would prefer that the United States move in the other direction, and offer states that desire such a pledge a clear U.S. commitment to come to their aid with nuclear weapons if they are subjected to a nuclear attack.

Furthermore, under the option of stigmatizing nuclear weapons, the U.S. nuclear posture would be redesigned based on the assumption that U.S. forces would not fire on warning and would not fire quickly or massively after a nuclear attack on the United States. Most, if not all, forces would be de-alerted in a transparent way. The remaining nuclear weapons would be brought home from Europe, and the United States would commit itself to only storing nuclear weapons on its own territory. Finally, in negotiations first with Russia and then with the other three nuclear weapons states, the United States would seek to reduce nuclear arsenals to first thousands and then hundreds of weapons, all de-alerted and subject to international inspection.

3. Reemphasizing the Role of Nuclear Weapons

Without abandoning such elements of the de-legitimation effort as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the United States has the option of seeking to enhance the role of nuclear weapons in its security policy.

In choosing this option, first the United States would make clear that the 2,000 to 2,500 strategic warhead limit that it has tentatively agreed to in START III is as low as it is willing to go and that it is not willing to give up its right to strike first or its capacity to quickly inflict massive damage on Russia or any other country. Second, the United States would interpret the CTBT narrowly so as to permit a vigorous stockpile stewardship program and other activities that would lead to the development of new types of nuclear weapons.

It is in addressing rogue states that there appears to be the most pressure to reverse the actions that have reduced the U.S. flexibility to threaten to initiate the use of nuclear weapons, including pledges to refrain from using nuclear weapons first and from developing new types of nuclear weapons. Just as it has declared a group of states to be outside the norms that govern international trade and therefore to be subject to various forms of embargo, the United States could declare that certain states have put themselves outside the framework of the NPT-even if they are members certified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to be in good standing-and are therefore subject to nuclear retaliation.

Thus, under this option, the United States would assert the right to use nuclear weapons first against any state that it labels as a rogue state in response to the use of chemical or biological weapons, to conventional cross border aggression, to military action within its own borders, or to efforts to build weapons of mass destruction.

To back up these threats, the United States would develop and deploy nuclear weapons designed against the forces of these countries and would again station nuclear weapons on ships and in bases around the world to make this threat credible. Finally, under the option of reemphasizing the role of nuclear weapons, the United States would resist further expansion of the nuclear free zone concept.

13 The U.S. government does not view these methods as an inherent contradiction in U.S. nuclear posture. The policy has been to maintain overwhelming nuclear force and to try to prevent other people from getting nuclear weapons. According to Slocombe, there is a "continuing American and global interest in a deliberate process to further reduce - and ultimately eliminate - nuclear weapons," yet the United States is "not yet at the point where we can eliminate our nuclear weapons," and that "A key conclusion of the Administration's National Security Strategy is that 'the United States will retain a triad of strategic nuclear forces sufficient to deter any future hostile foreign leadership with access to strategic nuclear forces from acting against our vital interests and to convince it that seeking a nuclear advantage would be futile.'" (12 February 1997).Back

14 That the United States has no intention of renouncing nuclear deterrence as a viable foreign policy tool is made clear not only in the Slocombe statement cited above, but in a statement by John D. Holum, Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, in which he details the U.S. position on the contentious issue. Holum presented his statement on December 2, 1996, at an international seminar on nuclear disarmament in Kyoto that followed the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Back

15 For example, during a U.S. Department of State Press Briefing on February 5, 1998, in addressing reports that the United States was planning to use nuclear weapons to destroy chemical and biological storage facilities in Iraq, department spokesman James P. Rubin explained that, "If any country were foolish enough to attack the United States, our allies, or our forces, with chemical or biological weapons, our response would be swift, devastating and overwhelming. We have worked hard to fashion non-nuclear responses to the threat or use of weapons of mass destruction, in order to give military commanders and the President a range of options from which to choose. As Secretary Perry said in 1996, we are able to mount a devastating response without using nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, we do not rule out in advance any capability available to us. I stress that these policies have to do with a situation in which the U.S., our allies and our forces have been attacked with chemical or biological weapons."

Likewise, in a U.S. Department of Defense News Briefing on January 27, 1998, department spokesman Kenneth H. Bacon reaffirmed that the United States would "respond decisively with devastating force" in response to weapons of mass destruction. When asked whether nuclear penetrating bombs had been ruled out in addressing buried targets, Bacon responded, "I don't think we've ruled anything in or out in this regard. Our position is that we would respond very aggressively." Back

16 Smith, "Clinton Directive Changes Strategy on Nuclear Arms." Back

17 In Morton H. Halperin, *Nuclear Fallacy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1987): 23-5, I argue that an unwarranted faith of Washington bureaucrats in the effectiveness of nuclear threats "is the greatest single obstacle to the adoption of a new American nuclear policy that would substantially reduce the possibility of nuclear war." Back

18 For an example of a model of nuclear forces consistent with stigmatizing the use and production of nuclear weapons, see Halperin, *Nuclear Fallacy*: 55-60; and for recent reports advocating this approach, see the Report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (August 1996) and The National Academy of Sciences Committee on International Security and Arms Control (CISAC) report, *The Future of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy* (June 1997).Back

4. Japanese Nuclear Options

If these are the basic choices facing the United States, what are the options for Japan? For the purposes of this initial discussion, I leave aside the question of political feasibility in Japan in order to focus on how U.S. policy choices on nuclear weapons and on Korean unification would affect the domestic political climate in Japan and the views of Japanese leaders on what nuclear posture it should adopt. Japanese nuclear options thus include: 1) maintaining the status quo, 2) taking a leadership role in the world to stigmatize nuclear weapons, and 3) nuclear armament.¹⁹

1. Status Quo

Widespread revulsion against nuclear weapons in Japan in response to the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has forced the Japanese government to announce the three non-nuclear principles that Japan "will not manufacture or possess nuclear weapons or allow their introduction into" Japan and that Japan will adhere to the NPT and the CTBT.²⁰ In its rhetoric, Japan is in the forefront of the effort to eliminate nuclear weapons. It has consistently refused to allow the United States to store nuclear weapons on its territory and successfully negotiated in 1972 the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Okinawa in 1972 prior to reversion-albeit with a secret pledge by Prime Minister Sato to President Nixon that Japan would permit their return in a dire emergency.²¹

At the same time, Japanese governments have done what was politically possible to support U.S. nuclear policy while quietly putting Japan into a position to be able to quickly develop nuclear weapons and sophisticated missile delivery systems should a consensus develop in Japan that this needed to be done.²² Specifically, Japan's cooperation with the United States includes support for U.S. positions on nuclear issues such as the CTBT and a refusal to join informal international coalitions seeking to press for more vigorous steps toward the elimination of nuclear weapons. Documents recently released by the U.S. government furthermore demonstrate that the Japanese government acquiesced to the U.S. practice of having U.S. ships with nuclear weapons call at Japanese ports.²³ Yet while it insists that it is determined not to develop nuclear weapons, Japan has a peaceful nuclear power program that generates weapons-grade plutonium, and it also has a space exploration program; many believe that there are Japanese officials who know exactly how to turn these activities into a program that produces nuclear weapons mated to effective delivery systems,²⁴ although there is disagreement about how quickly Japan could have a truly functional nuclear force. However, it remains true that other than the NPT, Japan, unlike Germany, has not entered into any international agreements that commit it to abstaining from developing nuclear weapons.

2. Stigmatizing Nuclear Weapons

Japan could clearly do much more to reinforce its own commitment to not developing nuclear weapons and to taking a lead in moving the world toward the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Under the option of stigmatizing nuclear weapons, Japan would restructure its peaceful nuclear power program so that it does not produce weapons-grade plutonium. Existing stocks of plutonium would be processed in Japan under effective international safeguards. Furthermore, Japan would make its nuclear power and missile programs much more transparent and take steps to make it harder to channel them into a nuclear weapons program. Japan would also take the lead in negotiating a nuclear weapons free zone in Northeast Asia that would commit Japan to neither develop nuclear weapons nor permit them to be deployed on Japanese territory.²⁵ In addition, Japan

would rely on the promise of the five nuclear weapons states to not threaten to use nuclear weapons against states in the nuclear free zone and to respond if any state made such a threat. The U.S.-Japan security treaty would remain in effect with its residual commitment by the United States to respond appropriately to any threats against Japan.

