

# Morton H. Halperin: The Nuclear Dimension of the U.S.-Japan Alliance: Paper and commentaries

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**July 9, 1999**

**Morton H. Halperin**

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

**-- Paper and commentaries --**

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- **Morton H. Halperin biographical information**
  - [Paper](#) (includes commentary) ([PDF](#))
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## **Description of the paper, commentaries, and project context**

Morton H. Halperin's "*The Nuclear Dimension of the U.S.-Japan Alliance*" addresses how choices among varying options for future US security policies in Northeast Asia may affect Japanese perspectives on security circumstances in the region generally and the utility of developing a nuclear weapons capability specifically. The paper discusses the current security environment in Northeast Asia, with reference to the past and present role of the US-Japan alliance (recently enhanced through the passage of the new guidelines for US-Japan defense cooperation). The paper examines how US extended nuclear deterrence policies have functioned as a foundation of that alliance, how the end of the Cold War has altered the credibility and viability of that foundation, and what problems and possibilities these changes present to the US, Japan, and other powers in the region.

The paper discusses possible future scenarios for US nuclear policy, which include adherence to the status quo, stigmatization of nuclear weapons, and reassertion of the value of nuclear weapons. The paper examines the nuclear weapons policy options that Japan is likely to pursue in each of these scenarios, and how other states in the region might subsequently react. Insofar as events on the Korean Peninsula have a direct bearing on these questions, the paper looks at how developments in Korea might affect choices among these differing policy options, and how these choices might in turn impact the evolution of Korean peninsula security issues. In particular, the paper examines how Korean unification might function to promote the possibility of a Northeast Asia Nuclear Free Zone and a commitment to "no first use" of nuclear weapons by states in the region. The paper concludes by discussing the prospects for development of a formalized multilateral regional structure to counter threats and promote security cooperation in Northeast Asia and throughout the world.

The paper is accompanied by commentaries by a variety of experts on regional and nuclear issues, each of whom utilizes a unique vantage point to offer both supportive and critical perspective on Halperin's theses. These commentators are:

- Mitsuru Kurosawa, Professor of International Law and International Relations, Osaka School of International Public Policy
- Patrick M. Morgan, Professor of Global Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of California, Irvine
- Richard Halloran, an independent writer contributing to American and Asian publications on security matters, US policy in Asia and other Asian and Pacific issues
- Don Oberdorfer, a fellow at the John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.
- Monte Bullard, a Senior Fellow at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies
- John E. Endicott, Director, Center for International Strategy, Technology, and Policy, Interim Secretariat of the Limited Nuclear Weapons Free Zone For Northeast Asia

"*The Nuclear Dimension of the U.S.-Japan Alliance*" by Morton H. Halperin is part of the East Asia Nuclear Policy Project's critical review of nuclear weapons policies currently operating in the East Asia region. The project aims to address the nuclear policies of all states in the region and to demonstrate how comprehensive regional security is a prerequisite to significant changes in nuclear weapons policies. For more information on the aims and activities of the project, see the [East Asia Nuclear Policy Project page](#).

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