

# **U.S. Extended Deterrence and Japan's Security**

**YUKIO SATOH**

**Livermore Papers on Global Security No. 2**

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

Center for Global Security Research

*October 2017*





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## Author's Biography

Ambassador Yukio Satoh is vice chairman of the Japan Institute of International Affairs in Tokyo. An accomplished Japanese diplomat, he has served as the permanent representative of Japan to the United Nations. He also served as the ambassador of Japan to the Netherlands from 1994 to 1996 and to Australia from 1996 to 1998.

Satoh entered the Foreign Service in 1961 from the University of Tokyo's Faculty of Law. He studied history at Edinburgh University from 1961 to 1963. He has written numerous articles on security issues in both Japanese and English, including *The Evolution of Japanese Security Policy*, Adelphi Paper No. 178 (1982) for the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. His most recent publication is a book published in 2017 in Japan on U.S. nuclear policy and Japan's security.

The views expressed here are those of the author and should not be attributed to any organization with which he is affiliated.

## Preface

This is the second paper in a new monograph series under the auspices of the Center for Global Security Research at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. The series explores complex emerging challenges in the security environment as they bear on issues of deterrence, assurance, and strategic stability. Our goal is to explore these issues deeply enough to provide significant new understanding that is technically informed and policy relevant. Our premise is that thoughtful students of international security affairs continue to value such in-depth analysis as a way to help make sense of the large flow of data and opinion that reaches all of us on a daily basis. The views expressed in these papers are those of the author and should not be attributed to the Center, the Laboratory, or the U.S. government.

In our changed and changing security environment, some of the most profound changes are in Northeast Asia. North Korea has crossed the nuclear threshold and is now arming itself with nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them at long ranges. China is rising and has become much more assertive in the region militarily, economically, and politically. Russia appears to be positioning itself for a renewal of influence in the region. Questions abound about the will and capacity of the United States to remain engaged effectively in the region, both militarily and otherwise. At the same time, various common interests in peace, stability, prosperity, and a healthy environment compel new forms of cooperation regionally.

Against this backdrop, new questions have emerged about the role of the U.S.–Japan alliance in securing peace and reinforcing stability. Significant new questions have emerged about how to adapt and strengthen regional deterrence so that it remains robust and effective in the face of new challenges. At the core of the unfolding discussion are hard questions about U.S. extended deterrence. What role does it play in the new security environment? What role can and should U.S. nuclear weapons play? What can Japan contribute to the strengthening of extended deterrence?

As a senior member of the Japanese diplomatic community, Yukio Satoh plays a leading role in Japan's security debate. As an expert on the security relationship with the United States, he is also a key leader in Japan's debate about nuclear weapons, deterrence strategies, and extended deterrence. His recent book on these topics, published in

Japanese in 2017, has earned high marks from reviewers. In this monograph, he sets out his key insights into the new agenda and his recommendations for the new policy dialogue. His thoughtful, dispassionate analysis adds significant value at a time of rapidly rising concern about the durability of stability in Northeast Asia.

**Brad Roberts**

*Director*

*Center for Global Security Research*



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# Introduction

If the task of developing the concept of U.S. extended nuclear deterrence early in the Cold War fell to the United States in partnership with its European allies, the task of adapting it to the emerging strategic challenges of the twenty-first century falls primarily to the United States and its allies in Northeast Asia, particularly Japan.

In its original Cold War context, the concept of U.S. extended deterrence was developed to deter the Soviet Union from attacking Western Europe with its much stronger conventional forces. To that end, the concept emphasized the possibility of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) employment of nuclear weapons in large numbers and even preemptively. It also involved the development of nuclear sharing arrangements by the NATO alliance, whereby some allies host U.S. nuclear weapons and operate dual-capable fighter-bombers in support of shared responsibilities for nuclear deterrence. Also, for the sake of reassuring the alliance's European members, NATO's deterrence strategy was designed to link the defense of Europe to the U.S. strategic nuclear deterrent against the Soviet Union. The Cold War concept of extended deterrence also included the logic that any major war in Europe would be a nuclear war and that any nuclear war in Europe would necessarily escalate to the employment of U.S. strategic forces, so that U.S. strategic deterrence of the Soviet Union would cover Europe. U.S. nuclear forces were initially superior to Soviet nuclear capabilities and, despite the Soviet nuclear build-up of the 1960s and 1970s, remained strong enough to ensure a stable "balance of terror" and mutual deterrence based upon the likelihood of mutual assured destruction (MAD) in the event of war.

With its strong roots in Europe, this concept of U.S. extended deterrence was applied elsewhere, although in a manner tailored to

the specific circumstances of different regions and allies. In Northeast Asia, for example, nuclear weapons were deployed to South Korea, but not Japan. This was one of the various ways in which the United States adapted extended deterrence to the particular requirements of Japan, including its strong anti-nuclear weapons sentiment. No nuclear sharing arrangements were made. For its part, the United States deployed nuclear weapons aboard surface ships and submarines in addition to those deployed with its strategic triad.

The end of the Cold War brought a significant loss of focus on extended deterrence. The United States quickly withdrew its nuclear weapons from East Asia and began the process of drawing down its nuclear presence in Europe. This reflected the broadly held view that major steps could be taken to reduce nuclear dangers and to alter deterrence strategies as a result of the positive changes in the security environment in the late 1980s. But the security environment has continued to evolve. Post-Cold War globalization has changed the global security conditions. The increased threat of terrorism by non-state actors, particularly by Islamic extremists, has been the most conspicuous feature of the post-Cold War security environment. But nuclear proliferation has also continued—especially in Asia (India, Pakistan and North Korea). Whereas Iran’s attempts to develop nuclear weapons have been so far stalled with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, North Korea’s nuclear weapons and missile development has progressed to such an extent that Pyongyang might, if left unchecked, be able to attain a capability to directly attack the United States with nuclear weapons in the near term.

More fundamentally, post-Cold War globalization has shifted the gravity of the world economy from the Euro-Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific economic space, with China as a driving force. Furthermore, China has been expanding military forces seemingly for a long-term aim of becoming a leading maritime power with global reach.

Against this backdrop, it is in East Asia that the emerging strategic issues pose the most complex new challenges to the concept and practice of extended deterrence. In Northeast Asia, North Korea’s nuclear weapons and missile development is challenging both U.S. extended deterrence to U.S. allies and U.S. central deterrence (that is, the deterrence of attack on the American homeland). China’s attempts to expand its territorial control in the East and South China Sea are part of its strategy to constrain U.S. deterrence strategy in the Asia-Pacific

region and beyond. Furthermore, China's growing economic and military power is changing the structure of the global strategic balance; the Cold War bilateral strategic balance between the United States and the Soviet Union is giving way to a trilateral balance, consisting of a combination of three bilateral strategic relations: U.S.–Russia, U.S.–China, and Russia–China.

These developments together have major implications for U.S. deterrence strategy, with its separate dimensions of extended deterrence, central deterrence, and strategic stability. Changes in one or all of these dimensions have important implications for Japan, which has opted to continue to depend upon the United States as a security guarantor, specifically on U.S. extended nuclear deterrence. A strong anti-nuclear weapons sentiment prevails among both the Japanese public and its political leadership, and the sentiment has only grown stronger with the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident of 2011. Japan's commitment to its non-nuclear policy remains firm despite North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile development, which have become increasingly provocative with increased tests of missiles and nuclear explosions. More significantly in the context of deterrence, the increased North Korean threat has moved Japan to further strengthen defense cooperation with the United States for the purpose of enhancing the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence. Japan's non-nuclear policy will not change until and unless the U.S. nuclear umbrella loses its credibility in Japanese eyes. There are also important practical reasons for Japan not to pursue an independent nuclear deterrent, to be discussed later.

It must be noted in this context that the first ever National Security Strategy of Japan, which was adopted by the conservative government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2013, confirmed Japan's commitment to its non-nuclear policy. With an acknowledgement that U.S. extended deterrence "with nuclear deterrence at its core" is indispensable vis-à-vis nuclear threats, the strategy is aimed at promoting cooperation with the United States in order to maintain and enhance the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence.

The National Security Strategy is intended to guide Japan's policy over the next decade. Accordingly, the focus of Japan's own deterrence strategy for many years ahead is set on the efforts to work with the United States to adapt the concept of U.S. extended deterrence to changing strategic conditions in the Asia-Pacific region. Close consultations with

Washington are essential for formulating such Japanese strategy, not least because U.S. deterrence strategy itself is evolving in its relations with North Korea (as well as South Korea), China, and Russia.

From the Japanese security perspective, U.S. extended deterrence plays a vital role not just vis-à-vis North Korea and China but also in relations with Russia. While U.S.–Russian strategic relations are quite different from those between the United States and the Soviet Union, and still evolving with Moscow’s renewed focus on nuclear weapons, strategic stability between the two nuclear superpowers is vital for Japan’s security, and Tokyo has long counted on the logic that U.S.–Soviet/Russian mutual deterrence would cover U.S. allies through U.S. extended deterrence. To ensure that the U.S. deterrence of China would cover the country, Japan has been counting on the same logic, if more vaguely in the context of strategic concept. Indeed, how to ensure strategic stability with China remains yet to be defined in U.S. strategy itself. The United States also has more to do to define how to deter North Korea once it possesses capabilities to directly attack the United States with nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles. Japan is an obvious stakeholder in Washington’s answers to these questions. And it wants to play a role in formulating those answers.

The objective of this paper is to contribute to policy debate in the United States and Japan about how best to ensure the continued effectiveness of deterrence, especially extended deterrence, in changing circumstances. It begins with a review of developments in the global security environment over the last two decades that bear on the practice, effectiveness, and credibility of deterrence, especially U.S. extended nuclear deterrence. These developments have brought significant new challenges to Japan’s security, in which the U.S. nuclear deterrent is relevant. The paper then considers the evolution of the Japan–U.S. alliance over this period, with a particular emphasis on the evolution of Japan’s role and its attitude towards U.S. extended deterrence. The third section discusses an emerging concept of the deterrence of the Japan–U.S. alliance. This begins with a discussion of Japan’s nuclear option. It examines in detail the evolution in recent years of Japan’s own thinking about how to enhance the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence and how to promote continued defense cooperation with the United States. The paper then sets out a list of key issues in extended deterrence which require a coherent Japan–U.S. approach. The paper concludes with observations about what the two

countries would have to do in order to further strengthen the deterrence of the alliance in the years to come.<sup>[1]</sup>

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1 Contemporary scholarship on these topics is not well developed, as security analysts in both Japan and the United States have put their primary focus on so-called gray zone conflicts. But there are some exceptions. See Brad Roberts, *Extended Deterrence and Strategic Stability in Northeast Asia* (Tokyo: National Institute for Defense Studies, 2013). See also Richard L. Armitage and Kurt M. Campbell, “Strengthening Deterrence in Asia,” Atlantic Council, October 2014, [http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Ext\\_Det\\_Ch\\_Statement.pdf](http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Ext_Det_Ch_Statement.pdf). and Robert A. Manning, “The Future of US Extended Deterrence in Asia to 2025,” Atlantic Council, October 2014, [http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Future\\_US\\_Ext\\_Det\\_in\\_Asia.pdf](http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Future_US_Ext_Det_in_Asia.pdf).

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# Emerging Challenges to Japan's Security

The need for rethinking deterrence strategy, and especially extended deterrence, derives from major changes in the Northeast Asian security environment over the period since the end of the Cold War. Three factors stand out: the emerging North Korean nuclear and missile threat, the expansionist policy of China, and changes in major power strategic relationships.

## North Korea

As of this writing in the summer of 2017, North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile development is the most imminent threat to Japan's security, let alone that of South Korea. Worse, a possibility that Pyongyang might soon attain a capability to make a direct nuclear attack on the United States poses an unprecedented challenge to the concept of U.S. extended deterrence at its core: the U.S. deterrence itself. To compound the situation, there is little prospect for denuclearizing North Korea through diplomacy.

Accordingly, what is required now of the United States and its allies are efforts to further strengthen deterrence of North Korea while also continuing to pursue a diplomatic solution together with both allies and partners, including China and Russia.

### *The DPRK's Pursuit of Nuclear Arms*

North Korea has been tenacious in pursuing nuclear weapons and long-range missiles. It has repeatedly broken the pledges to forego nuclear armament it made earlier; first with South Korea in 1991 (in the wake of withdrawal of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons from South Korea);

then with the United States as part of the Framework Agreement of 1994 (which followed the crisis when the United States indicated preparations to attack the North Korean reprocessing facility with cruise missiles); and, most recently, in the form of joint statement of the Six Party Talks in 2005.

North Korea has been ignoring the Six Party Talks since its delegation walked out in December 2008 and has been accelerating nuclear weapons and missile development under the leadership of its young leader, Kim Jong Un. In 2016, the country conducted two more nuclear tests (its fourth and fifth); more than twenty ballistic missile tests, including some using solid-fuel technology; and also the first test-launch from a submarine. Moreover, Pyongyang has been accelerating missile tests in 2017, including the test-launches of what are regarded as intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), and conducted yet another nuclear test in blatant defiance of the UN Security Council's repeated and increasingly severe reprimands and sanctions.

Looking to the future, it seems likely that North Korea will soon acquire the capability to directly attack the United States with a nuclear-tipped ICBM. It may also develop a hydrogen bomb. Pyongyang is also known to be developing submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), as previously noted. These first-generation submarines are unlikely to operate quietly at sea and thus may well not be credible deterrents because they could not be expected to survive attack. On the other hand, given the dictatorial nature of the Kim Jong Un regime, in which nobody dares to contradict the dictator, it is possible that the North Korean military, if ordered by the dictator, would try to use SLBMs before development of a survivable system.

North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles is a product of the isolated regime's insular logic. Obsessed with a fear that the United States seeks to remove the Kim regime by military means, the North Korean leadership appears to regard nuclear weapons as a means to ensure its survival. Pyongyang seeks to be recognized as a nuclear-armed state and to conclude a peace treaty with the United States. Moreover, having become weaker than South Korea in both conventional forces and economically, and having also seen overtures to Seoul by both Beijing and Moscow, the North Korean leadership seems to have become convinced that nuclear weapons are the only way for Pyongyang to claim superiority over Seoul.

