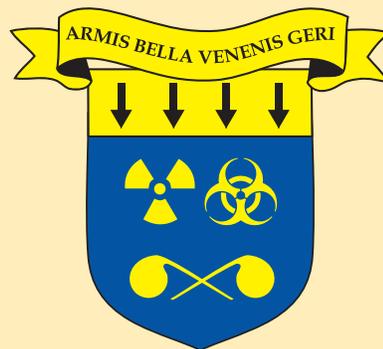


Views of Strategic Stability and of Deterrence in the Asia Pacific: AY18 Strategic Deterrence Research Papers

Edited by:

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Dr. Todd Robinson



United States Air Force
Center for Strategic Deterrence Studies

Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

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June 2018

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Preface

During the Academic Year 2018, the U.S. Air Force Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies (CUWS, renamed as the Center for Strategic Deterrence Studies in May 2018) provided a Deterrence Research Task Force (DRTF) elective for the Air War College and Air Command and Staff College. Ten students (four from the Air War College, six from the Air Command and Staff College) with broad and diverse backgrounds participated in this course, engaging in critical thinking about the nature of strategic deterrence and the role of nuclear weapons under strategic deterrence policy. The class took two field trips: one to Washington, DC, to engage with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff and Air Staff offices, the Department of State, the National Nuclear Security Administration, and the Central Intelligence Agency. The other field trip was to Los Alamos National Laboratory and Sandia National Laboratory to discuss the technical side of nuclear weapons.

Dr. Todd Robinson and Dr. James E. Platte were the instructors of this elective and faculty advisors for student research. The research questions came from General Robin Rand, commander, U.S. Air Force Global Strike Command, and Lieutenant General Jack Weinstein, Deputy Chief of Staff for Nuclear Integration and Strategic Stability (HAF/A10). General Rand asked the DRTF to investigate how the United States could revamp its deterrence and assurance strategy in the Asia-Pacific region. General Weinstein asked the DRTF to research adversaries' perceptions of strategic stability in order to avoid mirror imaging. These student papers attempt to address these strategic challenges.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The current national borders in Northeast Asia were settled between the end of World War II in 1945 and the armistice that ceased hostilities in the Korean War in 1953. By 1954, the hub and spokes system of bilateral alliances in Northeast Asia also was established, with the United States entering into bilateral collective defense agreements with Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region during the 1950s, the United States signed a bilateral collective defense agreement with the Philippines, a trilateral agreement with Australia and New Zealand (ANZUS), and the multilateral Manila Pact with Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, and the United Kingdom (called the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, or SEATO). This network of alliances was formed to contain the spread of communism in the Asia-Pacific region and counter any aggression from communist powers, namely the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.

This system underwent major changes in the 1970s. SEATO began to crumble in the mid-1970s and was formally dissolved in 1977, although the collective defense aspect of the Manila Pact is still recognized by Australia, France, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, and the United Kingdom. U.S. diplomatic recognition of Beijing in 1979 led to the end of the collective defense agreement with Taiwan that same year. Except for the temporary suspension of New Zealand's full participation in ANZUS, this system has mostly remained unchanged since 1980. Yet, the geopolitical and security situation in the Asia-Pacific has changed significantly in that time, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the economic and military rise of China, nuclear proliferation in North Korea, and territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas, among other issues. Technological change over the past 40 years also has increased allied and adversarial capabilities, along with presenting new security challenges. U.S. strategy toward the Asia-Pacific region must adapt accordingly.

Despite changes in geopolitics and technology, two core objectives of any U.S. strategy toward the Asia-Pacific region remains assuring allies and deterring adversaries. With this in mind, Air Force Global Strike Command asked the Deterrence Research Task Force (DRTF) to conduct research under the theme of revamping U.S. assurance and deterrence policies in the Asia-Pacific. In order to inform a debate on how to reshape U.S. assurance and deterrence policies in the Asia-Pacific, half of the DRTF members analyzed some past and present U.S. policies and the objectives of U.S. allies and adversaries in the region. These research projects comprise Part I of this book.

This section begins in Chapter 2 with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremy Holmes's examination of the continuous bomber presence (CBP) mission in the Asia-Pacific. Colonel Holmes specifically analyzes the impact of CBP on assurance, deterrence, and readiness in the region. He finds that CBP has assured allies and increased readiness, but the deterrent effects of CBP are still uncertain.

In Chapter 3, Major Aaron Baum applies the theory of strategic culture to South Korean policy toward the North Korean nuclear program, weighing the influence of South

Korea's strategic culture against that of U.S. policy toward the Korean Peninsula. Major Baum explains that South Korea balances its desire for independence with pragmatism for U.S. extended deterrence. He finds that South Korea will pursue a full range of conventional capabilities to counter North Korea, but will stop short of developing nuclear weapons, instead relying on U.S. extended deterrence.

Colonel Brian Rico looks at the overall impact of the U.S. troop presence in South Korea in Chapter 4 by examining public sentiment for the United States-South Korea alliance. Colonel Rico finds that support for U.S. troops in South Korea has remained high, and U.S. forward-deployed forces are the strongest assurance signal that the United States can send to South Korea. In addition, he concludes that U.S. troops in South Korea suppress domestic desire for nuclear weapons development.

In Chapter 5, Major Justin Hinrichs explores Kim Jong-un's psyche in order to predict what type of nuclear posture North Korea is likely to adopt. Major Hinrichs uses national identity concept (NIC) theory, which scholar Jacques Hymans developed to analyze leadership decisions to pursue nuclear weapons, and analyzes Kim Jong-un's public speeches to determine his psychological profile according to NIC theory. He then combines NIC theory with Vipin Narang's nuclear posture typology and concludes that North Korea is likely to adopt an asymmetric escalation posture.

Major Jeffrey Gould wraps up the research in Part I by looking at Northeast Asia as a whole and examining the deterrent effect of multilateral security pacts, as opposed to the existing bilateral security alliances currently in place, in Chapter 6. Major Gould reviewed the deterrent effect of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and compared that with the hub and spoke system in Northeast Asia. He finds that multilateral security organizations align security interests and strengthen deterrence, with the implication that the United States should pursue multilateralization in Northeast Asia to strengthen deterrence in the region.

The other half of the DRTF members addressed a related question that came from the Air Staff. This research examined adversaries' perceptions of strategic stability. Without such an understanding, U.S. policy makers and planners can fall into a trap of mirror imaging U.S. perceptions onto adversaries. Much of the scholarly and policy debate on strategic stability comes from the Cold War, with deterrence between the United States and the Soviet Union understandably being the focus of that debate. After the end of the Cold War, thinking on deterrence and strategic stability went into a lull, as deterrence between two nuclear superpowers did not seem as important anymore.

Recent years have shown that nuclear weapons still play a prominent role in global politics, and now the United States operates in an increasingly multipolar world, where the United States must deter multiple nuclear-armed adversaries. This has led to the concept of tailored deterrence, which says that there is no one-size-fits all strategy for deterrence and that the United States must craft a deterrence strategy for each adversary. While U.S. deterrence strategy in the Cold War was singularly tailored to the Soviet Union, now the United States must tailor multiple deterrence strategies at once. This makes understanding adversaries' conceptions of deterrence, end states, and strategic stability even more critical for U.S. policy makers.

Part II of this book begins with Lieutenant Colonel Michael James's analysis of Iranian perspectives of strategic stability in Chapter 7. Iran does not possess nuclear weapons, but Iran has had a controversial nuclear program and is major challenge for U.S.

operations in the Middle East. Colonel James explores Tehran's motivations for pursuing nuclear technology, both civilian and military, and why Iran agreed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). He finds that Iran prioritized economic security over nuclear weapons in agreeing to the JCPOA.

Chapter 8 turns to exploring Chinese conceptions of strategic stability. Major Adam Daino analyzes China's ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) development and compares China with SSBN development in France and India. Major Daino finds that China's SSBN development supports Beijing's regional security objectives, not further power projection or more aggressive nuclear posturing. He also finds that China's SSBN development is more similar to India than to France and suggests that SSBN development alone does not suggest that a country is adopting a more escalatory nuclear posture.

Major Joseph Shannon also examined China's nuclear modernization in Chapter 9. Major Shannon looks at what signal is being sent by China's nuclear modernization and what it says about Beijing's view of strategic stability. He provides an overview of the history of China's nuclear weapons and finds that competition with the United States has been a key driver throughout the history of the program. He also determines that China's nuclear modernization does not indicate a change to its current nuclear posture or its no first-use policy.

In Chapter 10, Major Erik Holmstrom analyzes the impact of Russian identity and Vladimir Putin's psychology on Russia's development of advanced military technologies, such as intercontinental ballistic missiles, hypersonic vehicles, long-range bombers, and ballistic missile defenses. Major Holmstrom demonstrates how Putin is a reflection of Russian identity. Putin behaves in the way that Russians expect, and accordingly, he emphasizes developing military might over the country's economy in order to protect the Russian homeland. Holmstrom also concludes that Putin has emphasized developing advanced military technologies due to perceived threats from the United States and NATO.

Lieutenant Colonel James Meier continues the research on Russian views of strategic stability in Chapter 11. Colonel Meier finds that Russian views of strategic stability are largely formed by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the eastward expansion of NATO to Russia's borders. He concludes that Russia's integration of conventional and nuclear forces into its military planning has occurred due to perceived threats from NATO.

The concluding chapter offers some final thoughts and recommendations for further research.

PART I:

DETERRENCE AND ASSURANCE

IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

CHAPTER 2

Indefinite Bomber Presence: What the Pacific Continuous Bomber Presence Was, Is, and What It Should Be

Jeremy M. Holmes, Lieutenant Colonel, United States Air Force

The Continuous Bomber Presence (CBP) was conceived in 2003 as a military hedge to potential adversaries of the United States or American extended deterrence umbrella in the Pacific region, namely China and North Korea.¹ The original CBP tasking was for only a handful of strategic bombers with the general mission of deterring adversary aggression, assuring allies, and increasing readiness.² The Department of Defense did not give much guidance beyond this. The CBP has gone from a bomber presence that has mostly conducted local training sorties from their home base of Andersen AFB, Guam, to conducting “presence” or “lightning” missions, typically in conjunction with a military exercise or integrated with other military elements, in and around the Pacific area of responsibility for strategic effect.³

Answering the question of “what is the CBP” may seem very simple in this regard, but the problem lies when you have the answer and compare it to the current state of affairs in the Pacific, most specifically with regard to North Korea. Almost 15 years later, the natural follow-on question is: Has the CBP fulfilled the objectives of the mission as originally intended? Also, does it continue to meet its objective so its continued presence is justified? If not, what needs to change about the CBP to make it more effective? Or, does the objective of the CBP need to change? This paper will answer the question of what the CBP was, how it is meeting its original intent, and what it should be in the future in light of a now nuclear-capable North Korea.

The first part of this paper will detail the original intent of the CBP and how the Pacific Air Forces executed it with regard to the past strategic situation in the Pacific. The next part of this paper will examine how the Pacific Air Forces conduct the CBP today in light of the current strategic situation, especially with regard to North Korea. The final part of this paper will conclude with how the CBP should be conducted in the future in light of the current strategic situation with North Korea and provide policy, strategy, and operational recommendations for the future.

This research is focused on the CBP and its role in deterrence and assurance in the Pacific. Deterrence and assurance lie in the psychological realm and encompass all instruments of national power. Observation of CBP performance alone cannot give complete insight into the overall effectiveness of American deterrence and assurance in the Asia-Pacific Theater. This research is unclassified. Many specific aspects of deterrence, assurance, and readiness are classified and this research does not delve, examine, or analyze those specifics. This research will examine the task and execution of the CBP in

the past and present in order to find ways to operate effectively in the future based on the security environment.

Background:

Genesis of the Continuous Bomber Presence - What It Was

The Continuous Bomber Presence originated from an operations order issued by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) late 2003. The original order called for B-52, B-1, or B-2 aircraft to deploy to Andersen AFB, Guam for a set period of time on a rotational basis.⁴ The mission was to assure allies, deter potential adversaries, and increase readiness in the Pacific Area of Operations (AOR). The order gave little more detail in execution.⁵ The B-52 became the first bomber type to enter the rotation, with six aircraft, a squadron of aviators, maintenance, and support personnel deploying. Most of the initial missions consisted of aircrews flying local training sorties whose limits did not extend past the Guam Area Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). The Pacific Air Forces did occasionally incorporate bombers into the Pacific AOR exercises around Hawaii, Alaska, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines.⁶

Prior to this time, the Pacific Air Forces and Air Force Central Command operated bombers from Diego Garcia in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Aircrews flying out of Diego Garcia occasionally flew to Andersen AFB, Guam for aircraft maintenance. Also during this time, to demonstrate extended deterrence commitments, CJCS orders occasionally sent bombers in and through the Pacific AOR for Global Power or Bomber Assurance and Deterrence (BAAD) Missions for hours, days, or weeks at a time.

Why Bombers Are the Deterrence Weapon of Choice

The U.S. nuclear triad consists of ICBMs, nuclear submarines, and nuclear bombers; each brings a different element to the table. The ICBMs are constant, always ready to launch. Submarines are survivable, hard to detect and hard to counter before they launch their missiles. Nuclear bombers are visible and flexible. Bombers can be generated with nuclear weapons and crews placed on alert. Bombers can be launched toward target destinations and be recalled or retarget their weapons in flight. Bombers can be massed together or they can be dispersed. All of these actions serve an operational purpose and make the bomber flexible. All of these actions are also very visible to adversaries and allies alike. Bombers are great for signaling intentions.

In 2013, the RAND Corporation conducted a study on crisis stability and long-range strike aircraft. The study examined a comparative analysis between fighters, bombers, and missiles. Although the study's primary driver was to examine the feasibility of a B-2 follow-on for a penetrating, stealthy bomber, the research conducted provides valuable insights to the types and posturing of weapon systems during a crisis. The analysis indicates long-range strike aircraft play an important role in crisis management.⁷

The RAND study states strike assets should possess both structural stability and crisis management attributes.⁸ Characteristics of structural stability include: sufficiently potent to deter a conventional attack, minimize vulnerability of the United States to a surprise attack, and mitigate the threat of U.S. surprise attack.⁹ Characteristics of crisis management include flexibility, responsiveness, and signaling capability.¹⁰ Taking these

categories and characteristics into account the study examined fighters, bombers, and missiles.¹¹ As can be seen in figures 1 and 2, the results vary for each weapon system type. Missiles, although responsive and less vulnerable to surprise attack, lack the ability to be flexible and effective in signaling. Bombers, on the other hand, possess the same positive attributes of missiles while also being flexible and having the ability to signal. For this reason, aircraft offer decision makers with the most flexibility and responsiveness in a crisis management situation.

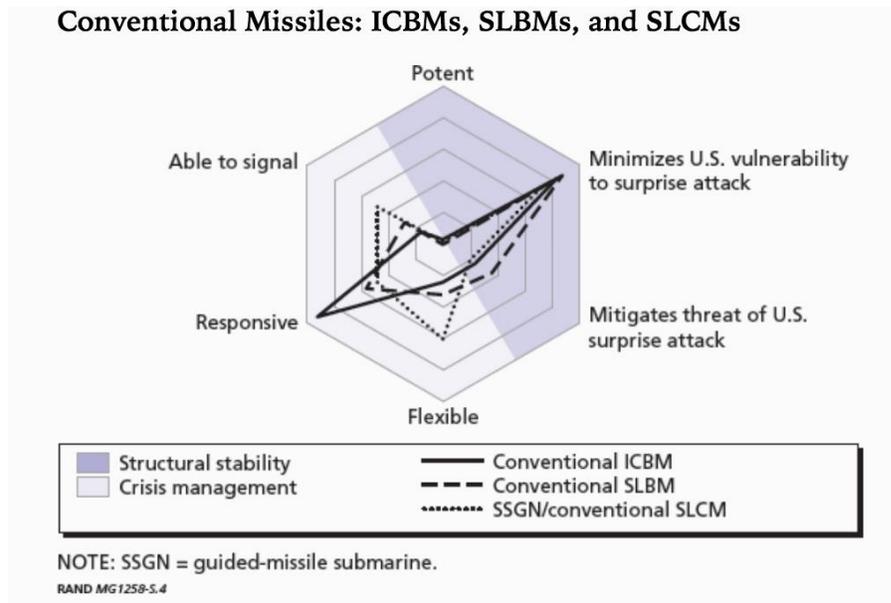


Figure 1. Conventional Missiles: ICBMs, SLBMs, and SLCMs. From Crisis Stability and Long-Range Strike.

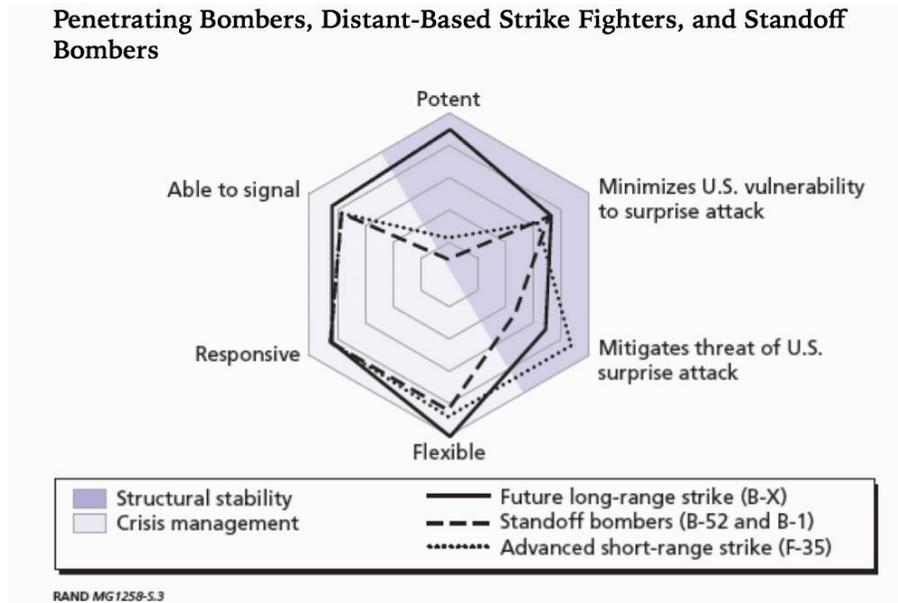


Figure 2. Penetrating Bombers, Distant-Based Strike Fighters, and Standoff Bombers. From *Crisis Stability and Long-Range Strike*.

