

QUESTIONS FOR NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW¹

(U) GROUP 5 -- RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN US NUCLEAR POSTURES AND COUNTER-PROLIFERATION POLICY (OPR: J51, OCR: J22, J53, J33, CPC) Working group representative -- Col Rhoades

***** FORMAL STRATCOM ANSWERS - AS OF 22 NOV 93 *****

~~(S)~~ What is the role of nuclear forces in deterring "uses" of WMD, taking into account such factors as the degree of US interests involved, US declaratory policy, world opinion? /

Obtained Under the
Freedom of Information Act
by Hans M. Kristensen

- (U) Nuclear forces have a role in deterring such "uses" of WMD. The fundamental purpose of US nuclear forces is two-fold: Deter the use of WMD; Prevent or counter acts of aggression against the US and its allies. Ideally, any deterrent strategy needs to consider an entire range of political, military, and economic options that can be brought to bear against a given adversary. Thus, nuclear forces are but one of many "tools" in our "toolbox" of deterrent options. However, the global impact of crossing the nuclear threshold elevates the political importance of these weapons relative to other means and methods in this "toolbox." As such, a viable policy and nuclear retaliatory capability to the "use" of WMD significantly increases their deterrence value.

- (U) To be effective, such a deterring strategy requires identifying an adversary's national interest (what they value) and then convincing that adversary we possess both the capability (appropriate weapons, delivery means, and C3) and the will (demonstrated by force exercises, readiness postures, and national policy) to threaten those interests. National sovereignty, survival, freedom of action, and power (political and coercive) are typical examples of what countries and their leadership value most. To be credible, we need to hold at risk those elements of power (i.e., political, industrial and economic infrastructure, and military capabilities) which underpin their power, both political and coercive. Deterrence also assumes an opposing nation's political leadership will act according to the logic of national self interest. While each nation has varying national interests, it should be logical to assume most would regard the possibility of a US nuclear response contrary to their national self interest. Under the deterrence paradigm, an adversary must consider the probability of any US response across a range of options.

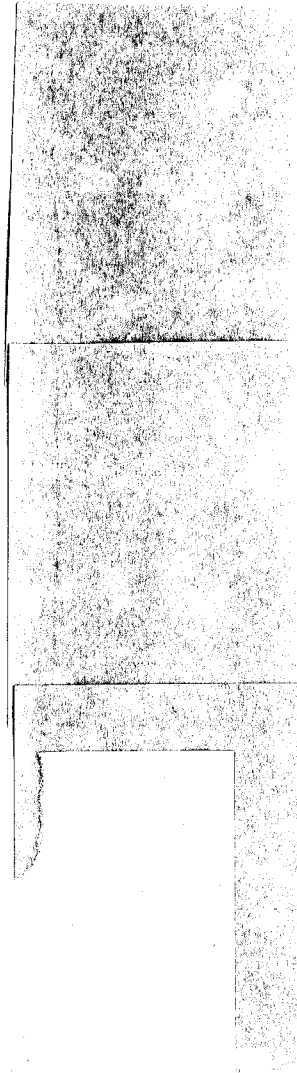
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¹ BOLD & ITALIC TYPE reflects coordination changes.

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- (U) In the final analysis, any aggressor will assess his "use" of WMD based upon his perception of our capability and national will to act. These perceptions will be significantly enhanced through a declaratory policy, doctrine, and demonstrated ability to employ all of our instruments of national power.

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~~(S)~~ What makes the US nuclear posture most effective and credible in deterring WMD use? Do particular nuclear systems or deployment patterns deter better than others? Does forward presence matter? Historical ties to region/country?

- (U) Certainly in the context of deterring a major FSU attack upon the US, our alert weapon systems of the US strategic nuclear forces are probably the most effective and credible aspect of our current posture. Deterrence involves capability and will. Alert forces demonstrate a credible, survivable, timely response, and exercised capability. The will to employ those forces is demonstrated through various readiness levels and a challenging and robust exercise program.

- (U) At lower levels, a marriage of national policy and various attributes of our nuclear forces enhance our deterrence strategy across many possible WMD scenarios. Weapon system responsiveness, flexibility, ability to deploy, survivability, and overwhelming firepower are among these attributes. These characteristics, tied with a national policy implying the US will retaliate appropriately at a time of its choosing, are important considerations in deterring Nth country actors in their calculations to use or threaten WMD use.