The prospect that North Korea might soon acquire capabilities to attack the United States with nuclear-tipped ICBMs and/or SLBMs has

raised the level of North Korean threats to the United States to a more serious level than ever. As Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told his department employees, former President Barack Obama told President Donald Trump that North Korea was going to be the greatest threat the latter would have to manage at the beginning of the new administration.<sup>[2]</sup>

The potential reliability of deterrence strategies may be further undermined by the reckless character of North Korea's reclusive young dictator, who seems unlikely to be deterrable in the sense that we believe the leaders of Russia and China to be. None can expect that, in times of military crisis and war, Pyongyang would act with the strategic calculations expected from more normal regimes, let alone major nuclear powers.

From the perspective of U.S. allies, the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence against North Korea is eroding in this context. This comes on top of enduring commonplace misgivings among U.S. allies, including Japan, about the general credibility of U.S. extended deterrence.

### *Trump's Approach*

Insofar as U.S. extended deterrence is concerned, President Trump's initial policy performances on this challenge have proved reassuring to Japan (and to South Korea as well). If South Korea's political reactions had been subdued before the Presidential election on May 9, Japan's Prime Minister Abe has been in close contact with President Trump. Japan's Self Defense Forces (SDF) have been acting in support of U.S. forces engaged in operations to deter North Korea, according to the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation the two governments agreed upon two years earlier.

President Trump appeared to have succeeded, if temporarily, in bringing home to President Xi Jinping his resolve to denuclearize North Korea. At the meeting at Mar-a-Lago in early April 2017, President Trump reportedly pressured Xi to do more to dissuade North Korea from nuclear weapons and missile development. After the meeting, he wrote: "if China decides to help, that would be great. If not, we will solve the problem without them! U.S.A."<sup>[3]</sup>

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2 Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson, "Remarks to the U.S. Department of State Employees," (2017), at the Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2017/05/270620.htm>.

3 Trump, Donald J. Twitter Post. April 11, 2017, 5:30 am. <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/851767718248361986>.



President Trump's unpredictability and impulsiveness also seem to have served the purpose of prompting China to engage more earnestly than before in addressing the North Korean problem. An attack with cruise missiles on a Syrian airbase had brought home to the Chinese his resolve to use force as necessary. That the attack took place while President Xi was visiting with President Trump made the impact of the message stronger. So did the first-ever use of a Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB) bomb (on an Islamic State tunnel complex in Afghanistan less than a week later), which demonstrated U.S. capabilities to attack expansive underground facilities and military capabilities stored therein.

In retrospect, however, President Trump's initial policy statements and actions seem to have preceded completion of the administration's review of policy options towards North Korea. Summarizing the results of that review in early May 2017, Secretary of State Tillerson made clear that the United States would pursue a denuclearized Korean Peninsula and that Washington was testing China's willingness to use its influence over North Korea. He pointedly stressed that Washington would not seek regime change in North Korea, its collapse, accelerated reunification of the Peninsula, or an excuse to move U.S. forces north of the thirty-eighth parallel. Secretary Tillerson also reaffirmed Washington's preparedness to engage in talks with North Korea when conditions become right. President Trump himself said that he would be prepared to meet with Chairman Kim under the right conditions.

But the time saved by the Trump administration for "testing China's willingness" was short. Less than 100 days after the first Trump–Xi meeting, Washington moved to sanction a Chinese bank and agree on an arms deal with Taiwan. These moves took place just before the second meeting between the two Presidents, on the sidelines of the G20 summit meeting in Hamburg, which produced little progress in attaining further cooperation from President Xi.

### *The Complexity of Disarmament Diplomacy*

Diplomatic efforts to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula are inherently complex. Even if the goal of denuclearization were shared by all concerned (even including North Korea as noted earlier), interests and concerns as well as policy priorities vary widely among the countries concerned (the United States, China, South Korea, Japan and Russia). It is these differences that have hitherto allowed Pyongyang to maneuver to develop its nuclear weapons and missiles.

China, for its part, has its own strategic calculations with regard to North Korea. As North Korea's only ally and the largest importer of North Korea's major export (coal), as well as the North's main supplier of energy, China has stronger leverage over Pyongyang than any other country. But Beijing has wished to avoid North Korea's collapse, out of concern that the results would include a cross-border influx of refugees as well as an expansion of the U.S. force presence to China's borders.

Nevertheless, annoyed by North Korea's escalating defiance and provocations, China seems to have become bent on pressuring North Korea to exercise restraint (although it is not known on what and how far). Since before the first Trump–Xi meeting, and possibly as part of preparations for the meeting, China announced a decision to suspend coal imports from North Korea until the end of this year (in order to comply with the last UN Security Council's resolution 2321). The resolution was designed to considerably cut North Korea's coal exports to China so as to reduce funds to be used for nuclear weapons and missile development.

At their first meeting, Presidents Trump and Xi reportedly shared a view that the North Korea situation had “reached a new level of seriousness and threat.”<sup>4</sup> In the wake of the summit meeting at Mar a Lago, Beijing seems to have warned Pyongyang not to conduct further nuclear tests. A state-run tabloid, *The Global Times*, then advocated that China should suspend oil supplies to North Korea if it were to conduct another nuclear test. Pyongyang responded with harsh criticism of China, which vindicated increased Chinese pressure. In the following months, North Korea's ICBM tests and the sixth nuclear explosion have prompted Beijing to support UN Security Council resolutions to place Pyongyang under increasingly tougher economic sanctions.

But it is widely suspected that President Xi himself wishes to avoid risk-taking diplomacy at least before the next party congress to be held in October, at which he would try to further consolidate his power for the years to come. It is not surprising either that China would refrain from seriously dealing with the United States until the Trump administration is cleared of domestic problems, such as investigations of the Trump campaign's relations with Russia. Or, President Xi might,

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4 Veronica Stracqualursi, “Trump urges China to ‘solve the North Korea problem,’” *ABC News*, April 11, 2017, <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/trump-urges-china-solve-north-korea-problem/story?id=46725640>.

if successful in consolidating his power base at the forthcoming party congress, take a long-term approach towards the United States, looking beyond President Trump's first term.

In the meantime, China seemingly regards UN Security Council resolutions as a pretext for defending its cautious approach to the North Korean question. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Beijing could veto any resolutions contrary to its interests. It is therefore significant that Beijing agreed to adopt the UN Security Council resolution limiting oil exports to North Korea less than ten days after the latter's sixth nuclear test.

South Korea's new President, Moon Jae-in, is also known to be an advocate for dialogue and reconciliation with North Korea and closer relations with China. During his first visit to Washington last June, President Moon agreed with President Trump on the need to apply "maximum pressure" on Pyongyang, but he also secured support for his "aspirations" to restart inter-Korean dialogue. Nevertheless, his call for dialogue has so far been ignored by Pyongyang, which seems to be focused solely on Washington's attention.

Russia, while supporting China's advocacy of dialogue and consultations with North Korea, also seems to be trying to have its say on the issue by responding to overtures by Pyongyang, which are part of the latter's efforts to avoid diplomatic isolation. President Putin was said to be atop the list of world leaders to whom Chairman Kim sent the Lunar New Year's greetings this year. Reportedly, Moscow has been increasing North Korean access to employment in the Russian Far East, has plans to expand railway networks connecting the two countries, continues its oil exports to North Korea, and recently agreed to open the port of Vladivostok for regular visits by a North Korean cargo liner.<sup>151</sup> Moscow also sent its strategic bombers to fly around the Korean Peninsula in the midst of the U.S.–South Korea joint military exercises in August.

### ***Difficulties of Deterrence***

On top of these complexities of the diplomatic responses to the emerging crisis, there appears to be no viable military means to stop Pyongyang's nuclear weapons and missile development programs.

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5 See Takayuki Tanaka, "Russian company to begin regular ferry service to North Korea in May," *Nikkei Asian Review*, April 19, 2017, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/Russian-company-to-begin-regular-ferry-service-to-North-Korea-in-May>.

Moreover, it appears highly likely that any attempt to do so would result in North Korean counterattacks on South Korea. North Korea's missiles and nuclear facilities are kept underground, and Seoul is within the range of North Korea's conventional fire power. Reportedly, the United States has attempted to use cyber and electronic warfare means to sabotage North Korea's missile development program, albeit with only limited success.<sup>[6]</sup>

Even at the time of nuclear crisis of 1994, the U.S. officials and officers concerned were said to be prepared for a breakout of war when the then-U.S. Secretary of Defense, William Perry, ordered the military to prepare an attack with cruise missiles on North Korea's reprocessing facilities. The execution of this plan proved unnecessary, as further diplomatic efforts, including a private initiative by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who visited Pyongyang in his private capacity to meet with President Kim Il Sung, resulted in the U.S.–North Korea Framework Agreement. Today, U.S. military action could not only result in a war that would be immediately devastating to Seoul, but would also directly involve Japan, which is now within the range of North Korean missiles.

Under such conditions, the United States and its allies have no choice but to further strengthen their deterrence posture, while also doing what can be done diplomatically to try to stop and roll back Pyongyang's nuclear weapons and missile programs. But strengthening deterrence is not a simple task.

Cooperation between the United States and Japan for the purpose of strengthening deterrence of North Korea has been deepening gradually in recent years. For example, the two countries have pursued joint development of an advanced missile defense interceptor (the SM3 IIA), which is now approaching completion. Japan has also strengthened its ability to support U.S. efforts to defend South Korea and also to use its missile defense systems to defend its territories and U.S. forces therein from North Korean ballistic missiles (as discussed further below). The vessels and aircraft of Japan's Self Defense Force have conducted numerous exercises with U.S. aircraft strike groups led by the USS Carl Vinson and the USS Ronald Reagan. They have also supported U.S. strategic bombers sent to deter North Korea. Efforts to further

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6 See David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, "Trump Inherits a Secret Cyberwar Against North Korean Missiles," *New York Times*, March 4, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/04/world/asia/north-korea-missile-program-sabotage.html?mcubz=1>.

strengthen alliance deterrence strategies and posture are discussed further in following sections.

Strengthening the regional deterrence architecture against North Korea requires also strengthening deterrence-focused cooperation in the U.S.–ROK bilateral alliance. Defense cooperation between the United States and South Korea has long been well planned and trained. More recently, the two allies have been well focused on the development of strategies and capabilities to strengthen deterrence in anticipation of the emerging North Korean nuclear and missile threat. But there are also challenges. Immediately after his inauguration, President Moon suspended the deployment of batteries of a U.S. ballistic missile defense system (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, THAAD), which had been partially deployed by his predecessor's decision, despite China's opposition. President Moon cited a need to check the deployment's impact on the environment as a reason for the suspension. But there was no doubt that he acted out of concern about the Chinese opposition. Seoul finally agreed to a full deployment of THAAD batteries after North Korea's sixth nuclear test in early September. Yet President Moon's effort to balance alliance cooperation with the United States with the cultivation of partnership with China could introduce a significant element of uncertainty about whether and how the U.S.–ROK alliance can continue to strengthen its deterrence posture.

Moreover, because the U.S.-led deterrence architecture is regional in character, based upon separate bilateral relationships, strengthening that architecture requires some improvements to trilateral defense cooperation among the United States, Japan, and South Korea. During the Cold War, Washington's primary interest in the U.S.–Japan security relationship was to have access to bases in Japan that could support U.S. force operations for the defense of South Korea. The defense of Japan was then separable from the defense of South Korea. Today, this is no longer the case. As Japan is within the range of North Korean missiles, the defense of Japan and of U.S. forces stationed there is no longer separable from the defense of South Korea. It is critically important therefore to make defense cooperation between the United States and South Korea and between the United States and Japan mutually supportive—and more closely linked than before.

But, given the strong anti-Japan sentiment persisting within the South Korean public opinion, the South Korean government has been hesitant to engage in defense cooperation with Japan. For example, the

South Korean government once declined to sign an agreement necessary for bilateral exchange with Japan of military intelligence. Although Seoul finally agreed in 2015 to conclude an agreement on the protection of classified military information, it was only after having exchanged information with Japan through the United States, and with a condition that the agreement could be reviewed annually. On the other hand, the three countries' defense officials agreed at the ninth meeting of the Defense Trilateral Talks held in April 2017 (the last such talks before the presidential election in South Korea) to enhance interoperability among the three forces, following the exercises conducted during the past year in missile warning, anti-submarine warfare, and maritime interjection, as well as combined flight training with U.S. bombers. It remains to be seen if and how the South Korean government of President Moon will act on defense cooperation with Japan over the longer term.

## Chinese Expansionism

A second key emerging challenge to Japan's security is posed by China. Beijing's attempts to enforce its territorial claims in the East and South China Sea have serious implications for Japan's security, not least because of their impact on U.S. extended deterrence. Such attempts appear to be designed to bolster Beijing's mid-term strategy for constraining U.S. military operations in nearby seas and in the Western Pacific more generally. That strategy seeks to constrain those operations through Anti-Access/Area-Denial (A2/AD) means. Two of America's leading experts on Asia, Richard L. Armitage and Kurt M. Campbell, together warned in 2014 that the A2/AD strategy was "designed to blunt the US ability to effectively project power into the region."<sup>17</sup> They concluded that the cumulative effect of modernization of China's conventional and nuclear forces was "that, under existing US capabilities and concepts of operations, US forces would face substantially greater risk in the Western Pacific."<sup>18</sup>

NATO, too, now uses the same term of "A2/AD." It does so to describe Russia's coercive attempts in recent years to recover its influence in the nearby areas ranging from the Caucasus to the Baltic. But Russian activities are different from those of Chinese in many ways. On

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7 From the chairmen's statement, Report of the Task Force on Extended Deterrence in Asia.

8 Ibid.

top of the difference of strategic domains involved (land and air for the Russian case, and sea and air for the Chinese), Russia's attempts are a reaction to what Moscow regards as the post-Cold War eastward expansion of NATO, and Moscow relies on military coercion and threats, backed by the deployment of nuclear missiles in Kaliningrad, cyberattacks on Estonia, and President Putin's disclosure in 2015 that Russia was "ready" to put its nuclear arsenal on alert at the time Russia annexed Crimea in the previous year.<sup>191</sup> NATO countries see Russia's resumption of the Zapad exercises in the same light.