The Continuous Bomber Presence Up to 2018: What It Is

Year after year, the number of missions and exercises across the Pacific AOR increased for the CBP. By the end of 2016, more CBP bombers flew more Higher Headquarters Directed (HHD) and Pacific AOR exercise missions than local training sorties. These sorties demonstrated the range and reach of CBP bombers to allies and adversaries, but not necessarily mission types.

The B-52 dual-capable strategic bomber logged the most CBP deployments. The B-1 conventional-only strategic bomber flew the next most, and the B-2 had the least, although all bomber types periodically deployed for BAAD missions. Generally, the United States increased the number of bombers in the Pacific AOR in anticipation or response to provocative adversary actions or major events like the Olympic Games.

The different bombers have similar and also unique characteristics. All the bombers, especially with tanker support, have the range to reach any adversary target in the world with a considerable air-to-ground missile or bomb payload. The B-52 and B-2 are nuclear capable, with the B-52 able to deliver the Air Launch Cruise Missile (ALCM) and the B-2 capable of delivery the B-61 and B-83 nuclear bomb variants.¹²¹³ The B-52 is a non-stealthy, standoff platform (for a first strike) capable of carrying the widest array of weapons. The B-2 is a stealthy, penetrating platform.¹⁴ The B-1 is a conventional-only platform, capable of carrying the largest payload of both air-to-ground missiles and bombs.¹⁵

Bomber Type	Nuclear Threat	Penetrating Threat	Standoff Missile Threat
B-1	No	Yes, with support	Yes
B-2	Yes	Yes	Yes
B-52	Yes	No	Yes

Figure 3. Bombers by Type and Threat Posed for a First Strike. Created by the author.

Regarding a first-strike capability, generally speaking, the B-2 poses a threat in all categories. The B-52 is a standoff threat, but not a penetrating threat without significant support. The B-1 is non-nuclear, but is a standoff and could be a penetrating threat with support.

Since the early 1990s, these bombers have played significant roles in American first strike and other enduring combat operations. The B-52s employed Conventional Air Launch Cruise Missiles (CALCM) against strategic targets during the first night or first strike missions in Operations Desert Storm (1991), Desert Strike (1996), Allied Force (1999), and Iraqi Freedom (2003).¹⁶ The B-2 has been used for penetrating first strike, direct-attack bombing missions in Operations Allied Force, Enduring Freedom (2001), Iraqi Freedom, and Unified Protector (2011).¹⁷ The B-1 has also been involved in penetrating, first strike missions in Operations Desert Fox (1998) through Unified Protector.¹⁸ All three bombers have conducted precision strike bombing missions in the Middle East since 2001 and all have the capability to launch the precision guided Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM).¹⁹ This missile would be used to destroy an adversary's high-value targets from outside the area defenses.²⁰

All of these bomber actions over the years clearly speak to the conventional, first strike capability that exists and that the United States is willing to use. It also alludes to the potential effectiveness of a nuclear strike capability. The conventional, standoff precision strike capability is clear though, and should be seen as a potential threat to be taken seriously by adversaries in the Pacific. In this fashion, bombers could be used to carry out the so called "bloody nose" strike on North Korea or be used in a responsive, punitive fashion, similar to the April 2017 American Tomahawk cruise missile strikes on Syria after that country's use of chemical weapons.²¹

Theory: The Continuous Bomber Presence and North Korea

The U.S. Air Force has been executing the CBP from the island of Guam in the Pacific Ocean since 2003. According to the original tasking order, the purpose of CBP is to assure allies, deter potential adversaries, and increase readiness. Since the genesis of the CBP, North Korea has continued to develop its nuclear weapon and ICBM arsenal. In January of 2003, North Korea announced it was withdrawing from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

In October 2006, North Korea conducted its first successful underground test of a nuclear device. More successful tests followed in 2009 and 2013 with two in 2016. The latest and most powerful was in September 2017.²² Concurrently, North Korea continued

to test and launch successively bigger and longer range missiles capable of delivering a nuclear warhead.²³ All the while, the U.S. Air Force has flown bomber assurance and deterrence (BAAD) missions around and over the Korean Peninsula.²⁴ The United States has clearly failed to dissuade North Korea from advancing its nuclear and missile program, but has the CBP failed to deter in the Pacific?

Gen. Robin Rand, commander of Air Force Global Strike Command, has stated that deterrence has not failed and pointed to the fact that armed conflict between the United States and potential adversaries in the Pacific has not occurred.²⁵ While it is true that deterrence has not failed in this respect, one can also not assume that deterrence has succeeded either.

If the CBP was intended to deter China from expanding and developing in the disputed territory of the South China Sea and North Korea from developing its nuclear weapons and ICBMs, then one could say deterrence failed. If the deterrence aspect of the CBP was to create a presence to deter outbreak of war in the Asia-Pacific region, one could still not conclude that deterrence has succeeded or failed.

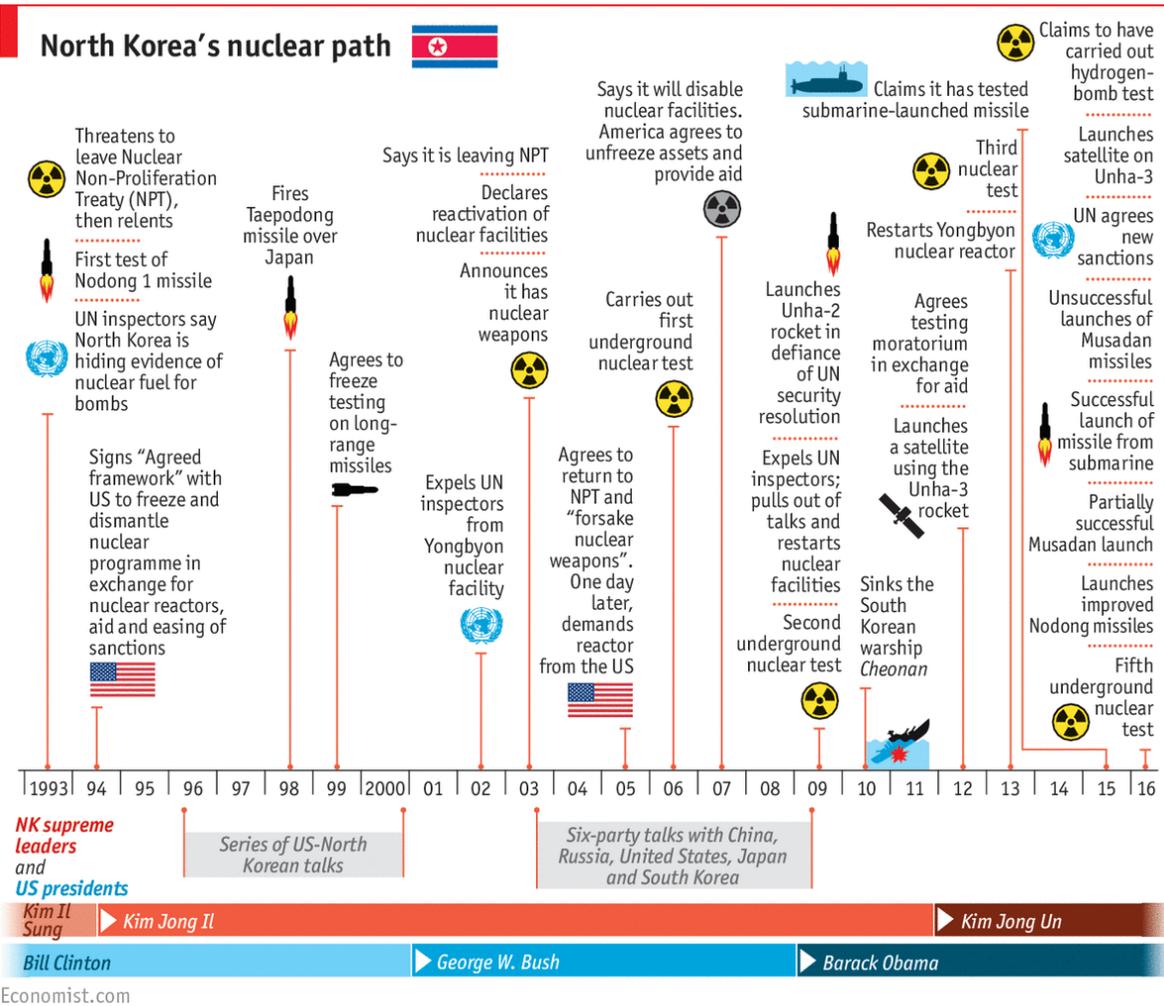


Figure 4. North Korea's Nuclear Path. The Economist, 2016.

To examine how effective the CBP was at deterring potential adversaries of the United States and its allies, we must ask the question, “What and who is the CBP trying to deter?” For this research, I will focus on China and North Korea as a target of deterrence. What of China and North Korea is the CBP trying to deter? Nuclear war? Major conflict? Violations of territorial sovereignty? Expansion into the South China Sea? Nuclear proliferation and nuclear weapon/ICBM development?

I hypothesize the CBP cannot be proven to be a deterrence failure or success, but it has had moderate assurance success and succeeded in increasing readiness.

Measuring Deterrence

Deterrence is extremely difficult to measure. If the main goal of CBP was deterrence, then how do we know whether it has succeeded or failed? Unfortunately, the scholarly literature has argued time and time again that deterrence success and failure are hard to measure. Just because a country’s military does not act does not necessarily mean it is deterred. The target country of deterrence may simply choose not to act. Or, if the target country is truly deterred, it may act like it is not deterred. Huth and Russett’s research explains why using documentary evidence, diplomatic historians and country experts to explain an adversary’s actions in light of a deterring country’s actions and policy is difficult.²⁶ Their research reveals two glaring problems using this method. First, policy makers have an incentive to disguise or misstate their intentions and reasoning, may not fully understand the motivations and reasoning for their actions, or may not precisely articulate the logic of their actions.²⁷ Second, absent explicit statements by policy makers of firm intent to use force, or admission of successful deterrent effect of the defender’s policies, conclusions of historians and country experts cannot be accurately relied upon unless evidence exists that individual scholars, actually utilized the same operational criteria to classify intentions, motivations, and reasons behind the statements and actions of the potential attacker.²⁸ The DOD, however, does have a concept for attempting to measure deterrence.

The Deterrence Operations (DO) Joint Operating Concept, published by the DOD, lays out doctrine and provides a method of assessment.²⁹ The aim of the DO JOC is ultimately on influencing adversary decision-making, which is inherently difficult to accomplish, as well as analyze and measure.³⁰ Success in deterrent activities is often indicated by the absence of an event.³¹ Assigning a cause and effect relationship between deterrent actions and a desired outcome of “no event” is problematic at best.³² The thoughts and calculations of an adversaries mind are difficult for external measurement. Therefore, analysts must construct innovative methods to objectively assess strategic deterrence operations.³³ These methods must address the problems of gauging human intention and perception, and measuring the degree of influence required or achieved.³⁴ The DO JOC states that for a specific deterrence objective, developing deterrent actions and determining the effectiveness of those actions requires three analytic steps: 1) develop an in-depth understanding of adversaries’ decision calculus, 2) develop and assess tailored, adversary-specific deterrent courses of action (COAs), and 3) implement and monitor the impacts of tailored deterrent COAs.³⁵

Recent research has attempted to measure deterrence by finding the deterrent value of the CBP bomber missions and the desired effect with regard to North Korea. Maj. Jonathan King proposed that Bomber Assurance and Deterrence (BAAD) missions or CBP

missions flown in the vicinity of the Korean AOR cause an increase in hostile rhetoric from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.³⁶ King attempts to test this hypothesis by measuring the change in slope of the KCNAwatch.co Threat Index before and after a BAAD event.³⁷ He did find the trend lines support the hypothesis – that BAAD events increase aggressive rhetoric in DPRK propaganda, thereby giving those looking to measure deterrence some insight in how to go about it.³⁸ However, King was unable to conclude a direct correlation in his small sample size. He finds the evidence suggests that BAAD events do not increase the aggression level in DPRK propaganda.³⁹ Further studies can expand to a wider reach or narrower focus to gain insight on the effect of BAAD missions on DPRK discourse.⁴⁰ King's findings also suggest broader studies could determine if there are any diminishing deterrent effects on continued BAAD missions, or threats, without follow-through.⁴¹

One could say yes, the CBP is deterring, but what proof would there be to support that claim? A potential aggressor may just choose not to get into a conflict or risk a confrontation regardless of the CBP.

In the case of North Korea, an argument could be made that the CBP actually contributed to advancing their nuclear weapon program. According to Prospect Theory, if an opponent is put into a loss frame, he may be more likely to take risks.⁴² If North Korea interpreted the CBP as a sign of a potential for increased loss, they may have chosen to take the risk of continuing or accelerating their nuclear weapons program because of the fact. North Korea may also not interpret the CBP as a significant, immediate threat at all and continued its weapons development.

The same may be true with China. With bombers continually present, the Chinese may have seen themselves in a loss frame or a potential future loss frame and because of this, chose to continue their South China Sea build-up. Or, like previously stated for North Korea, the Chinese may not have interpreted the CBP as a significant, immediate threat and continued their actions regardless.

How effective was the CBP at assuring American allies, namely South Korea and Japan? This question may be seemingly a little easier to answer given the fact that the United States can just ask South Korea and Japan if they feel assured by the CBP. For this research, I conducted informal interviews with senior officers of the Japanese Self-Defense Force and the Republic of Korea Air Force. Both officers stated they felt assured of the United States extended deterrence commitment by the presence of American bombers. Both officers also stated the most reassuring aspect of the United States commitment is the physical presence of American military personnel in the region and on their territory.

Assuring Allies

From an assurance aspect, the physical presence of U.S. military on the ground is important for several reasons. First, by the United States having its military forces in the countries with which they share security commitments, it gives those forces an opportunity to train in that environment and with the allies they will be fighting alongside. Secondly, it serves as “skin in the game” from an extended deterrence aspect. Words are cheap; lives are priceless. It's reasonable to assume that the United States is much more likely to aid an ally if American lives are at stake. People serve this purpose better than machines that show up overhead once or twice a week, as is the case with the CBP.

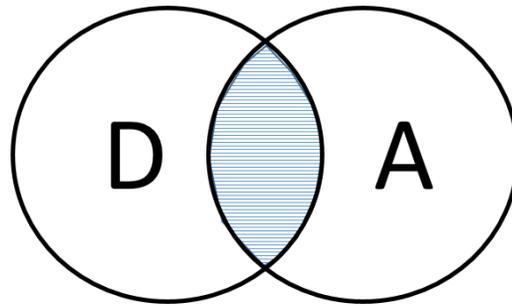


Figure 5. Deterrence and Assurance Overlap Model. Dr. Todd Robinson.

Simply put regarding deterrence and assurance, there are things a country can do to deter an adversary and things a country can do to assure an ally. There are also things a country can do that both deter and assure at the same time. As previously stated, deterrence is very difficult to measure, while assurance, although complicated, may not be as difficult. Where the overlap occurs is where a country can take an action that deters a country, in theory, with the full cooperation and participation of the country to be assured. With regard to extended deterrence, where assurance is necessary, a country providing the extended deterrence could focus on the overlap of deterrence and assurance for maximum efficiency.

Col. Eric Paulson attempted to measure assurance in the Baltic region by surveying NATO, military field grade officers of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, including one officer from Ukraine.⁴³ The survey asked respondents to rank various methods of assurance, to include:

1. Bomber Assurance and Deterrence Missions
2. U.S. forces deployed to the Baltics
3. U.S. forces stationed in the Baltics
4. American participation in regional exercises
5. The United States conducting integrated operations in the region
6. Public statements by American civilian and military leadership

Paulson found that among those surveyed, 70 percent responded with U.S. Armed Forces stationed at or deployed to the Baltics as making them feel the most assured.⁴⁴ He found that 23 percent felt most assured by BAAD missions or the presence of bombers.⁴⁵ Taking the findings at face value, while American troops on the ground is the majority answer in providing assurance, the presence of bombers was the next highest in assuring and provides some insight into the value of bomber presence missions and the Pacific CBP in providing assurance to allies.

Paulson's survey can provide two insights in assuring allies. First, asking allies if they feel assured may be easier than trying to determine if actions are deterring the

adversary. Secondly, surveying allies will uncover the exact ways they feel the most assured. While this may not necessarily equate to deterrence, if an adversary can observe that an opponent country is assured of their ally's support, it may contribute to that adversary being deterred.

Despite these insights, providing extended deterrence to allies has its own challenges, aptly described in the Healey Theorem. The Healey Theorem demonstrates that the requirements of assurance and extended deterrence for a discrete set of allies and their potential adversaries may differ markedly despite the fact the parties involved in both sets of strategies are the same.⁴⁶ Lord Denis Healey, the United Kingdom Secretary of State for Defence from 1964 to 1970, commented regarding the American security assurances to NATO: "It takes only five percent credibility of American retaliation to deter the Russians, but 95 percent to reassure the Europeans."⁴⁷

The Healey Theorem identifies a second challenge that comes directly from U.S.-allied discussions on deterrence issues. Discussions with allies are critically important to allied assurance. Giving American allies a "vote" on extended deterrence matters, however, also creates an opportunity for a "veto" on defense strategy and planning.⁴⁸ While simply surveying and asking allies for their input in extended deterrence matters seems straight forward, it has its own complications that may strain relationships in an alliance.