Finally, Japan would join other non-nuclear states in pressing for more substantial nuclear disarmament by the nuclear weapons states and would urge the United States to negotiate a bilateral no-first use agreement with China and with Russia, at least in East Asia.

3. Nuclear Armament

Japan's third option is to renounce the NPT and become a nuclear weapons state. It is now difficult to imagine the circumstances under which any Japanese government would pursue nuclear armament, but it is not inconceivable.²⁶ More important, current U.S. policy is justified in no small part by the argument that the United States is doing what is necessary to prevent Japan from going nuclear.²⁷ Moreover, Japan's development of nuclear weapons would certainly signal and accelerate the collapse of the NPT process. No one should take for granted the Japanese commitment over the long run to refrain from developing nuclear weapons.

Many Japanese concerned with international affairs have long chafed under the U.S. alliance, longing to end the treaty and reassert Japan's role as an independent great power. They have been prevented from implementing such a policy by the recognition that barring major changes in the world situation, the Japanese people would not tolerate such action. Moreover, they recognize that the United States and other states in the region would react very negatively to such a step.

However, one major impediment to a Japanese independent nuclear posture was removed with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Japanese leaders had recognized that they could not match the very large nuclear forces of the Soviet Union; now, they believe that over time, Japan could match the nuclear forces of Russia and China-neither of which can spend significantly more than Japan on nuclear forces. In fact, most analysts expect the Russian nuclear force to be reduced far below the levels permitted by the START agreements with the next ten years.

As the cold war came to an end, some Japanese leaders appeared to give serious consideration to ending the alliance with the United States and to developing an independent Japanese role in Asia, including the development of an independent nuclear capability.²⁸ A consensus rejecting this option has now reemerged in Japan. However, Japan leaders will still carefully assess the international situation, including China's relations with Japan and with the United States, in particular. A close Sino-American relation could lead Japan to question the continued credibility of U.S. security guarantees against China. Alternatively, a withdrawal of U.S. power from Asia, coupled with the continuing growth of Chinese military (including nuclear) capability, could have the same result.

The obvious question raised by the discussion of U.S. and Japanese nuclear policy options is their impact on each other. Is Japan more likely to go nuclear if the United States chooses to stigmatize nuclear weapons or if the United States increases its reliance on nuclear weapons? There is substantial disagreement on this question, rooted in a general difference about the relation of U.S. nuclear policy and efforts to slow nuclear proliferation around the world.

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19 For a discussion of the major positions in current Japanese discourse on the country's proper role -especially with

regard to nuclear weapons - in the post-cold war era, see Mike M. Mochizuki, "Japanese Security Policy," in *The U.S.-Japan Security Alliance in the 21st Century* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1997): 26-42. Back

20 Prime Minister Eisaku Sato made this pledge - known as the Three Non-Nuclear Principles - on February 5, 1968, after the deployment of a U.S. carrier from a Japanese port in retaliation against the capture of a spy ship by the North Korea. The notion was formalized by the Japanese Diet on November 24, 1971. Back

21 Agreed Minute to Joint Communique of United States President Nixon and Japanese Prime Minister Sato Issued on November 21, 1969, Top Secret, Washington, DC, two pages. See the discussion of this issue in the memoirs of Kei Wakeizumi. (English translation on file in the author's office.) Back

22 Prime Minister Sato secretly commissioned a study to examine whether it was possible and desirable to develop independent nuclear forces. It concluded that although there were no technical impediments to doing so, developing nuclear weapons would prove too costly. See "Nuclear Armament Possible But Unrealistic: Secret Reports," *Asahi*, November 13, 1994, pp.1. Back

23 According to *NSSM 5 - Japan*, Secret, U.S. National Security Council (spring 1969): 25, "Japan now acquiesces in transit by naval vessels armed with nuclear weapon. This right would extend automatically to Okinawa. (This is sensitive and closely held information)."; also see Masashi Iiyama, "U.S. Report: Japan Allowed N-Arms in Territorial Waters," *The Daily Yomiuri* (15 May 1997): 2. Back

24 For example, Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata admitted to reporters that "it's certainly the case that Japan has the capability to possess nuclear weapons but has not made them." *Kyodo News Service*, Tokyo (17 June 1974). Back

25 For details on such a nuclear-free zone, see Harrison, *Japan's Nuclear Future*: 27-8, 38-9. Back

26 To read of circumstances under which Japan could possibly go nuclear, see Harrison, *Japan's Nuclear Future*: 33-4. Back

27 "...in the eyes of the anti-nuclear majority [in Japan], the U.S. nuclear umbrella has a more immutable, transcendent value precisely because it provides a rationale for keeping Japan non-nuclear," Harrison, *Japan's Nuclear Future*: 25. Back

28 Harrison, *Japan's Nuclear Future*: 15-8. Back

5. U.S. Nuclear Policy and Japanese Nuclear Weapons

The debate within the U.S. government about how to address the problem of nuclear proliferation remains unresolved thirty years after the United States agreed with the Soviet Union to sponsor a non-proliferation treaty.

Originally, supporters of the non-proliferation treaty within the U.S. government argued that the only way to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons was to establish an international norm that states should not develop nuclear weapons. In order to secure wide acceptance of such an agreement, the United States and the other nuclear powers needed to agree to certain conditions, including a commitment not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against states that had renounced the right to make nuclear weapons; in turn, such states had to be assured of cooperation in developing nuclear power and receive at least minimal security guarantees against nuclear

threats. Finally, the United States had to agree to move toward reducing its reliance on nuclear weapons and its own nuclear arsenal and to accept limits-to be embodied in the non-proliferation treaty-on its ability to share information about nuclear weapons with its allies.

It was this last provision that provoked the most controversy within the U.S. government. Skeptics stressed the importance of sharing nuclear information and the operational planning and control of nuclear weapons with U.S. allies. From this perspective, the way to prevent key U.S. non-nuclear allies, Germany and Japan, from developing nuclear weapons was to maintain a robust nuclear capability and to seek a way in which to draw those two nations into participating in the decisions regarding those nuclear forces. In Europe, this led to proposals for a Multinational Force (MLF) in which a group of nations, including Germany, would provide military personnel for a ship equipped with U.S. nuclear armed missiles; others believed that the option of France sharing its nuclear force with Germany needed to be maintained. Furthermore, in what was then known as the Far East, the focus during the 1950s and 1960s was on "educating the Japanese about nuclear weapons" so that Japan would permit the stationing of nuclear weapons on its territory and participate in the planning for their use along with South Korea, which by 1958 had agreed to allow the United States to store nuclear weapons in its territory.

Not surprisingly, this conflict within the U.S. government resulted in a compromise. The United States negotiated the NPT but did not, at least in the first years of the Nixon administration, press other nations to sign. It negotiated a treaty with no negative or positive security assurances and gave only the most minimal assurances through the U.N. Security Council. Restrictions on sharing nuclear information were left loose enough to permit both the NATO Nuclear Planning Group to continue and the United States to train willing allies in the use of nuclear weapons. Finally, commitments to reduce nuclear forces in that treaty were consigned to a hortatory preamble.

Today, the school of thought that had opposed the NPT as an effective means by which to prevent nuclear proliferation still argues that U.S. enemies must be deterred with threats and allies assured by a robust U.S. nuclear arsenal backed by a clear willingness to employ nuclear weapons. They view the commitment in the NPT to move toward nuclear disarmament as mere rhetoric and, in any case, well-satisfied by the steps the United States has taken-and continues to take-to reduce its nuclear arsenal both unilaterally and by international agreement.

I believe that this approach is profoundly misguided as it applies broadly, but here I want to focus only on Northeast Asia in general and on Japan in particular.

Throughout the postwar period, Japanese leaders have quietly debated the question of whether Japan should develop an independent nuclear capability.²⁹ This debate was **not** centered around the credibility of the U.S. deterrent. Given the lack of any clear threat to Japan and the importance of the United States to Japan, few Japanese leaders have argued that more needed to be done to prevent nuclear threats to Japan. Given the conventional balance in Asia, the question of whether nuclear weapons should be used in response to conventional attacks has never been in the forefront of the debate. Neither the Russians nor the Chinese could have any doubt that an attack on Japan would be viewed as an attack on the United States, and so the U.S. nuclear threat was seen as a sufficient deterrent.