Leaders in Beijing argue that China's new maritime assertiveness is merely an attempt to recover maritime territories lost in "ancient times." However, China's tactics to achieve this end vary distinctly between those employed toward Japan and those used toward Southeast Asian countries. China's challenges to Japan's control of the Senkaku ("Diaoyu" in Chinese) Islands is quite comparable to the Russian case in Europe, insofar as they rely on coercive means (which in China's case includes, if not always, naval vessels) to press their claims. In 2013, Beijing also set up an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the East China Sea and covering the Senkaku Islands. In contrast, China has attempted no such step in the South China Sea. Instead, Beijing has been using economic leverage to entice its Southeast Asian neighbors to accept its proposals to solve conflicting claims through bilateral talks. The states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), for their part, have long pursued a goal of agreeing on binding rules of conduct in the South China Sea through multilateral ASEAN-China negotiations. But they have so far failed to respond in unison to Chinese actions.

China's different approaches in the East and South China Seas have so far generated different reactions from U.S. allies. Japan has responded to China's military aggressiveness in the East China Sea by taking steps to strengthen its defense efforts and to deepen its cooperation in the alliance framework with Washington. By contrast, Southeast Asian countries have responded to Chinese economic arm-twisting by distancing themselves from Washington and weakening their alliances and partnerships (as discussed further below).

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9 Andrew Rettman, "Russia says ready to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine conflict," *euobserver*, March 16, 2015, <http://euobserver.com/foreign/128001>.

## *The East China Sea*

On the edge of the East China Sea, the vessels of Japan's coast guard (called the Maritime Safety Agency) have been foiling Chinese attempts to deny the Japanese control of the Senkaku Islands. Since 2008, China has been almost constantly dispatching official vessels as well as fishing boats to areas around the islands, causing what the Japanese now call "gray zone contingencies," which fall between peace and war. Military tensions in the region increased with China's ADIZ declaration. It is Japan's responsibility to defend the Senkaku Islands and to utilize coast guard vessels to do so, as this keeps the contingencies within the realm of law enforcement and helps to prevent their escalation to war.

But in order to make their operations effective in relation to China, it is necessary—indeed, vital—to back up coast guard operations with the capabilities of the Japanese Self Defense Forces (SDF). Back up by Japan–U.S. defense cooperation may also be necessary. To guarantee effective cooperation by the two allies in such contingencies, the two agreed in 2015 to an update to the Guidelines for Japan–U.S. Defense Cooperation, in which they stated that Japan's SDF would "have primary responsibility for conducting operations to prevent and repel ground attacks, including those against islands" and that U.S. forces would "conduct operations to support and supplement" the SDF's operations.

In such contingencies, there is no role for U.S. extended nuclear deterrence capabilities, as a threat to employ U.S. nuclear weapons in a gray zone contingency would simply not be credible. On the other hand, the indirect link to the U.S. nuclear umbrella is useful, insofar as it would help induce Beijing to be more cautious than otherwise. It should be obvious that Japan does not expect the United States to utilize its nuclear strategy to support Japan's position on the Senkaku Islands. But, for the sake of credibility of U.S. extended deterrence, it is critically important for Washington to make clear its commitment to defend Japan and, if necessary, to employ nuclear weapons if Japan's efforts to defend the islands were to lead to military conflict with China.

Japan and the United States have hitherto taken three important steps to this end. First, since the 1960s, U.S. presidents have repeatedly expressed the country's commitment to extend deterrence, including the nuclear umbrella, to Japan. Notably, President Trump reiterated this traditional commitment in his first meeting with Prime Minister Abe in February 2017. Secondly, the Obama and Trump administrations



have affirmed that the Japan–U.S. Security Treaty covers the Senkaku Islands, signifying Washington’s recognition of Japan’s control of the islands. And thirdly, the 2015 Guidelines for Japan–U.S. Defense Cooperation stated that the two governments would take measures to ensure Japan’s peace and security “in all phases, seamlessly, from peacetime to contingencies,” making it clear that the so-called “gray zone contingencies” are within the purview of Japan–U.S. defense cooperation.

### ***The South China Sea***

Although the South China Sea is a zone of intense commercial activity affecting the economic vitality of many countries within and beyond the region, it is also marked by conflicting territorial claims among six parties: China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Vietnam. The situation has been aggravated by the fact that China has been trying to unlawfully enforce its claims over an expansive maritime space, creating artificial islands by reclamation, placing military assets thereon, and demanding to settle territorial conflicts through bilateral deals with the countries concerned, which are generally susceptible to Chinese pressure. Beijing has been defying the legal ruling given by an international tribunal at The Hague in 2016, which denied the Chinese claims in favor of the Philippines’ appeal.

The ASEAN countries, for their part, have failed to stand together against Chinese actions. Most significantly, President Rodrigo Duterte has abandoned the traditional position of the Philippines, bowing to Chinese pressure and distancing the country from its traditional ally, the United States. Despite the international tribunal’s ruling in favor of the Philippines’ claim successfully asserted by his predecessor, President Rodrigo Duterte changed positions during his first visit to Beijing in October 2016, giving priority to access to Scarborough Shoal for Philippine fishing boats over the country’s long-standing territorial claim over the atoll. Moreover, he abandoned the multilateral dialogue to create a rule of conduct in the South China Sea by accepting a Chinese offer to discuss conflicting territorial claims bilaterally. A multilateral approach, long pursued by the ASEAN countries, is expected to help to empower the smaller nations in their diplomatic engagement with a powerful China. President Duterte’s pro-China stance is especially consequential in 2017, as the Philippines serves as chair of ASEAN (notably, this is the fiftieth anniversary of its creation). As one example, the May 2017 ASEAN summit in Manila addressed the South China Sea question in

a weaker tone than a statement issued a year earlier. The 2016 statement itself had been made under a chairmanship of Laos, which was (and still is) more susceptible to Chinese influence than the Philippines.

A combination of factors seems to explain the failure of the ASEAN countries to act in unison against aggressive territorial claims by the Chinese. They include the ASEAN countries' propensity to avoid direct confrontation with China (or any other big powers) and their need for trade with China and investment and development assistance from it. Moreover, the so-called "ASEAN way" (of deciding common policy positions by consensus) also makes it difficult for them to act in unison. Essentially, the ASEAN way gives each member a veto. Accordingly, a few ASEAN countries under China's sway can block the ASEAN actions opposed by Beijing. The absence of strong political leaders comparable to the countries' founding fathers adds to difficulties for them to act together. Furthermore, Beijing's attitude of not meddling in other countries' domestic affairs, particularly over such politically sensitive issues as democracy, human rights, and corruption, is making Chinese assistance more acceptable to some ASEAN countries.

The United States dispatches naval vessels and military aircraft to the South China Sea in order to ensure the freedom of navigation and flight and to deny the legitimacy of Chinese actions to enforce its claims, including the creation of artificial islands. But the fact remains that the U.S. "pivot to Asia"—that is, the rebalancing of U.S. strategic focus to Asia as promoted by the Obama administration—has not proved sufficient to enable the Southeast Asian countries to stand up to China's forceful actions.

Japanese diplomatic initiatives on the issue have been similarly ineffective to date. Japan has been taking leadership in stressing the importance of a rules-based international order and of solving territorial disputes peacefully according to international law. As discussed further below, Tokyo has also been increasing assistance to some Southeast Asian countries in building up their capacity for maritime safety. Japan's success in foiling Chinese attempts to physically challenge Japan's control of the Senkaku Islands could have been seen in Southeast Asian capitals as proof that standing up to China works. It appears, however, that Tokyo's efforts have so far been overshadowed by the economic leverage exerted by Beijing.

Australia's shifting focus also underlines China's growing economic leverage in the Asia-Pacific region. The country, a longtime and deeply

loyal U.S. ally, now debates whether a political rebalancing of its major power relationships is in order. Some leading voices in Australia now openly advocate for such a rebalancing, so as to account for the growing economic importance of China, which is the largest market for the export of the country's natural resources. The Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, reportedly argued after a meeting with Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang (in March 2017) that "the idea that Australia has to choose between China and the United States is not correct."<sup>10</sup> This might be read to imply that Australia can have it both ways—a stronger relationship with China and a somewhat more distant relationship with its U.S. ally. Many Australians are said to be wondering whether it is time to pay less attention to the United States and engage more with China, a view expressed with growing frequency after the Trump administration's rejection of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal and the combative phone call between President Trump and Prime Minister Turnbull in February 2017.

In fact, China's influence on Australia's regional perspective had already emerged as a significant factor since before the arrival of the Trump administration. For example, Australia's 2016 Defense White Paper addressed the territorial issues in the South China Sea in a measured tone, seemingly reflecting the importance Canberra attached to its trade and economic relations with China. Quite notably, the white paper did not refer to Chinese activities in the South China Sea, even as it argued that the "refusal to act in ways consistent with international law and standards of behavior" creates international uncertainty, endangers populations, and impacts economic activity. In this context, the paper pointedly referred to "Russia's coercive and aggressive actions in Ukraine and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's proliferation of weapons of mass destruction."<sup>11</sup> The white paper also stated that Australia called on "all South China Sea claimants" to halt land reclamation and construction activities, although it added that Australia was particularly concerned by the "unprecedented pace and scale" of China's land reclamation activities in the South China Sea.

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10 Rod McGuirk, "Australian Prime Minister Won't Choose Between China and US," *The Associated Press*, March 23, 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-03-23/chinese-premier-warns-australia-against-protectionism>.

11 Government of Australia, Department of Defence, *2016 Defence White Paper* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2016), 46.

These developments in Southeast Asia and Australia clearly signal that economic influence is the currency of power in the Asia-Pacific region. Military power is not. U.S. force presence will continue to be widely regarded in the region as an indispensable stabilizer, particularly given increasing Chinese military power, but U.S. military power has not been fully translated into political influence in the region. Moreover, while many Southeast Asian countries are wary of China's increased military power, they generally regard it as part of a Chinese strategy aimed not at them but at the United States.

It is important to note that many ASEAN countries are trying to balance relations with China and the United States. By opting, if reluctantly, to not confront China on regional issues, they are not making a choice to push America out of the region or to align fully with China. Nor has Australia's attachment of importance to trade relations with China reduced Canberra's commitment to the rules-based order in the South China Sea, let alone the alliance with the United States.

Given the strategic importance of the South China Sea for the U.S. deterrence strategy (as stressed by the Armitage–Campbell statement referred to earlier), it is important that the United States and Japan design a more productive strategy for cooperation with the ASEAN countries so as to ensure stability and security in Southeast Asia and the strategically important South China Sea. As discussed further below, Japan has certain roles to play for the common security interests it shares with the United States in the region. To involve Australia and India would also be valuable. It is increasingly important to consider the Indian Ocean, the South China Sea and, more broadly, the Western Pacific as a single maritime space.

## **Changes in Major Power Strategic Relationships**

The third significant challenge in Japan's security environment, and one especially consequential for deterrence, is at the major power level. At a global level, and certainly from the regional perspective in the Asia-Pacific, strategic relationships among the major powers are undergoing significant, indeed profound change. Most symbolically, China's rise has begun to change the structure of strategic balance among major nuclear powers from a bipolar one between the United States and the Soviet Union to a combination of three sets of bilateral strategic relationships: U.S.–Russia, Russia–China, and U.S.–China.

The future of these strategic relationships is highly uncertain. The Asia-Pacific region could become a breeding ground for highly competitive tripartite strategic relations, as the United States, Russia, and China respectively have strategic stakes in the region, if to different degrees. More significantly, the strategic balance among them could evolve with an emerging China as an epicenter of the change. It must be pointed out that, in this context, how the United States would deepen cooperation with its allies and partners in the region would have significant bearing on the U.S. position in the evolving tripartite strategic relations. Needless to say, it is a distinct advantage the United States has over Russia and China that it has long cultivated alliances and partnerships in the region, on top of those in Europe. NATO is the most advanced case in point.

So far at least, the implications of an intensifying tripartite strategic rivalry are not evident globally. The tripartite strategic relationship is still evolving, and the growth of China's military power has so far been evident primarily in the Asia-Pacific region. The Europeans, arguably looking at China through the economic lens, do not seem to be fully attuned to some of the more strategic implications of its rise. In terms of security, the Europeans are preoccupied with other pressing issues such as Russia's increased assertiveness and military threats, the influx of refugees and the increasing dangers of terrorism, as well as the rise of nationalistic populism to challenge the concept of the European Union (EU). But put in perspective, it is likely that China's political and military, let alone economic, power will continue to grow, so that the strategic relations among the three countries would eventually spillover to Europe. For example, President Xi's ambitious foreign policy initiative, called "One Belt, One Road," is designed to connect China and Europe by two routes; a land route called "One Belt" and a sea route called "One Road." The scheme is modeled after the ancient "Silk Road."

### ***U.S.–Russia Relations***

Of the emerging strategic relationships, the one between the United States and Russia promises to be of central importance for global strategic stability. After all, the two together possess over 90 percent of the existing nuclear weapons and their choices about how to manage their nuclear relationship will have significant implications for global nuclear arms reduction.

The strategic military relationship between the two seems still to be built on the foundation of mutual assured destruction (MAD), a cold war concept linked historically to the arms race between the two nuclear superpowers and their efforts to develop and preserve strategic stability. In the 1990s, leaders in Washington and Moscow tried to move away from this logic, as it was unsuited to the improving political and economic relationships between the West and Russia. But in the period since, Russia's leaders have returned to hostility toward the West and have fully embraced, again, a strategy of deterring the West, with a particular emphasis on nuclear deterrence. Russia's leaders are highly motivated to preserve the MAD relationship with the United States. Leaders in the United States have been reluctant to return to the more adversarial relationship but have joined with Russia in putting a policy focus on strategic stability as traditionally defined.