Regarding alliances and assurances, Snyder and Lee find with respect to South Korea, the United States extended deterrence commitments have played an important role in keeping that country from developing nuclear weapons of its own.⁴⁹ Despite the value of the nuclear umbrella, the United States has made non-nuclear, positive assurances to include forward-deployed troops, joint military meetings and exercises, as well as advanced conventional capabilities.⁵⁰ The capabilities the CBP brings to the theater and the way bombers are integrated into South Korea and Japan exercises clearly fits this category. Wirtz finds some success of extended deterrence is often linked to tangible evidence of national commitment in the form of forward-deployed forces or retaining forward deployed U.S. nuclear weapons as in the case of NATO.⁵¹ He also concludes, as in the case of South Korea, the credibility of successful United States positive security guarantees does not necessarily have to be accompanied by forward-deployed forces; in case studies, consultations instead of force deployments was the preferred method to signal resolve.⁵²

In Andrew O'Neil's research of South Korea and American extended deterrence, he finds that extended deterrence has become more important over time.⁵³ South Korea has become increasingly reassured over time regarding U.S. extended deterrence and it has become more institutionalized in the way of thinking and planning.⁵⁴ There has been a declining frequency in the statements coming out of South Korea reflecting the doubts about the alliance with the United States and there has been no attempt made to reinstate its nuclear weapons program.⁵⁵ Finally, South Korean policy makers have no doubts about American extended deterrence preventing existential threats to the country, but are less convinced that it will prevent lower level provocation from North Korea below the level of war.⁵⁶

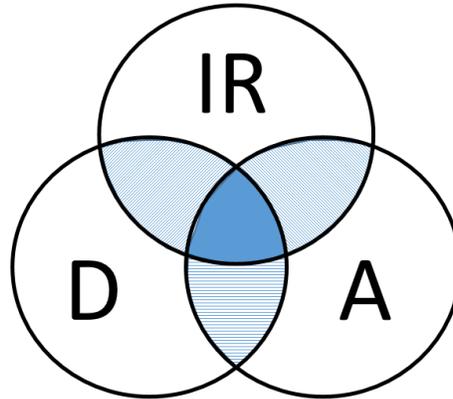


Figure 6. Deterrence, Assurance, and Increase Readiness Overlap Model. Adapted from Dr. Todd Robinson’s Work. Created by the Author.

Increasing Readiness While Deterring and Assuring

After 15 years of bomber experience in missions in the Pacific, no doubt aircrew readiness has increased. Aircrews are familiar with the operating area and allies have grown used to the presence of bombers as a sign of American extended deterrence. By continuing to refine deterrence operations in a tailored fashion, in close coordination with allies through integrated exercises, operations and planning in order to increase readiness, overall effectiveness can be increased. Focusing on the convergence of these three areas should be the goal of the CBP into the future. Planners and operators should strive to identify ways to measure and increase this focus to improve upon deterrence, assurance, and readiness.

Why the CBP Can’t Force North Korea to Give Up Its Nuclear Weapons

Some in the United States, from high-ranking government officials to the general electorate, believe the United States can just coerce or compel North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons. On the surface, this tactic may seem to make sense; the bigger and stronger state forcing the smaller weaker state to meet its demands. Deterrence Nobel Laureate Thomas Shelling would describe this as compellence. Compellence is when one state initiates an action (military) that can cease or become harmless only if the opponent state responds in a way to the initiator’s favor.⁵⁷ In this scenario, if North Korea met the US-Pacific Ally threat with force, unacceptable loss of life would likely occur on all sides. This makes compellence a bad option. Also problematic would be if North Korea opted to do nothing and make the United States look like the aggressive bully. Even worse, not responding to the act will likely weaken U.S. military credibility. This may embolden North Korea more and possibly encourage other nations to advance their nuclear or missile programs. Take for instance the “red line” statement that President Barack Obama made with regard to Syria and chemical weapon use. A subsequent use met with no military action. Contrast this with Syria chemical weapon use during the Donald Trump presidency and the near immediate, punitive strikes that ensued. As of the writing of this paper, no subsequent Syrian use of chemical weapons has been undertaken.

Likewise, nuclear coercion will likely not work. Recent statistical analysis and historical case study/qualitative research conducted by Furhman and Sechser states using nuclear weapons to coerce other states shows inconclusive results, and more times than not, nuclear coercion whether implicit or overt does not work.⁵⁸ Absent better options, credible nuclear deterrence is the best option for the United States and its allies in the Pacific region while greater diplomatic efforts are given time to work.

When All Else Fails, Deter and Assure

Deterrence is making an adversary not take an unwanted action based on the perceived cost a nation will inflict outweighing any benefits the country may gain.⁵⁹ Deterrence is psychological. In order for deterrence to work, a nation must be credible to the adversary by making the leadership believe a nation has the capability and will to inflict unacceptable losses.⁶⁰ Nuclear deterrence normally involves the territorial integrity of a nation, national survival, or a nation's vital interests to be effective. This is why the United States cannot deter North Korea's nuclear and ICBM development, because the mere development does not directly threaten territorial integrity or vital interests. It is possible, however, to control North Korea's nuclear use through effective deterrence. For the nuclear deterrent to be the most effective, the United States and its allies must increase their capability and will to use nuclear weapons, and using bombers is the best way to do this.

The findings of this study fortify the United States' rationale for stationing bombers in the Pacific for the CBP for assurance and signaling purposes. The U.S. Air Force can make the extended deterrent signal much stronger and more effective though. I conclude the CBP cannot be proven to be a deterrence failure or success, but it has had moderate assurance success and succeeded in increasing readiness. As shown, deterrence success or failure is extremely difficult to prove. The scholarly literature from over the years has proven this as well as recent attempts to measure the deterrent effect of BAAD and bomber presence missions in the vicinity of North Korea. Recent assurance research, especially with regard to South Korea, shows trending success in this area despite inherent challenges with providing extended deterrence to an ally. Over the course of 15 years of the CBP, no doubt readiness has increased due to the continual focus on the mission in the Pacific and persistent presence there. By synergizing the nexus of tailoring deterrence theory to the specific threats, assuring American allies by inclusion in planning activities and combined operations, and ensuring aircrew training and readiness is focused in these areas, the CBP can improve its efficiency and effectiveness in the Pacific AOR.

Policy Recommendations:

What the Continuous Bomber Presence Should Be

Based on the current strategic situation in the Pacific region, there exist several force structuring alternatives, especially with regard to bombers and the CBP. One possibility would be to establish methods that are similar to those that can be found in the NATO alliance, including both combined nuclear planning groups and nuclear sharing arrangements.⁶¹ Forward basing of nuclear weapons should also be considered. Basing nuclear weapons at a central and neutral location like Andersen AFB, Guam might work to avoid the negative politics of reintroducing U.S. nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula or on Japanese soil.⁶² This would reduce their vulnerability, mitigate potential negative perceptions in South Korea and Japan, and perhaps allow the three allies to coordinate and train with one another for the nuclear delivery mission.⁶³

Another method to increase assurance is to continue and advance combined exercises as suggested by the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review. These exercises should include officer exchanges and liaisons. These exercises should also involve detailed integration between allied and partner air forces and militaries, not just deconfliction and coordination. Regarding the CBP, BAAD, and bomber missions, exercises should involve conventional strike and conventional support to nuclear operations.

Also to be considered should be the moving or activation of a permanently based bomb squadron at Guam. Currently, B-52 and B-1 bomb squadrons rotate for six-month deployments at Andersen AFB, Guam. A permanently based bomb squadron would have several positive attributes. First, it could save time and money from units having to deploy and redeploy every six months. Second, it would allow the squadron to build firmer relationships with the joint force, allies, and partners in the USPACOM AOR. Third, having a permanent bomber presence would bolster assurance and American extended deterrence commitment to its allies. A permanent bomb squadron, coupled with occasional BAAD deployments of other bombers would demonstrate the ability to maintain presence and also to surge forces or escalate when needed.

If the United States discontinues the CBP, it should take measures regarding force structures in order to properly assure allies. The U.S. Air Force could maintain or strengthen a permanent bomber operations and support function at Andersen AFB and deploy bombers on an ad hoc basis, as exercises or the strategic situation necessitates, in order to signal, show resolve or escalate. With this, the United States could continue to fly BAAD missions from the United States, especially during times when bombers aren't present on Guam, in order to assure allies and demonstrate capability.

The strategic situation in the Pacific region is unlikely to change any time soon. Regardless of the specific policies or courses of action, American and allied military leaders take with regard to the CBP, a U.S. military presence will be necessary in the Pacific for the foreseeable future. Bombers will continue to play a key role to show American resolve and commitment to stability, security, and extended deterrence.

Notes

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CHAPTER 3

South Korean Efforts to Counter North Korean Nuclear Aggression

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Recent North Korean nuclear aggression has raised debates about how the United States should secure its interests in Northeast Asia. However, any action on the peninsula should consider the security preferences of American allies, especially the Republic of Korea (ROK). With militaristic rhetoric coming from the Trump administration, the question arises of how important U.S. policy is to the actions of our Korean allies in countering North Korean (DPRK) nuclear aggression. Thus, it is important to review nuclear crises of the past and the alignment of U.S. and ROK policy toward Pyongyang. This paper reviews three periods of nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula and argues that U.S. military policy is not the sole factor determining South Korean response to DPRK nuclear provocation. South Korea's strategic culture of self-reliance drives non-nuclear diplomatic and military responses while allowing Seoul to depend on the U.S. alliance for its nuclear deterrent.

Background

In July 1953, North Korea agreed to the Korean Armistice that initiated a formal cessation of hostilities between North and South Korea. Three months later, the United States and the Republic of Korea signed their own bilateral agreement. The Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) created a defense alliance that has lasted more than 60 years. In the treaty, the United States and South Korea pledged to consult each other when the security of either state is threatened (Art. II). Specifically, the two countries are to “maintain and develop appropriate means to deter armed attack,” (Art. II), and act together to meet dangers to lawfully recognized territories (Art. III).¹ Furthermore, in Article IV of the treaty, South Korea granted the United States “the right to dispose U.S. land, air and sea forces in and about the territory of the Republic of Korea.”²

While the MDT does not directly address extended nuclear deterrence, the U.S. nuclear umbrella has been an accepted part of the alliance nearly since its inception. Since 1953, consecutive American presidents have maintained the policy of a strong U.S.-ROK alliance backed by U.S. extended nuclear deterrence. Prior to the armistice, President Dwight Eisenhower signaled his willingness to use nuclear weapons to end the Korean Conflict. He then reiterated his resolve should China and North Korea reinitiate hostilities.³ From 1958 to 1991, the United States stationed nuclear artillery, bombs, and missiles in South Korea to counter a North Korean invasion.⁴ Further, in 1975 the Ford administration affirmed that the United States would consider the use of nuclear weapons in a conflict “likely to result in defeat in any area of great importance to the United States in Asia ... including Korea.”⁵

It was not until 1978 at the 11th Security Consultative Mechanism (SCM) that extended nuclear deterrence was formally included in the alliance where a joint communique endorsed the continued role of “the nuclear umbrella.”⁶ More than three decades later, the 2009 SCM continued to reaffirm this stance promising, “To provide extended deterrence for the ROK, using the full range of military capabilities, to include the US nuclear umbrella.”⁷ The 2016 establishment of the Extended Deterrence and Strategy Consultation Group, which “provides a forum for comprehensive discussions on strategic and policy issues regarding extended deterrence against North Korea” also demonstrates the growing importance of extended deterrence in the alliance.⁸ Hence, while not initially a formal part of the mutual defense treaty, both the action and words of the alliance have confirmed America’s extended nuclear commitment to South Korea.

Within the last 25 years, North Korea’s nuclear actions have tested the resolve of the MDT and America’s nuclear umbrella. Three crises have demonstrated the ROK’s approach to dealing with a nuclear Pyongyang. The First Nuclear Crisis began in 1992 when North Korea threatened to pull out of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) to develop its own nuclear weapons. This period was highlighted by eventual diplomatic alignment between the United States and South Korea, resulting in the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework to dismantle North Korea’s nuclear program in exchange for alternative energy sources. The Second Nuclear Crisis, from 2003 to 2007, was characterized by increased hostility between the Bush administration and North Korea. Pyongyang launched several ballistic missiles and tested its first nuclear bomb during this period. Finally, starting in 2008, there has been growing apprehension over North Korean nuclear weaponization in what I call the Third Nuclear Crisis. This period includes overt missile and nuclear weapons testing by North Korea countered by continued South Korean engagement and a modernized conventional deterrent.

Research Framework

The U.S.-ROK alliance has been the center of increasing debate since the DPRK threatened to withdraw from the NPT. Experts have stressed that Pyongyang’s nuclear program expansion presents a serious challenge to the United States and South Korea.⁹ Accordingly, U.S. defense officials have asked what a redesigned security posture in the Pacific today should look like. To answer this question, we must first understand what has worked for U.S. policy in South Korea. How has U.S. policy affected how the Republic of Korea feels about security vis-a-vis North Korea? How much influence does U.S. policy have on South Korean responses to DPRK nuclear aggression? Seeing that the Korean peninsula has a history of seeking independence in security, U.S. influence may not be what some American policymakers believe. South Korea’s strategic culture of independence and pragmatism allows for both great power reliance as well as independence through indigenous security force development. So where does the South Korean strategic culture of self-reliance play into its response? Taking into account strategic culture, what effect has U.S. military policy had on ROK efforts to counter a North Korean nuclear threat?

I seek to understand how military policy regarding U.S. extended deterrence and the alliance affect this balance of autonomy and reliance. I argue that U.S. policy is not the sole factor determining South Korea’s response to North Korean nuclear aggression. The hypotheses tested are as follow:

1. *(H1) South Korean strategic culture of self-reliance drives diplomacy in response to North Korean nuclear aggression*
2. *(H2) South Korean strategic culture drives non-nuclear military responses to North Korean nuclear aggression*
3. *(H3) South Korean strategic culture allows for continued dependence on the U.S. alliance for nuclear deterrence.*

Based on these hypotheses, I show that U.S. military policy has taken less of a determinant role in influencing South Korea's responses to a nuclear DPRK. I analyze ROK diplomatic and military actions compared with U.S. responses during three periods of North Korean nuclear hostility. I use artifacts of strategic culture tied to the decisions the ROK makes during these periods. Because strategic culture manifests itself through language and statements, my research is based on polls, news articles, press releases, and government reports.

First, I review ROK responses, diplomatic and militarily, from the First Nuclear Crisis of 1992 to 2003. During this period, South Korean diplomatic responses both shaped and followed U.S. policy. Its military responses took a defensive posture, though weapons development and policy suggests regional aims beyond North Korea. Secondly, I cover the period of Pyongyang's nuclear threat in what is known as the Second Nuclear Crisis. While U.S.-ROK diplomatic approaches to the crisis were at odds during this period, South Korea maintained its military modernization in support of the alliance, taking into consideration the North Korean threat as well as regional independence. Finally, I review the growing Third Nuclear Crisis from 2008 to 2017 as North Korea actively sought to weaponize its nuclear program. During this period, South Korea openly developed a modern three-tiered conventional deterrent against North Korea.

Through all three crises, South Korea maintained a preference for engagement with North Korea, though its military development was not always focused solely on the DPRK. Aside from the diplomatic and conventional military responses, I seek to understand why the ROK has not developed a nuclear program, though it has the capability to do so. In the 1970s, Seoul sought an indigenous nuclear weapons program, but in 1975, it abandoned its designs and signed the NPT. Since then, it has relied on the U.S. nuclear umbrella, though some argue that Seoul has the potential technical capability to quickly produce its own nuclear weapons.¹⁰

Strategic Culture Theory

My research develops through the lens of strategic culture theory. A state's strategic culture is based on its fundamental beliefs about war and its preferences for security planning and conflict resolution.¹¹ A state's history, geography, resources, military, religion, and values all play into its decisions regarding security. Alastair Johnston defines strategic culture as a system of arguments, language, analogies, metaphors, and symbols that establish preferences for security by conceptualizing the role of the military in political affairs.¹² Strategic culture is what reifies the role of the military in politics for a group. Johnston measures it as a group's view on the role of war in human affairs, the nature of

the threat, and the efficacy of the use of force.¹³ Artifacts to measure strategic culture include debates, policies, speeches, media, weapon decisions, and ceremonies. The theory is not exclusive of realism's rational actor behavior, but argues that state utility calculations are influenced by culture.¹⁴

As Victor Cha explains, "As a predictive tool, strategic culture does not predetermine behavior, but shapes it, offering ideas on where the grooves are deepest and most well-trodden with regard to future behavior."¹⁵ The implications are clear: by following the grooves of South Korean strategic culture, U.S. policy can maximize the efforts of the alliance, and build a unified response to the DPRK nuclear threat.

South Korean strategic culture is one of independence and self-reliance. The entire Korean peninsula has a history of conquest and colonization. Geographically located between two Asian powers – Japan to its east and China to its north and west – Korea has been a victim of 5,000 years of power competition with more than 900 invasions.¹⁶ In the 20th century alone, Korea had several upheavals. It lost its sovereignty as a protectorate of Japan in 1905. By 1910, Japan had fully colonized the peninsula. When Japan was defeated in World War II, Soviet and American occupation divided Korea at the 38th parallel. Within five years, the Korean Conflict broke out backed by the Chinese in the North and the United States in the South. As Cha points out, the ROK's "push for more self-reliant defense capabilities, autonomy, and alternative military suppliers found in Korean force improvement plans are a perfectly natural response to the uncertainties of the post-Cold War era."¹⁷ Constantly caught up between battling powers due to its geographic significance, South Korea has developed a culture that looks inwards for its own security.

Notwithstanding this independent attitude, South Korea recognizes the pragmatic value of alliances and diplomacy. Cha points out that historically, order in the region is kept through great power competition or cooperation, both of which tend to exploit or exclude smaller powers like Korea.¹⁸ So in order to survive and provide for its own security, Korea has historically looked to diplomacy and military alignments with great powers. Bilateral alliances with great powers was the only way to survive. Historically, China was the guarantor of that protection, though Korea's relationship with China during these periods was one of vassal or protectorate and not the alliance between two sovereign nations. Today, the United States is the great power of choice for South Korea, even though some South Koreans have manifested anti-Americanism at different times. Shin and Izatt argue, though, that anti-Americanism does not necessarily cause anti-alliance sentiments.¹⁹ Similarly, Haesook Chae concludes that regardless of anti-Americanism, most South Koreans prefer maintaining or even strengthening the U.S. alliance to secure against and eventually denuclearize North Korea.²⁰ Andrew O'Neil argues that faced with a security environment with possible threats from China, Japan, and especially North Korea, the ROK wants to maintain its alliance with the United States to benefit from its extended nuclear deterrent policy.²¹ Thus, while independence is central to South Korean culture, practicality plays a role as well. This balance of independence and reliance shows that strategic culture does not negate a state's realistic tendency toward rational preference, but it does shape it.