In fact, while some Japanese have doubted the credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrent,³⁰ most Japanese who leaned toward advocating a Japanese nuclear capability took this position because they believed such a capability would permit Japan to end the security relation with the United States and to assert an independent role in the world. Yet despite the deep desire of many Japanese leaders to regain Japanese independence, there were three major obstacles to moving in this direction. First, the Japanese people would not tolerate the massive increase in defense spending,

the assertion of an independent military role, or, most of all, the development of nuclear weapons. Second, the reaction in the rest of Asia would pose a very serious threat to Japan's economic goals as well as to its security. Finally, Japanese leaders recognized that it would be very difficult to develop a secure second strike capability against the Soviet Union.

Even if Japan had developed nuclear weapons, it still might have needed the U.S. nuclear deterrent to ensure that the Kremlin was not tempted to launch a surprise attack. Thus, developing nuclear weapons would still have left two problems. First, since the very purpose of developing a nuclear capability was to assert independence from the United States, it made no sense to simultaneously seek to rely on the U.S. deterrent. Second, given the U.S. anti-proliferation posture, Japan risked losing the protection of the U.S. deterrent if it set out on this path. Therefore, Japan saw no choice but to sign onto the NPT and later to accept making it permanent, while quietly maintaining its options so that it could respond if the international and domestic situation made it possible for Japan to acquire a nuclear capability.

The end of the cold war changed this situation in only one way. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the drastic decline in the Russian economy- and hence the resources available for defense-meant that it became possible for Japan to develop its own nuclear deterrent sufficient to deter both Russia and China. However, the other impediments to moving forward remain.

We come then to the fundamental question: which U.S. nuclear posture is most likely to solidify the Japanese non-nuclear posture?

U.S. policy continues to be premised on the assumption that further reductions in the U.S. nuclear arsenal, accompanied by no-first use guarantees, would increase the chances that Japan would develop nuclear weapons. It is true that the official Japanese establishment would be momentarily disconcerted if the United States moved in this direction, but that concern would soon vanish and would not, in any case, create a situation in which Japan could and would move to develop nuclear weapons.

Likewise, efforts by the United States to expand the role of nuclear weapons would not in and of itself create pressure in Japan to develop nuclear weapons. However, if it led to the collapse of the non-proliferation regime and the development of nuclear weapons by a number of other states in the area, especially a unified Korea, a consensus might well develop in Japan that it needed to exercise its option. Such a consensus might also develop if there was no further progress in reducing nuclear weapons and if China continued to improve and expand its nuclear forces.

Thus the conditions that might lead Japan to develop nuclear weapons would be:

- 1. a consensus in Japan that the United States could no longer be counted on to defend Japan;
- or**
- 2. the development of a Korean nuclear capability;
- or**
- 3. a lack of progress in nuclear disarmament, coupled with an expansion of the Chinese nuclear capability.

If the United States chose to instead further stigmatize nuclear weapons, Japan would have great difficulty resisting such efforts, as it has been thus far unable to stay outside the non-proliferation regime, whatever the private misgivings of its bureaucracy and political leadership.

Thus, if the United States took the lead in suggesting a Northeast Asian nuclear free zone,³¹ Japan would not find it possible to resist. (A number of different suggestions have been made for the scope of such a nuclear free zone. I have in mind the traditional notion of a zone covering only a region of states that are not nuclear weapons states. Thus the area covered by the treaty would include North and South Korea and Japan, and possibly Taiwan and Mongolia, but not any part of the territory of China, Russia, or the United States. The nuclear weapons states would be asked to sign a protocol promising to respect the region and abstain from threatening to use nuclear weapons against any state party to the treaty.)

Moreover, the concern of Japanese leaders about the future direction of a unified Korean government creates an opportunity for the United States to involve Japan in an effort to resolve the situation in a way that would both strengthen the non-nuclear status of Japan and Korea and ensure that the bilateral alliances between those two countries and the United States survive the unification of Korea.

In order to seize this opportunity, the United States should seek to involve all countries with interests in Northeast Asia in a cooperative security process that would result in advancing a range of U.S. objectives, including strengthening the worldwide non-proliferation regime. The first step is to define U.S. objectives in Northeast Asia now and after Korean unification.

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29 Harrison, *Japan's Nuclear Future*: 12-3. Back

30 Kumao Kaneko, former director of the Nuclear Energy Division of the Foreign Ministry, argues in "Japan needs no Nuclear Umbrella," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (March/April, 1996): 46-51, that the "United States would be highly unlikely to use its nuclear arms to defend Japan unless American forces in Japan were exposed to extreme danger." Back

31 For details of the effort being made to establish such a zone, refer to the report sponsored by the Center for International Strategy, Technology, and Policy, University of Georgia, Atlanta "Toward a Limited Nuclear Free Zone in Northeast Asia: Senior Panel's Deliberation on a Draft Initial Agreement" (1995). Back

6. Options for the Korean Peninsula

The turmoil in the South Korean economic system and the election of Kim Dae Jung, and North Korea's missile tests and mysterious tunnels-all amid efforts to improve bilateral relations-have produced an extraordinarily fluid and uncertain situation. South Korea is no longer a confident economic giant facing a North in a state of economic collapse. Furthermore, the South now has a leader who is much more open to direct talks with the North in an effort to implement the far-reaching North-South accord negotiated in 1991 and has explicitly disavowed any effort to destabilize the North Korean regime.

The four power talks provide a framework in which China and the United States can consider their overall security interests in the region.

There remain a number of different scenarios for the Korean peninsula. Three are laid out here to

help to illuminate key security issues, including the question of the continuing role of nuclear weapons in the region: 1) "muddling through," 2) a Chinese-ROK agreement, and 3) a cooperative security agreement.

1. Muddling Through

The debate in the United States and South Korea about whether a quick collapse in the North is possible and desirable is largely over, although there remain those who hope for a "managed" collapse in a brief period.³² The economic crisis has heightened concern about the impact of unification on South Korea. Moreover, the dangers of a sudden collapse are now better understood.

It now appears that the most likely scenario for Korea is one of "muddling through." Under this formula, no effort would be made to destabilize the North and the two Koreas would slowly implement the agreement between them, leading to increased exchanges and recognition. In parallel, the United States would remove its restrictions on trade and gradually normalize relations with the North.

In this scenario, despite this approach, the North could still quickly collapse. If it did not, North and South would gradually adopt the slogan of "one country-two systems" and move very slowly toward unification.

2. China-ROK Alliance

Because South Korean leaders fear that China might feel compelled to go beyond the aid it is now providing to the North and to militarily intervene to prevent a collapse that would lead to a unified government allied with the United States and hostile to China, they have begun to consider another option in which unification would come about as a result of a bilateral understanding between the ROK and the PRC.

With this approach, the ROK and the PRC would improve their relations in order to forestall a clash between the two countries. South Koreans wish to avoid Chinese intervention, which would again divide Korea, and the Chinese goal of preventing a unified Korea from being part of an anti-Chinese alliance could lead to an agreement between the two countries. In this scenario, China would agree not to intervene to prevent unification of the entire peninsula and Korea would agree to end the alliance with the United States and to expel U.S. troops once Korea was unified.

3. Cooperative Security Arrangement

Under the cooperative security scenario, the United States would discuss with all major powers that have interests focused on the Korea peninsula what their security concerns are and seek to define a process and an outcome that were consistent with the interests of each state. It would then initiate the agreed process in a transparent manner to bring about the agreed outcome, which would be consistent with the interests of each state, including the desire of South Korea to see a process of gradual unification unfold.

The first step in that process would be for the United States to define its own interests in Northeast Asia both now and after the unification of Korea. Obviously, one key objective would be to prevent further nuclear proliferation and to ensure that if there were any nuclear weapons or weapons-grade fissionable material in North Korea, they were destroyed.

I believe this approach is the one that the United States should follow, not only to address the problem of security on the Korean peninsula, but to minimize the danger that Japan will seek to develop nuclear weapons.

