

# **Strengthening Deterrence for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Strategic Conflicts and Competition: Accelerating Adaptation and Integration**

**Workshop Summary  
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**CGSR**

Center for Global Security Research



## Summary of Workshop Discussion

### **Strengthening Deterrence for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Strategic Conflicts and Competition: Accelerating Adaptation and Integration**

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The views summarized here are those of the workshop participants and should not be attributed to CGSR, LLNL, or any other organization.

#### **Key questions:**

1. How well is the United States doing in competing to develop concepts and capabilities to negate the deterrence strategies of potential adversaries in high end regional conflict?
2. What can be done to improve the integration of U.S. military capabilities so that they are more certain of promising decisive effects if crisis erupts tomorrow?
3. What can be done to improve the competitive position of the United States and its allies over the longer term so that strategic deterrence becomes more robust?
4. How can the United States and its allies more effectively cooperate to accelerate adaptation and integration?

#### **Context:**

This was the fourth in a series of annual events convened at Livermore to exploring the emerging place of the “new domains” in U.S. deterrence strategies. The purposes of the series are to facilitate the emergence of a community of interest that cuts across the policy, military, and technical communities and to inform laboratory strategic planning. U.S. allies have also been drawn into the conversation, as U.S. deterrence strategies are in part about their protection. Discussion in these workshops is on a not-for-attribution basis. It also makes no use of classified information. On this occasion, there were nearly 100 participants from a dozen countries.

The series has evolved over its four years. In 2014, we put the focus on cross domain deterrence and shared some of the initial thinking done at that point on the challenges of deterrence in and through cyber space and outer space. In 2015, we highlighted new work done in the defense analytical community on cross-domain issues. In 2016, we utilized a table-top exercise to stimulate thinking in the group about operational and strategic challenges in a multi-domain conflict. In 2017, we set aside the “cross domain” label, which has fallen into dis-use, and opted instead

for “integrated strategic deterrence” as an organizing concept. This term has value in attracting attention to the challenge of ensuring that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts (that is, that the deterrence effects of our deterrence strategy are more than the individual contributions of different tools in the deterrence toolkit). We also put the focus on strategic competition for integrated strategic deterrence. That is, we wanted to understand how different actors perceive the shifting balance of strategic influence as they make progress in developing, fielding, and demonstrating their modern and adapting deterrence toolkits. After all, Russia, China, and North Korea are adapting their military postures in part to re-make the regional orders that they oppose. Thus, we wanted also to understand what the United States and its allies should do to ensuring that any shift in the balance of strategic influence is in our favor.

### **Panel 1: A Red-Blue Deterrence Net Assessment: the Euro-Atlantic Context**

- How does Russian leadership assess the balance of strategies, capabilities, and strategic influence in Europe today? Looking ahead, does it predict a balance more or less advantageous to Russia? Why?
- How does NATO assess the balance, presented and predicted?

Russian leaders take a dim view of the strategic balance and believe that all of the main trends are against Russia. They assess improvements in Russia’s military posture to be modest, so far, and weakness in the Russian economy to be chronic. In contrast, they perceive the United States to enjoy power advantages in all dimensions of national power—military, economic, and political, including strong and growing alliances plus an ability to marshal coalitions of the willing.

And Russia’s leaders are resolved not to acquiesce to this situation. They fear what they understand to be malign U.S. intentions, including encirclement and containment of Russia, denying Russia its rightful place in the world, and seeking regime change in Moscow. They see U.S. allies as willing partners in U.S. efforts to oppose Russian interests. Their determination to counter these intentions has led to a number of choices: to strengthen domestic political control while striking back at Western democracies, to re-build Russian military and economic power, to foster incremental change in the global order, and to abandon the constraints imposed by arms control.

In the military domain, Russia’s strategy emphasizes flexibility and adaptation to their own limits and to adversary counters to their actions. Their emphasis today is on “salami tactics” rather than direct military confrontation. Their aim is to figure out and exploit seams in the Western capabilities and preparedness. They seek to delay, dissemble, deflect, and distract and to exploit to good effect the time they’ve bought. In case of U.S. intervention in Russia’s periphery, it is likely that Russia will not wait for U.S. reinforcement to come and will exploit a concept of limited conventional or even a nuclear strike to force U.S. into surrender.