Clearly, the South Korean strategic culture of self-reliance does not completely exclude space for alliances. Cha describes this balance of autonomy and great power dependence as "assertive bilateralism," in which South Korea seeks to develop its own security under the protection of U.S. defense.²² However, independent development does

not go unchecked. Cha reiterated, “If one employs a cultural interpretation, ROK behavior, while different and unsettling for the alliance, will be bounded at the extreme by its own constraints on strategic choice.”²³ In other words, ROK pragmatism may constrain its preferences for self-reliance on the far edges of the spectrum. Indigenous nuclear weapons may be considered an extreme that is constrained by the republic’s practical dependence on U.S. extended deterrence.

1992 – 2003: The First Nuclear Crisis

The First Nuclear Crisis began in 1992 when North Korea refused International Atomic Energy Agency special inspections and threatened to withdraw from the NPT. Then ROK President Kim Young-Sam’s diplomatic response was criticized for its inconsistency.²⁴ Seeing an opening with the possible regime collapse after Kim Il-Sung’s death, President Kim Young-Sam felt a hardline stance would better position the ROK for negotiations. Thus, he held that the United States and South Korea should show resolve against the DPRK and await its collapse. In response to the U.S. proposal to exchange light water reactors for the North’s commitment to abandon its nuclear bomb program in the Basic Agreement, President Kim Young-Sam strongly opposed the negotiations as a “half-baked compromise” that “might prolong the life of the North Korean government,” “send the wrong signal to its leaders” and “bring more danger and peril.”²⁵

Coming to power in 1998, President Kim Dae-jung’s “sunshine policy” broke with the previous administration’s hardline approach to counter Pyongyang’s nuclear development and aligned more with U.S. President Bill Clinton’s diplomatic approach of negotiations without prior DPRK concessions. This sunshine policy of engaging North Korea and encouraging regional reconciliation sought to expand South Korea’s regional leadership role and resulted in the inter-Korean summit in 2000. It also guided the greater regional vision promoted by Seoul’s next president, Roh Moo-hyun to create South Korea as the center of regional economic and security cooperation. Both Kim and Roh carried the vision that North Korea was a key partner for regional integration and independence “rather than the main enemy to fight.”²⁶

Throughout this period, South Korean diplomatic efforts, even the hardline policies, demonstrate that ROK leadership did not see the North’s nuclear program as an immediate threat to South Korean security. Andrew Pollack pointed to the lack of any spikes in noodle sales in 1994 despite North Korea’s threats of war as evidence that South Koreans did not see the North’s atomic threats as dangerous. Historically, “even a hint of war sent consumers rushing to stock up on dried noodles.”²⁷ In the hardline Kim Young-Sam presidency, as well as the more progressive tenures of Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun, South Korean diplomatic responses revealed ROK voices in the alliance’s approach to North Korea. Though at times this voice differed from the United States, South Korea likely followed along with U.S. diplomacy. The fear of nuclear war with Pyongyang was not high enough to risk threatening the alliance with Washington.

A large volume of literature addresses the diplomacy carried out with North Korea during the first crisis. However, less work has been done to analyze Seoul’s defense activities. As the nuclear threat was benign in the eyes of the ROK, its military policy was one of defense. From a military perspective, South Korea’s security initiatives demonstrated redundancy in defense systems evident of its strategic culture of self-reliance. While South Korea did not seek its own nuclear weapons, it did expand its

conventional military capabilities – some directed at North Korea and others directed at establishing an autonomous defense force. On the surface, ROK policy could be seen as following U.S. policy. However, upon closer examination, there is evidence these South Korean efforts were actually stemming from a preference for self-reliance.

Seoul demonstrated independence in its military response toward the DPRK during this period. At the beginning of the crisis, the 1993-1994 ROK Defense White Paper, principally focused on North Korea. It stated, “Our most important tasks today are to prepare for the existing threat from the North and to strengthen our self-reliant defense capabilities.”²⁸ Further, it explained, “Faced with a North Korean military threat, our armed forces are making their utmost effort to establish a solid military deterrence posture. At the same time, in preparation for the strategic environment that will come in the 21st century, we are carrying out future oriented defense policies aimed at solidifying our self-reliant defense capability to protect our national interests.”²⁹ Thus, during the Kim Young-Sam years, the ROK military policy was one of defense against the DPRK, while moving toward greater defense autonomy in the future.

The ROK’s focus on a defensive posture was exemplified in its response to U.S. plans for a limited surgical strike on North Korea’s Yongbyon nuclear facility in 1994. President Kim argued against such an attack calling President Clinton to say that an airstrike would “immediately prompt North Korea to open fire against major South Korean cities from the border.”³⁰ Further, in March 1994, South Korea announced it would introduce Patriot anti-ballistic missile batteries as defense against North Korean missiles.³¹ These examples demonstrate a military policy that opposed offensive actions and favored a defensive posture with respect to North Korea. Such a policy was likely a combination of the ROK not seeing the North Korean nuclear program as an immediate threat and fear of escalation from limited offensive strikes to full-scale war. Moreover, the response shows that U.S. policy did not drive a military response. Instead, South Korea’s military response was determined by Seoul.

ROK military policy during the crisis gradually expanded beyond North Korea to regional military independence. The 1997-1998 ROK Defense White Paper provided nuanced changes to its 1993-1994 version. Its objectives were updated to defend the nation “not only from the military threats of North Korea, but also from all kinds of external military threats.”³² Additionally, while it identified the ROK-US alliance as the “mainstay of Korea’s defense system,” it also set an objective to achieve a regional advanced defense force built on the “realization of a self-reliant defense posture” and modern weapons systems.³³ Air Force and Navy modernization during the 1990s exemplifies this desire for an autonomous capability.

Korea’s plans to modernize its Air Force during this period demonstrate a preference for autonomy in defense. In November 1997, Seoul announced its F-X program to create an indigenous air superiority and deep strike capable aircraft. While deep strike ability could act as a deterrent to a North Korean nuclear strike, the program could also “turn the Republic of Korea into a regional power within 20 years, with a view to holding its own on the geopolitical scene after any reunification.”³⁴ Additionally, the ROK Air Force identified strategic intelligence systems, airborne early warning and control systems, tanker aircraft, electronic warfare aircraft and anti-tactical ballistic missiles as systems that will follow the F-X program.³⁵ These systems could detect a DPRK threat, warn South Korea, and demonstrate the ability to strike the North, should it act aggressively. Finally,

in 1999, Korea initiated development on an indigenous stealth material program that “satisfied about 70 percent of operational requirements of the country’s military.”³⁶ Each of these developments would increase South Korea’s ability to strike the North, and also serve to establish the ROK as a modern independent regional force.

As Jong Kun Choi and Jon-Yun Bae explained, “Since 1994, South Korea’s military has focused on enhancing its conventional deterrence capacity in addition to securing the extended deterrence from the United States. The various governments of South Korea, regardless of their ideological orientation, have exerted enormous efforts to modernize and upgrade South Korea’s military capabilities.”³⁷ While the United States certainly already had the most advanced air forces in the world, South Korea continued its path of conventional military modernization to not only counter the DPRK nuclear threat, but to establish its own autonomous defense force in Northeast Asia.

Conventional air modernization was not the only development that demonstrated the South Korean strategic culture of self-reliance. Naval modernization showed a desire for self-reliant forces. However, unlike air development, naval modernization during the period was not focused on countering North Korean nuclear aggression. The republic’s efforts toward a self-reliant navy aimed at expanding South Korean military power in the region. Through the 1990s, the ROK Navy primarily focused on protecting South Korean territorial waters and islands. In June 1993, it commissioned the *Changboghham*, a 1,200-ton imported submarine. A year later, the ROK deployed its first domestically built submarine.³⁸ By the end of the century, South Korea had begun a naval expansion for protection beyond its regional waters. In 1999, the Defense Ministry announced the ROK Navy would procure three Aegis-class destroyers in addition to its small fleet of landing craft to support its Marine Corps operations. Additionally, it began planning for Korean versions of a destroyer, a heavy landing ship, and mine laying and hunting ships.³⁹ Andrew O’Neil suggested these naval modernizations were less focused on North Korea, and more to establish the ROK as a regional power capable of independent blue-water operations.⁴⁰ Thus, although South Korean strategic culture still drove efforts toward an autonomous navy, maritime modernization was not aimed at countering DPRK nuclear aggression.

As opposed to conventional developments, Seoul did not seek to develop indigenous nuclear weapons. While Seoul had secretly procured a weapons programs in the 1970s and 1980s, it did not see its own nuclear program as necessary for autonomous defense during the First Nuclear Crisis. Surveys of South Korean society provide some reasons. A poll by Gi Wook Shin highlighted that even college students – the most anti-American group – acknowledged the American alliance contribution to Korean national security.⁴¹ His survey showed a majority of students supportive of the U.S. military remaining on the peninsula rather than withdrawing immediately (55 percent to 36 percent).⁴² Additionally, Choi and Bae explained, “South Korea is constrained by formidable anti-nuclear social norms as well as an alliance structure that has discouraged their development.”⁴³

In 1991, President Roh Tae-woo announced ROK’s unwillingness to “manufacture, possess, store, deploy, or use nuclear weapons.”⁴⁴ Similarly, in 1993 when President Kim Young-Sam was asked if he would categorically rule out development of South Korea’s own nuclear weapons, he responded, “Absolutely. That would disrupt peace in Northeast Asia and peace in the world at large.”⁴⁵ Etel Solingen summarized, “Despite a North Korean threat to turn Seoul into a ‘sea of fire,’ there seems to be little popular and

governmental support for a South Korean nuclear deterrent.”⁴⁶ North Korean nuclear programs were not seen as grave enough to merit South Korean nuclear weapons. An indigenous nuclear program was not only contrary to what the South Korea’s populace and government felt they needed, but it would also add little to the alliance’s existing deterrent structure and would likely only lead to more instability in Northeast Asia.

Thus, the republic sought to balance the U.S. nuclear deterrent with a modern conventional aerial deterrent. This balance of dependence and autonomy is best summarized in the joint communique from the 28th ROK-US Security Consultative Meeting in November 1996 between U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry and ROK Minister of National Defense Kim Dong Jin. In it, “Secretary Perry reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to render prompt and effective assistance to repel any armed attack against the ROK ... and to provide a nuclear umbrella for the ROK. Minister Kim reaffirmed that the ROK will continue to modernize its armed forces and to assume increased responsibility for its own defense.”⁴⁷ The U.S. nuclear umbrella along with ROK’s conventional weapons development filled requirements that addressed not only North Korea’s threat, but also Seoul’s desire to establish a self-reliant force.

The First Nuclear Crisis provides evidence that U.S. policy has not been the sole factor determining South Korea’s responses to North Korea’s nuclear aggression. Although the United States had the military capability to protect South Korea, Seoul sought an independent military. Seoul envisioned this self-reliant force as being able to respond to North Korea’s nuclear threats. While Seoul did not reinstate a nuclear weapons program from decades past in the face of the First Nuclear Crisis, it followed its own policy regarding conventional weapons as demonstrated by its air modernization programs. South Korean polls and leadership statements show that the country saw an indigenous nuclear program as unnecessary and destabilizing. While U.S. extended deterrence seems to have satisfied Seoul at one end of the spectrum, conventionally, South Korea sought conventional deterrence through an air force capable of striking anywhere in North Korea. Conflicts arising between South Korea’s preference for diplomatic engagement and the Bush administration’s handling of the Second Nuclear Crisis demonstrate even greater autonomy in Seoul’s efforts to counter North Korea’s nuclear aggression.

2003 – 2007: The Second Nuclear Crisis

The Second Nuclear Crisis began in late 2002 when North Korea allegedly admitted that it had a secret nuclear weapons program based on highly enriched uranium, in violation of the soon to be defunct Agreed Framework. Through the next five years, North Korea announced it had nuclear weapons, launched seven ballistic missiles, and tested its first nuclear weapon.⁴⁸ However, major factors affecting this crisis trace back to 2001 and the Bush administration’s hardline policy toward North Korea.

Contrary to the Clinton administration’s ultimate policy of engaging Pyongyang diplomatically in order to denuclearize, President George W. Bush’s policy sought to coerce Pyongyang by refusing direct engagement until Pyongyang stood down its nuclear program. This was particularly alarming to North Korea in the face of the administration’s preemptive attack policy and regime change threats. President Bush specifically called out North Korea in his first State of the Union address saying, “North Korea is a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction ... States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons

of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger.”⁴⁹ Additionally, soon after Saddam Hussein’s regime fell, Bush announced, “Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies. We cannot put our faith in the words of tyrants, who solemnly sign non-proliferation treaties, and then systemically break them.”⁵⁰

Consequently, President Bush’s policy was at odds with South Korea in countering the North Korean nuclear issue. Polling in 2004 showed that while 80 percent of South Koreans would approve of a U.S.-led preemptive attack on North Korea if the United Nations, South Korean government, and other allies agreed, the numbers dropped precipitously if any of those conditions were not reached.⁵¹ If the United Nations and South Korea approved and allies did not, the approval dropped to 38 percent while any combination without United Nations or South Korean approval ranged from nine percent to 27 percent approval.⁵² According to another report in May 2002, only 56 percent of the respondents wanted to maintain the alliance – down significantly from 89 percent in 1999.⁵³

Korean nationalism and a desire for South Korea to play an independent regional role “was on a collision course with the Bush administration’s hardline approach.”⁵⁴ This played out in Roh administration statements that increasingly countered President Bush’s policy. President Roh was sympathetic to Pyongyang’s nuclear weapons pursuit as a tool to deter external aggression. He stated, “North Korea’s nuclear weapons pursuit cannot be viewed as an instrument to attack ... or to assist terrorist groups”⁵⁵ and ‘taking too tough a stance against North Korea could cause friction and disagreement between South Korea and the United States.’⁵⁶ Additionally, in 2003, Roh’s envoy to Washington revealed that Seoul “would rather have a nuclear North Korea than a chaotic collapse of the government there.”⁵⁷

Thus, while the Bush administration took on a more hostile approach, Seoul maintained its course of engagement. To build relations with Pyongyang, the Roh government encouraged other regional countries to interact with North Korea and engaged in the joint Kaesong industrial park as part of his Peace and Prosperity policy.⁵⁸ His Unification Minister Chung Dong-young also announced that Seoul would “play a leadership role in managing the North Korean issue, rather than meekly embracing the U.S. approach.”⁵⁹ Despite even North Korea’s first underground nuclear test in 2006, Seoul maintained this path of diplomatic independence. In response to the test, along with Russia and China, South Korea remained opposed to the use of force for fear of escalating the situation out of control.⁶⁰ South Korean Prime Minister Han Myung Sook said Seoul would support U.N. sanctions, but “not military action that could spread into a war on the divided, densely armed Korean Peninsula.”⁶¹

Because the paths of diplomatic policy and military action were at odds between the two countries, South Korea had to strike a balance to maintain the U.S. alliance while still demonstrating its culture of independence in regional security. In his U.N. General Assembly speech in 2004, South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon called for Pyongyang to cease its nuclear activities, while also declaring that inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation would continue.⁶² Similarly, in 2006, President Roh stated, “There is no difference in views between Korea and the United States ... but the Korean government does not agree to the opinions of some in Washington who wish for a collapse of the North Korean regime or their attempts to pressure it.”⁶³ Throughout the period, South Korea

sought to establish its independence in security matters by maintaining its policy of engagement without alienating the military alliance.

One way South Korea maintained the U.S. military alliance throughout the period without resorting to force was to continue development of a conventional force capable of countering North Korea. Historically, the United States has strengthened the bilateral alliance by actively supporting the improvement of ROK armed forces. Thus, announced in 2005, South Korea's Defense Reform 2020 Plan aligned military modernization with U.S. support, while also creating an independent regional force. Further, the 2008 ROK Defense White Paper highlighted, "We will continue to build an all-directional military readiness and defense capabilities that enable us to protect our nation against not only North Korea's military threats, but against all threats across the spectrum. The ROK-U.S. Alliance will evolve into a future-oriented strategic alliance."⁶⁴

Again, naval and aerial modernization demonstrate the South Korean preference for security independence while balancing the U.S. military alliance against North Korea. President Roh carried on President Kim Dae-jung's vision for a blue-water navy as part of the plan that would have, by 2020, a navy with 70 ships to include destroyers, submarines and Aegis cruisers, and double the aircraft.⁶⁵ To highlight Seoul's desire for an autonomous navy, South Korea developed six DDH-II destroyers, one of which was commissioned each year from 2003 to 2008. Not only were these stealth ships heavily armed, but they were developed to be independent command ships in a combat task force able to provide command and control during battle for alliance forces.⁶⁶ Seoul's naval modernization, as President Lee Myung Bak stated in 2008, was part of Seoul's vision to "build a state-of-the-art force that can protect our maritime sovereignty."⁶⁷ As during the first crisis, a South Korean blue-water navy would do little to counter DPRK nuclear aggression, but it was to project ROK power within and beyond the region.

Similarly, South Korea continued its major modernization in its air force. In 2004, 40 F-X jets were to begin filling Korean Air Force inventories as well as replacing older existing helicopters with Korea's next-generation attack helicopter.⁶⁸ Additionally, ROK defense planned to acquire four Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) by 2008.⁶⁹ Finally, during this period the ROK decided to pursue missile defense, creating a command and budget for Patriot missile defense systems. However, South Korea sought to build it independently out of concern that U.S. cooperation would affect its relations with China.⁷⁰ Under Defense Reform 2020, the ROK Air Force vision was to have an organizational structure for air superiority and precision strikes capable of constant vigilance and immediate response, to include retaliatory strikes during peacetime.⁷¹ Once again, air force modernization focused on the ability to strike and punish North Korea in order to bolster its conventional deterrent.