- (U) Within certain scenarios, forward presence serves to enhance perceptions of US capability. A potential proliferator's perceptions are certain to vary when a system is deployed in theater. An "on-the-scene" or rapidly deployable nuclear force offers the potential of providing a more "visible" and viable theater response than a force residing in the US. Also, certain forward deployed assets and systems (i.e., gravity bombs) can be more responsive than a CONUS-based equivalent. Forward forces provides the opportunity to integrate with allies forces on a periodic basis, and, in the case of dual capable weapon systems, adds to deterrence by creating uncertainty of whether nuclear assets are actually "in-theater." Furthermore, while extending an umbrella of protection and signal of US commitment to allies, forward presence transmits a equally strong message to any potential proliferators. These contributions serve to increase the deterrent value of a nuclear force.

- (U) Forward presence and historical/regional ties and security commitments are paramount in making extended deterrence credible. This can be seen in our ties and commitments to Europe, Japan, and South Korea as an example. Without these ties and associations, the most sophisticated of capabilities would lack credibility in extended deterrence.

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deduct → - (S) Why is the U.S. concerned about proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and related technologies?

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-- (U) The US is equally concerned about the possible escalation of a conflict due to WMD use.

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- (U) Having a nuclear capability is viewed by some nations as being a force equalizer in their dealings with the U.S. Our concern is heightened by the number of nations (particularly ones that are historically unfriendly to us) that now possess these technologies and the means to deliver them against us or our allies or will possess them in the foreseeable future.

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--(S) As an integral part of our national defense strategy, which seeks to defend U.S. forces, interests, and allies, we must ensure that we have the capability to counter, destroy or defend against these destructive weapons.

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***** FORMAL STRATCOM ANSWERS - AS OF 16 NOV 93 *****

~~(S)~~ - What is the actual or projected threat to U.S. national security interests?

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- (U) There are also several sub-categories that could also be considered:

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~~(S)~~ If prestige is a driver in nation's acquisition of WMD, how can the prestige associated with having nuclear weapons diminished?

- (U) First, by continued negotiations between the US and Russia to reduce our nuclear stockpiles. Further, as the stockpiles approach the level of the rest of the Perm 5, they must also be included in the negotiations. This negotiations and reductions in stockpiles send positive signals the US and Russia are giving less importance to nuclear weapons. Also, increased support and adherence by all nations to the CTBT, NPT and the IAEA all tend to diminish the prestige of having nuclear weapons.

- (U) Other ways to reduce prestige include strengthening the sanctions that are imposed on proliferators. If the rest of the world penalizes the proliferators, the desire to have nuclear weapons would be less. If the rest of the world views the possession of nuclear weapons as a negative, prestige would be less.

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- (U) To what degree can U.S. actions affect the acquisition calculus of proliferants and would-be proliferants?

- (U) Each nation will have a different perspective on the U.S. nuclear capability. Nations with expansionist aims may view development of WMD as the only means of countering U.S. nuclear power. Friendly nations may feel the extended deterrence provided by U.S. nuclear capability makes development of a WMD capability unnecessary. As we reduce our nuclear arsenal, these different perspectives will cause some to see opportunities for proliferation and expansion while others may be encouraged to reduce their WMD programs/arsenals. Other U.S. actions which may influence potential proliferators include public statements on positive/negative security assurances and the positions we take on international agreements such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). As the only true superpower, the approach the U.S. takes to such issues as nuclear policy, START I & II treaty execution, pursuit of a CTBT, and the NPT extension will have a major influence on the action of other countries.

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~~(S)~~ How do proliferant nations envision "using" weapons of mass destruction?

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~~(S)~~ Do WMD have military utility in the eyes of proliferant nations?

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- (U) WMD can be perceived as a great equalizer for otherwise weak military forces or to counter overwhelming conventional superiority. Just as we viewed our nuclear forces as a counter to superior numbers of Soviet conventional forces during the Cold-War, other nations are now just beginning to see the utility of nuclear weapons as a similar countering force.

- (U) WMD are perceived as having some military utility. Several nations in recent history have used them. Iran and Iraq have used WMD on their own populations and there is no reason to suggest they would not use them on other nations populations. The danger in this discussion is that we try to analyze what other nations will do using our perceptions of utility and our set of values (our cultural perspective). Many of the other nations in the world do not share our same values or cultural perspectives.