If their assessments of the main trends are dim, their assessment of their progress in adjusting to these new realities is more positive. In their view, Russia has done quite well in the last few years in adjusting to new realities, reforming its military, and in devising and implementing a new global strategy.

NATO's assessment is also mixed. On the one hand, the alliance has many natural strengths, including the confidence of victory in war if U.S. power projection is ensured. With the commitments at the summits in Wales and Warsaw, the alliance has begun the necessary adaptation of its deterrence and defense posture.

But on the other hand, there are many sources of concern. Military readiness is in a "state of emergency." Capabilities to move the forces across the Atlantic have diminished and have not been properly exercised. Weapons inventories are low. U.S. resolve is heralded but big questions exist and allies are hedging against a weak U.S. commitment to their defense. NATO does not have a robust strategy for gray zone conflict and has shown itself to be rigid when it needs to be learning and adaptive. The contrast between Russia and NATO in thinking about future war is stark. In addressing these concerns, NATO faces a conundrum. Every step it takes to strengthen its deterrence and defense posture will be read in Moscow as a step to improve NATO's posture for preventive war against Russia.

Discussion focused on the question of whether President Putin perceived the need and opportunity to contest the European security order by military means. Opinion was divided. Some assess that he sees neither need nor opportunity: no need because the West is in retreat for political and economic reasons and no opportunity because there is no military gain he could expect to keep. Others assess that he sees both need and opportunity.

There was also discussion of the value of the term "salami tactic." Drawn from the strategic experience of Europe in the 1930s, and Hitler's expansion strategy, it fits poorly the circumstances in both Europe and East Asia today, where Russia and China seek to alter the regional status quo without direct war with the United States. On the other hand, as one participant argued, it is a useful term because it reminds us of the pieces of salami so far lost—that is, the acts of aggression that have proven successful in re-making facts "on the ground."

## **Panel 2: A Red-Blue Deterrence Net Assessment: the Northeast Asian Context**

- How does China's leadership assess the balance of strategies, capabilities, military advantage, and strategic influence in East Asia today? Looking ahead, does it predict a balance more or less advantageous to China? Why?
- How does DPRK leadership assess the balance, present and predicted?
- How should the United States and its allies assess the regional balance?

China's leadership assesses the balance to be shifting favorably but slowly. It is shifting favorably with the rise in China's comprehensive national power, its growing economic clout regionally and globally, and its growing military capabilities. It is shifting favorably also in part because of perceptions of American weakness, paralysis, and retreat. It is shifting slowly because of continued domestic economic and political challenges and because of the difficulties of creating a military that is fully modern in more than name because it is capable of fully joint operations and managing the risks of escalation in multiple domains. PLA leadership has stated succinctly that the PLA "still cannot fight a modern war." This makes Beijing more risk averse than Moscow. China's military modernization is seen in China as a long-term process and a competitive one in which China is playing catch up. So far at least, and for the foreseeable future, China's leaders perceive no fundamental power shift in the region in China's direction.

North Korea's leadership is confident that the strategic balance is in the midst of a major re-alignment. Historically, it has seen itself as at the mercy of U.S. "hostile policies." Its sense of vulnerability to U.S. power follows from its own sense of domestic political vulnerability and its failure in the contest with the South. Accordingly, North Korean leaders decided to compete with the United States on deterrence and compellence strategies and capabilities. They continue to assess the existing balance as unfavorable for the DPRK. But they see deterrence as becoming more stable and opportunities for compellence becoming more numerous with the growth in North Korea's nuclear and missile forces. Kim Jong Un sees opportunities in what he perceives to be U.S. over-extension, U.S.-PRC competition, and U.S.-ROK friction. He seems likely to become more risk accepting as his capabilities grow and to accept significant risk to try to recover the lost South. Answers to following questions are unclear: What will be the next steps of North Korea after it achieves capabilities which it seeks? Can Kim Jong Un be deterred like Stalin or Mao, and if not, why? Can he be compelled, and if so, what can we force him to do?