32 For an enumeration of possible scenarios for the precipitation of Korean unification, see "Search for a Framework for ROK-US Relations," Report of a Conference sponsored by The Seoul Forum for International Affairs and the Council on Foreign Relations, Seoul (1997) 16-7. [Back](#)

7. Cooperative Security in Northeast Asia before and after Korean Unification

What are the key elements of the security situation that the United States should seek to put in place in Northeast Asia to improve the security situation, including permitting the peaceful unification of Korea? One way to approach this question is to ask what situation the United States would like to see following Korean unification. I would suggest the following as a point of departure:

- a unified, democratic Korea in all of the territory now controlled by North and South Korea;
- the 1954 U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty continued and applied to the entire country;
- U.S. troops in Korea maintained at current or reduced levels and in a location that avoids unnecessary conflict with civilian needs;
- a Korea that is de-nuclearized and committed by international treaty to remain non-nuclear; and
- satisfaction on the part of China, Japan and Russia that the outcome and the manner in which it was reached are consistent with each country's security interests as it defines them.

The objective of a unified democratic Korea in all of the territory now controlled by North and South Korea goes without saying. It is worth noting that this outcome is by no means assured. It depends at the least in creating a situation in which if the North collapses, China does not feel obliged to intervene in order to ensure a security zone under the control of a friendly government not allied to the United States. Even if China can be persuaded not to intervene to prevent the unification of Korea, a collapse in the north is by no means guaranteed, and unification may be the result of a very slow process of reconciliation between the North and South. Such a process may even include a period in which there is "one country but two systems" or even two governments.

The continuation of the security treaty between Korea and the United States is critical to ensuring that a unified Korea does not feel the need to develop nuclear weapons and does not come under the control of any one of its more powerful neighbors. The presence of some U.S. troops in Korea will make the U.S. deterrent more credible, including the commitment to respond to any nuclear threats against Korea.

In order to gain Chinese assent to this U.S. role in Korea, it will be necessary to provide assurances, particularly about the location of U.S. forces. The Chinese are unlikely to be willing to agree to any arrangement that permits U.S. forces to be stationed at the Chinese border, but might be willing to acquiesce to their presence in the lower part of the peninsula. The agreement on the location of U.S. forces should be accompanied by other confidence building measures (CBMs), including limits on the forces stationed by China and Russia in the border areas close to the Korean peninsula, notification of military exercises by any state in the vicinity of the Korean peninsula, and restrictions on Japanese naval and troop deployments.

Although North Korea regularly threatens to resume its nuclear program if the framework

agreement collapses, both Korean governments are now committed to not developing nuclear weapons. This understanding should be codified in an international treaty creating a nuclear free zone in Northeast Asia, which furthermore would transform the unilateral commitment by the Japanese government to its own people into a binding treaty obligation for Japan. It would also convert a commitment between the two Koreas-which will lapse at the time of unification- into a binding international commitment that would apply to a unified Korean state as well as any intermediate arrangement on the Korean peninsula. Specifically, the proposed treaty would obligate Korea and Japan to not develop nuclear weapons or permit them to be stationed on their territory, and provision might be made for international inspection of the obligations of the signatory states. The three nuclear powers would furthermore agree not to threaten to use-or to use-nuclear weapons against Korea or Japan or to station nuclear weapons in the territory covered by the treaty.

The value of the agreement could be enhanced by including a pledge by the three nuclear weapons states not to use nuclear weapons first against each other in the region. As with other nuclear free zones, the nuclear weapons states would remain free to have ships, including submarines, armed with nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles operate in the zone. Taiwan could also be covered by the treaty by having both the PRC and the ROC on Taiwan agree that nuclear weapons will not be stored on the island, that the government of Taiwan will not develop nuclear weapons and that no state will attack Taiwan with nuclear weapons-all without prejudice to existing positions on the political status of Taiwan.

The objective of satisfying China, Russia and Japan with both the process and the outcome is the most novel and the most important suggestion made here.

The 1994 "Agreed Framework" between the United States and North Korea-which was aimed at resolving the nuclear proliferation threat from the North and thus at contributing to stability on the peninsula-came about only because the United States, South Korea and Japan were willing to seriously consider North Korea's security interests as its leaders defined them and then enlist the support of China and Russia.³³ A similar but more explicit and transparent process is necessary to insure that Korea is eventually unified peacefully and that the result is to strengthen, rather than weaken, the sense of trust among the great powers in the region.

If the United States is truly interested in "engaging" China, it should work hard to draw it into a serious dialogue on cooperative security in Northeast Asia and to establish a security framework in which all key countries with interests in the region could seek to find solutions reflecting a cooperative security approach.

The first step would be to discuss bilaterally with each country U.S. long-term security interests, particularly as they relate to Korea. If agreement can be reached on the desired end points, then discussion can begin on what steps should be taken in the short term to ensure a peaceful transition on the peninsula.

The concerned outside parties should agree to not militarily intervene in North Korea and to consult urgently about appropriate steps in the case of a collapse of order in the North. At the same time, they should agree not to seek to isolate the North economically or politically but to provide it with humanitarian assistance based on needs determined by the appropriate international institutions. They should also agree to lift remaining economic sanctions and to provide assistance for economic development if the North institutes necessary reforms in its economic system.

One should not minimize the difficulties of moving in this direction. North Korea might easily see these steps as an effort to create a broader coalition aimed at thwarting its objectives in the region. China continues to be wary of any proposals for multilateral security cooperation in Asia. South

Korea and Japan remain suspicious of each other and reluctant to cooperate on security issues. There is little sense of urgency of the kind usually needed to create new institutions or new ways of looking at issues. However, I believe that all of these impediments can be overcome if the United States is clear on what it is trying to accomplish and exercises sustained leadership.

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33 A comprehensive treatment of the 1994 "Agreed Framework" can be found in Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998): 195-204. Back

8. A Regional Security Structure

Out of the discussions on Korea as well as nuclear issues and other security issues in Northeast Asia might grow a consensus on the need to create first informally and then more formally a new international forum for discussing the security problems of Northeast Asia.³⁴ Such a forum might be patterned after the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), a pan-European security organization that was established as a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in Europe. Like the OSCE, a Northeast Asia Cooperative Security Organization (NACSO) could be designed to promote cooperative solutions to security problems through decisions achieved by consensus, contributing toward the prevention of conflict among powers with interests in Northeast Asia, as well as toward providing the means to address threats to international peace and regional security. Structurally, it might have a small, informal secretariat that helps set the agenda for meetings of heads of government as well as of foreign and defense ministers and chiefs of staffs.

This organization would provide a venue to discuss arms control and confidence-building measures for the region, including those related to nuclear weapons. Its agenda in this regard would include the measures directly relating to the Korean peninsula as well as more general security issues, including the proposed nuclear free zone, playing an important role even if agreement could not be reached on issues related to the Korean peninsula. The PRC would almost certainly resist formal membership for the ROC on Taiwan or any explicit discussion of what it views as a domestic issue. Still, discussions of security issues related to Taiwan might occur at the margins of these meetings.

The proposed Northeast Asia Cooperative Security Organization would not seek to supplant existing collective security treaties, including the bilateral treaties between the United States and Korea and Japan. Rather, these treaties would be viewed as a second line of defense to be activated only if these cooperative security measures failed. That is, the United States, Japan and the ROK would undertake to consult with the NACSO first in the event of a security threat in the region and only resort to consultation within the framework of these treaties if this effort failed. Military cooperation, joint planning and military exercises would be permitted after notification and other measures to avoid misunderstandings. The bilateral security treaties would be accepted by all the states in the region as not directed at any other states. For Japan and South Korea, they would provide assurances against military threats from China or Russia. The other states would accept the treaty as a necessary means to limit the armament of Japan, Korea and Taiwan, including their continued adherence to the NPT and acceptance of a nuclear free zone.

To summarize in more concrete terms, the security landscape that the United States should strive for in the unified Korea would include:

- a united, democratic Korea allied to the United States and committed to not developing nuclear weapons;
- U.S. forces stationed in Korea pursuant to the bilateral security treaty;
- an international agreement on security on the Korean peninsula that limits the deployment of U.S. troops to below the 40th parallel and provides for confidence- building measures, including notification of military exercises by any state in the vicinity of the Korean peninsula and restrictions on Chinese and Russian troops in the area bordering Korea, and on Japanese naval and troop deployments;
- a treaty that creates a nuclear free zone in Northeast Asia that covers Korea, Taiwan and Japan and prohibits the nuclear weapons states from storing nuclear weapons in the area or using them against the non-nuclear states or each other in the zone covered by the treaty; and
- a Northeast Asia Cooperative Security Organization that brings the key players together to discuss these issues.

Success in negotiating this set of arrangements would not only increase the chances for the peaceful unification of the two Korean states and for cooperative security in Asia, but it would make a major contribution toward preventing nuclear proliferation in Northeast Asia and throughout the world.