Over the last two decades, Russia has compensated for weakness in its conventional military forces with increased reliance on nuclear weapons in its military doctrine, while the United States has been trying to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in deterrence strategy and in its bilateral relationship with Russia. As part of military reform since 1997, Russia has been developing, if within the limits of the 2012 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), new intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) with new multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV) warheads, a new generation of nuclear submarines to carry new submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and new shorter-range missiles. Russia has also developed and deployed new ground-launched cruise missiles (SSC-8) in violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty of 1997. A leading American expert even suspects that Russia might eventually withdraw from the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in order to test new nuclear warheads the country is now developing.<sup>[12]</sup>

It appears that there is no strategic advantage over the United States that Russia can gain with such steps, given the existence of MAD. But the Russian logic seems to be different. For example, President Putin reportedly said in late 2016 that Russian nuclear forces should acquire a capability to "reliably penetrate any existing and prospective missile

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12 William J. Perry, *My Journey at the Nuclear Brink* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015), 190.

defense systems.” This apparently reflects Moscow’s concern that the U.S. missile defense systems will in the future weaken Russia’s deterrence capability, especially if deployed in combination with long-range prompt conventional strike capabilities. Moscow seems to believe that the combination of these capabilities could give the United States an option to attack Russia preemptively by both nuclear and non-nuclear means—and it seems to believe that Washington would be seriously tempted to try such a decapitation strike. Moscow may also be trying to maintain a position of strategic superiority over China, as discussed further below.

Politically, President Putin might be wishing to appeal to patriotic Russian public opinion by claiming to make Russia’s nuclear forces stronger than the American and Chinese forces combined. After all, Russia is good at strengthening its nuclear forces and such efforts enjoy broad public support in the country.

In contrast to Moscow’s renewal of nuclear focus and capability, Washington has continued to put its focus on reducing the role of nuclear weapons in deterrence strategy and creating the conditions that would allow other nuclear weapon states, including but not exclusively Russia, to join in further reductions. The Obama administration rejected new nuclear weapons, following the approach of its two immediate predecessors. Accordingly, Washington has been engaged in programs to maintain the effectiveness of its nuclear deterrent by extending the life of existing nuclear warheads and fielding modernized delivery systems. The United States has also replaced the multiple warheads atop its ICBMs with single ones for the sake of strategic stability.

The conclusions of the Trump administration’s ongoing nuclear posture review are due at the end of 2017. From a Japanese perspective, the administration should continue the hitherto bipartisan policy of trying to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in deterrence strategy if the conditions for safely doing so could be created. This would help to reinforce nuclear arms reductions—an important responsibility of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)-sanctioned “nuclear weapons states,” and especially of the United States and Russia which, as previously noted, together possess 90 percent of nuclear weapons in the world.

Nuclear arms control negotiations have been the mainstay of U.S.–Russia strategic relations for decades. But with the dramatic downturn in Russia’s relations with the West since 2014, there has been no re-

sumption of arms control negotiations to determine what will follow the expiration of the New START in 2021, or to consider whether it should be extended once, as permissible in the treaty, for five years. Despite mixed signals by Presidents Putin and Trump over the last year on the question, there appears to be little prospect of such a resumption in the period ahead.

A long-term hiatus in U.S.–Russia arms control talks, and especially their definitive collapse, would have wide-ranging implications for efforts to reduce nuclear weapons. For example, it would make it more difficult to engage the other NPT-sanctioned “nuclear weapons states” (China, Britain and France) in multilateral or multipartite efforts to reduce their nuclear stockpiles (a scenario once advocated by those pursuing step-by-step elimination of nuclear weapons, such as Global Zero). Moreover, without the progress of nuclear arms reduction by these nuclear weapons states, it would be difficult to persuade other nuclear-armed states to join efforts to reduce nuclear weapons. The nuclear powers’ apparent lack of enthusiasm for nuclear arms reduction has no doubt made it easier for countries like North Korea and Iran to gain domestic and international support for their nuclear ambitions.

But pessimism must be tempered by the reality that both Washington and Moscow have enduring interests in strategic stability, which will give them a shared incentive to preserve some arms control framework. They also have a shared interest in moving to lower levels of nuclear forces, including financial ones. Russia’s military modernization program has come under increasing pressure as oil prices remain low and the expenses of its nuclear modernization program are significant. For its part, the United States faces stubborn financial difficulties as well as a rising bill for both military modernization and nuclear modernization. These factors and other political ones may bring them back to the arms control negotiating table.

From a Japanese perspective, Moscow’s efforts to strengthen its nuclear forces have not affected, so far at least, Japan’s confidence in the will and capability of the United States to deter Russian nuclear threats to Japan. Japan has long had a view that the effect of mutual deterrence between the United States and Russia would cover Japan as the consequence of U.S. extended deterrence. The view also has been reflected in Tokyo’s need to balance the country’s reliance on the U.S. nuclear umbrella with its non-nuclear policy of not permitting entry into the country of U.S. nuclear weapons. This contrasts with the Eu-



Europeans' cold war vintage demand for the deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons for the sake of assurance of U.S. commitment. NATO's nuclear deterrence strategy has not changed fundamentally since the end of the Cold War, although nuclear weapons no longer play the central role in the alliance's broader strategy that they once did. NATO has begun the process of adapting and strengthening its deterrence posture to deal with the changing circumstances brought by President Putin, as well illustrated in the communique of its Warsaw summit in 2016. Although it has renewed its commitment to nuclear deterrence and to the nuclear sharing arrangements as essential to dealing effectively with Russian threats, the Alliance has only begun what promises to be a long-running debate on such matters. Its effectiveness or ineffectiveness in meeting the challenge posed by Russia could have a significant impact in East Asia, if Russia is emboldened to press its neighbors by military means.

### ***Russia–China Relations***

Riding on the wave of post-Cold War economic globalization, China has economically overtaken Russia, beginning to upset and overturn the bilateral power balance, albeit not militarily, between the two countries. Russia has contributed its part to this shift, by remaining wedded to its once-lucrative energy exports while avoiding making needed reforms to its economy. Russia's economic difficulties have since worsened with a sharp fall in the price of oil. By contrast, China, with a very long history of commerce, has well adapted itself to a market-oriented economy and taken advantage of economic globalization to rapidly rise economically and subsequently in terms of political influence and military power.

In the Asia-Pacific region, Russia's geopolitical profile has been low and overshadowed by China ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Even in Central Asia, which Russia still regards as part of its sphere of influence, China's trade with the five countries exceeds Russia's trade with them. China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative includes the region. It must be noted that the initiative has evolved from the concept of a "Silk Road economic belt," which President Xi announced in 2013 in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan.

Recently, however, Russia's strategic attention has begun to shift back to Asia. This seems in part to be a hedge against the growth of Chinese military power. It is also an effort to balance against the United States in the region, as part of Moscow's global strategy. In 2010, Mos-

cow established the Eastern Military District and the Eastern Joint Strategic Command. Quite symbolically, two of the three newly developed submarines equipped with new SLBMs were assigned to the Pacific fleet during the past two years. Moreover, with the aim of strengthening the defense of the Sea of Okhotsk, Russia deployed in 2016 land-to-sea ballistic missiles on the two islands, which Japan regards as part of its own “Northern Territories.” Earlier, Moscow was said to be alarmed by a Chinese survey vessel’s repeated passage (since 1999) through the Sea of Okhotsk on its way to and from the Arctic Ocean. The Russians regard the Sea of Okhotsk as the country’s inland sea reserved for its naval forces, its strategic submarines in particular.

Moscow is also wary of the vulnerability of Eastern Siberia and the Far East to Chinese influence. In these regions, which are far away from the European part of Russia and bordering on much more populous Chinese provinces, the Russian population is diminishing and local economies are struggling. It is noteworthy in this context that President Putin created in 2012 the Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East.

Japan, with its technological and financial resources, can play an important role in realizing President Putin’s ambition of economic development in these regions. Recognizing this opportunity, Tokyo has responded positively to Moscow’s interest. Prime Minister Abe has been cooperating on what is termed as “the Joint Economic Activities on the Four Northern Islands” and other measures to help improve Russia’s economic and social conditions in broad areas, including urban development, promotion of medium-and-small industries, and medical and health care improvement. Deeper economic cooperation and improved political relations with Moscow might lead to the attainment of Tokyo’s long-pursued goal of recovering the Northern Territories. But whether President Putin is prepared to finally make such a deal remains an open question.

On the question of strategic balance, it is likely that Russia’s increased reliance on nuclear weapons, with a declaratory policy including a possibility of “first use” of nuclear weapons, reflects Moscow’s growing concern about the expansion of Chinese military power, including its nuclear forces. It is also plausible to assume that Russia has violated the INF treaty to equip itself with new Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCMs, in this case the SSC-8) in order to close a gap between the two countries in the category of intermediate-range missiles.

By contrast, China's response to Russia's reliance on nuclear weapons seems to be quite measured, at least so far. China does not seem to be concerned about military threats from Russia. On the contrary, China is seemingly confident of its economic superiority over Russia and knows that Russia needs Chinese markets for Russia's energy exports as well as Chinese investments in Russia's energy industries. As discussed further below, the focus of China's military strategy is not on Russia—it is on the United States. In the near term, it seeks to constrain and, if possible, prevent U.S. intervention in China's maritime operations in the East and South China Seas and in the Western Pacific (particularly for the purpose of stopping Taiwan's independence). In the longer term, it apparently seeks to attain naval power with global reach.

### ***U.S.–China Relations***

The strategic relationship between the United States and China is more complex than the other two bilateral strategic relationships. It is also still evolving in multiple and unpredictable ways. China is an important player in the world economy and a driving force of its growth. To the United States as well as Japan and South Korea, for example, China is an important partner for economic interdependence and political cooperation. As a case in point, China's cooperation has been essential to deal with North Korea and to create a prospect, however slim, for progress towards its denuclearization. And of course, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China can stop any Security Council resolutions contrary to its interests.

Beijing is said to have so far shown little interest in dialogue with Washington focused on strategic military power and strategic stability, despite repeated U.S. invitations. This probably has something to do with the fact that the nuclear force balance is not of central importance for the U.S.–China relations, at least so far. Beijing also regards opacity as an intrinsic part of its strategy. It is also unclear if China believes in the concept of mutual deterrence.

Washington, for its part, is said to have not determined whether it accepts or rejects mutual vulnerability as the basis of the strategic military relationship with China.<sup>[13]</sup> Although the United States has re-

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13 Brad Roberts, *The Case for U.S. Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2016), 173.

peatedly promised that the missile defense of the U.S. homeland is not “pointed at China” (that is, aimed at negating China’s deterrent) and has not modernized its nuclear forces with direct responses to China’s nuclear modernization, political and military leaders in Washington have proven reluctant to openly accept mutual vulnerability. They seem to fear that it will be taken in Beijing as a sign not of strategic restraint but of appeasement. Such a conclusion by Beijing would be detrimental to strategic stability. The assessment is shared by some Japanese experts. Both American and Japanese experts must accept, however, that China now has some second-strike capabilities (including mobile ICBMs and SLBMs), meaning that it already has a certain deterrence capability against the United States, if not to the level of MAD.

From a Japanese perspective, this new situation does not affect the credibility of the U.S. nuclear umbrella. The increased vulnerability of the United States to Chinese nuclear retaliation does not reduce the effectiveness of U.S. deterrence of China. As noted earlier, Japan has long believed in the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence against Russia even under the condition of the U.S.–Russia mutual deterrence based upon a state of MAD.

What does worry Japan is the possibility, even if remote, that the balance of nuclear deterrence power between the United States on the one hand and Russia and China on the other hand might become favorable for the latter two (as discussed further below). Despite a deep mutual skepticism underlying the two countries’ relations, Moscow and Beijing share one common goal: that is to undercut the United States’ position as the sole superpower. Hence their shared penchant for a multipolar world. A possibility therefore remains that the two countries might try to strategically cooperate against the United States, to undercut the effect and credibility of the U.S. extended deterrence.

In fact, the Japanese appear to be warier of this possibility than do Americans. The Japanese tend to look at the strategic balance among the three countries with a suspicion that Moscow and Beijing might unite to counter Washington. Accordingly, the level of nuclear force which the United States would consider sufficient to deter both Russia and China, might not be reassuring to the Japanese. For example, an arms control strategy that would produce a force balance of 1000 deployed strategic nuclear warheads for both the United States and Russia and 300 for China might be seen as stabilizing by the United States, insofar as it promises sufficient deterrence potential against

either Russia or China. But Japanese experts, let alone public opinion, might consider it to be destabilizing by suspecting that such a numerical imbalance might put the United States at a strategic disadvantage in the case of collusion by Moscow and Beijing.

It is presumed that neither Washington nor Moscow would want to reduce their nuclear arsenal to such an extent that the Chinese nuclear forces would come to carry weight in the tripartite nuclear balance. Moreover, the number of warheads alone would not determine a state of strategic balance. But raw numbers such as these would easily affect Japanese public perceptions with regard to the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence, upon which Japan relies.

It is plausible to assume that China would seek to further strengthen not only military but also economic and political power before defining its strategic relationship with the United States. In his first meeting with President Barack Obama in 2013, President Xi Jinping made a proposal to build “a new model of major country relationship based on mutual respect and win-win cooperation for the benefit of the Chinese and American peoples.”<sup>[14]</sup> He also stated earlier that the vast Pacific Ocean had “enough space for the two large countries of China and the United States.” These statements are too broad to indicate what China would want in its strategic relations with the United States. But they no doubt underline China’s strategic aspirations to be eventually on a par with the United States.

In the meantime, as pointed out earlier, China’s growing economic power has begun to change Asia-Pacific geopolitics in its favor, most symbolically luring U.S. allies, such as South Korea, the Philippines and Australia, to begin to balance, albeit to different degrees, their alliance relations with the United States against their growing dependence upon economic relations with China. As already noted, China has been engaged in efforts to expand its influence globally through such a grand plan of “One Belt, One Road” connecting China and Europe. China’s reported plan to make huge investments in an expansive network of deep sea ports, reported by *Financial Times*,<sup>[15]</sup> testifies to Beijing’s plan to become a global maritime power.