Japan's leadership takes different views of the strategic relationships with China and North Korea. The instabilities presented by developments in the strategic relationship with North Korea are largely near-term, requiring incremental adjustments in the deterrence strategy of the U.S.-Japan alliance. The United States and Japan should continue to reject mutual vulnerability as the basis of that strategic relationship and should ensure that their defensive and offensive capabilities credibly align with that policy. This requires robust abilities to limit damage to ourselves while defeating the nuclear war-fighting strategy of the North. The China challenge, in contrast, is largely long-term. To be sure, it has its near-term aspects, including the need for credible counters to its salami slicing tactics in the maritime environment. But looking to the longer term, the U.S.-Japan alliance needs a better grand strategy. In the past, the focus has been on "shape" and hedge; in the future, it should be on containing and cost-imposing. Key capability gaps for the alliance are reflected in the growing gap in regional prompt strike capabilities (China has a huge advantage) and balance of modern regional nuclear forces.

### **Panel 3: Improving the Integration of Space and Cyber Means to Achieve Decisive Effects**

- How can space be more effectively integrated into the portfolio of military assets to enable coherent operations, decisive effects, and effective deterrence?
- How can cyber be more effectively integrated for the same purposes? Should it be? How?

In exploring how to better integrate space into the rest of the military toolkit, it is important to be clear about the baseline: space is already highly integrated. At the operational level, space is essential to almost everything the U.S. military does. There is substantial unity of effort. But better integration is needed. In war against a space-faring nation willing to use military means to contest U.S. control of space, unity of effort may well be lost. Such a war would involve difficult decisions about which capabilities to defend and which not to defend and how to cope with the ensuing degradation. In future space warfare, both kinetic and non-kinetic means will have a role in U.S. efforts to sustain operations in space, but there are both political and economic constraints on the further development of both.

In exploring how to better integrate cyber into the rest, it is important to be clear about the distinction between violent and non-violent conflict. In a violent conflict, cyber can and will be treated as but one more instrument of state power, with some unique attributes like all such instruments. Cyber is merely an aspect of the net-centric warfare embraced by the U.S. military decades ago. War-fighters are now exploring how to better exploit cyber means in the “escalate” and “dominate” phases of war. But in a conflict that has not yet crossed over the line to armed violence—in gray zone conflicts—it is not useful to think of cyber as a domain of conflict where offense and defense operate as generally understood. Cyber can offer no support to general deterrence, as the capabilities needed to make threats credible are not on display. Rather, cyber’s role in conflicts below the lethal level is about persistence in the adversary’s operational environment. Contest in a cyberspace during gray zone conflicts is about seizing the initiative below the use of force, and ensuring ease of access to adversary’s networks what might be exploited during the direct, kinetic military confrontation.

### **Panel 4: Improving the Integration of Strike and Defense**

- What are the roles of strike and defense in deterrence strategy and how can their contributions to deterrence be strengthened?
- What impact will hypersonic capabilities have on deterrence and stability?

In deterrence strategy, the role of strike is to threaten to impose costs on an adversary, whereas the role of defense is to reduce his expected benefit in attacking

the United States or its allies. In addition, non-nuclear strike capabilities can credibly be threatened in a first strike in a way that may be difficult with nuclear-strike systems. And the role of missile defenses of the homeland and in the regions is to take the enemy's cheap shots off the table; that is, limited defenses strip away the credibility of blackmail strategies that depend on limited displays of force to establish the credibility of a threat.

On defenses, a central question today is: are we at an inflection point? The emergent North Korea threat poses a number of new challenges, as does the need to continue to hedge against possible rapid future emergence of an Iranian long-range missile threat. In response to the North Korean threat, some near term enhancements to the U.S. missile defense posture are likely, including so-called "left of launch" capabilities, both kinetic and non-kinetic. Steps will also be taken to augment the Ground-based Mid-course Defense system for the U.S. homeland, to seek a modest future space-based tracking capability, to development an improved multi-object kill vehicle, and to fully exploit potential applications of directed energy. Questions are being asked about how best to balance future improvements to homeland and regional defenses and how best to balance investments against ballistic, cruise, and hypersonic threats.