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**** STRATCOM/OSD "WORKING QUESTIONS" (Elaborated Version) ****

- ALREADY ANSWERED
 \$ - PARTIALLY ANSWERED
 & - NEW QUESTION

- (U) How, if at all, does what WE do affect what THEY do, where "They" are countries with a high probability of proliferating, to include but limited to: North Korea, Iran, India, Pakistan, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

- (U) Each nation will have a different perspective on the U.S. nuclear capability. Nations with expansionist aims may view development of WMD as the only means of countering U.S. nuclear power. Nations may not have expansionistic aims and still desire to obtain WMD for reasons such as a tool to enforce religious or ethnic preferences or to maintain regional balance of power because a neighbor has WMD. Our nuclear deterrent posture does not influence these reasons to obtain WMD except, by maintaining nuclear weapons we can support political aims. This is accomplished through demonstrating intent by maintaining an arsenal and continuously providing war plans to support regional CINCs. Reduction in defense budgets influencing delivery systems and arsenals may cause some nations to see opportunities for proliferation and expansion while others may be encouraged to reduce their WMD programs/arsenals. Other U.S. actions which may influence potential proliferators include public statements on positive/negative security assurances and the positions we take on international agreements such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). As the only true superpower, the approach the U.S. takes to such issues as nuclear policy, START I & II treaty execution, pursuit of a CTBT, and the NPT extension will have a major influence on the action of other countries.

- (U) Does "Extended Deterrence" play a role in discouraging allies (i.e., Japan, Germany) from seriously considering any need to acquire nuclear weapons?

- (U) Each nation will have a different perspective on the U.S. nuclear capability. Allied nations with expansionist aims may view development of WMD as the only means of confronting U.S. objections to their political aims. Friendly nations may feel the extended deterrence provided by U.S. nuclear capability makes development of a WMD capability unnecessary. Management of the drawdown through treaties and the corresponding military management of equipment, people and warheads must be appropriately communicated to allies to ensure their confidence in our ability to respond quickly to an incident in their region. Continued combined conventional exercises with friendly nations demonstrate our ability to respond to their region. Another issue is internal strife or desires for regional hegemony in non-allied countries. US nuclear arsenal may neither deter nor encourage in these cases. However the US nuclear umbrella may be seen by other regional countries to help them deal with the proliferator in their region. As we reduce our nuclear arsenal, these different perspectives will cause some to see opportunities for expansion while others may be encouraged to reduce their WMD arsenals.

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- (U) Does the U.S. nuclear arsenal deter or encourage the proliferation of WMD?

- (U) Different nations will have different perspectives on the U.S. nuclear arsenal. Many will feel the extended deterrence provided by the U.S. nuclear arsenal make development of their own WMD capability unnecessary. Others will feel it is necessary to have WMD in order to deal with the U.S. on a more equal footing. The Indian Prime Minister's comment after Desert Storm, "Don't take on the U.S. unless you possess nuclear weapons" clearly illustrates this latter point of view.

- (U) Does U.S. declaratory policy deter or encourage the proliferation of WMD?

- (U) Current U.S. declaratory policy provides "extended deterrence" to our allies. There are advantages to a policy which states that aggression against an ally may prompt a U.S. nuclear response. From a non proliferation perspective, extending our deterrence to technologically advanced allies such as South Korea, Japan, or Germany may deter them from acquiring their own nuclear weapons capability.

\$ - (U) What, if any, is the role of nuclear weapons in deterring the acquisition or use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD)?

- (U) Nuclear weapons provides traditional deterrence against other nuclear weapons targeted on US soil. Additionally, US nuclear weapons have a major impact in roles such as extended deterrence and escalation control. Some allies forego acquisition of WMD depending on the US capability to extend our nuclear umbrella. Nth countries faced with the US nuclear deterrent capability coupled with political intent may choose not to follow the course of a *Nuclear Weapon State (NWS)*. Regional conflict between two countries may be deterred from escalation by the diplomatic suggestion of US possible intervention. The US nuclear weapons act as an escalation control within the region especially with the uncertainty of the type of possible US intervention. Careful stewardship of the US strategic nuclear arsenal as the arms control agreements take hold and continue the FSU and US down the path of nuclear disarmament may convince those nuclear capable countries to halt research and agree to not develop WMD.