Against this backdrop, it is quite notable that President Xi did not

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14 President Obama and President Xi Jinping, after a bilateral meeting, Sunnyslands Retreat, Rancho Mirage, California, June 8, 2013.

15 James Kynge, Chris Campbell, Amy Kazmin and Farhan Bokhari, “How China Rules the Waves,” *Financial Times*, January 12, 2017, <https://ft.com/sites/china-ports/>.

reiterate such visions (at least publicly) in his first meeting with President Trump, possibly because he wanted to figure out how to develop relations with an unpredictable new president.

More fundamentally, a notion is apparently widely shared by Chinese people both in China and abroad that their country (or mother country) will eventually become the number one in the world. Such a gut feeling is not far-fetched in light of China's history of having been the world's greatest civilization and power. This ambition is not evident in China's near-term strategy. But President Xi's pronounced vision of a "China Dream" sets out this ambition clearly for his domestic audience. It seems self-evident that this ambition underlies China's approach toward strategic relations with the United States and toward the outside world as a whole.

Needless to say, it would be wrong to assume that China's power position will continue to grow unfettered. On the contrary, the country's political and economic conditions are already fraught with serious problems in a broad spectrum of policy dimensions, ranging from political oppression and human rights denials to economic and other social disparities among the people, and from environmental degradation to aging society, to name just a few. An increasingly tight control on civil society and freedom of expression, for example, is testimony to the Communist Party's awareness of spreading frustrations within the public opinion, which could otherwise undermine the party's monopoly of power.

Nevertheless, it is likely that for the next five to ten years China will push on with its own agenda aimed at recovering its great power status under the tight control of the Communist Party, probably led by President Xi.

The Chinese pursuit of primacy will pose an unprecedented challenge to the Americans whose national creed is also to remain strongest in the world. But it may not take shape, given the very different strategic cultures of the two countries. After all, the Chinese strategic approach is based upon a much longer perspective than the Americans', which is redefined almost every four years.

All in all, it is likely that the U.S.–China strategic relationship will continue to evolve, reflecting both military rivalry and competition for leadership in other domains, such as trade and finance; diplomacy and international order; and climate change, development assistance, democracy, and basic human rights. This calls into question whether the

United States can think about and pursue strategic stability with China in the same way that it does in relations with Russia. The search for strategic stability in the bilateral U.S.–China relationship will be further complicated by the emerging triangular major power strategic landscape.

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# The Japan–U.S. Alliance in a Changing Security Environment

As highlighted in the preceding section, Japan sits in a dynamically changing security environment, which raises major new challenges to the role of deterrence in the Japan–U.S. alliance, particularly those related to the credibility and effectiveness of U.S. extended deterrence. Yet Japanese responses to the new challenges will continue to be framed by the Japan–U.S. Security Treaty, which is deeply embedded in Japanese thinking on defense and security. This paper therefore first examines the nature of the alliance before turning to Japan’s evolving deterrence strategy.

## Japan’s Unique Position

Because the United States is a country with many allies, it would sometimes be difficult for American experts to understand the unique position of Japan as a U.S. ally. Accordingly, it would be important to note, first and foremost, that in sharing security perceptions, no other ally aligns with U.S. interests and concerns more broadly than does Japan. Tokyo shares with Washington security concerns about Russia and China, as well as North Korea.

U.S. allies in Europe are focused primarily on a resurgent Russia’s growing threats and other non-strategic problems. To the extent that any of them look toward East Asia, they tend to view China through an economic lens, as argued above, and to worry about North Korea’s nuclear weapons development for the sake of nuclear non-proliferation but not in the context of their own security.

Even South Korea does not fully align with U.S. regional, let alone global, security perceptions. Certainly, Seoul and Washington (and Tokyo)



share significant concerns about the North Korean threat to the security and sovereignty of the Republic of Korea. But Seoul does not seem to perceive itself as under military pressure from China and instead focuses on China as an important partner for trade and diplomacy. South Korea also sees in China as a willing supporter for its criticism of Japan's pre-World War II colonization and wartime conduct.

Australia too has overlapping but not identical security interests with those of the United States. Australia is an important ally to the United States, having fought alongside the United States in all the wars since World War I, including in Iraq. But Canberra attaches far less importance to U.S. extended deterrence than Japan and South Korea. Situated in the Southern hemisphere, the country is not exposed to the kinds of threats that would require U.S. extended deterrence, particularly since the end of the Cold War. Quite tellingly, Australia's 2016 Defence White Paper refers to U.S. extended deterrence only once as part of a statement to the effect that Australia's security is "underpinned by the ANZUS Treaty, U.S. extended deterrence and access to advanced U.S. technology and information."<sup>[16]</sup> The white paper acknowledges that only the nuclear and conventional military capabilities of the United States could offer effective deterrence against the possibility of nuclear threats against Australia. But Canberra anticipates no such threat. The white paper repeatedly states that there would be "no more than a remote prospect of a military attack on Australian territory by another country in the period to 2035."

## Japan's Role in the Alliance

Japan's unique position among U.S. allies derives from a combination of reasons; the country's geopolitical position (bordering, albeit across the sea, on Russia, the Korean Peninsula, and China), its reliance, if gradually diminishing, on U.S. military protection for defense, with total dependence upon U.S. nuclear deterrence, close economic and trade relations with the United States, not to mention sharing with the Americans the acceptance of universal values, such as freedom and democracy. The bilateral alliance relationship is also unique; it is neither a mutual defense arrangement (such as the United States has with South Korea and the Philippines, for example) nor a collective self-

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16 Government of Australia, Department of Defence, 2016 *Defence White Paper* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2016), 121.

defense arrangement (such as NATO). Under the Japan–U.S. Security Treaty of 1960, Japan provides the United States with “facilities and areas” in return for a U.S. commitment to defend Japan and ensure the security of the region. This distinct alliance relationship stems from the fact that Japan has long denied itself the exercise of the “right of collective self-defense,” in accordance with a long-held interpretation of the Japanese constitution (supported by public opinion embedded with pacifism). As is well known, the constitution was drafted under the strong leadership of the United States, which was in command of the Allied Forces then occupying Japan. As to be discussed later, it was only in 2016 that Japan’s Self Defense Force (SDF) became legally permitted to conduct activities for collective self-defense, albeit to a limited extent.

The Japan–U.S. security arrangements are vital for the forward deployment of U.S. military forces in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. Most importantly for the current U.S. strategy, twenty-one U.S. naval vessels, including an aircraft carrier, are now homeported in Japan, with the family members of the crew living in Japan. The aircraft carrier homeported in Japan (USS Ronald Reagan at present) is the only forward-deployed U.S. aircraft carrier. These arrangements make it possible for the United States not only to discharge its commitment to defend South Korea but also to deploy U.S. forces to the Western Pacific and beyond much faster and at lower expense than from the West coast of the continental United States.

Japan also provides “host nation support” in the form of financial support for U.S. forces. In FY2016, this totaled over \$5 billion. No other ally provides financial support at this level. During his February 2017 visit to Tokyo, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said that Japan is a model for cost sharing among U.S. allies.

The Japanese government has also been increasing defense spending for the last five fiscal years in a row. That trend reached a new high of \$42.5 billion in the FY2017, and the Japanese government is said to be planning to further increase it in the next fiscal year.

And, most importantly, Japan’s defense efforts have expanded, along with SDF cooperation with U.S. forces. The expanded defense efforts include, for example, the deployment and operation of ballistic missile defenses and the co-development of an advanced interceptor—all in response to growing concerns about North Korea. The increased potential threat posed by North Korea’s missile and nuclear weapons

development changed Japanese security perceptions in the late 1990s in favor of stronger defense and closer alliance cooperation with the United States. The continued growth and modernization of Chinese military power and Beijing's aggressive actions in recent years to enforce its territorial claims in the East and South China Seas, particularly those to challenge Japan's control over the Senkaku Islands, have prompted Japan to further strengthen its defense efforts and defense cooperation with the United States.

These Japanese efforts are essential to ensure the credibility of the U.S. commitment to extend deterrence to Japan. As to be discussed further below, the 2015 Defense Guidelines provide Tokyo with a blueprint for such efforts.

The uniqueness of the Japan–U.S. alliance is featured in deterrence strategy as well. In contrast to NATO, which calls itself “a nuclear alliance” and conducts joint nuclear policy and planning in support of its nuclear sharing arrangements, the U.S.–Japan alliance embraces extended deterrence but conducts no joint nuclear policy and planning and has no sharing arrangements. Moreover, Japan denies entry into the country of U.S. nuclear weapons.

But like U.S. allies in Europe, Japan has been sensitive to changes in U.S. nuclear policy and posture. Tokyo has been particularly interested in the policies of the last three U.S. administrations to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in deterrence strategy. This American policy orientation has affected, if inadvertently, Tokyo's strategic thinking in two different ways. The U.S. policy shift has aroused some concerns in Tokyo that it might weaken U.S. deterrence capability. In the course of the 2009 U.S. Nuclear Posture Review, there was significant discussion of whether or not to retire the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile/Nuclear (TLAM/N), a weapon the United States had long maintained in storage for potential use in a future contingency. This discussion was the subject of controversy in both Tokyo and Washington D.C.

On the other hand, and more importantly, the expansion of the role of conventional weapons in U.S. deterrence strategy has made it politically easier for Japan to take part in the alliance's deterrence strategy without worrying about possible conflicts between the country's non-nuclear policy and U.S. strategy. For example, the 2015 Guidelines for Japan–U.S. Defense Cooperation spells out defense cooperation between the SDF and U.S. forces within a broad concept of “deterrence of the Japan–U.S. alliance,” which includes conventional force

cooperation between Japan's SDF and U.S. forces as well as the U.S. nuclear umbrella. Accordingly, SDF vessels and aircraft have participated in joint exercises with U.S. aircraft carrier strike groups and strategic bombers engaged in operations to deter North Korea. In addition, in this context, Japan and the United States have been strengthening cooperation on ballistic missile defense, as noted above, and explicitly so as a means to strengthen the regional deterrence architecture. Looking to the future, Japan's contribution to the U.S. deterrence posture may yet be further expanded, as its advanced dual-use technologies come to play a role in what many now call Washington's third offset strategy.

## Changes in Japan's Attitude towards Extended Deterrence

### *Anti-Nuclear Weapons Sentiment*

Whereas Japan's attitudes toward increased defense cooperation with the United States and for increased host nation support have shifted rapidly along with changes in the security environment, Japan's attitude towards U.S. extended deterrence has been much slower to change. Japan has long given priority to its non-nuclear policy over requirements under the Japan–U.S. Security Treaty. Behind this has been a strong anti-nuclear weapons sentiment prevailing within a broad spectrum of Japanese public and political opinion. The anti-nuclear weapons sentiment has been reflected in Japan's long held Three Non-Nuclear Principles: of not producing, not possessing, and not permitting entry into the country of nuclear weapons. These remain almost sacrosanct not only politically but also within public opinion. The three principles were formulated as a policy in the late 1960s by then-Prime Minister Eisaku Sato of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and formalized in a resolution by the Diet (Japanese parliament) in 1971. "These principles were subsequently upgraded to the status of 'national principles' (kokuze), and each subsequent administration, LDP or non-LDP, has repeatedly reaffirmed its unwavering support for these principles as national policy."<sup>[17]</sup>

These principles reflect the memories of the nuclear explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which have been kept alive within the body

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17 Mataka Kamiya, "Realistic Proactivism: Japanese Attitudes toward Global Zero," in *Nuclear Security Series—Unlocking the Road to Zero: Perspectives of Advanced Nuclear Nations 6* (2009): 41.

politic despite generational changes. Furthermore, as noted earlier, the anti-nuclear sentiment in a broader context, including negative opinions concerning nuclear power generation, has become stronger in the wake of the accidents at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant on March 11, 2011.

The depth of Japan's commitment to the non-nuclear principles is affirmed by the fact that Japan continues to reject an independent nuclear deterrent even in the face of dangerous developments in its security environment, especially including Pyongyang's accelerating drive to develop nuclear weapons. Quite notably, Tokyo has opted to strengthen its efforts to support U.S. extended deterrent. It must be stressed in this context that U.S. extended deterrence, including the nuclear umbrella, has contributed to the goal of nuclear non-proliferation, as it allows Japan to pursue a non-nuclear policy. Japan's firm commitment to the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, despite its technological and financial capabilities to develop nuclear weapons, is by itself a significant contribution to the cause of nuclear non-proliferation. Japan's non-nuclear policy is an embodiment of the anti-nuclear weapons sentiment of the Japanese people and not simply a product of U.S. nuclear umbrella. But the U.S. nuclear umbrella is essential for the security of a non-nuclear Japan. The term "nuclear umbrella" is defined here as the commitment of the United States to protect the vital interests of its allies by nuclear means and is used in contrast to "extended deterrence," which is broader in concept—focusing more on the ends rather than the means of policy.

It must be noted in this regard that the Japanese government had long tried to distance itself from U.S. nuclear strategy, let alone its operation. This was particularly evident as Tokyo had tried to apply the "no introduction" principle to U.S. force operation during the Cold War. As noted earlier, the United States then deployed nuclear weapons on naval vessels, both surface and submarine. But Tokyo and Washington had agreed that U.S. nuclear weapons would be introduced into Japan only when agreed to by Japan through an obligatory "prior consultation." For decades, the Japanese government asserted that U.S. nuclear weapons had never entered the country, arguing that Tokyo had not been approached by Washington for a "prior consultation." In fact, the U.S. government held to a different view of its obligations. In its view, the transiting of Japanese territorial waters by U.S. vessels carrying nuclear weapons, or port calls by them, did not constitute the "introduction" of nuclear weapons, and thus created no obligation for prior consulta-

tion. This difference of views emerged only as the result of a post-Cold War investigation initiated by then-Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). It is now known that Washington had confidentially notified Tokyo of the difference of interpretation with regard to the notion of “introduction” of nuclear weapons. But Washington also refrained from making the difference a public issue, possibly out of concerns that such an approach would undercut the Japanese public’s support for the Japan–U.S. Security Treaty itself. The Japanese people’s strong anti-nuclear weapons sentiment was apparent to the Americans concerned. This chapter closed with the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives of President George H.W. Bush in 1991, which included the removal of all nuclear weapons from U.S. surface ships, attack submarines, and land-based naval aircraft. There is now no concern that U.S. vessels transiting Japanese waters or entering Japanese ports might be carrying nuclear weapons.