On strike capabilities, there are also a number of important new questions. Given the maturing counter-intervention capabilities of Russia and China, what can or should the United States and its allies do to ensure a balance of strike systems as well as effective penetration of their defenses? Given the maturing hypersonic programs of both countries, what can the United States and its allies do to ensure strategic stability? More fundamentally, what do the United States and its allies need to do to ensure that they have a "sense of agency" in confronting an aggressor who, by definition, will have the initiative in a confrontation aimed at re-making U.S.-backed regional security orders?

On hypersonic strike systems, China and Russia are pursuing advanced capabilities in part for purposes of deterrence and strategic stability. In their assessment, these are necessary counters to continued U.S. pursuit of ballistic missile defense, as they provide assured penetration to target. The United States has not set out an analogous strategic rationale. The competitive pursuit of advanced hypersonic strike capabilities by China, Russia, and the United States brings with it a number of potential instabilities. It introduces competition to a zone where it has so far been lacking—so-called "near space," between the endo- and exo-atmospheric zones now covered by missile defenses. In addition, the very short timelines associated with warning and reaction increase the risk of miscalculation early in a conflict.

#### **Panel 5: Defining the Elements of the Long-Term Competition**

- How does Russia approach the problem of long-term competition with the United States and the West? How competitive is it likely to be?

- How does China approach the problem of long-term competition with the United States and its allies? How competitive is it likely to be?
- What competitive strategies make sense for the United States and its allies today?

Russia's approach is not about gaining dominance over the West over the long term. Rather, it is about fending off current threats (as it perceives them) from the West by competing aggressively so that withstands duress and survives. In contrast, it perceives the West and especially the United States as pursuing a long-term strategy to gain dominance. Its leaders believe that the United States is slowly but surely gaining a position of strategic superiority over Russia. In response, Russia cannot respond symmetrically; instead, it responds with what it has. This approach builds on the solid foundation of deep strategic thought in the Russian military that was not lost during the difficult national retrenchment in the 1990s. President Putin has come around to the military's way of thinking. But the inflated threat perception both precedes and will outlive him.

Russia's approach encompasses political, economic, and military means. In the military domain, its emphasis has been on understanding the main characteristics of future warfare and preparing itself accordingly. It systematically studies enemies to understand their strengths and weaknesses and then develops concepts to compete effectively. In the strategic realm, Russian leaders seek a return to parity with an expanded nuclear toolkit of both strategic and non-strategic means, a non-nuclear toolkit with advanced strike capabilities of various kinds, both kinetic and non-kinetic, and robust counter-intervention capabilities. In contrast to the West, Russia puts a major focus on integrating information operations at all levels of conflict and war, including explicitly for purposes of subversion.

Many Russian leaders see Russia as unlikely to be competitive in the long term. In the near term, this may increase the risk both conventional provocations by Russia and unwanted escalation as a result of miscalculation.

China's approach to long-term competition also encompasses political, economic, and military means. As in Russia, domestic renewal and control are important features of the long-term approach. Like Russia, China has clearly articulated opposition to the U.S.-backed regional security order. In the military domain, it has sustained a long-term modernization and build up of both conventional and nuclear forces with the aim of defeating adversary power projection and so-called "third party intervention" (that is, the United States as an outside power). Like Russia, it is pursuing a salami-slicing tactic in the region aimed at changing facts on the ground without direct military confrontation with the United States and its allies.

The United States, in contrast, has not been competing with either Russia or China. Since the Cold War ended, the United States has put its military focus on adapting to the problem of regional powers armed with weapons of mass destruction and long-

range missiles and then on counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency. While Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran “have gone to school on us” (to cite former Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work), we have gone to school on a different set of challenges. But at the national level, the United States is now at a time of re-focusing and re-thinking the main elements of defense strategy and national strategy more broadly, so some renewed focus on long-term competition is in order and should be possible.