While South Korea continued its modernization of conventional weapons, it restrained from developing nuclear weapons during the years of the Second Nuclear Crisis. Polling of South Korean perceptions provides insight into ROK nuclear opinions. In 2004, while 59 percent of South Korean rated a nuclear North Korea as a "critical threat" to South Korea's strategic interests,⁷² most South Koreans (60 percent) opposed U.S. employment of nuclear weapons under any circumstance.⁷³ Yet despite this strong opposition, a slight majority (51 percent) agreed that South Korea should have nuclear weapons.⁷⁴ This number increased dramatically following the DPRK's first nuclear test when 65 percent of South Korean respondents held that an indigenous nuclear capability was necessary.⁷⁵

However, statements from ROK leadership demonstrated Seoul's confidence in the U.S. nuclear deterrent muting proposals for an indigenous nuclear program. President Moo-hyun said, "The United States has promised to guarantee deterrence against North Korea's nuclear weapons and we're maintaining our relations with the United States in that direction."⁷⁶ Similarly, the U.S.-South Korea joint communique following North Korea's first nuclear test, included 'assurances of firm U.S. commitment and immediate support to the ROK, including continuation of the extended deterrence offered by the U.S. nuclear umbrella.'⁷⁷ Thus, despite growing interest in a nuclear program, South Korea's military efforts remained concentrated on conventional deterring North Korea and establishing a self-reliant force capable of projecting regional power. This force would continue to remain dependent on the assurances of U.S. extended nuclear deterrence.

2008 to Present: A Growing Third Nuclear Crisis

The current growing nuclear crisis is directly linked to North Korea's intense weaponization programs. At the end of 2007, as part of the Six-Party Talks, Pyongyang promised to provide a "complete and correct declaration of all its nuclear programs" and to disable its nuclear facilities.⁷⁸ However, North Korea's continued aggression escalated tensions once again on the peninsula. Along with Pyongyang's continued ballistic missile tests, North Korea sank the ROK ship *Cheonan* and shelled Yeonpyeong Island in 2010. It also carried out its second, third, and fourth nuclear tests in 2009, 2013, and 2016 respectively. This growing crisis revealed that even with a conservative party leadership, South Korea's preference for diplomacy and defense independence remained, while demonstrating an increasingly popular support for indigenous nuclear weapons.

Even with the election of the ROK's first conservative president in a decade, Lee Myung-bak, South Korea continued to show its preference for diplomacy, though now it was revealed as more coercive than the "carrot" methods of his predecessors. Diplomacy during this period mirrored the Bush administration's policy of requiring progress toward denuclearization, prior to compromises by Seoul. However, in 2009, following Pyongyang's second nuclear test, polls still showed over 73 percent of South Koreans still supported an engagement policy with North Korea giving credence to the idea that diplomacy remains South Korea's preference even with eventual North Korean weaponization.⁷⁹ In 2010, following the sinking of the *Cheonan* and the North's provocations on Yeonpyeong, South Korea ceased diplomatic engagement, cut almost all trade with the North, and rallied international support for sanctions against Pyongyang.⁸⁰ Further, although recognizing diplomacy was needed, South Korea refused to return to Six-Party Talks until Pyongyang showed commitment to denuclearization and accepted responsibility for the two incidents.⁸¹

In 2011, President Lee Myung-bak proposed an invitation for Pyongyang to the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit to restart talks, yet maintained the North "must acknowledge its wrongdoings [for the *Cheonan* and Yeonpyeong]" and "allow back nuclear inspectors and halt its uranium enrichment program."⁸² In the years that followed from 2012 to 2017, North Korea's two nuclear tests and multiple ballistic missile launches were met with South Korean support for sanctions. Finally, in 2017 the Trump administration's "maximum pressure and engagement" policy met with the ROK's new Moon administration's efforts to engage North Korea and include China in a diplomatic solution. Thus, throughout this period, South Korea tended toward coercive diplomacy as

opposed to appeasement to address North Korean denuclearization, but still opposed military force for conflict resolution.

During this period, polling showed a change in perception regarding both Pyongyang and the United States from previous periods. A 2011 survey revealed that South Koreans increasingly saw North Koreans as the “enemy” rather than “one of us” and nearly 68 percent thought North Korean nuclear weapons were for nuclear blackmail not defense.⁸³ Additionally, a large majority saw North Korea to blame for poor inter-Korean relations and the failure of progress in finding a resolution to the nuclear crisis.⁸⁴ Finally, polling showed the United States as most favorable nation and North Korea scoring the least favorable.⁸⁵ These reports showed a shift of enmity and blame from the United States to Pyongyang and high regard for the U.S. military alliance.

In addition to showing a continued preference for diplomacy, the newest crisis again demonstrated South Korea’s culture for military independence. With a conservative government, the republic remained focused on military modernization to create an independent conventional force, but also countered North Korea with small-scale military responses. For example, the day after North Korea’s second nuclear test in 2009, Seoul announced it would participate in the Proliferation Security Initiative, a U.S. policy, which allows states “to search and interdict North Korean ships and aircraft for contraband items (the weapons of mass destruction, missiles, and illegal weapons) on and over the high seas.”⁸⁶ Despite pressure from the Bush administration, Seoul had previously refused to participate in the initiative during the Second Nuclear Crisis. Additionally, in 2014 following North Korea’s announcement of a new form of nuclear testing, the North and South exchanged fire of hundreds of artillery shells, though the artillery fell harmlessly into the Western Sea.⁸⁷

In 2016, South Korea announced a new modernization program to develop a conventional deterrent response alongside the U.S. nuclear deterrent. A key area of South Korea’s conventional response was through a three-pillar system to be fully operational in the 2020s. Though different parts of the system have been in the works for years, this was the first formal declaration of the three-pillared plan.

The first pillar, Kill Chain is a system of satellites and missiles to detect and preemptively strike DPRK missiles. Korean Air and Missile Defense (KAMD) is the second pillar and is an anti-ballistic missile system that complements the United States Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) to intercept North Korean ballistic missiles. Korea Massive Punishment and Retaliation (KMPR), the third pillar, is a plan to retaliate and punish North Korea with missiles in case of a North Korean strike.⁸⁸ South Korean Defense Minister Han Min-koo told the National Assembly, “The military is developing the three-pillar system that will provide tailored measures to deter threats from the North’s weapons of mass destruction.”⁸⁹ Similarly, President Moon reiterated the “needs to develop our military capabilities in the face of North Korea’s nuclear advancement.”⁹⁰ Through developing precise retaliatory capabilities and robust missile defense, Seoul demonstrated its independence in creating a punitive and denial-focused deterrent force aimed at North Korea.

While creating an independent conventional deterrent, Seoul has maintained its reliance on the U.S. alliance for nuclear deterrence. However, growing calls for nuclear weapons in South Korea demonstrate the country’s preference for independent defense. O’Neil highlights that the *Cheonan* and Yeonpyeong provocations in 2010 reduced the

credibility of U.S. extended deterrence, and as a result, the Extended Deterrence Policy Committee (EDPC) was created “to develop a tailored bilateral deterrence strategy ... to enhance effective deterrence options against the nuclear and WMD threats from North Korea.”⁹¹ One of the EDPC’s first actions was to review the possibility of redeploying American tactical nuclear weapons to South Korea.⁹² Polling the following year showed almost 63 percent of South Korean respondents supporting an indigenous nuclear weapons program.⁹³ While public support for nuclear weapons subsided since the 2010 provocations, it resurfaced in the face of Pyongyang’s further nuclear aggression in 2017 when polling showed nearly 70 percent of South Koreans wanted the United States to reintroduce tactical nuclear weapons⁹⁴ and 60 percent approved of an indigenous ROK nuclear weapons program⁹⁵ – up from 54 percent in 2016.⁹⁶

Nuclear weapons acquisition also became an increasingly acceptable political platform. Former presidential secretary for security strategy, Cheon Seong-whun, said, “If we don’t respond with our own nuclear deterrence of some kind, our people will live like nuclear hostages of North Korea.”⁹⁷ Additionally, opposition party leader Won Yoo-chul implied there was a growing need for ROK to have its own nuclear weapons: “If the U.N. Security Council can’t rein in North Korea with its sanctions, we will have no option, but to withdraw from the Nonproliferation Treaty.”⁹⁸ Even President Moon Jae-in’s defense minister broached the idea of accepting U.S. tactical nuclear weapons saying that “the redeployment of American tactical nuclear weapons would be the surest way” to deter North Korea.⁹⁹ However, in the face of growing support for nuclear weapons, President Moon reiterated Seoul’s stance on nuclear weapons, stating, “I do not agree that South Korea needs to develop our own nuclear weapons or relocate tactical nuclear weapons in the face of North Korea’s nuclear threat.”¹⁰⁰ Moon sees nuclear weapons on South Korean soil as adding little to the combination of ROK’s conventional deterrent and U.S. extended deterrent. Further nuclear weapons, in his eyes, would lead to instability in Northeast Asia.¹⁰¹

Analysis

While all three nuclear crises developed under separate circumstances, certain trends emerge showing South Korean strategic culture in its responses to North Korean nuclear aggression. First, in support of Hypothesis 1, South Korea has maintained a preference for diplomacy and an aversion to war with regards to a nuclear North Korea. Based on polling and South Korean leadership statements, during years of both conservative and progressive party power, Seoul has not sought an offensive military response to North Korea. Either North Korean nuclear programs are not viewed as a large enough threat to risk offensive military aggression or South Korea fears escalating a war that would disrupt South Korea’s regional progress. This preference for diplomacy, and even the type of engagements sought, have at times conflicted with U.S. responses throughout the crises. Yet interestingly, it was U.S. policy that changed to fall in line with ROK after President Clinton’s plans for surgical military strikes.

Supporting Hypothesis 2, the ROK has consistently postured for defense and deterrence in its conventional military responses to a nuclear DPRK. This approach was contrary to early U.S. plans to strike the Yongbyon nuclear facility and is manifested in its weapons development. Through all three periods, South Korea has balanced its autonomy with the alliance by military modernization. ROK Air Force modernizations tended to

focus on deterring North Korea through deep precision strikes, air superiority, and ballistic missile defense. These same weapons would prove less useful against a greater threat, such as the Chinese, but they could be used in both denial and retaliatory deterrent functions. At the same time, the ROK has modernized its navy. However, maritime development is less focused on deterring North Korean nuclear aggression, and instead on its goals of regional autonomy while still supporting the alliance.

Finally, in support of Hypothesis 3, while creating its own conventional deterrent, Seoul has remained supportive of U.S. extended nuclear deterrence. South Korea's stance did not change throughout the crises, even when the Korean public and government officials heavily favored indigenous nuclear weapons. Once again, this could be the ROK's way of balancing a self-reliant force without alienating or denigrating the nuclear capabilities that the United States brings to the alliance. However, growing support of nuclear weapons deployed on South Korea showed that the future constraints against nuclear weapons might weaken as ROK continues its path toward a completely self-reliant force. In all, analysis of the three periods refutes the idea that U.S. policy is the sole driving force behind South Korean responses to North Korea. Instead, the ROK's strategic culture of independence and self-reliance manifests itself in the diplomatic and conventional military responses while still leaving room for a pragmatic reliance on the U.S. nuclear umbrella.

Conclusion

Debates will continue over the way forward on the Korean Peninsula with Washington and Seoul likely not always seeing eye to eye. By looking at the three periods, some general implications are revealed concerning diplomatic, conventional military and nuclear response options. Throughout all three periods, South Korea has supported diplomacy, though at times the engagement approach has differed. This clear preference for diplomacy contradicts some of the rhetoric of the Trump administration, and Washington should be cautious not to isolate its Korean allies when touting military options. The United States and South Korea will need to continue to adjust their engagement approaches to demonstrate a firm alliance. At times, each may need to compromise in drawing the line of aggressive engagement with Pyongyang. Currently, both Washington and Seoul support engagement with North Korea backed by firm sanctions, but the compromised stance has yet to approach the military options suggested by the current U.S. administration.

Other implications emerge from the ROK's military modernization. South Korea maintained its objective for independent defense on the conventional side through modernization of its military. Although the United States traditionally encourages its allies to build strong defense forces, South Korea has taken its own path in producing a conventional three-pillared deterrent against the DPRK, seemingly redundant to the U.S. nuclear deterrent. The United States should seek to understand the why behind the conventional deterrent. Is it a signal of reduced assurance of the nuclear umbrella, expanding flexible options, or a sign of the ROK's independence?

Military modernization provides insights into policy implications as well. ROK Air Force modernization has particularly been aimed at North Korea through deep strike fighters and anti-ballistic missile systems postured for defense and retaliation. Thus, by pushing strong support for ROK air modernization in defense responses, the United States

could support a denial and punishment deterrence strategy against North Korea, which may appear less antagonistic to Pyongyang than preemptive strikes. Additionally, Seoul's air modernization began in the 1990s, yet was not formally announced as part of its conventional deterrence until the Third Nuclear Crisis period. The United States should look at allied weapons acquisitions over the long term so as not to be surprised when a formal strategy or plan emerges based on years of weapons modernization.

Additionally, the current American administration has shown wariness of allies being too dependent on the United States, even suggesting free-riding. South Korea's naval developments suggest that Seoul does not present a free-riding problem. While not aimed at countering a nuclear North Korea, Seoul's navy demonstrates a desire for taking responsibility for regional security and supporting global operations. Instead of suggesting free-riding, the United States needs to be increasingly aware of the potential for South Korea to develop more aggressive, independent offensive capabilities. Moreover, seeing that regional power projection seems to be the focus of ROK naval modernization, the United States should consider how a growing ROK Navy might affect other U.S. alliances in the region, in particular Japan.

Finally, from a nuclear response perspective, South Korean public and political opinion showed an increasing favorability for nuclear weapons. Though South Korea has been content to rely on the U.S. nuclear umbrella, South Korean strategic culture of independence may eventually outweigh the pragmatic benefits of American extended deterrence. If Seoul were to see the DPRK nuclear program as critical to ROK national survival, the United States should be prepared to offer nuclear options that strengthen the alliance and still support the NPT. This may mean redeploying nuclear weapons in the region to convince Seoul not to seek its own independent nuclear weapons. However, given Seoul's stance through the three periods, anything beyond studies of possible United States reintroduction of nuclear weapons would be premature.

The U.S.-ROK alliance has been a solid partnership over the last 60-plus years, with the United States providing both conventional and nuclear forces to defend the region from North Korean aggression. South Korea has shown in that last two decades that in the face of increasing DPRK nuclear aggression, it will not sit back and rely on U.S. military power. North Korea is a threat to the United States. However, when dealing with Pyongyang, the United States cannot forget that North Korea is a threat to Seoul as well. Seoul may not always see the threat the same way as Washington though. Accordingly, South Korean strategic culture has and will continue to play a major role in determining its efforts to counter North Korean nuclear provocation.

Notes

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¹⁴ Cha, "Strategic Culture and the Military," 114.

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¹⁶ Ibid., 116.

¹⁷ Ibid., 118.

¹⁸ Ibid., 117.

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CHAPTER 4

The United States Force Structure in South Korea: How It Has Evolved and How It Is Viewed?

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Since 1953, the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) have maintained a military alliance that has been a cornerstone of a security triangle in Northeast Asia. Since the Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) of October 1953, American troops have been stationed on the peninsula. The presence proves to be both an assurance guarantee to the ROK and provides a tripwire effect concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).¹ Since that time, U.S. military postures have been different on the peninsula almost every decade since 1970. Through those periods, the ROK has perceived each attempt differently and has considered the possibility of developing a nuclear weapons program to some extent. The United States is yet again in the midst of a significant troop reconfiguration on the peninsula that has caused concern there, regarding the American posture and its ability to meet future security challenges.

In looking at American military presence in the ROK, how has the United States military evolved over the years in the ROK, and how has the ROK viewed these changes concerning its security? This paper will outline the historical contexts of actions the United States made with regards to military postures. It will also show perceived fears of abandonment that South Korea displays with each American decision. Evidence suggests that the likelihood of a security vacuum in the ROK if the United States chooses to remove its troops from the ROK. If the United States takes steps to diminish its presence of troops on the peninsula or decides not to provide credible assurance guarantees, it could lead to the ROK taking bolder steps to guarantee its security.

Historical Context

The United States has had a continuous presence on the peninsula since the end of World War II. The Americans initially served as commanders and later as advisors to the ROK. As the ROK established an army and a ministry of defense in 1948,² the United States continued to serve in an advisory role, but did not have a substantial footprint on the peninsula. It was not until after June 1950 when the DPRK invaded South Korea that the United States began to have a more significant presence in the region and created a "quintessential Cold War relationship in Asia."³ What the United States and the United Nations undertook as a peacekeeping mission evolved into the United States forming an alliance with the ROK. That alliance has become one of the United States' most vibrant and prosperous bilateral agreements.⁴ Since the inception of the MDT, the United States

either has been threatened by the spread of communism, (i.e., Soviet Union/China and Vietnam) or threatened more recently by the emergence of China as a new economic superpower.⁵ As a result, the United States has remained in Northeast Asia. In light of changing world events, including the War on Terror and the evolution of the region, the United States has remained a staple. As recently as 2009, the United States under President Barack Obama has recognized the need to “rebalance” the region.⁶ Amidst all of these competing issues and circumstances, he acknowledged the vital role the area has on U.S. global power.