Although there has been no change in Japan’s policy of not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons, the Japanese government’s attitude toward U.S. nuclear strategy has changed considerably. A key catalyst has been the bilateral Extended Deterrence Dialogue (EDD), which began in 2010 to strengthen policy coordination on extended deterrence and the nuclear umbrella, as discussed further below. That Japanese officials’ participation in the dialogue has aroused little backlash in public and political opinion seems to testify to the increased public awareness of the need to ensure the effectiveness of that umbrella.

### ***Changes in Defense Policy***

Japan’s attitude towards the concept of U.S. extended deterrence has evolved over time. As the country recovered independence in 1952, Japan accepted U.S. military protection, including the nuclear umbrella. However, following that decision, the Japanese government distanced itself from the U.S. nuclear strategy, and how to make the three non-nuclear principles compatible with the need for the nuclear umbrella was a priority issue in policy debates in Tokyo. Even now, public perceptions regard the U.S. nuclear umbrella as a “necessary evil” at best. It is the emerging challenges to Japan’s security described in the first chapter of this paper that have put Japan’s focus on the need to strengthen defense cooperation with the United States for the purpose of ensuring the reliability of U.S. extended deterrence.

These gradual changes have been reflected in Japan's official defense policy, which has been gradually developed through five consecutive National Defense Program Outlines/Guidelines (BOEI-KEIKAKU-TAIKO). Two NDPOs were adopted in 1976 and 1995 and three NDPGs in 2004, 2010 and 2013. The English translation of BOEI-KEIKAKU-TAIKO was changed in 2004 from "National Defense Program Outlines" (NDPO) to National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG).

The documents from 1976, 1995, and 2004 took basically the same stance with regard to U.S. nuclear deterrence, leaving it entirely to Washington to deter nuclear threats. Nevertheless, there were notable differences in the way these documents referred to U.S. nuclear deterrence. For example, the first NDPO of 1976 simply stated: "Against nuclear threats, Japan will rely on the nuclear deterrent capability of the United States." The second NDPO of 1995 qualified reliance on U.S. nuclear deterrence with an emphasis on Japan's diplomatic efforts for nuclear disarmament. This NDPO was adopted after the end of the Cold War by the three-party coalition government led by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama of the Socialist Party. By contrast, the NDPG of 2004, adopted by the government of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), separated reliance on U.S. nuclear deterrence from efforts for international nuclear disarmament. It also underlined the importance of ballistic missile defense (BMD) as Japan's own efforts to supplement reliance on U.S. extended deterrence. Accordingly, the Japanese government decided in 2005 to participate in joint development with the United States of an advanced BMD interceptor (SM3 BLOCK IIA). A key driver of this decision was North Korea's 1998 test firing over the mainland Japan of an intermediate range missile (Taepodong). This NDPG also stressed Tokyo's preparedness to play an active role in international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, including Japan's participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) proposed by President George W. Bush a year earlier.

Against this backdrop, the NDPG of 2010 reflected a major shift in Japanese leadership views of the U.S. extended deterrent. It recognized that U.S. "extended deterrence, with nuclear deterrent as a vital element" would be indispensable as long as nuclear weapons exist, and stated that Japan would closely cooperate with the United States in order to maintain and improve the credibility of extended deterrence. It was the first time that the NDPO/NDPG explicitly referred to U.S. extended deterrence, let alone to Japan's commitment to cooperate with

the United States to enhance its credibility. Following the 2004 NDPG, this NDPG also affirmed Japan's policy to strengthen ballistic missile defense and to cooperate with the United States to the end.

It is noteworthy that the government led by Prime Minister Naoto Kan of the liberal-leaning DPJ adopted the NDPG of 2010. In terms of political dynamics, this seems to be analogous to President Richard Nixon's overture to China, although the moves were made in the politically opposite direction. As a staunch conservative, President Nixon could pursue a liberal cause of opening relations with Communist China without serious objection from conservative forces in the United States. Likewise, a liberal DPJ government could work for a conservative cause of increased reliance on U.S. nuclear deterrence without much objection from the left of the Japanese political spectrum.

The major shift reflected in the 2010 NDPG was reflected in Japan's first-ever National Security Strategy, as crafted by the government of conservative Prime Minister Abe and released in 2013. On the topic of extended deterrence, it argued as follows: "With regard to the threat of nuclear weapons, the extended deterrence of the U.S. with nuclear deterrence at its core is indispensable. In order to maintain and enhance the credibility of the extended deterrence, Japan will work closely with the U.S., and take appropriate measures through its own efforts, including ballistic missile defense (BMD) and protection of the people."

The 2013 NDPG adopted at the same cabinet meeting also states: "With regard to the threat of nuclear weapons, Japan will take appropriate measures through its own efforts, such as maintaining and improving the credibility of extended deterrence provided by the United States, ballistic missile defense (BMD) and protection of the people."



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# Japan's Deterrence Strategy

**A**s the preceding analysis implies, challenges to Japan's deterrence strategy are not over whether or not it should possess an independent nuclear deterrent. Japan has chosen a different course and remains strongly wedded to it. But it is important to address the question of Japan's nuclear option before discussing the optimal deterrence strategy that the country has opted to pursue. The discussion of Japan's nuclear option would also help to understand what would be required for the effective deterrence of emerging threats and how Japan could best improve its security.

## Japan's Nuclear Option

Foreign pundits often warily discuss the possibility that Japan might opt for nuclear armament. Given that Japan has the technological and financial capabilities necessary to develop nuclear weapons and missiles, such speculation is not unwarranted. Moreover, in Japan there are some conservative politicians and pundits who advocate to change the Three Non-Nuclear Principles for the purposes of either possessing nuclear weapons or permitting introduction of American nuclear weapons. But their impact should not be exaggerated, for they remain a small minority among the public and political opinion. Moreover, the strong opposition to nuclear weapons among the Japanese public and political opinion is deeply embedded. For the foreseeable future, these political factors will endure.

There are additional reasons that Japan is highly unlikely to consider a nuclear option. First, there is the financial factor. Japan lacks strategic depth, as its population is heavily concentrated in a few major cities along the coasts. Thus, the only credible deterrent it might consider would be one deployed at sea—nuclear submarines carrying nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles. This would be hugely expensive. It would also

take many years to create such a force, during which time its security position would likely erode considerably—especially if it were to seek such a capability over Washington’s objections. Given Japan’s need for a credible conventional defense posture—and the rising costs of fielding advanced defensive systems—it makes far more sense for Japan to invest toward that end. A related objective, as discussed further below, should be to help strengthen the capacity of the Southeast Asian countries for maritime security.

There is also a diplomatic factor. A Japanese decision to embark upon nuclear weapons development would no doubt deal a shattering blow to the nonproliferation regime and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which would likely result in the emergence of additional threats to Japan. It would also lead immediately to the country’s political isolation. Among the many consequences of this would be the damaging effects on the country’s economy.

Strategically, a Japanese decision to create an independent nuclear deterrent would make the Americans question the continued value to the United States of the Japan–U.S. Security Treaty. After all, from a U.S. perspective, such a Japanese decision would reflect a loss of Japanese confidence in the willingness and/or ability of the United States to make good on its promise to defend Japan.

Despite these drawbacks, debates about Japan’s nuclear option will continue in and outside the country, particularly given a changing security environment and rising questions about the U.S. world role. But the possibility for Japan to seek an independent nuclear deterrence over Washington’s objection or at the expense of alliance with the United States will remain inconceivable in the foreseeable future. Although some advocate to change the Three Non-Nuclear Principles for the purpose of enhancing the credibility of the U.S. nuclear umbrella, it is also inconceivable for the Japanese public to accept the deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons into the country.

On the other hand, if the strategic environments around Japan were to deteriorate to such an extent that Japan’s nuclear option would become strategically justifiable, Washington and Tokyo might want to explore whether the nuclear sharing arrangements within NATO might be applied in Japan, albeit with Asian rather than European characteristics. Such sharing would strengthen the umbrella but it would not involve an independent Japanese nuclear option. In a much-degraded security environment, this could have value. Yet, today, such a step would be

provocative, and unnecessarily so. Considering these factors, strengthening the Self Defense Forces' conventional capability while deepening defense cooperation with U.S. forces to enhance the U.S. extended deterrence credibility in the eyes of both the Japanese people and potential adversaries is the optimal option for Japan's deterrence strategy.

## Two Concepts of Deterrence

The 2013 National Security Strategy of Japan broke new ground in a number of respects, not least with the express commitment to cooperate with the United States in order to maintain and enhance the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence. It also set out two separate concepts related to deterrence.

- “Japan ensures its national security by enhancing deterrence through the strengthening of its own defense capability as well as by the deterrence of the Japan–U.S. Alliance, including the extended deterrence provided by the U.S.”
- “Japan will strive to enhance the deterrence and response capability of the Japan–U.S. Alliance.”

In support of the latter commitment, the strategy sets out a variety of steps, including joint training, joint intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) activities, joint/shared use of facilities by the SDF and the U.S. forces, operational cooperation and policy coordination, cooperation on BMD, maritime affairs, outer space, cyberspace, and disaster relief operations.

This policy framework raises a major conceptual question: what precisely is Japan's concept of deterrence? Quite obviously, the answer is not simply nuclear deterrence (or advocacy for an independent nuclear deterrent). The strategy also states: “under the evolving security environment, Japan will continue to adhere to the course that it has taken to date as a peace-loving nation.” As the strategy puts it, the commitment to “the path of a peace-loving nation” includes a policy of “observing the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.” Subsequently, the 2013 NDPG and the 2015 Guidelines for Japan–U.S. Defense Cooperation expressed Japan's commitment to the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.

But given that the notion of “deterrence” is still associated with nuclear weapons in international discourse, it would be better for Tokyo to clarify more specifically what is meant by the “deterrence” that Japan is trying to attain by strengthening its own defense capability.

Japan's Self Defense Force has many non-nuclear capabilities to "deter" aggression (as do many other countries' forces). But it has not created "a deterrent," a term that generally equates with nuclear deterrence. It is now accepted that the U.S. extended deterrent includes conventional forces. As the 2010 U.S. Nuclear Posture Review Report made clear, the United States has sought to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in regional deterrence architectures by increasing the role of non-nuclear means, such as ballistic missile defense and prompt non-nuclear strike capabilities (as well as resilience in cyberspace and outer space). Nevertheless, as it is widely held that nuclear forces are the only means to deter nuclear threats, nuclear deterrence is still regarded as the core of the U.S. extended deterrent.

The 2013 National Security Strategy of Japan also talks about "the deterrence of the Japan-U.S. alliance." The concept is palatable in the context of the universally accepted concept of deterrence, as the alliance's deterrence posture includes the U.S. nuclear umbrella. It is notable in this context that the 2015 Defense Cooperation Guidelines also refer to the notion of "the deterrence of the Japan-U.S. alliance" (and not to Japan's own deterrence or deterrent).

### **"The Deterrence of the Japan-U.S. Alliance"**

As noted above, the 2013 National Security Strategy was followed in April 2015 by the revised Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation, which serve as a blueprint for enhancing the effectiveness of the deterrence of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. The Guidelines provide "the general framework and policy direction for the roles and missions" of the two countries and "ways of cooperation and coordination" between them. It also stresses that Japan would "possess defense capability on the basis of the "National Security Strategy" and the "National Defense Program Guidelines," and that the United States would "continue to extend deterrence to Japan through the full range of capabilities, including U.S. nuclear forces."

Among many arrangements set forth by the Guidelines, the following three are particularly important for the sake of enhancing the effect of the deterrence of the Japan-U.S. alliance: (1) Japan's exercise of the right of collective self-defense, (2) seamless cooperation in peacetime, and (3) diplomatic efforts.

## Japan's Engagement in Collective Self-Defense

In the 2015 Guidelines, Japan has committed itself to cooperate with the United States in responding to armed attacks in the region on the United States or a third country like South Korea. Toward these ends, the Guidelines identified seven areas for cooperation between the Japanese SDF and U.S. forces. These include (1) intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), (2) air and missile defense, with particular focus on early warning, interoperability, network coverage, and real-time information exchange, (3) maritime security, with the aim of promoting bilateral presence through ISR, training and exercise, (4) asset protection, (5) training and exercises (bilateral and multilateral) with a particular notion that “timely and realistic training and exercises will enhance deterrence,” (6) logistic support, including supply, maintenance, transportation, engineering, and medical services, in particular, and (7) use of facilities, particularly promoting joint/shared use of facilities and areas as well as site surveys on facilities, including civilian airports and seaports, as preparations for contingencies.

This agenda of cooperation ran afoul, however, of the collective self-defense issue. As discussed in an earlier section, a long-held constitutional interpretation prohibited Japan from exercising its right of collective self-defense, including by cooperating as indicated in the revised Guidelines. Thus, to cooperate as indicated in the Guidelines would require some change to the interpretation of the constitution—or to the constitution itself. The Abe government agreed to adopt the Guidelines before such changes had been made, as the Guidelines (like the preceding two guidelines) specifically stated that they did not “obligate either government” to take legislative measures. As a matter of fact, the Abe government was already proceeding with preparations to try to pass a set of laws to make it possible for the SDF to exercise the right of collective self-defense to a limited extent, which was enough to cover the areas spelled out in the Guidelines. As noted earlier, Prime Minister Abe was successful in gaining parliamentary approval and a new interpretation was put into force in March 2016.

This was an important step to make U.S. extended deterrence more credible than before. Japan's commitment to take part in joint defense operations for the shared deterrence strategy of the alliance is essential to the strengthening of the U.S. commitment to the defense of Japan.