Competitive strategies are part of a family of possible influence strategies. Other strategies include strategies of denial (such as Switzerland’s) or of degrading an adversary’s political system (such as Russia’s strategy). Competitive strategies were first elaborated in the Cold War as a way to slowly transform and ultimately prevail in the long-term competition with the Soviet Union. The central idea was to compel forms of competition in which the Soviets could not hope to catch up but could not afford militarily not to compete. To be effective, these strategies require a deep knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the military strategies, economics, and political systems of adversarial states. And their effectiveness can generally only be measured over decades. Measures of effectiveness include:

- Are the strategic and operational options for the United States and its allies expanding while the adversary’s are shrinking?
- Are the costs of competition rising for the adversary while declining for the United States and its allies?
- Is momentum shifting from the adversary to the United States and its allies, in the sense that they are the ones determining the state and scope of competition?

Discussion focused on the suitability of competitive strategy responses to the current strategic circumstances with Russia and China. The concern was expressed that such a response may magnify the problem we face rather than moderate it. After all, China has abundant resources with which to compete and may see no area in which it cannot afford to do so. Russia could be reinforced in its misperception that America seeks strategic preeminence and dominance. An alternative approach was suggested, one that emphasizes twin efforts to (1) maintain a deterrence posture robust in the face of new threats and (2) seek agreement with Moscow and Beijing about the tenets of mutual vulnerability and about the aspects of our separate national postures that are consistent with or divergent from those tenets. A provocateur asked if the United States is prepared to accept the strategic vulnerability that it asks Russia and China to accept. If not, expect sustained, long-term competition at the strategic level of war.

#### **Panel 6: Assembling the Future Deterrence Toolkit**

- How can the United States invest to put itself in a much more competitive position in the future vis-à-vis strategic threats?

- What lessons for deterrence capabilities and integrated approaches can be learned from DoD technology innovation initiatives aimed at enabling the Third Offset?
- Should the United States and its allies pursue a division of labor?

How to invest to become more competitive vis-à-vis potential future strategic threats is a question policymakers have faced since the mid-1990s. Few observers appreciate the depth of the challenges that had already taken shape then, and which have only become worse in the two subsequent decades. With the end of the Cold War, many decisions were taken to retire capabilities and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. military strategy. Some had to do with closing down key elements of a production complex that had become tired and run down after a decade of very intense activity. By the mid-1990s, much of the production infrastructure was not functioning. And with the rising salience of the so-called “loose nukes” problem, money went elsewhere.

The Nuclear Posture Reviews of the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations all emphasized the need for a flexible, responsive infrastructure that could produce new capabilities in response to a technical problem or a geopolitical surprise. But progress in repairing the infrastructure has been much slower than expected, as the problems proved both stubborn and expensive to resolve. The Trump administration now faces the same basic set of choices about whether and how to ensure the capability to meet future deterrence needs.

At the conventional level, the “third offset” launched some important initiatives. The label itself is clearly associated with the former deputy secretary of defense and thus has largely disappeared from the DoD vocabulary. But the central question remains: how can the Defense Department exploit the sources of technical and industrial innovation elsewhere in American society to strengthen national defense?

Part of the answer lies with setting the right priorities; innovation will only result from a top-down leadership effort. Part of the answer lies with getting the right advice; DoD leadership must understand the lessons of innovation experiments, both successful and not. Part of the answer lies with effectively utilizing the technical assets available to the Department, such as the Service laboratories and the national laboratories in the Department of Energy. And part of the answer lies in being patient, as rewards in the public sector can be quite slow to materialize. On all of these aspects, the DoD record is mixed but overall positive. It has done many of the right things. But focus remains critical.

Equally critical is unity and clarity about grand strategy and the linkage of grand strategy to operational priorities with specificity and discipline in the system to make lasting change. This is missing today. So too is “mojo.” The second offset was driven by lots of it; but it’s largely been missing from the third. Why? This has something to do with:

- 15 years of war-fighting in regional conflicts while Russia and China set their sights on clear strategic objectives and moved forward.
- Generations of weapons developers and acquirers whose success is in mastering an overly complex system, not in getting product fielded.
- Legislative restrictions that punish the many for the transgressions of one or a few.
- A devaluing and with it a loss of technical and analytical talent in both the military and civilian ranks.
- The mismatch between Service authorities versus Combatant Command responsibilities.