The alliance was not under serious threat until the 1970s when the United States under the Nixon Doctrine called for its Asian allies to provide for its own defense.⁷ The United States had more than 60,000 troops stationed in the ROK. Under Nixon, 20,000 were removed in 1971.⁸ This new declaration from the United States as well as actions from the country in the region was the first time since the MDT that the ROK felt pressured and insecure about the role the United States would play in its defense. As a result, the ROK under Park Chung-hee decided to pursue a secret independent nuclear deterrent.⁹ This was the first time that the ROK had feared abandonment from the United States. The United States was successfully able to prevent the ROK from continuing to develop nuclear weapons through the threatening of economic sanctions and cutting off aid to the ROK. This threat, coupled with the American promise to maintain the deployment of troops to the ROK for as long as it was needed, provided Park with adequate assurance that the United States would defend the ROK. In light of this assurance, Park gave up his pursuit of a nuclear weapons program.¹⁰ This fear of abandonment was short lived through the early to mid-70s, but reared briefly again, during the Carter administration when President Jimmy Carter wanted to withdraw troops from the peninsula.¹¹ This time, Park was able to use the coercive threat of nuclear weapon development as a way of trying to apply pressure to the American president. Park was not only successful in his ability to keep American troops on the peninsula, but ultimately his actions helped lift U.S. economic aid restrictions and formed the Combined Forces Command (CFC), which added another layer of assurance on the peninsula.¹²

Finally, as the Cold War came to an end and the United States no longer found itself in a fight against the Soviet Union or the spread of communism, the ROK found itself at a new crossroads in the U.S./ROK alliance. Negotiations were opening up with the DPRK under the new ROK president, Roh Tae-woo. As the first president of the new democratic elections in the ROK, he believed that the best way for reunification of the peninsula was through absorption.¹³ His thoughts stemmed from Germany’s efforts to reintegrate the country after the Cold War. President George H. W. Bush announced in 1991, that the United States would no longer have nuclear weapons in the ROK.¹⁴ He primarily did this in response to the collapsing of the Soviet Union, but it had effects that would allow Roh to go forward with his absorption efforts of the DPRK,¹⁵ Roh made significant headway with the ability to establish the Joint Denuclearization Declaration and the Basic Agreement on Reconciliation agreements in 1992.¹⁶ The former declares that neither ROK nor the DPRK will engage in pursuing a nuclear program and the latter provided a framework for ending the hostilities and fostering political reconciliation.¹⁷ On the surface, these agreements provided both countries with the idealistic mindset to lift the nations into a post-Cold War similar to that of Europe. What evolved from these discussions was the DPRK took the tension lapse and ramped up a clandestine nuclear weapons program, and

the ROK was just learning what it would take economically and socially to absorb the DPRK.¹⁸ The ROK under Roh saw an opportunity for relaxing its security posture against the DPRK with hopes of reunification. However, soon the DPRK withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1993 and began to further its nuclear weapons program, thus nullifying the Joint Denuclearization Declaration agreement signed earlier.

The turn of the century provided for another opportunity for the United States and the ROK to re-evaluate their assurance alliance as the United States was engaged in the 9/11 attacks as well as its War on Terror. This period showed a perceived, yet understandable, lapse in U.S. interest in Northeast Asia. In the late 1990s, the ROK President Kim Dae-jung instituted the “Sunshine” policy towards the DPRK. This policy was intended to show the world a new way of dealing with the DPRK. It focused on engagement and cooperation rather than containment.¹⁹ This transformational period was a promising outlook for the peninsula, but after President George W. Bush’s State of the Union address in 2002, labeling the DPRK as part of an “axis of evil,” this was seen by many as undermining the ROK’s Sunshine policy efforts.²⁰ During this timeframe of the 21st century turn, the United States’ resolve to maintain troops on the peninsula stayed, but was coming under serious scrutiny as the country needed to send resources elsewhere with other commitments on the global stage.

The assurance guarantee from the United States to the ROK withstood another reduction in troops from the peninsula with the United States’ engagement in the War on Terror. In 2004 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, President Bush ordered the 2nd Brigade Combat Team from the 2nd Infantry Division to deploy from South Korea to Iraq. This movement was met with mixed perspectives as the South Koreans saw what they considered fruits of the Sunshine policy with regards to the DPRK and a lull in tensions between the two countries. Others, however, saw it as lack of support from the United States to the ROK. The United States entered a phase of concern with maintaining regional stability and balance of power in Asia.²¹

U.S. Assurance in the Aftermath of a Nuclear DPRK

The fear of the DPRK to attain a nuclear weapons program was a concern for the United States and around the world, but on Oct. 10, 2006, the world was now faced with the reality that the DPRK was now a nuclear state. The relationship under the Sunshine policy was positive, yet the ROK seemed unsettled with the event. “This is a grave threat to peace, not only on the Korean Peninsula, but in the region,”²² South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun was quoted as saying just days after the detonation. The ROK was in the middle of the Sunshine policy with the DPRK. This new threat to regional peace had Roh concerned, but his willingness to open economic options to the DPRK seemed more important to him. The Sunshine policy was one of hope and prosperity, yet the DPRK undermined its principles in its quest for security. President Roh and the ROK did not dissuade them from continuing their two main Sunshine policy programs with the DPRK even though the United States had garnered sanctions from the U.N. American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made a special trip to the ROK urging the government to review and stop its economic dealings with the DPRK.

The ROK and DPRK had two main programs that are benchmarks from the Sunshine policy, namely the Kaesong Industrial Complex and the Hyundai Kumgang Mountain tourism project.²³ Both of these programs opened up not only a partial bit of

North Korea to the South Koreans, but it also allowed for the building of an industrial complex in the north in hopes that it would provide jobs and help the northern populace. The United States urged the ROK to enforce U.N. sanctions against the DPRK, but the ROK chose to show solidarity with its new economic partners. “The decision is South Korea’s to make,” stressed South Korean security aide Song Min-soon.²⁴ This sentiment shows how committed the ROK was to the Sunshine policy and the fruits that these two major programs had laid for the ROK in its efforts for reunification.

From 2000-2007, the assurance posture of the U.S. troop presence in the ROK had diminished, but not much rhetoric concerning the lack of U.S. assurances had followed in response. The War on Terror that the United States was involved in was a major factor in the ROK’s view of the time period, but the fruits of the Sunshine policy and the easing of tensions that the ROK felt from the DPRK was more notable. Whether it was the Sunshine policy or South Korea’s rising confidence in its military or economic status, it pursued a more equal and independent stance with the United States.

In 2003, the ROK sought to abolish the CFC by 2010, thus giving control of Korean Forces back to Korean military officers.²⁵ The United States and ROK seemed to become divergent on their dealings with North Korea, and the assurance alliance was coming into question. Lee Myung-bak a conservative politician, was elected president after Roh. He brought a different perspective to the ROK. President Lee did not agree with Mr. Roh’s approach to North Korea, and it had caused friction with the United States, a South Korean ally. He promised to work more closely with Washington in dealing with North Korea.²⁶ It was apparent with the ROK’s election that the people of South Korea were not entirely happy with the liberal Roh’s administration and the unaccounted free flowing amounts of money. Lee recognized the position his country was now facing with the DPRK having nuclear weapons and the seemingly dwindling support the ROK could be receiving in the future from the United States if he did not start to change some policies, namely the Sunshine policies. This period offers a small perspective into the attitudes of the ROK with regards to American assurances and downplays the role that Knopf places on forward-deployed troops and their importance on security alliances. This period can also be looked at from a human populace perspective to show what the appetite is for a nuclear South Korea and how its public perceives the U.S. presence on the peninsula.²⁷

Analysis

In 2006, the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research published a public opinion and foreign policy poll in the United States, China, India, Australia, and South Korea.²⁸ The data from South Korea on various questions will be used as a snapshot in time to understand some of the thoughts of the South Korean people and will provide a point of analysis as this paper moves forward. The poll data was conducted from June 2006 to July 2006 with a combination of both in-person interviews as well as telephonic. The subset of the South Korean populace was weighted and carefully selected to include 1,024 participants.²⁹ Several questions were asked, but of particular note, the participants were asked if South Korea should have nuclear weapons and 64 percent of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement while 35 percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.³⁰ This data in and of itself doesn’t show the real appetite of the populace at large, but shows how the public opinion is in favor of the ROK having nuclear weapons.

When asked the question, “Do you think that U.S. military presence in East Asia increases or decreases stability in the region?” The responses were favorable 59 percent to 23 percent that the United States presence was increasing the stability in the region.³¹ As a reminder, the timeframe for this poll was taken before the DPRK detonating a nuclear device and after the United States had withdrawn 28,000 troops as part of its fight in the Middle East. The attitudes and perspectives of the Korean people still saw value in the U.S. presence, but saw even more value in their view that the ROK should have nuclear weapons. Further noted in the data shows that 52 percent (vice 37 percent to reduce) of the participants thought the United States military presence should be maintained at current levels and 54 percent (vice 36 percent thought too many) agreed to the approximately 30,000 U.S. troops as the right number of troops present.³² The data from this period indicates the ROK populace understood the role the United States played not only in the world, but also within South Korea.

The last section of this data set looks at the questions of North Korea with regards to nuclear weapons. The participants were asked if they thought North Korea had nuclear weapons and how threatened they felt about it. Before October 9, 2006, and North Korea detonating a nuclear device, 81 percent of the respondents believed that the DPRK had already acquired weapons and 29 percent felt very threatened, 48 percent a bit threatened and 21 percent didn’t feel threatened at all with North Korea having nuclear weapons.³³

A review of this data can be analyzed through many lenses, but understanding potential implications this paper will utilize Christopher Hughes’ four principal drivers that guide a country to embark on a nuclear program.³⁴ He outlines the role national security, prestige, domestic political economy, and technological capabilities play in a nation’s reasons to embark on a nuclear weapons program. With regards to their national security, the data can be interpreted to represent that the people of South Korea do feel threatened by the belief that North Korea has nuclear weapons coupled with the notion that a majority of respondents believed South Korea should have nuclear weapons. This snapshot shows the insecurity at-large that South Korean participants viewed their situation in 2006.

Looking at Hughes’ assertion of prestige, it is hard to define without looking at South Korea’s domestic political economy. Two perspectives are at crossroads. On one hand, the ROK wanted the dissolution of the CFC, but as the new Lee administration took over in 2008, it is a very pro leaning U.S. perspective. The data from this poll shows unfavorable results (75 percent bad to very bad job),³⁵ with regards to the job President Roh has done in his tenure as president. The current political climate is not favorable for Roh, and therefore the political economy or prestige perspectives is a negatively balanced for Hughes’ concepts. Finally, with regards to nuclear technology, South Korea has already proven it has the capability as shown in the early 1970s, but currently lacks raw materials for this endeavor. Together with Hughes’ formula and the public opinion of the timeframe, it gives a good perspective on a South Korean appetite for a nuclear weapons program regardless of U.S. presence and regardless of a validated North Korean nuclear program.

Lee Myung-bak’s presidency in 2008, as well as President Obama’s election in 2008, signals yet another chapter in alliance assurance the United States provides to the ROK and the ROK response. Shortly after President Obama took office in January 2009, the DPRK chose to detonate a second nuclear device. This put Obama in a tough position of what to do, and how to react, not only to North Korea, but what assurances he needed to give to South Korea. In a joint announcement between Presidents Lee and Obama, the

following was announced: “We will maintain a robust defense posture,” the statement read in part. “The continuing commitment of extended deterrence, including the United States nuclear umbrella, reinforces this assurance.”³⁶ This instance was the first time a U.S. president had guaranteed in writing a response to a nuclear attack.³⁷ This situation was a defining moment for both presidents signaling not only an assurance message to the ROK, but a deterrence message to the DPRK. In light of North Korea’s second detonation of a nuclear weapon as well as several missile tests throughout 2009, many retired and former general officers and scholars wanted the United States to provide more.

In October 2009, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates took a trip to Seoul for the United States and ROK annual Security Consultative Meeting. During this trip, those scholars and general officers made a plea for the return of tactical nuclear weapons to South Korea. Many scholars believe the nuclear umbrella poised by President Obama is too fragile and the United States at large may not be willing to exchange Los Angeles or New York for Seoul.³⁸ Another major item discussed was pushing the CFC dissolution beyond 2012 to ensure the United States remained a stable presence to South Korea and its security. The United States once again found itself as a key member in South Korea for fears of a nuclear program restarting in South Korea. As the U.N. placed economic sanctions on the DPRK, much of the world was waiting on President Obama’s 2010 Nuclear Posture Review and what kind of nuclear stance the United States would publicly declare not only with regards to its first use policy, but its assurance guarantees to allied partners. President Obama’s review concluded that the United States would not attack a non-nuclear state with nuclear weapons if it were part of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. This new statement was a departure from the Bush’s administration and was in line with a tailored approach to his view on nuclear weapons,³⁹ yet allowed for assurance use against North Korea and therefore sending the signal to South Korea that the United States was still ready to defend if needed.

The subsequent years found the U.N. exerting sanctions upon sanctions onto the DPRK for continuing with its nuclear and rocket technology. It wasn’t until former President Jimmy Carter made a trip to North Korea to ask for the release of an imprisoned U.S. citizen that the president of the DPRK Kim Jong-il subsequently agreed to begin six-party talks once again.⁴⁰ Unfortunately in December 2011, Kim Jong-il passed away and his son Kim Jong-un became president of the DPRK so the six-party talks never happened. The next year was a year that North Korea continued its developed and launching of test rockets further creating angst among the U.N. and South Korea.⁴¹ Scholarly rhetoric reappears in 2013 following yet another nuclear test from North Korea, this time under its new leader Kim Jong-un, it also happened when South Korea was having its national election and President Obama was delivering his State of the Union address.

This rhetoric reappears with concerns about the United States’ nuclear umbrella and whether it will be enough or not. Representative Chung Mong-joon made a call for South Korea to develop nuclear weapons, claiming the United States nuclear umbrella falls short of reliable protection and it has done nothing to prevent North Korea in its development of nuclear weapons.⁴² The representative used the India-Pakistan model as a way to view a solution to the North Korean threat. This sentiment was apparent in academic circles where most notably Mun Suk Ahn, an assistant professor at the Chonbuk National University, South Korea, wrote a piece on not only should South Koreans develop nuclear weapons, but some of the consequences of those actions. He cited a 2013 South Korean

Gallup poll where 64 percent of those surveyed thought South Korea should have nuclear weapons.⁴³ He further discussed the potential arms fueling perspectives of the region as well as a potential undermining of ROK and U.S. relations. The ability for South Korea to develop weapons is not the question, but is the region ready for more nuclear weapons and will that cause North Korea to develop more and in a faster timeline. The results of this study show the United States needs to continue to use diplomatic courses of action and bolster its extended deterrence umbrella assurance to South Korea.⁴⁴

In light of yet another nuclear test in 2016, South Korean President Park Geun-hye remains steadfast in her resolve to not have South Korea go nuclear. She is unwilling to put favorable relations with both China and the United States at odds but warns future presidents may not see the same picture.⁴⁵ This mindset has stood ground with the new South Korea president, as Moon Jae-in has pushed for peace talks with North Korea as opposed to military solutions to the conflict.⁴⁶ In an effort to further provide an assurance guarantee to the ROK, the United States agreed to deploy an anti-missile network called THAAD – the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system. This action was met with great angst and worry from the Chinese, because in their eyes they see this as a step towards the United States, the ROK and Japan creating a NATO-like entity.⁴⁷ The United States and the ROK have tried to relieve the worries stating that the system is there as a means to protect the ROK from a missile attack from North Korea. This gesture also goes a long way to showing South Korea that the United States is committed to its protection. The appetite and desire for South Korea's need to develop its own nuclear weapons has been debated over several years. Yet, South Korea remains under the umbrella of the United States and has not made any significant headway to change this direction.

The United States Future in ROK

The United States is currently moving its major installation from Yongsan Army Garrison in Seoul to Camp Humphreys near the port city of Pyeongtaek. The United States and the ROK agreed to this consolidation in 2003, but is now seeing it become a reality.⁴⁸ The move gives valuable real estate back to the ROK. The Yongsan Army Garrison has been home to the U.S. Army 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry for decades.⁴⁹ This event marks the beginning of the diminishing American presence near the border of South and North Korea. Only time will tell what impacts this will have on border relations. General Vincent K. Brooks, the top American general on the peninsula, has endorsed the need for the CFC to remain in Seoul. The CFC was originally slated to move south to Camp Humphreys, but this allows the two countries to continue to focus the alliance's military capabilities in one location.⁵⁰ The CFC remaining in Seoul with the ROK Ministry of National Defense sends a message to not only the ROK, but to the DPRK as well. First, the message to the ROK indicates the United States' willingness to strengthen its alliance amidst the troop relocation. Second, the message it sends to the DPRK is a clear signal that the United States still plays a major role in the ROK. This troop movement may be the beginning of an operational control transition, but by no means shows a lack of support of the peninsula by the United States. The U.S. military presence in the ROK has seen many changes over the decades. These changes can provide signals to the ROK and other U.S. alliance partners.

The United States needs to maintain a deployed stance in the region, more specifically within the ROK to ensure a credible assurance guarantee to South Korea. The United States has provided several assurance guarantees over the years from sustained

deployed forces to the deployment of a THAAD system and a hallmark written warranty from a U.S. president. The United States is committed to the protection of South Korea and should remain a staunch supporter in the future. As seen through various forms and time periods, the appetite for South Korea to develop nuclear weapons is high and has remained steady from before North Korea became a nuclear power to the present day. If the United States has any desires of continuing to remove forces from Korea or not continue to ensure its assurance guarantees, it might be a tipping point for South Korea regardless of the consequences it may bring. If South Korea ever truly fears American abandonment or perceives the security of its state is ever in jeopardy, it may very quickly begin to develop its own nuclear weapons.

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² Mize, page 3.

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⁴ Ibid, 20.

⁵ Robert Sutter, *International Relations of Asia* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield), 2014, 94.

⁶ Ibid., 95.

⁷ Mize, 3.

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¹⁰ Ibid., 166.

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¹² Ibid., page 166.

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¹⁴ O'Neil, Page 63.

¹⁵ Jonathan Pollack, *No Exit, North Korea Nuclear Weapons and International Security* (New York, NY: Routledge Publishing, 2011), 106.

¹⁶ Cha, 399.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 400.

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²⁹ *Ibid.* The South Korean sample drew from 15 of the 16 administrative divisions of South Korea based on a multistage quota sampling method. The national population was categorized into 16 groups by administrative divisions, five groups by age, and two groups by sex. The quota of samples was then calculated by region, age, and sex, based on the 2005 Korean Census. Households were randomly selected in every region according to the quota. In the final step, weights were applied to the dataset to match the sampling quota by region, sex, and age more precisely.

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³¹ *Ibid.*, Question Q490.