This approach has borne additional fruit in 2017, enabling the SDF's closer-than-ever cooperation with U.S. forces in operations to deter North Korea. Joint operations have sent a strong deterrence message from the alliance to Pyongyang. They have also signaled to Washington Japan's clear commitment to share the burden of deterrence in the region. Tokyo well understands the legitimate and long-standing U.S. desire to have its allies share such burdens. Indeed, it has long been a nightmarish assumption shared by Japanese security experts in and outside the government that Japan's failure to act to defend U.S. forces engaged in operations to defend South Korea would have disastrous consequences to the alliance itself. The SDF's cooperation with U.S. forces in deterring North Korea was unprecedentedly visible. According to the Guidelines, which stressed the importance of enhancing deterrence through "timely and realistic exercise and training," the SDF's vessels and fighters repeated exercises with their counterparts belonging to U.S. aircraft carrier task groups led by USS Carl Vinson and USS Ronald Reagan. There were also joint operations of the SDF's fighters with U.S. strategic bombers. Moreover, Japan's 19,500-ton helicopter carrier, the Izumo, was reportedly engaged in an operation to "safeguard" a U.S. supply vessel off Japan's coast. Less visible, but equally important, has been the two countries' cooperation through the newly created Alliance Cooperation Mechanism explained below.

It is important to note that few voices of concern have been raised in opposition to these SDF operations. This contrasts with the opposition voiced against the effort to create a legal basis for collective security operations by the SDF.

### ***Seamless Cooperation***

The Guidelines also stressed that the two countries will take measures to ensure Japan's peace and security "in all phases, seamlessly, from peacetime to contingencies." From a Japanese perspective—and from a deterrence perspective—this is important because it confirms that Japan–U.S. defense cooperation covers what Japan's National Security Strategy defines as "gray zone" contingencies—which are neither peace nor war. It is a shorthand to encompass the range of coercive actions pursued by China to press its territorial claims in the maritime environment. The commitment of the two allies to address all contingencies "seamlessly" ties the United States to Japan's defense in these contingencies. In particular, it means that the United States

backs up Japan as it uses its Maritime Security Agency (coast guard) to try to foil Chinese challenges to Japan's control of the Senkaku Islands within the realm of law enforcement.

In order to ensure seamless cooperation between the two countries' forces, the Guidelines decided to create a mechanism called the Alliance Coordination Mechanism. Its function is to strengthen policy and operational coordination between the Japanese SDF and U.S. forces "in all phases from peacetime to contingencies."

Moreover, with a view to facilitating bilateral operational cooperation between the two forces, which take action through their respective chains of command, the Guidelines underscored the importance of "co-locating operational coordination functions." The co-location of the two command systems has already been realized, with the Maritime SDF and U.S. Navy at a naval base in Yokosuka and the Air SDF and U.S. Air Force at an air force base in Yokota. A similar arrangement is planned between the Ground SDF and U.S. Army at an army base in Zama. These three bases are not far from the metropolitan area of Tokyo. It is expected that ongoing bilateral military cooperation to deter North Korea will also help to further improve the institutional aspect of bilateral defense cooperation.

## **The Diplomatic Context for Deterrence**

It is also significant that the Guidelines pointedly included "diplomatic efforts" as an area of cooperation "to strengthen the deterrence and capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance." Japan-U.S. diplomatic cooperation is essential to address priority security issues such as denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and preservation of the rules-based international order in the East and South China Seas. Bilateral diplomatic cooperation is also of critical importance for enhancing the alliance's continued viability in the context of an increasingly challenging strategic environment.

But diplomatic efforts for alliance purposes require careful coordination. After all, the management of bilateral relations requires tackling many politically contentious issues, ranging from competition in trade and economics to problems associated with U.S. bases in Japan. Moreover, the foreign policies of the two countries are not always fully complementary.

## *Bilateral Diplomacy*

The arrival of the Trump administration opened a significant new chapter in the bilateral relationship. From a Japanese perspective, the initial contacts between the Japanese government and the Trump administration went well. Prime Minister Abe called on President-elect Trump at the Trump Tower in New York immediately after his election and became the second world leader (after British Prime Minister Theresa May) to meet with him. In follow up, Mr. Abe accepted an invitation to visit with the newly-sworn-in President at Mar-a-Lago. Since then, the two leaders have remained in close contact over the North Korean issue.

Senior leaders in the Trump administration have moved forward the bilateral relationship as a priority. Secretary of Defense James Mattis symbolically chose South Korea and Japan as the first countries to visit after being confirmed by the Senate. Secretary of State Tillerson visited Tokyo in March before going to Seoul and Beijing. The visits together assured the Japanese (and the South Koreans) of the Trump administration's alliance commitment in the face of North Korea's accelerated nuclear weapons and missile development. Vice President Mike Pence also visited Tokyo early in his tenure. Although his visit focused on an economic dialogue, it served also to deepen a sense of alliance between the two countries.

The Japanese leaders and public have also found the new President's tough line on the North Korean nuclear issue reassuring in the context of U.S. extended deterrence. President Trump's reported pressure on President Xi to do more to dissuade North Korea from nuclear weapons and ICBM development and the U.S. military operations designed to deter and pressure North Korea have been seen as signs of an enduring U.S. commitment to Japan's security.

Notwithstanding these reassuring developments in the early months of the Trump administration, alliance politics between Tokyo and Washington remain unpredictable. President Trump's mercurial personality and deal-making tactics together have cast doubt on the durability of his policy commitments. His trade-focused "America first" policy is undercutting Washington's international leadership. The ongoing investigations into the Trump campaign's relations with Russia are also casting doubt on the long-term political stability of the Trump presidency.

Furthermore, an unprecedented delay in the appointment of senior officials in the administration has deprived the U.S. government (except for the military) of the capabilities to plan, articulate, and implement co-



herent policies in many dimensions relevant to alliance relations. Divides in Congress and, behind it, the American polity itself add to the unpredictability of U.S. policy.

The Japan–U.S. alliance itself has not been free of major political concerns, with a history of political frictions over bilateral economic and trade relations. Against this backdrop, President Trump’s quick and outright rejection of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement was a disappointment to Tokyo, which made maximum possible concessions on politically sensitive areas such as agriculture in order to conclude the negotiations of the agreement. Tokyo is now trying to bring the TPP into force with eleven members without the United States (TPP-11), while hoping that the United States will eventually change its mind and join the group. Bilaterally, Japan has joined the United States in broadly framed talks on trade and economics to be conducted under the co-chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso for Japan and Vice President Pence for the United States. But some Japanese are wary that the Trump administration’s “America First” approach and its obsessive focus on the trade balance and domestic jobs is ominous, not least because it seems so far removed from economic logic.

The two countries’ security relations also have their problems, despite their overall strength and robustness. A key outstanding issue is the long-pending plan to relocate a Marine air station in Okinawa. The Japanese government is determined to move forward with a long-agreed plan to relocate the station from a densely populated area of the island to a site on the coast. But this is opposed by the prefectural government, which instead demands the removal of the air station from the island. The plan is part of a larger project agreed by the two governments more than twenty years ago, with the aim of removing U.S. bases from the central areas of the island in order to reduce the burdens on local communities associated with the presence of U.S. forces. Anti-U.S.-bases sentiment is particularly acute in Okinawa for a combination of reasons: that the islanders suffered from the only ground battle that took place in Japan during World War II; that the islands had been kept under U.S. administrative control until 1972 (after Japan had recovered independence in 1952); that the islands have long been bearing the burden of the heaviest concentration of U.S. bases in Japan; that U.S. bases have been sitting on private lands in Okinawa (in the other parts of Japan, U.S. bases are mostly placed on the public lands); and that there have been accidents and violent crimes involving civilians. Given all this, Tokyo’s most careful

attention to the local situations is required as the Japanese government tries to implement the agreed plan. Equally important is careful attention by the U.S. military to avoid accidents and to prevent crimes.

### ***Russia and China***

Alliance relations with the United States inevitably link Japan to Washington's relations with Moscow and Beijing. Japan and the United States have many shared interests in the U.S. bilateral relationships with Russia and China; therefore, cooperation and alignment between them can be mutually beneficial. But their interests do not fully converge, and there are potential sources of friction that need to be managed. A key challenge—and opportunity—is presented by the shared commitment to strategic stability.

In the case of Russia, the United States and Japan have a shared interest in reducing the risk that President Putin's challenge to the existing international order might produce. They have a shared interest in ensuring effective Russian support for nonproliferation objectives in Northeast Asia and the Middle East. They also have a shared interest in attaining a stable strategic military relationship between Russia and the United States and avoiding a return to arms racing between the two nuclear superpowers.

But whereas Russia is once again the primary security concern of the United States, Japan has a separate agenda in relations with Russia. As noted earlier, Tokyo needs to develop cooperative relations with Moscow in order to recover Japan's own islands, which the Japanese call the Northern Territories, and to conclude a peace treaty with Russia. These islands have been kept under Russian control ever since Soviet forces occupied them in the last weeks of World War II. Although Japan and Russia normalized relations in 1956, a peace treaty between them has never been concluded and the recovery of the Northern Territories remains a priority of Japan's Russia policy. Tokyo's pursuit of improved relations with Moscow does not seem to immediately disturb the Japan–U.S. alliance. The United States has long been supporting Japan's claim over the Northern Territories, and Japan–Russia relations are peripheral to U.S.–Russia strategic relations, which are primarily focused on Europe and the Middle East.

By contrast, how the U.S.–China relations would evolve would remain a central focus of Japan's concern about the changing strategic relations among the three powers. Although Japan will remain the most

important U.S. ally in Asia, China will become the major focus of U.S. strategy towards global geopolitics in the 21st century. This is inevitable, given its rising influence, power, and ambition.

As noted earlier, Japan and the United States share a recognition that China's economy is important for the world's economy and that its political power is important for the stability of global geopolitics. Japan, for its part, has been pursuing with China the mutually agreed but vaguely defined goal of developing a "mutually beneficial strategic relationship." Economic interdependence between the two countries remains mutually beneficial. But the Chinese coercive challenges to Japan's control over the Senkaku Islands continue. Efforts to set up a "hotline" between the two countries to avoid sea and air accidents have been stalled despite an agreement by the two governments to do so. China has also been engaged in oil and gas development on the continental shelf under the sea areas where the two countries' claims overlap, ignoring an agreement made by the two countries in 2008 to pursue a joint development of energy resources in the areas.

Washington shares with Tokyo serious concerns about China's increasing military power and aggressive attempts to expand its territorial claims in the East and South China Sea. Washington has made increasingly clear its support to Japan's control over the Senkaku Islands. But in contrast to its position in support of Japan's claim to the Northern Territories, now occupied by Russia, Washington refrains from taking a position on conflicting territorial claims on the Senkaku Islands (as generally in other cases of conflicting territorial claims).

More generally, Japan cannot take it for granted that Washington will always consult with Tokyo on its relations with Beijing. Japanese experts recall unhappily the so-called "Nixon shock" the country suffered when President Richard Nixon secretly sent his National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, to Beijing in 1971 to open a direct line of communication with the leaders of Communist China. The sense of shock and even betrayal in Japan was strong. After all, having followed the United States in recognizing the Republic of China exiled on Taiwan as the sole government representing China, Tokyo expected that any change in such a fundamental U.S. policy would result only from advance discussion with its key regional ally. If President Nixon's incentive was significant—finding a way out from the quagmire of the Vietnam War—then a different U.S. president may have another significant incentive to cut a deal with Beijing without consultation with Japan, for example, to prevent or

roll back a nuclear-arming North Korea from becoming capable of attacking the United States. Given today's very strong alliance relationship, especially relative to 45 years ago, a repeat of a similar shock seems unlikely. Nevertheless, President Trump's unpredictable and often self-contradicting style in pursuing the pronounced goal of "America first" adds to the misgivings on the part of many Japanese about the reliability of U.S. foreign policy towards China.

### ***Southeast Asia***

On the other hand, diplomacy is a policy area in which Japan—like all countries—wishes to establish its own identity. The closer Japan–U.S. defense and deterrence cooperation becomes, the more important it becomes for Tokyo to show, both domestically and internationally, its diplomatic identity in contrast with U.S. policy.

Southeast Asia may be an area where Japan could further pursue its foreign policy identity. Japan has built up strong ties with Southeast Asian countries by contributing to their economic development, particularly after the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the region in the mid-1970s. Politically, Tokyo also contributed to the creation of the ASEAN-led security dialogue, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Japan's coast guard (Maritime Safety Agency) has long since been cooperating with its counterparts in the region for their capacity building. Japan's official development assistance (ODA) has been increasingly employed to this end.

And, recently, the SDF has begun to strengthen cooperation with counterparts in the region through personnel exchanges, visits of its vessels and aircraft, participation in multilateral exercises, and provision of equipment. Most recently, the SDF held a seminar on maritime security and international law, inviting military representatives from all the ASEAN countries. The seminar, which was held onboard the SDF's helicopter carrier sailing the South China Sea, was the first event of what is named as "Japan–ASEAN Ship Rider Cooperation."

Building on this gradual improvement of cooperation with Southeast Asian countries, Japan hopes to contribute to regional security. To this end, it is better for Tokyo to engage in cooperation with the ASEAN countries separately from Washington. The ASEAN countries wish to avoid taking sides between the United States and China and can find partnership with Japan a way to strengthen their positions without inviting an anti-U.S. reaction from Beijing.

There is no doubt that in a broader context of Japan–U.S. cooperation for peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, such Japanese efforts would serve the alliance’s common purposes of expanding the stabilizing impact of the alliance.

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# The Agenda for the Japan–U.S. Extended Deterrence Dialogue

The progress in recent years of the Japan–U.S. alliance in adapting to a changing world is both significant and impressive. The two allies have discussed extensively the key characteristics of the changing security environment, and have built deep agreement on the main challenges to their security. They have updated high-level political guidance as a way to accelerate improved cooperation to meet new challenges. They have significantly increased their focus on deterrence and have set out a practical agenda for strengthening extended deterrence and ensuring the credibility of the U.S. nuclear umbrella. All of this requires sustained and effective dialogue, beginning at the top between the two elected leaders but deepened at every subsequent level.