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34 For a discussion on the role of regional structures in Northeast Asia as a mechanism for peace, see Kyung-Won Kim, "Maintaining Asia's Current Peace," *Survival* (Winter 1997-1998): 53-4. Back

9. Commentary by Mitsuru Kurosawa

The following comments are by Mitsuru Kurosawa, Professor of International Law and International Relations, Osaka School of International Public Policy.

"The Nuclear Dimension of the U.S.-Japan Alliance" by Mr. Morton H. Halperin contains excellent analysis and proposals on U.S. nuclear policy as well as Japanese nuclear policy. As it deals directly with Japanese nuclear issues and contains useful and convincing suggestions, it should be read by as many Japanese experts as possible.

I agree with his analysis on the conditions that might lead Japan to develop nuclear weapons; a lack of U.S. security credibility, Korean nuclear capability, and a lack of progress in nuclear disarmament.

In this context, he seems to recommend a U.S. policy of stigmatizing nuclear weapons. His argument for no-first use of nuclear weapons is highly appreciated. He emphasizes many times that the only utility of nuclear weapons should be to deter an attack by nuclear weapons, either against the United States or against an allied state. He also recommends responding by conventional weapons against biological and chemical weapons, which would be a clear guidance for the U.S. Government.

His suggestion that the response to a nuclear attack on any state would be viewed in the future as the responsibility of the international society as a whole must be taken into account when we discuss a deep reduction or elimination of nuclear weapons.

On Japanese nuclear options, he said, "Japan has a peaceful nuclear power program that generates weapons-grade plutonium." This analysis is not correct. Japan is now generating not weapons-grade but reactor-grade plutonium, which could be used for a nuclear explosion, although it is less suitable for that than weapons-grade plutonium. Existing stocks of plutonium are also processed under effective international IAEA safeguards.

His recommendation for a cooperative security scenario for the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia is agreeable to me as the best way to deal with security issues in this area. However, I can not accept all of the details of his idea. A unified, democratic and denuclearized Korea is a commonly accepted goal and should be pursued.

I have some doubts whether his idea that the 1954 U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty be continued and applied to the entire country and that U.S. troops in Korea be maintained after unification will be acceptable to China and Russia. How is the United States going to give satisfaction to them?

I completely agree with his opinion that a Northeast Asia nuclear weapons free zone including the Korean Peninsula and Japan should be established. His suggestion, "if the United States took the lead in suggesting a Northeast Asian nuclear free zone, Japan would not find it possible to resist", is very interesting and should be pursued, because Japan is reluctant to take a lead on this issue as it is afraid of U.S. opposition. The measure could be taken even before the reunification of Korea.

A Northeast Asia Cooperative Security Organization is worth discussing more seriously because current bilateral diplomacy in this area can not cope well enough with security issues in the 21 century.

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10. Commentary by Pat Morgan

The following comments are by Patrick M. Morgan, Professor of Global Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of California, Irvine.

Morton Halperin's discussion of the nuclear dimension of the US-Japan relationship is a stimulating analysis of a subject not often frontally addressed. Since Japan has no nuclear weapons or announced plans to obtain them, and since the US no longer has any nuclear weapons on its ships visiting Japan, the nuclear dimension of the alliance is seldom considered. The Halperin paper carefully explores possible future scenarios under which nuclear weapons could spread and is an imaginative and thoughtful proposal for avoiding the more dangerous possibilities.

The review of US objectives in maintaining nuclear weapons is concise yet complete, as is the analysis of the possible options for US policy, in the abstract, vis-a-vis nuclear weapons in the future. However, the suggestion that the US is firmly entrenched in the first of these options is perhaps a bit misleading. Clearly the US has not renounced all its nuclear 'weapons, reserves the right to use them first, and suggests that it might use them against any state that used WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction). It also plans to maintain a large stockpile of nuclear weapons components, giving it the option of creating a much larger arsenal on short notice. But it is also clear that the US has been trying to stigmatize nuclear weapons in some ways. It has agreed to huge cuts in its nuclear arsenal, to negotiate still further cuts, and to halt nuclear testing. It is investing very heavily in advanced conventional forces for military contingencies around the world, trying in part to reduce to nil the likelihood it will ever need nuclear weapons to achieve its military objectives. It has convened them

into weapons of last resort in some ways, in its own policies and in NATO. It has withdrawn them from Korea and has largely abandoned a nuclear threat to North Korea. It is the bulwark of very vigorous nonproliferation policies under the UN or NATO, alongside its own policies, which are much more intrusive than in the past. Thus the US policy is closer to a blend of the first two options.

Next, it is undoubtedly important that the US continue to resist any nuclear proliferation in Northeast Asia, and Japan would be a good candidate for this if the entire regional security situation disintegrated. However, the impression the paper creates - despite explicit language to the contrary at times - is that Japan is poised to develop nuclear weapons if US policy moves in the wrong direction (with a reported debate in the US as to which direction that would be). In fact, the obstacles to Japan becoming a nuclear power are much greater than this implies, particularly in view of the newly refurbished alliance. Japan does not like the idea of nuclear weapons and missiles so close by, in Korea, but it has put up with nearby nuclear weapons (Russian, Chinese) for years - relying on US nuclear deterrence - so it is unlikely to react quite differently now. And Japan has been careful to try to avoid antagonizing the entire region with its military policies, so it would not readily take the one step guaranteed to overturn all regional security considerations and arrangements.

In the same vein it is hard to see why, as the paper suggests, Japan might now feel more concerned about a possible non-nuclear US response to a nuclear attack on Japan. Japan lived for years with the fact that a US response to such an attack from the Soviet Union would be so risky as to be of dubious credibility, something that would be much less so now in responding to such an attack from China or North Korea. So the problem should be no larger than it was and is probably smaller. If the US did stick to a non-nuclear response it would almost certainly attempt, through its conventional forces superiority, to eliminate the offending regime, which should therefore be just as deterred as when facing the threat of a nuclear riposte.

Halperin's view that US openness to using nuclear weapons to respond to a nuclear attack on its allies is good for encouraging nonproliferation may be correct, but it does not seem like the best guide for policy. It would seem better to leave ambiguity as to how the US could respond, while continuing to contemplate a non-nuclear but highly effective response if possible, and trying to get its allies to see this as beneficial. (The Flexible Response debate all over again.) In addition, it seems likely that such a decision will always be based on the situation and not on a predetermined policy. The US should plan on: responding without nuclear Weapons if this is feasible; exploring whether this is acceptable in principle to US allies, even if they are attacked with nuclear weapons); seeing if this is acceptable to other states, and whether they would also accept a nuclear response to an initial breach of the nuclear taboo; seeing what the public says at the time.

As for moving toward cooperative security arrangements for Northeast Asia, this is a fine idea, as is the proposal that preliminary talks begin. But my impression, in talking with policy makers and various analysts, is that this sensible course of action is not being employed, even privately, because in various ways it is politically unacceptable. For North Korea, such discussions imply an enlargement of the coalition that it now confronts. For China, the discussions would invite just that reaction by the North and therefore would suggest that, like others, China expects North Korea to collapse. And Japan's involvement would be a good way to arouse ROK and DPRK concerns about its future influence in the area. Such informal and formal discussions are needed, as are the cooperative security management efforts that could emerge, but apparently they can only be pursued as very preliminary in nature (at best) - with the idea of laying the groundwork for a future time when conditions are more propitious. And the most important condition here will likely be emerging evidence that the North is about to collapse.

It may be that the best route to wider discussions about regional security management will be to eventually enlarge the current four-party talks about the peninsula, particularly since Japan and

Russia have been angling to be included in them from the start. And talks like these will certainly be needed when the time comes to implement unification. Whether gradual progress in these kinds of discussions could culminate in a nuclear free zone would then be explored at a later time. To try to seek one now will just multiply the complications involved in the negotiations, both externally and at home for each party, so it should probably be treated as a very late stage objective. The ultimate objective mentioned in the paper, a Northeast Asian Cooperative Security Organization, is highly desirable but will take considerable adjustments, particularly by China, to bring about. It will have to remain a goal for the long term.