³² *Ibid.*, Questions Q495, Q465.

³³ *Ibid.*, Questions KK6, KK7.

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⁴⁹ Kim Gamel, “US Forces begin to move south of Seoul,” *Stars And Stripes*, July 14, 2016.

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Rico

CHAPTER 5

The Psychology of Nuclear Postures: A Predictive Analysis of Kim Jong-un's Nuclear Future

Justin Hinrichs, Major, United States Air Force

“The nuclear weapons research sector and the rocket industry should mass-produce nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles, the power and reliability of which have already been proved to the full, to give a spur to the efforts for deploying them for action.”² With these words, Kim Jung-un declared a vision for North Korea's security future. It appears to be a future aglow with nuclear intentions. This, of course, stands in stark contrast to the will of the United States and the rest of the international order. Worse yet, this revisionist actor seems to challenge the status quo with a long history of provocative actions. If nuclear peace is to continue its reign, it must do so not only at the behest of luck, but from serious efforts to understand and analyze the factors holding influence in nuclear decision making. Such an understanding will open the best possible avenues of influence with Kim Jong-un to help lead to the best possible outcome for the Korean Peninsula and the world.

This begs of researchers to explore what influences nuclear decision making. This paper will make one such attempt. Specifically, this paper will seek to understand the extent to which ideational factors influence nuclear posture selection. By utilizing the NIC determination method of Dr. Jacques Hymans and applying it around key nuclear decisions, I will seek to show that psychological factors strongly influence nuclear posture selection. More specifically, this paper will show that relative levels of opposition will determine the choice between an asymmetric escalation or assured retaliation posture. Where opposition is less effectual, the relative levels of nationalism will predict the adoption of a catalytic posture.

H₁: High or Low Status and High Solidarity = Asymmetric Escalation

H₂: High Status and Low Solidarity = Assured Retaliation

H₃: Low Status and Low Solidarity = Catalytic

Supporting Theories: Hymans' Proliferation Psychology

Decision making is an inherently cognitive function. It is also incredibly complex. Sizable contributions have come from economists and other theorists. However, the ability of psychology to look within minds and across cultures suggests that it has a lot to offer for those who would seek to understand human behavior – and to those who would seek to influence that behavior. Psychology adds empirical vigor to the efforts of national leaders in formulating intelligent and effective policies.

Among the most notable recent endeavors in applying psychology to the nuclear realm is Jacques Hymans *The Psychology of Nuclear Deterrence*. He begins with an

interesting observation that, in spite of enormous costs and risks, nuclear states continue to emerge. However, the emergence of nuclear weapons capabilities does not seem to be directly related to any level of technical capability or the influence of outside actors.³

Enormous costs and challenges stand between those who would seek nuclear weapons and their acquisition. Between 2017 and 2026, the United States will spend around \$400 billion on its nuclear arsenal.⁴ The estimated total annual gross domestic product (GDP) of North Korea is \$40 billion,⁵ yet both have nuclear weapons. Beyond the financial costs lies the weight of world opinion. The ostensible global policy regarding nuclear proliferation has been deterrence and/or prevention. Thus, as Pakistan developed nuclear weapons, it faced a litany of sanctions and derision on the world stage. Yet, still the Pakistanis forged ahead in developing their own bomb. Still further, there are tremendous technical and scientific challenges that go in to developing a nuclear weapon. Amidst all these apparent hardships, why would any nation push for a bomb?

Indeed, there are countries that, presumably, could develop nuclear weapons but do not.⁶ Countries like Japan, Germany, Australia, and South Korea seem to have the financial and technical wherewithal. If nuclear weapons are so effective at ensuring a state's security, why have they not pursued nuclear weapons? Why is it that not every country wants them? It would seem there is more that influences the decision to pursue nuclear weapons than a simple cost-benefit analysis. Mere rationality fails to adequately predict state behavior in this regard.

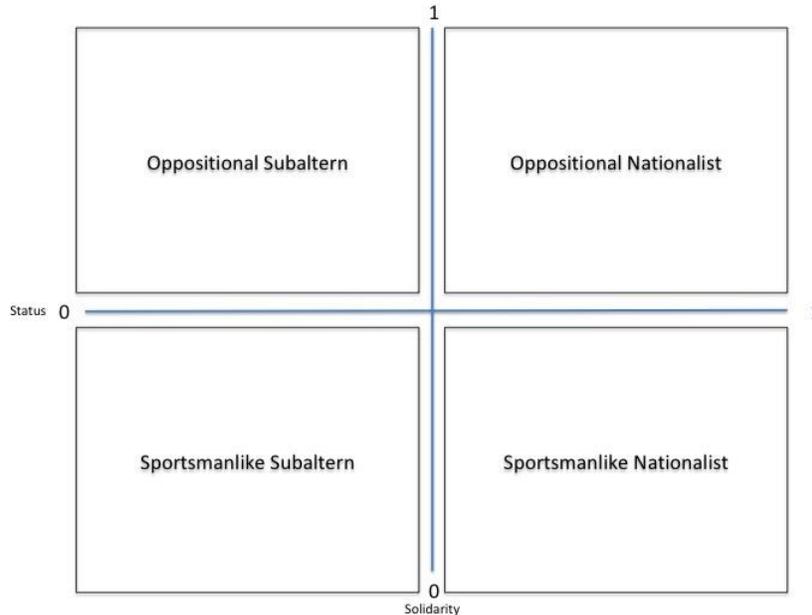
The answer proposed by Hymans is that the combination of two psychological factors strongly influences a national leader's decision to pursue nuclear weapons.⁷ The two factors Hymans enumerates are *solidarity* and *status*. Broadly, he asserts that state leaders understand the natural position of their state, and who their state is, on a basis of comparison to another state(s). That state(s) is termed the *Key Comparison Other* (KCO). Solidarity is the relative measure of opposition between the state and its KCO. Status is the relative measure of position between a state and its KCO. A brief explanation regarding the underpinnings of solidarity and status is in order.

Solidarity measures the level of perceived natural opposition between a state and its KCO. It is important to note that this level is not related to temporal feelings of mistrust or animosity, but is much more existential in its origins. It underscores how fundamentally opposed the two states are in terms of their interests and values.⁸ Its emotional correlate is fear.

Fear is an important and useful emotion. As an adaptive function, fear alerts us to potential dangers in our environment and initiates the necessary physiological responses to those stimuli.⁹ Thus, it is proper for state leaders to have a certain level of fear when confronted with another state. That state may represent a threat in many forms. The challenge with fear is that it is possible to become oversensitive to fears in a "better safe than sorry" sort of mentality.¹⁰ This can intimate leaders to act in ways that seem irrational.

The corresponding emotional correlate of status is pride. Unlike fear, there is a significant lack of published psychological research into the phenomenon of pride and its outcroppings.¹¹ From the available works, however, it appears that pride is related to individual's conception of their achievement relative to certain standards, rules, or goals.¹² Its presence aids in determining social standing relative to others. Thus, a national leader's sense of status determines where they see themselves relative to other countries.

Hymans measures solidarity on a scale between zero or “sportsmanlike” and one or “oppositional.” The division between the two, between being a sportsman or an oppositionalist, is located at 0.5. The measures of status are, likewise, along a scale from zero to one, termed subaltern and nationalist respectively. The specific methods for determining these measures will be covered later. For now, it is important to note that, being measured on separate axis, these measures allow for four possible combinations of leaders: Oppositional Nationalist, Oppositional Subaltern, Sportsmanlike Nationalist, and Sportsmanlike Subaltern. These are known as the National Identity Conception, or NIC.



Hymans’ hypothesis, in essence, is that only leaders holding an oppositional nationalist NIC would pursue nuclear weapons. Within them, the unique confluence of pride and fear, when confronted with their KCO, created a compelling drive that could best be satisfied with the acquisition nuclear weapons.¹³ These weapons have the unique ability to resolve potential fears while providing a talisman of national superiority.

Narang’s Nuclear Postures

With the acquisition of nuclear weapons, leaders must make another important set of decisions, incorporating those weapons into the existing military structure. Vipin Narang defines a nation’s nuclear posture as, “... the incorporation of some number and type of nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles into a state’s overall military structure, the rules and procedures governing how those weapons are deployed, when and under what conditions they might be used, against what targets, and who has the authority to make those decisions.”¹⁴ Focusing on regional powers his three categories of nuclear postures provide an excellent framework for analysis. His three postures are: catalytic, assured retaliation, and asymmetric escalation.¹⁵

Leaders who implement a catalytic posture seek to deter adversarial activity through the involvement of a third party patron. This third party patron must be a nuclear state of greater military capability than the initial state or its adversary. The essence of the catalytic posture is that, when endangered, the nation will threaten nuclear war against its

adversary unless the third party patron steps in to resolve a conflict. Notably, it is possible to adopt this posture with a relatively small nuclear arsenal.¹⁶

An assured retaliation posture requires the possession of a second-strike nuclear capability. In short, in this posture, a state aims to use its nuclear forces to retaliate after it has received a nuclear attack. This typically requires diverse nuclear forces and a comparatively large nuclear arsenal such that the country can reliably mount an effective second strike.¹⁷

Finally, asymmetric escalation postures threaten the first-use of nuclear forces. In order to deter any acts of aggression against them, leaders implementing this posture promise that, if provoked, they will unleash their nuclear forces quickly. The hallmark of the asymmetric escalation posture is the clear matching of tactical nuclear forces against an adversary's conventional force.¹⁸

To select a nuclear posture Narang asserts his *Posture Optimization Theory* whereby, "...states select nuclear postures in a way that optimizes their force structure for their external security environment and their internal threats and constraints."¹⁹ This process requires careful calculation and rationality to arrive at the nuclear posture that best deters a nation's likely foes.

A Synthesizing Theory

If Narang is correct, Kim Jong-un is likely to select either a catalytic posture if he can assuredly rely on Chinese intervention in any aggression against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), or an asymmetric escalation posture if he cannot. This is based on the decision apparatus Narang has created.²⁰ What if, however, the process is more complex than Narang asserts? Could psychological factors play a greater role in determining what posture Kim Jong-un will select?

As Hymans indicates, oppositional nationalist leaders, those measuring higher in status and solidarity, are more likely to pursue nuclear weapons. If this pursuit is rooted in their relative experiences of fear and pride, it stands to reason that the acquisition of a nuclear weapon will have an impact on their NIC scoring. The implication would be that fears (and hence solidarity) scores should be reduced while pride (measured in status) should stay the same or increase.

Following this initial drop, however, leaders will continue to evaluate their situation through the same psychological lenses that initiated the pursuit of nuclear weapons in the first place. That this analysis occurs while they are just beginning to field their nuclear forces and adopt a nuclear posture means it will hold great sway in determining just what that posture may look like. Three different cases may help explain how this process could work in a hypothetical construct.

In the first option, a state develops a nuclear weapon amidst great outcry and persecution from nearly the entirety of the international system. The prime minister, driven by his or her concern over the proximate threat he or she faces on the eastern border, continues to promote nuclear capability. Even if the world is upset, the prime minister feels better knowing that the country is secure. The result of his or her actions and outspoken mannerisms is a great number of sanctions. The result is a deteriorating economic situation that the prime minister now fears is tempting the nation's adversary to take decisive action. The overall situation would drive this leader's opposition to higher levels and result in a nuclear posture that is most able to deter any acts of aggression, asymmetric escalation.

In the next case, a president initiates a highly covert plan to develop nuclear weapons. That plan comes to fruition and, as it does, the government allows small leaks to neighboring adversaries, which raises their suspicions. A finely honed diplomatic meeting establishes, in veiled terms, that this country has no intention to provoke hostilities. The adversary gets the message and withdraws forces from the border. With the security dilemmas seemingly resolved, and reveling in the pride of the nation's accomplishments, this leader's measures of status and solidarity remain relatively unchanged. The leader selects an assured retaliation posture for its rather dependable and unprovocative nature.

Finally, in the last case, a new emperor comes to power. The emperor's father had been a force for change within his country, but not always in the wisest of directions. As a result, the new emperor inherited a troubled country with a fledgling economy and a disheveled military. The old emperor's greatest legacy was a push to develop nuclear weapons, a feat he accomplished just prior to his death. However, even in success he found defeat. While technically successful, the nation's nuclear tests were plagued with problems. Further, this new emperor has a certain moral disdain for these weapons. Granting the ability to ensure the family's dynastic survival, but not seeking a formative threat, the new emperor seeks to terminate further development. The new emperor's low level of national pride will see him or her reach out to an old ally, one far more powerful and experienced in nuclear weapons. While expressing his or her nuclear policies in terms of threats, what the new emperor is ultimately trying to do is effectively borrow from the forces of the nation's allies. The emperor's catalytic posture just might be enough for this to happen.

Method

NIC Determination

The first task is to assess the NIC of a nation's leader. This is accomplished through textual analysis. The ideal texts for this work are state-level speeches given to a broad audience, something akin to a State of the Union speech. These speeches bring about the broadest array of foreign and domestic topics making them ideal for sampling and determining the speakers NIC. Where such speeches are unavailable, other forms of speeches can be used, but their inherent limitations must be considered. For instance, if a leader gives a speech to a group of foreign diplomats it would naturally skew the subject matter of the material. A measure of qualitative control, therefore, is important.

With the speech material in hand, the next step is to analyze the text. The first task within the analysis is to find references to external actors. Using the United States as an example, Canada, the European Union and Asia are all coded as external actors.* The basic unit of measure for coding is the paragraph. Thus, if Canada were mentioned three times in the first paragraph, none in the second, and twice in the third, this would be scored as "2," one point for each of the paragraphs in which it was mentioned.

* For more precision as to the coding rules I again refer the reader to the appendix of *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*

The external actor mentioned most frequently is considered the key comparison other (KCO). This nation is the one that should be driving the solidarity and status

sentiments of the given leader. Once that nation is determined, to tabulate the solidarity component of the NIC we divide the total number of paragraphs referencing the other by that same number plus the number of paragraphs that mention collective entities including the leader's nation *and* the KCO. $\text{Solidarity} = \text{KCO} / (\text{KCO} + \text{Collectives})$.

Similarly, to determine the status component, we subtract from the total number of KCO paragraphs, the number of paragraphs that reference wider entities to which the leader, but not necessarily the KCO belong. This is divided by the total number of KCO referencing paragraphs. $\text{Status} = (\text{KCO-exclusionary paragraphs}) / \text{KCO paragraphs}$.

As opposed to Hymans' work, which looked at the leader in broad sections of time, I intend to look at NIC evolution across time. A level of constancy would seemingly confirm reliability with Hymans' evaluation within the NIC component scores. Put another way, it would seem unlikely for either nationalism or oppositionist sentiments to vary widely across short timeframes. However, smaller changes may show trends that are indicative of psychological influence taking hold. By examining timeframes significant to a nation's nuclear development we can see the extent of these influences.

Nuclear Posture Determination

To assess a nation's nuclear posture I will utilize the categorizations described by Narang.²¹ His trichotomy provides a useful framework for analyzing nuclear postures. Further, his research also shows that these postures are not static, as certain states have shifted their posture in time, an important consideration for this research effort. While this research will attempt to ascribe differing origins for a state's nuclear posture, for now, I will assume that his categorizations of nuclear postures are accurate in order to provide a basis for comparison.

Country Specifics – Pakistan

In examining North Korea's potential nuclear future, Pakistan presents a compelling case for examination. While there are some discordant elements between these nations, there are a great number of security parallels. In developing its nuclear arsenal, Pakistan faced substantial proximate threat from India, with which it shares a boarder. India had a significant advantage in military might, conventional and nuclear, and had a better economic situation. Further, Pakistan developed its nuclear technology while the world pressured it to do otherwise.

In researching Pakistan it is important to note that its parliamentary government makes the prime minister of the nation its face of global leadership. Thus, I conducted NIC analyses of Pakistani prime ministers between 1973 and 2017. These dates correspond to the start, development, fielding, and growth of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. In total, 19 speeches comprised of 560 paragraphs were analyzed from a broad cross section of audiences.

Country Specifics – North Korea

The DPRK presents a research challenge as regards to the determination of Kim Jong-un's NIC. Mired in layers of secrecy it would seem that there are few publically recorded speeches that are ripe for analysis. However, this disadvantage quickly fades away with the totalitarian nature of his regime. It is doubtful that release of any statements

of consequence from the state-run media happens without his approval. Thus, even if the specific words are not his own, the ideas are sure to mesh with his and provide a fair representative sample.

To understand North Korea's NIC I analyzed speeches given by Kim Jong-un beginning shortly after his ascent to power in 2012 and concluding with his New Year's Day address in 2018. In total this represented seven speeches that were comprised of 519 paragraphs.