\$ - (U) How, if at all, does classic deterrence (i.e., based on the Warsaw Pact/NATO model) play in deterring the acquisition or use of WMD?

- (U) Classic deterrence maintains an effective guard against the FSU states as the world waits for all four republics to join the NPT and commit to the START I and II agreements. Continued turmoil with the FSU promotes concern over the positive control of the nuclear weapons. Maintaining the appropriate level of nuclear deterrence, allowing for reductions in both arsenals as agreements are reached, will ensure allies and enemies alike of the reduced likelihood of massive nuclear exchange. Within the context of a regional single or few warhead detonation, classical deterrence already allows for adaptively planned missions to counter any use of WMD.

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§ - (U) Is there a difference between strategic and theater nuclear systems in the role of deterring the acquisition or use of WMD?

- (U) *Today, nuclear weapons fall within two categories -- strategic and non-strategic. Given strategic systems are primarily CONUS-based, non-strategic systems typically include TLAM-N and dual-capable aircraft. An existing or deployed non-strategic (theater) nuclear system should be considered as but one of many tools available to deter WMD. Naturally, the ability of a nuclear asset, strategic or non-strategic, to influence one's actions is both scenario and "perception" dependent. While the presence, or perception of presence, of non-strategic weapons in some theaters may be of little or no impact, in other theaters the influence of may have an opposite and more deterring effect. Depending upon one's perspective, an "in theater," readily available asset poses a much greater threat or level of protection against WMD use than one in the US. Also, some systems forward deployed in theater (i.e., gravity bombs) will be more responsive than one in CONUS. Further, the deployment of theater weapons may send a strong message to proliferators. These contributions may increase the deterrent value of a nuclear system.*

§ - (U) Are nuclear weapons the best or at least a useful deterrent to counter the threat of the use of WMD? Would a nuclear threat be credible?

- (U) Nuclear weapons *but one of many tools available to counter the use of WMD. While each scenario is independent and must be evaluated within the political, economic, and military environment at the time, nuclear weapons can deter use of WMD. A possibility of a US nuclear threat can be credible and will be determined by the political will and the international environment.*

§ - (U) With the demise of the Warsaw Pact, would nuclear weapons be used preemptively in a crisis or conventional war situation to destroy WMD?

- (U) The US should preserve its options for responding to the situation by maintaining its current policy which does not preclude first use of nuclear weapons. While it would not be our wish to unleash the destructive power of a nuclear weapon, the loss of even one American city, or the endangerment of vital American interests *overseas* is unacceptable. To counter this threat, the US should not rule out the preemptive first use of nuclear weapons. In addition, following the use of WMD, the US should again seek to preserve its options. The US policy should not require retaliation with nuclear weapons, but it should leave that option open as one of a complete spectrum of possible responses.

§ - (U) Following the use of WMD by a non-nuclear country, would we employ nuclear weapons?

- (U) Each scenario is situational dependent on a variety of factors. Nuclear weapons are merely one tool available as response by the NCA in any situation.

§ - (U) What is the role of strategic conventional weapons in this situation?

- (U) There is a blurring line between strategic conventional and nuclear forces in the deterrent equation. The US should consider all options. Not all targets require a nuclear weapon. Strategic conventional weapons may be the "best" weapon for a particular situation. As with nuclear weapons, strategic conventional weapons have unique capabilities. When combined, having both capabilities strengthens the US position and response options.

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\$ - (U) What other alternative should we have?

- (U) The military alternatives to nuclear and strategic conventional weapons are many. They range from small incursions by Special Operations Forces to the large scale employment of conventional forces (including the employment of active and passive defenses and counter-force operations). To be better prepared, the US should develop response options for likely targets. These response options should include the full spectrum of forces both conventional and nuclear.

\$ - (U) What would our objectives be?

- (U) Take the lead in championing continued reductions in world arsenals by all NWS. Take actions to make the procurement of WMD less attractive to those countries that don't have them. Stop the development of WMD in those countries trying to procure them. Deter the use of WMD by those countries that already have them, and prevent the transfer of WMD technology to other countries.

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***** STRATCOM INTERNAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION *****

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