Finally, as the paper indicates, keeping the US alliance with a unified Korea is a good idea and is probably feasible. But retaining more than skeletal US forces in Korea, without any serious threat to Korea, is probably impossible, even under the quite imaginative arrangements suggested in the paper to ease the concerns of the neighbors. After all, if all the great powers agree to unification and to a decent relationship with the new state, that would be a major contribution to regional peace and security. They would certainly expect to see US forces then depart; in fact, this seems likely to be a minimal demand for Chinese or Russian support for unification. Otherwise, the US gets what it wants, but what do they get? It would also be difficult to sell a continuing US military presence to Congress and the public, when the threat is gone, and there is Korean nationalist sentiment to consider as well. An arrangement might be possible under which the forces are gradually rather than immediately withdrawn, but their indefinite presence seems unrealistic.

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11. Commentary by Richard Halloran

The following review is by Richard Halloran, an independent writer contributing to American and Asian publications on security matters, US policy in Asia and other Asian and Pacific issues.

Morton Halperin's paper entitled "The Nuclear Dimension of the U.S.-Japan Alliance" is seriously flawed on at least four counts:

1) The author sets up a straw man in examining Japan as a nuclear power when there is little evidence today that any responsible leader or organization in Japan is seriously contemplating having their nation acquire nuclear arms. That calls into question the very reason for writing the paper. If the author knows of evidence that Japan is earnestly giving thought to going nuclear, he should give us as much as he has got because it would make one helluva story. Moreover, Mr. Halperin cannot blithely brush aside "the question of political feasibility" of nuclear weapons in Japan because that is at the very heart of the matter. The economics, technology, and even the military aspects of the issue pale before a political altar in Japan.

2) Throughout the paper are contentions, some of them startling, that cry out for evidence, quotes, and authoritative citations to prove the point. For instance, the author writes: "Until very recently, the U.S. goal was to 'prevail' in such an encounter [nuclear conflict], but this unattainable objective has finally been abandoned." Where is the evidence that is so, where are the quotes to prove the point?

Again, the author states: "U.S. nuclear policy continues to focus on deterring a deliberate surprise attack on the United States, including by threatening, and planning, to launch forces on warning of such an attack." Again, where is the evidence that is so, where are the quotes to prove the point?

Similarly, the author asserts: "Deterring the actions of rogue states or terrorists is a relatively new objective for U.S. nuclear forces, emerging most clearly in the post-cold war period." Where is the evidence that this is a mission for nuclear forces? Who says so? In addition, there appears to be an unresolved contradiction with an earlier statement that US nuclear forces are still intended to deter/defeat Russian nuclear forces.

In another instance, the author writes: "Many Japanese concerned with international affairs have long chafed under the U.S. alliance, longing to end the treaty and reassert Japan's role as an independent great power." This statement requires extensive evidence and quotes, which are not likely to be forthcoming. One should be careful to distinguish between those Japanese who want to end the alliance with the US, who are relatively few, and those Japanese who want, for a variety of reasons, to see US forces reduced or withdrawn from Japan even as Japan retains its treaty with the US. Those are two different things.

(I did not see the footnotes to the paper but even so, questions such as these should have been answered in the text itself.)

3) The paper is further marred by factual inaccuracies. The author writes, for instance, that US nuclear forces are "kept on hair trigger alert." Having been in the operations centers at the former SAC and of NORAD, and in missile control capsules, and having flown in B-52 and B-1 bombers, and having been to sea in SSBN's, I can certify that there is much evidence to the contrary, that US nuclear forces are not on "hair trigger alert." Indeed, some officers who are knowledgeable about nuclear matters have wondered out loud, half-joking but half-serious, whether the US could launch its nuclear weapons in a timely manner, given the extensive human and technical controls on them.

Similarly, Mr. Halperin states: "It [Japan] has consistently refused to allow the United States to store nuclear weapons on its territory and successfully negotiated in 1972 the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Okinawa in 1972 prior to reversion-albeit with a secret pledge by Prime Minister Sato to President Nixon that Japan would permit their return in a dire emergency." That is off the mark. The so-called Transit Agreement permits the US to move nuclear weapons at any time through Japan, including Okinawa, but not to store them there. This was negotiated in 1969 to take effect on the reversion of Okinawa in 1972. Thus a warship or plane carrying nuclear weapons could stop in Japan but must move on without unloading the nukes. This was also not, as the author states elsewhere, a recently discovered development but has been known since before the reversion of Okinawa.

4) Lastly, the paper is flawed by omissions, most notably the effect on the entire nuclear picture and particularly that in Northeast Asia of the India-Pakistan nuclear detonations last year. The lone reference to those catalytic events was: "The most immediate danger is that India and Pakistan will stumble into a nuclear war following their nuclear tests and their apparent determination to deploy nuclear forces." The paper should have addressed how would that affect the national security of the United States and how that would influence nuclear developments in Northeast Asia. Has this made the Japanese more nervous? Have the India-Pakistan explosions affected the North Koreans, who seem ready to resume their nuclear weapons program, or at least to threaten to renew it, on almost any excuse. The paper should also have taken into account the response of China, already a substantial nuclear power.

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The following review is by Don Oberdorfer, a fellow at the John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. Mort Halperin has sought to think through U.S. nuclear weapons policy as it affects Japan and Northeast Asia. His analysis of this complex issue is clear and understandable.

I quite agree with his emphasis on the two most vital considerations which would affect a decision on whether Japan should arm itself with nuclear weapons: (1) U.S. policies which affect Japanese perceptions of the U.S. nuclear umbrella and (2) the situation on the Korean peninsula.

I do not believe -- and never have believed -- that Japan would go nuclear except in reaction to a very powerful shock to its security system, such as loss of confidence in the U.S. protective relationship or development of nuclear weapons in Korea in a manner that seems to threaten Japan.

As for U.S. policy, Halperin has stated the alternatives. I think ambiguity is likely to continue, and I agree with Halperin's caution about the impact of drastic changes.

I am less certain about his views on Northeast Asia. Although the development of a Northeast Asia nuclear free zone is a desirable goal, as is the creation of a regional security organization, I doubt either is possible so long as the current regime in North Korea is in power. The DPRK has rejected participation in regional activities, even on the Track Two level, apparently out of concern that it will be in a disadvantageous position in meetings with stronger regional powers and the ROK. China has been unwilling to participate without North Korea. The only practical possibility I can see at the moment is expansion of the existing four-party talks to bring in Japan and Russia, as proposed by ROK President Kim Dae Jung. This would not be easy but, if it happened, might provide a forum that could ease into regional security issues.

In my view, greater policy emphasis should be placed on working with the ROK to forestall development or possession of nuclear weapons after unification. However and whenever unification occurs, the present ROK is certain to be the dominant power. Currently ROK policy is to remain free of nuclear weapons, but there is a substantial body of opinion -- greater and more powerful than that in Japan -- which does not agree. Throughout the 1990s the United States has been doing all it can to stop or stall the North Korean nuclear weapons program, so far, I believe, successfully. In the longer run it also needs to turn its attention south of the DMZ. In the mid-1970s the United States used strong pressure, bordering on coercion, to halt a South Korean nuclear weapons program. It could not exert the same pressures following unification, although the stakes in the future will be equally high -- in the first instance, the military status of Japan.

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13. Commentary by Monte Bullard

The following comments are by Monte Bullard, a Senior Fellow at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies. Overall I found this paper to be very useful and interesting. The following comments are meant in the spirit of constructive critique:

1. On page four, the list of purposes for the U.S. use of nuclear weapons might include something about having a weapon of "last resort" as is often mentioned.
2. Page 9 - in the second paragraph "the U.S. never seriously contemplated the use of nuclear weapons in Asia" - I thought they were considered or threatened during the Korean War and in the 1958 Quemoy Crisis.

3. Page 14 - in the second paragraph it might be useful to mention the existing Russian - Chinese agreement on "no first use." This whole idea of a U.S. no first use statement or the reasons why it isn't made could be expanded. It is central to the debate between the U.S. and China on strategic issues.

4. Page 17 - third paragraph "certain states have put themselves outside the framework of the NPT" - a very important concept that could be expanded ... is this the definition of a rogue state? If so, what are the criteria for formally agreeing (e.g. between the U.S. and China) on which states are rogue states?

5. One of the main Chinese challenges about the U.S. use of nuclear weapons is that, particularly against "rogue states," the U.S. has more than sufficient conventional power to destroy the rogue state and therefore does not need a nuclear retaliatory capability. Even to retaliate against chemical and biological weapons, nuclear and CB weapons are not needed. From a Chinese perspective the only remaining rationale for retaining NBC weapons is the "China Threat."