But let's stand back from all of these frustrations and look at the larger picture. We have a compelling new problem in front of us (the problem brought to us by Russia, China, and North Korea). As a nation, we are good at renewing our focus and getting energized about new challenges. We have strong alliances and strong allies.

Finally, what role can allies play in assembling the future deterrence toolkit? In fact, U.S. allies already play a significant role in this regard. Although there is not a precise division of labor, there has been common purpose and significantly improved cooperation over the last decade. The driver has been the shared perception of the need to adapt and strengthen regional deterrence architectures in both Europe and Northeast Asia to new strategic circumstances. The result has been a joint commitment to pursue a comprehensive strengthening approach to those architectures. This encompasses multiple means:

- The political renewal of U.S. alliances so that our common purpose is clear and no adversary can hope to separate us from each other.
- Steps at the conventional level of war to ensure a favorable balance of power, measured in terms of our collective ability to deny an adversary a fait accompli.
- Missile defenses in the region to protect U.S. power projection (and those allies wishing to participate in such defense) and in the American homeland to protect against limited strikes that might be threatened as part of an enemy's effort to "de-couple" the United States from its allies.
- Non-nuclear strike capabilities, including especially new prompt strike capabilities, whether regional or global.
- Resilience in cyber space and outer space along with situational awareness.
- A nuclear component, tailored to the unique requirements of each region.

U.S. allies contribute across this full spectrum, in one way or another. This is entirely different from the Cold War, with its tidy distinction between two levels of war (conventional and nuclear) and a tidy division of labor (at the nuclear level, the United States extended to others). Looking to the future, there are many opportunities to increase the capability portfolio. The fastest capability growth may

be possible in the areas of conventional strike and regional missile defense, areas where allies can contribute significantly.

### **Panel 7: Strengthening U.S. and Allied Integration for Deterrence**

- How can the transatlantic community better integrate efforts to adapt and strengthen strategies and capabilities? How much can be done inside NATO and how much must be done outside?
- How can the United States and its allies in Northeast Asia better integrate at the bilateral and trilateral levels to achieve positive deterrence implications?

The transatlantic community has made good progress in recent years but the finish line is still some distance in the future—defined as a deterrence posture well tailored for new challenges. In Russia, NATO faces a potential adversary that has strengthened its military posture and fully integrated conventional and nuclear means of warfare, all in service of a strategy to unravel the regional security order that NATO exists to defend. And Russia is not the only deterrence challenge for the alliance.

Looking to the near-term future, it is unclear how much more adaptation NATO will pursue. For some in the alliance, the steps to improve responsiveness to Baltic contingencies put in place in recent years suffice to meet the new threat. For others, they are only the beginning, as they fail to prepare adequately for Russian escalation (after all, goes the argument, if NATO is successful at the conventional level of war in defeating a Russian attempt at a military fait accompli then it will have to contend with Russia preparations for that eventuality). At this time, NATO has no formal strategy vis-à-vis Russia that would guide this debate. And the prospects for a strategy are not good. Accordingly, NATO needs a strategic conversation. That must focus on the “appropriate mix”—the mix of nuclear and non-nuclear capabilities for deterrence and defense, on war plans and operational concepts, on institutional adaptation, on exercises, and on strategic communications. This is a conversation that only one country—the United States—can lead.

From a Japanese perspective, the central question is how to re-establish the regional deterrence architecture in light of the damage done to it by North Korea. Pyongyang now expects the United States and its allies to be deterred. Will they be? In this new circumstance, it is important that Washington and Tokyo take every opportunity to showcase their cooperation for deterrence, including with exercises that demonstrate the viability of flexible deterrent options. It is important also that both countries sustain the defense investments needed for “dynamic defense.”