Until 2009, Japan and the United States had no special mechanism designed to ensure the needed focus on deterrence and substantive consultations about it. During its policy and posture reviews of 2009, the Obama administration opened the door to such consultations, and thus in 2010 began the Extended Deterrence Dialogue, as already discussed. The Trump administration in its first year has continued the practice of consultations on deterrence, including in a way that has helped to inform its own internal reviews of policy and posture for nuclear deterrence and missile defense.

Against the backdrop of emerging security conditions described earlier, the following three aspects of U.S. strategy stand out as important agenda items for Japan–U.S. Extended Deterrence Dialogue: nuclear declaratory policy, the U.S. nuclear posture and missile defense.

## Nuclear Declaratory Policy

U.S. nuclear declaratory policy consists of a number of statements about the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. defense strategy and the circumstances in which the United States might or might not employ such weapons. The 2010 NPR Report sets out a number of the Obama administration's commitments, well suited to the times. But the times have changed. Some elements should be reconsidered. Others have enduring values.

From a Japanese perspective, the first objective of an updated U.S. nuclear declaratory policy should be to strengthen the deterrence of North Korea. Pyongyang needs to understand Washington's resolve to deter aggression. It should be left with no room for miscalculation.

The Obama administration's NPR stated that President Obama would consider the employment of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States and its allies. It ruled out both a no-first-use obligation as well as a statement that the sole purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attack, on the argument that the vital interests of the United States and its allies could be put at risk by a variety of non-nuclear means. But the rest of its declaratory policy put the emphasis on reducing the role and number of nuclear weapons, assuring U.S. allies, and calling for stable strategic relationships with Russia and China.

At that time, the possibility that North Korea would acquire capabilities to directly attack the United States was still remote, albeit growing, and the focus of U.S. strategy was to defend its allies, South Korea and Japan. But now that North Korea is at the brink of having a capability to directly attack the United States, it is critically important for Washington to make its declaratory policy stronger in the eyes of North Korea—and of Japan and South Korea. To this end, it is advisable to make it clear that "first use" of nuclear weapons remains its strategic option, or, at least, to pointedly underscore the so-called "calculated ambiguity" with regard to "first use."

The advice of a bipartisan Congressional Commission on the U.S. strategic posture in 2009 has continued relevance. As it argued, a U.S. decision to adopt a policy of no-first-use "would be unsettling to some U.S. allies." The Commission also argued that a policy of no-first-use "would also undermine the potential contributions of nuclear weapons to the deterrence of attack by biological weapons," and further underscored

an argument that “calculated ambiguity” should continue as a key element of U.S. declaratory policy, arguing that “long-term U.S. superiority in the conventional military domain cannot be taken for granted.”<sup>181</sup> In the same year, the Independent Task Force of the Council on Foreign Relations also argued that “the policy of calculated ambiguity” about the use of nuclear weapons in response to an adversary’s use of chemical or biological weapons would continue to serve U.S. interests.<sup>191</sup> Since 2009, the conditions that led to these policy judgments cannot be said to have improved. On the contrary, they have become much worse, so that the need for calculated ambiguity in U.S. declaratory policy is more important than eight years ago.

Given that Pyongyang is believed to possess chemical and biological weapons, the United States should continue to refrain from claiming that the “sole purpose” of nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear threats. As already noted, the Obama administration stopped short of adopting “a universal policy that deterring nuclear attack is the sole purpose of nuclear weapons.” But it pledged to “work to establish conditions under which such a policy could be safely adopted.”

By contrast, the Congressional Commission recommended that the United States should reaffirm that the purpose of its nuclear forces was “deterrence, as broadly defined to include also assurance of its allies and dissuasion of potential adversaries.” The Chairs’ Preface of the Council’s Independent Task Force reflected their view that “the sole purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons” was “providing deterrence for the United States and its allies.”

It is indeed questionable if nuclear weapons would be a right means to deter the use of chemical or biological weapons. But it is also questionable, particularly given the absence of any convincing way to deter the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), if it would be appropriate to explicitly exclude the use of WMD as a potential justification for nuclear retaliation.

More fundamentally, it is important not to send any wrong signals to Pyongyang at a time when it is escalating its provocations. It is advisable for the Trump administration to not follow the Obama administration’s pledge to work for the conditions to enable adoption of the “sole pur-

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18 United States Government, Institute of Peace, *America’s Strategic Posture* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2009), 36-37.

19 United States Government, Council on Foreign Relations, *U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Council on Foreign Relations, 2009), 17.



pose formulation” as policy, as the North Korean leadership might see it as a sign that its preparation for warfare with illegal WMD has gone largely unnoticed by Washington.

## **The U.S. Nuclear Posture**

The necessary elements of the U.S. nuclear posture are of course for the United States to determine, in light of its strategic calculus and financial conditions. Given the importance of U.S. extended deterrence to its allies and also that of allies’ support for U.S. deterrence strategy, however, the perspective of those allies needs to be heard.

From a Japanese point of view, it would be important for the credibility of the U.S. nuclear umbrella for Washington to address the new question of how to deter North Korea on top of the long-pursued questions of how to deter Russia and China.

Militarily, the United States might be capable of eliminating North Korea’s nuclear weapons and other offensive capabilities without employing nuclear weapons, particularly in the event of war. But to deter North Korea while pressuring it to move in the direction of denuclearization, a U.S. nuclear deterrence posture designed to support its declaratory policy is indispensable. It is therefore advisable for a future U.S. nuclear posture to explicitly include nuclear weapons appropriate for employment against North Korea, or Iran and other similar countries that might emerge. For it is evident, even to Pyongyang, that the U.S. strategic capabilities aimed at deterring Russia and China are too large to be employed against countries like North Korea.

With regard to a future U.S. strategic posture to deter Russia and China, it is reassuring to Tokyo for the reasons discussed earlier that the U.S. deterrence capability would remain credible for the purpose of deterring the two countries even in the case that they cooperate to counter the United States.

## **Missile Defense**

Faced with the increased threat from North Korea, the Japanese government is considering various enhancements to its national missile defense. These include adding the Aegis Ashore system to the current architecture of lower-tier point defenses (the ground-based Patriot missiles, or PAC3) and the longer-range regional defenses (the sea-based Aegis system with Standard Missile 3 IA and IB missiles). The

sea-based system's capabilities will be improved in coming years with deployment of the advanced interceptors co-developed with the United States (the Standard Missile 3 IIA).

The further improvement of Japan's missile defenses will enhance the alliance's missile defense against North Korea and will reinforce the overall alliance deterrence posture. But it will also usher in a new phase of strategic coordination between Tokyo and Washington on missile defense against potential threats from China. There is an argument that deployments of the new and more capable SM3IIA "could raise significant new questions about strategic stability, as these might conceivably be deployed in ways that could impact China's confidence in its ability to strike the United States with its strategic forces, albeit only in a limited way."<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, Japan would eventually need to protect itself against growth in the missile threat from China. This would lead to a question about how much is enough for Japan to possess—for the sake of its own defense and also for the interests of the alliance's deterrence strategy.

One American analyst has concluded on the basis of the country's experiences to date that "Japan should have some capability to defend itself against small-scale strikes by China" but that "Japan need not have the capability to defend itself fully against the large-scale strikes of which China is capable because the U.S. extended deterrence commitment should be effective in preventing such attacks."<sup>21</sup> These arguments suggest that future steps in the development of Japanese missile defense architecture would raise a new set of challenging policy questions. Most importantly, how to balance the requirements for the deterrence of the Japan–U.S. alliance (including Japanese missile defense) with those for the United States' pursuit of strategic stability with China and, in the final analysis, how to consider Japan's role in the context of strategic stability between the United States and China. Unlike the case of the U.S.–Russia strategic stability, which is based upon nuclear force balance, it would be difficult to argue that Japan would only be a beneficiary of the U.S.–China strategic balance. But Ja-

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20 Brad Roberts, 'Anticipating the 2017 Review of U.S. Missile Defense Policy and Posture,' in *Missile Defense and Defeat: Considerations for the New Policy Review*, CSIS, March 2017, 22. [https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/170228\\_Karako\\_MissileDefenseDefeat\\_Web.pdf?oYEFXIARU6HCqtRN3Zuq7mKlJU3jllq](https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/170228_Karako_MissileDefenseDefeat_Web.pdf?oYEFXIARU6HCqtRN3Zuq7mKlJU3jllq)

21 Ibid., 33.

pan's role in the balance would also remain yet to be defined. To further compound the question, strategic balance between the United States and China would evolve under the influence of developments in many dimensions—as pointed out earlier.

In the same vein, next steps in the development of the U.S. homeland missile defense architecture would also raise some challenging questions for the East Asian security environment. In 2016, the U.S. Congress changed the U.S. national missile defense law in a manner that obliges the Trump administration to explore much more robust homeland defenses. From 1999 until that time, the law mandated that the administration “deploy as soon as technologically possible an effective national missile defense capable of defending the territory of the United States against limited ballistic missile attack.” In 2016, the word “limited” was dropped in favor of terms like “multi-layered and robust,” opening the door to something other than a limited defense and to future U.S. missile defense architectures of the American homeland that attempt to negate the larger scale strikes of which Russia and China are capable. This would generate significant reactions from both countries, including potential reactions that could increase the threat to U.S. allies, including Japan.

These arguments point to an important agenda for the Japan–U.S. Extended Deterrence Dialogue. How and how far should Japan expand its missile defense against potential threats from North Korea and China? How credible would the U.S. extended deterrent be in deterring North Korea and China? How are the answers to these two questions related? The problem remains, however, that the interrelation between the required scope of missile defense and the level of credibility of extended deterrence is difficult to define now for a combination of reasons. These include:

- The role of missile defense in overall U.S. deterrence strategy has not been defined by the new administration (in Japan, missile defense has so far been regarded as a backup for defense in the event that U.S. deterrence were to fail);
- The intended strategic relationships of the United States with North Korea and China have not been defined;
- Further progress of North Korea's missile capabilities is likely to blur distinctions between the U.S. homeland and regional missile defense; and

- In a longer-term perspective, the prospect for the proliferation of ballistic missile technologies and the expansion of Japan's responsibilities for international security cooperation within and outside the alliance with the United States might add to the need for the SDF to have advanced sea-based missile defense capabilities.

Given these complex and challenging issues, the time has come for Japan and the United States to discuss anew the role of respective missile defense capability in relation to U.S. extended deterrence.

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## Conclusion

As of this writing, North Korea's accelerating provocations—with more-than-ever-frequent missile tests and its largest ever nuclear explosion—are increasing the risk of war, with little prospect of reversing the dangerous trend through diplomacy. But in the context of U.S. extended deterrence, U.S. actions and alliance cooperation have notably been in progress in the form of preparations for defense and exercises of joint operations between the United States and its two allies, South Korea and Japan. U.S. resolve to use military means as necessary has been made clear by its repeated pronouncement that all options are on the table. If the effectiveness of U.S. deterrence of North Korea remains questionable, it is due to the recklessness of the Pyongyang regime, which does not seem to act according to strategic calculations to be expected from normal countries. This is an unprecedented challenge to the hitherto held concept of deterrence. Yet this does not devalue the concept. To adapt the concept of deterrence to such a country as North Korea, it is essential for the United States and its allies to stay on course to deepen alliance cooperation to further enhance the effectiveness of the alliances' deterrent and the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence, particularly in the eyes of the South Koreans and the Japanese. Japan's primary contribution to this end will be to quickly equip itself with the capabilities needed to fully implement its roles as spelled out in the 2015 Guidelines for Japan–U.S. Defense Cooperation and further expand its contributions to the deterrence of the Japan–U.S. alliance.

Needless to say, diplomacy will continue to be the key to reversing the worsening trend. After all, deterrence is a means to prevent a war while pursuing better security conditions through diplomacy—denuclearization of North Korea in this case. To this end, more efforts should be made by the international community as a whole and particularly by

China and Russia to pressure North Korean leadership to understand the consequences of its self-damaging policy.

The same can be said about a changing strategic balance among the three major powers. But given the Russian and Chinese expansion of their military power, including nuclear weapons, U.S. extended deterrence, including the nuclear umbrella, will continue to be valuable for the sake of security of its allies and partners as well as for the cause of nuclear non-proliferation.

Against this backdrop, it is important for the Japanese government to further deepen the public's understanding of and support for the concept of deterrence. The North Korean threats have certainly increased the public's support for the government's policy to rely on U.S. extended deterrence. But the public's support for the concept of deterrence to date has been focused almost solely on the conceptualized end of deterrence (prevention of war) rather than the means necessary for deterrence (military preparations to deter). Hopefully, the process of deterring North Korea will help to deepen the public's understanding of the importance of preparing means for deterrence, particularly a strategic linkage between Japan's efforts and the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence; that Japan's increased defense efforts and deeper alliance cooperation with the United States are critical to make U.S. commitment to extended deterrence firmer. The linkage would be important for the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence not only against North Korea but also in strategic relations with China and Russia.

Equally important for Japan's deterrence strategy in the changing strategic environment described earlier is for the country to further strengthen its economy and contribute to sustained growth of the Asia-Pacific and global economy through free trade. Such Japanese efforts would serve the purpose of strengthening the country's identity internationally as well as domestically while depending on U.S. extended deterrence for security. Expansion of Japan's economy would also be necessary to bolster Japan's defense efforts and deepen cooperation with Southeast Asian countries and other partners (like Australia and India) for an enhanced security environment in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. This would no doubt contribute to the empowerment of the Japan-U.S. alliance in the context of changing strategic balance among the major powers.

To the same end, it is strongly hoped that the Trump administration will change its earlier decision to leave the TPP. The United States is too

important to turn a blind eye to its responsibility to take leadership in promoting interdependence in the Asia-Pacific economy. This cannot be overemphasized in the context of the changing strategic balance among the major powers. For, as noted at the outset, the Asia-Pacific region, with its economic dynamism, would become a major breeding ground for changes in strategic balance among the United States, China, and Russia. More broadly, the same can be said about Washington's policy towards international policy cooperation on free trade and other global issues, such as global warming. In the final analysis, it is economy, not nuclear weapons, that will define geopolitics and strategic relations in an increasingly polarized but interdependent world.





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