6. What is the rationale behind leaving troops in Korea after reunification? It can only be aimed against the Chinese and that would clearly cause friction. Until now the rationale for troops in Korea has been limited to protection from an attack by the North. Would we need to develop a new anti-Chinese rationale for leaving troops there?

7. It will be difficult for the U.S. to provide credible security guarantees to Japan and Korea and at the same time engage the Chinese in a Northeast Asia Security Dialogue. How do we hope to work with China and at the same time treat them as the only potential enemy in every situation?

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14. Commentary by John Endicott

The following comments are by John E. Endicott, Director, Center for International Strategy, Technology, and Policy, and Interim Secretariat of the Limited Nuclear Weapons Free Zone For Northeast Asia. Having just concluded reading the paper by Mort Halperin, I am torn by two responses. First, as a specialist on Japan, especially the nuclear issue, I find the manner in which the argument is presented to the reader far too simplistic. I find myself writing all sorts of commentary, not vermillion to be sure, in the margins that take exception with Dr. Halperin's assertion that Japanese "Leaders" took this or that position on the nuclear issue without, in the main, identifying these "Leaders." To a layperson interested in the nuclear issue, it must almost surely seem after completing this reading that the Japanese government has been much more interested in obtaining a nuclear weapons' capability than is actually the case.

We are not introduced to the legal constraints of the very limiting Atomic Energy Basic Law which in Article 2 states: "The research, development and utilization of atomic energy shall be limited to peaceful purposes and performed independently under democratic management, the result therefrom shall be made public to contribute to international cooperation."¹

Nor are we introduced to the debate leading to the signing in 1970 of the NPT and its ratification on May 24th, 1976. Even in the face of adamant opposition from the Soshinkai (Pure Hearts Society) with high representation from the then important Sato, Fukuda, and Ishii Factions of the LDP, Prime Minister Miki with support from the Chair of the Atomic Energy Commission, the Japan Atomic Industrial Forum (the important commercial lobby), the middle-of-the-road LDP factions (Shiina,

Funada, Mizuta, Nakasone, and Ohira), the opposition parties, and the average Japanese citizen,² realized ratification of the treaty.

In fact, the entire debate, save for some interesting developments since the end of the Cold War, is dismissed by Dr. Halperin by his decision to "leave aside the question of political feasibility in Japan in order to focus on how U.S. policy choices on nuclear weapons and on Korean unification would affect the domestic political climate in Japan and the views of Japanese leaders on what nuclear posture it should adopt."³ This can be effective in closed government circles where the object is often to think the unthinkable and prepare for all options, but to leave aside such a fundamental aspect of the situation in a public commentary is to risk the formulation of pressures on American policy based on incomplete and possibly stereotypic information. It is risky business at best, and need not be resorted to when we are not faced with an imminent crisis.

My second response to Dr. Halperin is to find myself in agreement with many of the actual proposals presented in the paper. I agree with the options available to the United States regarding nuclear policy: Deterring Deliberate Attacks, Preventing Accidental Attacks, Deterring Nuclear and Conventional Attacks on Allies, and Deterring Actions of Rogue States. Especially I agree when he opines that the future role of nuclear weapons in the international system will be primarily determined by what happens in Northeast Asia.⁴ I do take exception, however, with his statement that "no Russian objective in Europe or Asia could possibly rise to the level that Russian leaders would view launching a surprise attack as a rational and justifiable act..."⁵ As events in Yugoslavia evolve in the light of NATO enlargement, one could posit several scenarios involving NATO expansion into the Baltic or unforeseen problems from Serbia that could lead revanchist Russian nationalists into a desperation that would not be "rational" from our standpoint, but clearly so in a reasoning comparable to that of Imperial Japan in 1941. Therefore, an American nuclear force structure capable of responding to that kind of eventuality should not be dismissed.

In the discussion regarding nuclear attacks on allies, the subject of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe is first developed and latter expanded upon in the presentation. I would like to tie this subject with that of the paragraph immediately above. Much could be gained in re-assuring Russia that NATO's enlargement is not threatening, or less so, by revisiting our assumptions of the rationale for storing U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. Some could be re-deployed to the CONUS with the ultimate goal of the entire American nuclear force being either at sea or stored/deployed within the Continental U.S. Clearly, the world can see that technology makes the collocation of nuclear weapons to the theater employed unnecessary. The states of Asia seem to relate to the U.S. nuclear guarantee quite well, even after the consolidation of tactical nuclear weapons by President George Bush in 1991. I would agree with Dr. Halperin that it is time to recognize the safety of the United States for such storage sites, but at the same time, demonstrate some faith in the Russians by coordinating with them, in addition to our NATO Allies, all along the way.

In speaking of U.S. Policy Options with regard to nuclear weapons, three options are identified: Maintain current policy, Stigmatize nuclear weapons further and reduce arsenals, Reemphasize the role of nuclear weapons. While I largely agree with the author, I would suggest adding a fourth option and placing it in the second position. "Reformulate American Non-proliferation Policy" to make it responsive to changed worldwide conditions. In this respect, I would call on the government to reassess its criteria for nuclear free zones, especially those that limit U.S. participation in the creation of new zones, the requirement that all states in a region participate from the beginning in such a zone, and the stipulation that all states in the zone be effectively prohibited from developing or possessing any nuclear devices for whatever purpose.⁶ This would be a positive option that could then build on the existence of regional nuclear free zones worldwide to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and contribute to the creation of cooperative security environments in many

areas of the globe. Dr. Halperin later seems to endorse a greater role for such bodies and agrees that some such structure in Northeast Asia is essential.

In the discussion regarding stigmatizing nuclear weapons, Dr. Halperin makes the point that at some time the U.S. may wish to "... rule out the use of nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack on Japan...."⁷ However, he correctly notes that such an announcement would "generate very serious disquiet on the part of Japanese leaders." I believe, in light of the Japanese response to the 31 August 1998 missile launch that overflowed Japan, this is an understatement in the extreme.

In this same section discussing the stigmatizing of nuclear weapons, a reference is made to the fact that nuclear forces under such a concept "would be de-alerted in a transparent way."⁸ Of course, de-alerting slows down the ability to respond in a timely manner if the situation calls for the employment of nuclear weapons. Allow this reviewer an observation at this point. As effective as de-alerting may be as an observable CBM, there might come a time when the act of nullifying existing de-alerting procedures could readily restore rationality to an adversary's train of thought. The very transparent re-mating of warheads to missiles, or the revocation of de-targeting agreements, or the removal of rocks from a hardened silo cover could all send clear messages in an era of electronic transparency that could be very useful to the decision maker at the highest level.

In the section dealing with reemphasizing nuclear weapons, the point is made that the U.S., in an emergency or escalating crisis, could "again station nuclear weapons on ships and in bases around the world to make this threat credible."⁹ It is clearly 20th Century thinking, not 21st Century thinking, to believe it is necessary to place nuclear weapons anywhere in or next to a theater where nuclear weapons may be employed for them to be effective. All that relocating weapons does is to produce an additional target that must be defended in depth against terrorists or special forces who might otherwise not have such a high value American target nearby. We have many visible conventional systems that are designed specifically to be mobile. Let us use those and keep high value targets within the continental U.S.

In discussing Japan and stigmatizing nuclear weapons, the aspect of making the nuclear power program of Japan more transparent is discussed. I believe I am on very firm ground when I indicate that there is no other peaceful nuclear power program so thoroughly examined by the IAEA as Japan. It is by law open both by the Basic Law and by international agreements, both bilateral and multilateral. I do not know how fissile materials in Japan would be channeled into weapons programs without the world knowing. Probably the greatest safeguard in this case are Japanese scientists themselves.

Under this particular option, Dr. Halperin has Japan taking the lead in developing a nuclear weapons free zone in Northeast Asia. Here I join in saying "amen." Since 1991, the Center for International Strategy, Technology, and Policy of Georgia Tech (not the University of Georgia as noted in Dr. Halperin's Footnote # 31) has been examining, as a means to create a cooperative security regime in Northeast Asia, the notion of a nuclear weapons free zone. Japanese participation has been key since the beginning and has been led by the enlightened vision of Lt. General Toshiyuki Shikata, a retired Ground Self Defense Force Officer.