From a South Korean perspective, bilateral progress to date in strengthening cooperation for deterrence has been significant but inadequate. Some important differences remain between Seoul and Washington over the requirements of deterrence, over the likelihood of new forms of military provocations by the North,

and over escalation management strategies. The consultative mechanisms are functioning well but have their limits. Improved integration would be useful. One useful step would be improved trilateral cooperation in the U.S.-RoK-Japan relationship. Another step would be improved U.S.-RoK interoperability. But the United States should not push too hard in these areas, as the best may be the enemy of the good enough.

### **Panel 8: Setting Priorities for Adaptation and Integration**

- What lessons follow for the U.S. government and for U.S. allies that can accelerate change?

General observation: In the development of modern deterrence strategies for emerging challenges, we are both re-learning some of what we've forgotten over the last 30 years while learning some entirely new things. In tailoring our deterrence strategies to the new problems presented by Russia, China, North Korea, and others, we need to be mindful of an old lesson: we cannot be effective without understanding our adversaries—especially their worldviews and their perceptions of their interests. But we must also be modest in our expectations, as history has taught us that our understanding may never be very good. We need to be mindful also of the need to communicate clearly our intent to our adversaries. They appear ready to make a serious miscalculation about our stake in a regional conflict that is escalating: that there will be an asymmetry of stake in their favor, they appear to believe that their interests will be vital while ours will only be reputational. We should be clear that an escalating conflict will create vital interest for the United States and its allies that will guide U.S. choices and lead to behaviors that they may find deeply alarming.

Now, let's return to the key questions that shaped the overall workshop agenda. First, *how well is the United States doing in competing to develop concepts and capabilities to negate the deterrence strategies of potential adversaries in high end regional conflict?* The short answer appears to be: not very well. Potential adversaries have spent a couple of decades thinking about the problem posed for them by U.S. military power, while the focus of U.S. innovation has been on counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency. The discussion has raised a particular question about what we are trying to negate. Is it strategies or capabilities? Our adversaries are fielding capabilities for the purpose of coercion and defeating us. They do not limit the role of nuclear weapons to deterrence alone. We need both counters to capabilities and counters to strategies. The discussion of net assessments on the opening two panels highlighted the pervasive disagreement that exists about the main trends in the strategic relations among the major powers. This in itself is a source of concern, as it fuels the potential for strategic surprise.

Second, *what can be done to improve the integration of U.S. military capabilities so that they are more certain of promising decisive effects if crisis erupts tomorrow?* The discussion identified many opportunities for improved integration and the benefits

for deterrence, defense, and competitiveness of doing so. Various synergies can be reaped in a manner that compensates for certain weaknesses. But it also revealed some important limits. Integration is only a means to an end, and it is important also to keep an eye on the different ends at the operational level of war and in strategy development. The conversation also put the emphasis on the operational level so let us be careful not to forget the conceptual level. We need shared operational and strategic concepts about the emerging security environment. But we also need to be mindful of the fact that not all U.S. allies have enthusiasm for closely integrating nuclear and non-nuclear deterrence, because the bright line between the two serves us well.

Third, *what can be done to improve the competitive position of the United States and its allies over the longer term so that strategic deterrence becomes more robust?* Adaptations to the military posture of the United States and its allies that negate the coercive value of the new military tools of potential adversaries can go a long way to negating their strategies of trying to roll back the regional orders through salami-slicing tactics. The discussion affirmed that the competitive strategies approach is useful for thinking about the long-term strategic relationships of the United States and its allies with Russia and China. To the extent the United States has thought about these relationships in recent years, it has put the focus on deterring war-time behaviors. It needs to put more focus on how to “win” long-term competitions for the regional order. It also needs to be pro-active rather than re-active in its development of strategy.

Finally, *how can the United States and its allies more effectively cooperate to accelerate adaptation and integration?* The United States and its allies should continue to pursue the comprehensive approach to adapting and strengthening regional deterrence architectures, as this shares the burden equitably and produces synergistic benefits. But they also need to put a clearer focus on the development of long-term strategies and concept development, as the effort here has been too modest.