From the very beginning, however, we have been addressing such a zone as a means to get at the crucial area of creating a cooperative security infrastructure and environment in NEA, the heart of which would be a regional agency that would enforce the agreement, once made, and would serve as the mechanism for regularized and frequent interaction by security specialists of Northeast Asia. It would, in essence, become the first working group in the region that would address a specific security issue. Of course, the hope is that it would move on to other areas once confidence and trust has been achieved in the course of realizing a weapons free zone.

This particular concept was first introduced by CISTP to a Washington, D.C. review panel at the Institute for Defense Analyses in February 1992, then internationally in Beijing the month following. It received a positive reaction from all but the Chinese, even including the North Koreans (DPRK) who were present in addition to representatives from the Republic of Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Canada, Mongolia, Russia, and the United States. A year later, when the DPRK threatened to leave the NPT system, the same Chinese participants who had been so unpleasant turned to indicate that they too could be positively interested in such a notion. They wished a nuclear armed North Korea about as much as everyone else in NEA.

Since then we have held meetings to discuss the characteristics of possible zones, the review group growing from the five general officers invited to Atlanta for five weeks in 1995 to over 70 specialists from the military, diplomatic, nuclear power, and peace activist communities of NEA who met in Helsinki last October with the co-sponsorship of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the interim, we had meetings in Buenos Aires, Bordeaux, and Moscow. Over time, the original concept was modified to recognize realities in NEA, and the term "limited" was added to the title. Just as in the Limited Test Ban Treaty, the group of experts recommended a step-by-step approach. We have just concluded a planning meeting in Shanghai to make certain that the October Tokyo plenary meeting will be the most productive yet. Four major areas of discussion will be examined at this meeting: the need for an international review of nuclear free zone criteria; Theater missile defenses and NEA; bilateral and multilateral structures in NEA; and the role of nuclear weapons in NEA interstate relationships.

While all of our efforts have been on the Track II, unofficial level, this coming October meeting in Tokyo will be co-funded by the Council for Global Partnership of the Japan Foundation and the W. Alton Jones Foundation of the United States. At the meeting in Helsinki last October, Finnish experts on the CSCE process took part ensuring that applicable processes could be introduced to the LNWFZ-NEA (Limited Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in Northeast Asia) experience. As a result, three baskets have been created: the LNWFZ-NEA, Related CBMs, and Economic Incentives to Insure DPRK Participation.

The reader can readily guess that this reviewer is fully supportive of Dr. Halperin's comments for an active Japan leading NEA into a nuclear free zone, with an agency supportive secretariat and possible OSD structures to insure to prepare for cooperative security, not confrontation in NEA. However, when he begins to discuss Japan's third option, that of becoming a nuclear weapon state, he makes some comments and statements that clearly need to be footnoted for substantiation. In the discussion about the collapse of the Soviet Union and the removal of "one major impediment to a Japanese nuclear posture,"¹⁰ he notes: "Japanese leaders had recognized that they could not match the very large nuclear forces of the Soviet Union; now, they believe that over time, Japan could match the nuclear forces of Russia and China...."¹¹ I would very much like to know who said this among "Japanese leaders." Secondly, Dr. Halperin notes that "As the cold war came to an end, some Japanese leaders appeared to give serious consideration to ending the alliance with the United States and to developing an independent Japanese role in Asia, including the development of an independent nuclear capability."¹² This is footnoted as "15-8" from Selig S. Harrison's "Japan's Nuclear Future: The Plutonium Debate and East Asian Security." In checking pages 15-(1)8, the event described deals with December 1971. This quote is so important that it clearly needs a correct cite.¹³ Moreover, the assertion that "A consensus rejecting this option has now reemerged in Japan," is not footnoted. These are all vital to the thrust of the argument at this point. I would like to agree with the author, but I would also like to view his evidence.

The final section of the paper expressly dealing with Japan addresses the nexus between U.S. nuclear policy and Japanese nuclear weapons. Halperin correctly, in this reviewer's opinion,

identifies the three conditions under which Japan might develop nuclear weapons: a failed U.S. relationship; a challenging Korean nuclear weapons capability; and a stalemated non-proliferation environment coupled with an enhanced Chinese threat.¹⁴ He asserts that if the U.S. "took the lead in suggesting a Northeast Asian nuclear free zone, Japan would not find it possible to resist." I fundamentally agree with this point, but the current criteria dictating U.S. responses to nuclear free zones requires that they come out of the region affected, not be created as a result of U.S. policy involvement. Here is where a major problem currently exists within our arms control guidance.

Dr. Halperin suggests the membership for a nuclear free zone for NEA. He sees one involving the two Koreas, Japan, possibly Taiwan and Mongolia, "but not any part of the territory of China, Russia, or the United States."¹⁵ That differs from the CISTP formula that involves them all (but Taiwan at this point). In discussions over the past eight years, it is clear that the U.S., some of its territory, and some of its weapons must be involved. The U.S. must start to view itself as part of NEA--like it or not, technology has linked us together. U.S. territorial involvement, if only a little bit, assures the kind of participation desired from all players. Also, to have China and Russia as members, not observers, assures that China becomes involved in an arms control measure crucial to the future of NEA. Russian participation, if only in tactical weapons, brings the significant weapons inventory in the region into the game. This is an opportunity to begin an Asian security community; all states of the region should be players even though the waters may well be uncharted.

From pages 24 to 32, almost one-third of the paper, Dr. Halperin reviews the very important Korean Peninsula, a Cooperative Security Arrangement, and A Regional Security Structure.¹⁶ To examine it closely in this review would send the review into extra innings. Not needed. He makes the key point when he notes: "If the United States is truly interested in 'engaging' China, it should work hard to draw it into a serious dialogue on cooperative security in Northeast Asia and to establish a security framework in which all key counties with interests in the region could seek to find solutions reflecting a cooperative security approach."¹⁷ This reviewer is in full accord, except I would add Russia to the compound so that it reads "China and Russia."

His concluding comments refer to a regional security structure that we should strive to shape in the years ahead that would function as a "new international forum for discussing the security problems of Northeast Asia."¹⁸ The components recommended include: a united, democratic Korea; U.S. forces remaining in Korea; an international agreement on security for the Korean peninsula; a nuclear free zone for Northeast Asia; and a Northeast Asian Cooperative Security Organization. This is what is needed as we enter into the 21st Century. The work CISTP has been pursuing since 1991 in this regard differs in detail, but the main thrust of this paper and our work is to get America started on a new and imaginative policy for one of the most important areas of the globe. Halperin in his work demonstrates the need for the U.S. to adopt a foreign policy that can engage all the states of NEA in the creation of a new and vital security community that can enhance the security and prosperity of all living in the region and those trading with it. Viewing nuclear weapons as instruments of peace by using their control to create a new NEA only continues a lesson learned by us all after events of October 1962.

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1 John E. Endicott, *Japan's Nuclear Option: Political, Technical, and Strategic Factors* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), p. 44. Back2 A poll taken by the *Sankei Shimbun* in December 1975 revealed that 54% of Japanese respondents favored ratification as compared to 17% opposed. Back

3 Morton H. Halperin, "The Nuclear Dimension of the U.S.-Japan Alliance," p. 15.Back

4 Halperin, p. 3. [Back](#)

5 Ibid., p. 5. [Back](#)

6 See John E. Endicott, "A Limited Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone in Northeast Asia: A Track II Initiative," *Disarmament Diplomacy*, Issue Number 35, March 1999, pp. 19-22. [Back](#)

7 Halperin, p. 13. [Back](#)

8 Halperin, p. 14. [Back](#)

9 Ibid., p. 15. [Back](#)

10 Halperin, p. 18. [Back](#)

11 Ibid. [Back](#)

12 Ibid., p. 19. [Back](#)

13 Selig S. Harrison, Ed., *Japan's Nuclear Future: The Plutonium Debate and East Asian Security* (Washington, D.C., Carnegie Endowment, 1996), pp. 15-18. [Back](#)

14 Halperin, p. 23. [Back](#)

15 Ibid., p. 24. [Back](#)

16 Given the structure of this paper, a title that is more inclusive of the subjects covered is in order. This paper is really about collective security in NEA and American policy imperatives -- Japan's nuclear option happens to be one very important part. [Back](#)

17 Halperin, p. 29. [Back](#)

18 Ibid., p. 30. [Back](#)

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