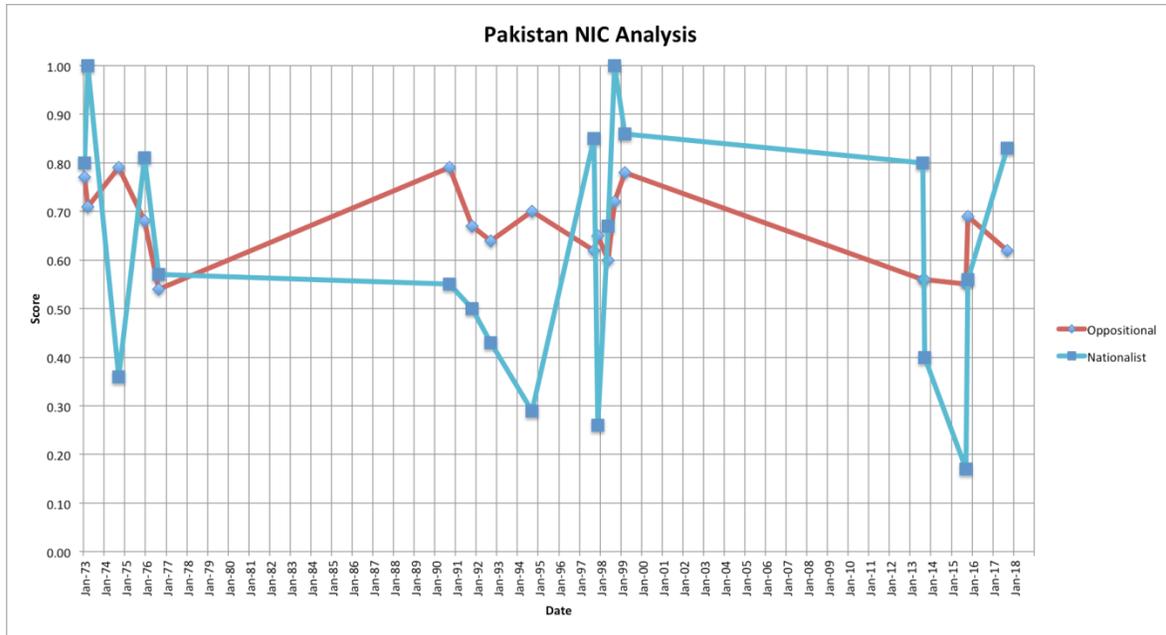
Results

Pakistan

The example of Pakistan seems to conform to the expected behavior the ideational factors would suggest, though not without some surprises. India, the expected KCO for Pakistan, conducted its first nuclear test in May 1974. As expected, thereafter Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's opposition scores begin to increase. It was also in this timeframe that Pakistan began its quest for its own nuclear capabilities.²²

It is commonly believed that Pakistan achieved nuclear capability sometime in the early 1990s.²³ Indeed, in the early 1990s Pakistan's opposition scores quickly diminish. At the same time, scores of nationalism also seem to fall off. It is worth noting that it took Pakistan nearly two decades to achieve its nuclear ambitions. It is possible that a nuclear program that took so long to achieve any level of parity with its rival could explain this depression in nationalistic fervor. More importantly, Narang asserts that Pakistan held a catalytic posture until 1991. The nationalism and oppositional scores sampled in this timeframe conform to those predicted in H₃.

The seminal event in Pakistan's nuclear program came in 1998 when, in response to Indian nuclear tests, Pakistan tested several nuclear devices in quick succession. NIC evaluation in this timeframe shows another peak in both oppositional and nationalist scores. Narang asserts that in 1991 Pakistan shifted to an asymmetric escalation posture. Looking at the data, 1991 and 1998 were both years of significant change in Pakistani NIC. As expected in H₁ the oppositional scores were relatively high. These scores fell off after the proposed adoption of this posture, suggesting it was effective in resolving some measure of the fear-based emotions driving Pakistani behavior.



Perhaps the greatest surprise encountered in this analysis is that India was not the primary KCO for Pakistan. In fact, the term that best describes Pakistan’s KCO is “Privileged Powers.” After some deliberation, however, this makes great sense. Pakistan was a colonial state of the British Empire until 1947. Following that experience it would seem the Pakistanis harbor a concern for those countries with the power to overtake them once again. The speech evidence confirms this, “... the legacy of colonial rule would be wiped out and the governmental machinery streamlined to respond to public needs.”²⁴ This is not to suggest that India is unimportant in Pakistani decision making. India is indeed mentioned in nearly every sampled speech and often would very nearly rival privileged powers for prominence as the KCO.

Pakistan also presented several challenges in analysis that may have adversely affected the results. First, broadly speaking, it is difficult to find texts that are translated into English. It seems that the prolific number and variety of coups to which Pakistan has been subjected has also hampered their documentary and archival efforts, not to mention their economic challenges. More acutely, it is traditional for the prime minister to give an address on the Pakistani Independence Day. In 1973 and 1974, key years for analysis, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto opted not to give this address.²⁵ This meant that occasionally suboptimal texts had to be used for analysis.

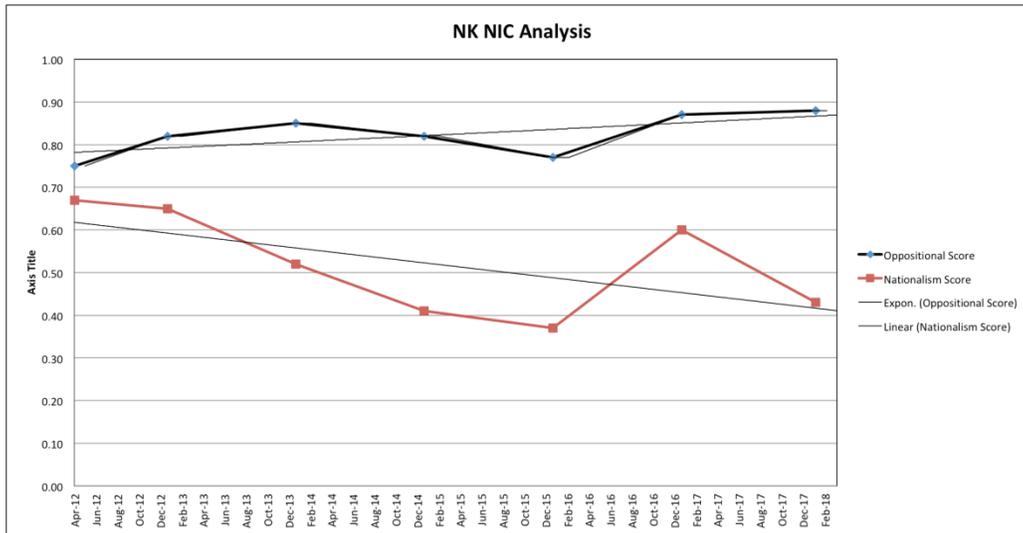
North Korea

The analysis of Kim Jong-un’s NICs seems to conform to the expected pattern. While North Korea did complete some nuclear tests 2006, as Hymans points out, these tests were the worst initial nuclear tests a country has ever performed.²⁶ Everything changed, beginning in 2013 with a moderately successful test, followed later with an ostensibly successful test in 2016. In NIC terms, Kim Jong-un’s oppositional scores climb slowly until 2013, and then fall off until 2016, when they spike upwards and then continue to slowly climb.

Kim’s nationalism scores were frequently depressed. In fact, they peaked in the first sampled speech after he took over the country and rapidly diminished until 2016. Thereafter they trended sharply upwards before once more beginning to fall off. Contextually, this may suggest that the nuclear success of 2016 (also a celebratory year for the North Korean Communist Party), inspired pride in the North Korean leader. However, it may also show that Kim is also acutely aware of the massive challenges facing his country.

In terms of KCO, my analysis confirmed and continued the early findings of Hymans.²⁷ The best way to understand North Korea’s KCO is to define it as anyone that is not North Korea. While that framework encompasses the United States, it is also worth noting that the United States has taken on an increasing role in North Korean KCO status. In his January 2018 address, the United States specifically finally eclipsed veiled references to non-North Korean entities and was the KCO for that speech.

One other noteworthy surprise came in the 2018 New Year’s address. Kim Jong-un stated: “In no way would the United States dare to ignite a war against me and our country.”²⁸ While admittedly subtle, this speech is the only time in my analysis that Kim made reference to himself. The implications for this could be considerable and deserve further attention, especially if he is beginning to personalize the attacks against North Korea. Especially from a psychological standpoint that could open up a much wider aperture for action on his behalf and further undermines the potential for him to act in a purely rational sense.



Conclusion

North Korean Posture Adoption

The psychological influences model would suggest North Korea is likely to adopt an asymmetric escalation posture. This is based on the very high relative levels of opposition in the most recent NIC analysis. Interestingly, this stands in contrast to Narang’s model, which would hinge on the availability of a third party patron. Presumably China would fill the role of this patron. This is possible as China does have an interest in regional

stability.²⁹ However, it is also easy to overstate the Chinese interest in North Korea. While North Korea is highly dependent on the Chinese for trade, the North Korean impact on the Chinese economy is miniscule. In fact, from the Chinese perspective, the status quo is highly favorable. Regime collapse in North Korea presents a potential calamity for China. Overt U.S. military action would once again put the U.S. military on China's border, this time potentially clinging to the nuclear weapons that used to belong to the DPRK.³⁰

Interestingly, at this juncture, Narang's model has difficulty encompassing cultural artifacts. There is a stark difference between having a third party patron available, and having it is an option a leader would consider. *Juche*, a philosophy of complete independence, dominates North Korean thinking. The ultimate goal of North Korea is total independence in economics, politics, and defense.³¹ It would seem odd for a country whose stated objective is to achieve independence in national defense, a role for which nuclear weapons may be particularly well suited, to then turn to another party for its own defense.

Policy Implications

American policy in North Korea must be understood in terms of the desired end states. American interests must prioritize regional stability, contain Chinese influence, decrease human rights abuses by the DPRK, and maintain an American presence in regional affairs. Other potential, though less important outcomes would deal with Korean unity, bring an end to anti-Japanese sentiment, and create a further roadmap for regional trade partnerships. Notably, the ideal of denuclearization is not an ideal end state as it is likely not feasible at this point in time for two reasons. First, giving up nuclear weapons would be tantamount to Kim Jong-un declaring his own weakness.³² Second, Kim Jong-un has watched what has happened to non-nuclear states that have tried to stand up to the United States. Both Libya and Iraq have seen their regimes fall and their sovereignty muted.

In terms of nuclear posture, the United States has a vested interest in North Korea maintaining an assured retaliation posture. While this may not represent a best-case scenario, it is a least-bad one. A catalytic posture, while potentially minimizing the size of North Korea's nuclear arsenal, would also increase Chinese influence in the region. This would further complicate the United States' relations with China, a burgeoning issue that does not need an additional hindrance. Asymmetric escalation is inherently unstable. This would strongly constrain American options and freedom of maneuver on the peninsula as it would be difficult to determine what provocations could trigger a North Korean nuclear response. The biggest question, then, is how the United States can use its instruments of power to influence the adoption of an assured retaliation posture.

Diplomatic engagement has the best chance of influencing North Korean behavior. Many see this as the first and most important step the United States can and must take.³³ Diplomatic engagement can help decrease oppositional tendencies by putting a more benign face on actions by the United States. Further, it can help identify areas of common interest upon which future agreements can be built. Part of North Korea's desire is "simply to be recognized as a nation-state with equal standing in the world."³⁴ "The difficult task for the United States and its allies in East Asia, therefore, is to be pragmatic in terms of dealing with even a tyrannical regime like Pyongyang and to project strength in a way that promotes freedom in North Korea for the sake of long-term regional and global peace, not

to mention for the betterment of people in the country.”³⁵ It would seem that, compared to the cost of nuclear war, diplomatic recognition and engagement is a small price to pay.

Information operations can also play a major role in shaping North Korean actions. Known for being the most isolated nation in the world, North Korea’s authoritarian policies strictly prohibit outside influence. This is a key powerbase for the Kim regime. However, the information age can help undermine his power. There is strong demand for black market items that show South Korean culture.³⁶ The United States and the Republic of Korea must take advantage of this situation. The state-imposed information controls prevents citizens from comparing life under the regime to life in other countries while also stymieing any chance of learning best practices from outside industry, further curtailing economic development.³⁷ While it may not directly affect Kim Jong-un’s NIC, forcing him to turn his attention to domestic issues can buy the United States the time it needs for other methods to work.

Military actions must be carefully measured for the foreseeable future. The cost of failure in this regard is likely to be measured in millions of lives lost.³⁸ There may be an upside, however, to North Korea’s nuclear prowess. The stability-instability paradox asserts that nuclear weapons create stability at the strategic level, which generates a level of conventional instability.³⁹ It may be possible for the United States to take advantage of this paradox to end North Korea’s salami tactics and lesser conventional provocations. A small symbolic strike, diplomatically faced as a punishment for some transgression, may help change North Korean calculus on future actions. It is noteworthy, however, that this could be a huge gamble for which South Korea, much more than the United States would bear the cost of miscalculation.

Economic measures have arguably been effective. However, their best use in the future is likely to be more in terms of “carrots” than “sticks.” The state of the DPRK economy can only be described in terms like squalor or utter ruin. Unfortunately, as is typical in authoritarian regimes, that has done little to impact the lifestyle of the countries elites. The burden of economic sanctions instead falls on the population at large. The Kim regime values security well above prosperity and does not require much of an economy in order to maintain its control over the population.⁴⁰ So long as things do not get too bad, it seems that there is little upside to further economic sanctions. Instead, by rewarding the North Koreans for behavior that is complicit with desired end states, like the end of human rights abuses, it may be possible to ease the suffering of the North Korean population and create a more benign image for the United States.

This whole of government approach is the best chance for maintaining peace in the Asia-Pacific region. The above actions cannot be conducted in isolation but must be integrated in such a manner as to build off one another in a synergistic manner. This requires a foreign policy with coherence and intentionality, one aimed at avoiding high intensity confrontation, but not one so timid as to be completely risk averse. When conflict exists between two nuclear states risk is unavoidable. The current state of affairs between the United States and the DPRK is not enviable, but it is reality. What is most important, then, is to manage risk and utilize effective methods to improve the situation. Utilizing psychology’s ability to influence and understand cognitive processes is, therefore, of the utmost importance.

Notes

¹ I wish to thank Dr. Todd Robinson and Dr. Jim Platte for their thoughtful insights into this research. All errors found herein are my own.

² Kim Jong-un, “Kim Jong-un 2018 New Year’s Address,” n.d., 6.

³ Jacques E.C. Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation: Identity, Emotions, and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1-3.

⁴ Congressional Budget Office, “Projected Costs of U.S. Nuclear Forces, 2017 to 2026,” n.d., 1.

⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, “The World Factbook,” accessed January 5, 2018, www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kn.html.

⁶ Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*, 4-5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁹ Scott O. Lilienfeld, “Fear: Can’t Live with It, Can’t Live without It,” *Phi Kappa Phi Forum* 90, no. 3 (2010): 17.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Gavin B. Sullivan, “A Critical Psychology of Pride,” *Critical Psychology: International Journal of Critical Psychology*, no. 21 (December 2007): 171.

¹² *Ibid.*, 173.

¹³ Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*, 36.

¹⁴ Vipin Narang, *Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era: Regional Powers and International Conflict*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014), 4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

²¹ Narang, *Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era*.

²² Jacques E.C. Hymans, *Achieving Nuclear Ambitions: Scientists, Politicians and Proliferation* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 243.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, "Prime Minister's Address to the Nation" December 20, 1975, www.bhutto.org/1976.php.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Jacques E.C. Hymans, "Assessing North Korean Nuclear Intentions and Capacities: A New Approach," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 8, no. 2 (May 2008): 276-77.

²⁷ Ibid., 266.

²⁸ "New Year's Address," North Korea Leadership Watch, January 1, 2018, www.nkleadershipwatch.org/2018/01/01/new-years-address/.

²⁹ Jihyun Kim, "Understanding the Hermit Kingdom As It Is and As It Is Becoming: The Past, Present and Future of North Korea," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 46, no. 1 (February 2016): 132.

³⁰ Denny Roy, "Misunderstanding North Korea," *AsiaPacific Issues*, no. 133 (August 15, 2017): 6.

³¹ Yong Soo Park, "Policies and Ideologies of the Kim Jong-un Regime in North Korea: Theoretical Implications," *Asian Studies Review* 38, no. 1 (March 2014): 6.

³² Roy, "Misunderstanding North Korea," 3.

³³ Hymans, "Assessing North Korean Nuclear Intentions and Capacities: A New Approach," 261.

³⁴ Kang, quoted in Kim, "Understanding the Hermit Kingdom As It Is and As It Is Becoming: The Past, Present and Future of North Korea," 135.

³⁵ Ibid., 139.

³⁶ Ibid., 137.

³⁷ Park, "Policies and Ideologies of the Kim Jong-un Regime in North Korea: Theoretical Implications," 7.

³⁸ Roy, "Misunderstanding North Korea," 5.

³⁹ Brad Roberts, *The Case for U.S. Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Security Studies, an imprint of Stanford University Press, 2016), 63.

⁴⁰ Roy, "Misunderstanding North Korea," 3-4.

CHAPTER 6

Multilateralism and Deterrence

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Since the end of World War II, arguably the western world has been organized under an institutionalized liberal world order, which led to the creation of a one of the most significant multilateral security institutions, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.² NATO, coupled with liberal institutions, allowed Europe to quickly recover from two devastating world wars even with the threat of communism at its doorstep. During the height of the Cold War, NATO and its partners held fast against a nuclear equipped and larger ground force under the control of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. A war was never fought between NATO and the Soviet Union.

However, during this same time several wars were fought in East Asia that included an influential NATO partner, the United States. Governmental control, land, political and economic influence in Europe and East Asia were divided between the United States and the Soviet Union. Each party built up protectorates and supported governments who affirmed their belief structure. Each nation sought to bring its political-economic structure to other nations expanding their sphere of influence. These conflicting ideologies along with expanding influence should have led to more conflict in Western Europe, much like in Asia, but something prevented war in Western Europe. Undoubtedly, nuclear weapons played a significant role in the prevention of a great power war in Western Europe, but failed to prevent wars in Asia. One of the contributing factors to why deterrence worked in Europe and failed in Asia centers on multilateral security agreements.

Multilateral security agreements were lacking from Asia, but played a prevalent role in Western Europe during the Cold War. Under multilateral security agreements, liberal democratic principles fostered an environment that bolstered deterrence in Europe. Why was this same model not applied among Asian partner nations? Two separate and distinct models were applied in developing security agreements among U.S. partners as a means to support the political ends. Under multilateral agreements, zero major conflicts were fought in Western Europe and under bilateral agreements, five major conflicts were fought in Asia.³

It is my argument that multilateral security agreements increase deterrence and decrease the probability for war by aligning national security objectives and threats among each nation state involved. This paper will discuss how multilateral security agreements might support deterrence. Deterrence theory in the post-nuclear age puts nuclear weapons at the heart of the argument. However, there are other factors that improve deterrence, such as political standing in the world, military capabilities, economic strength, etc. These factors strengthen deterrence and give it credibility.

Several authors have tackled a similar question, but tend to focus on why a multilateral treaty organization will not work. Dr. Victor Cha in his books *Alignment Despite Antagonism* and *Powerplay* used historical context in Japan and Korea to explain

abandonment and entrapment complexes impact multilateral security agreements. Gilbert Rozman's books, *Northeast Asia's Stunted Regionalism* and *US Leadership, History, and Bilateral Relations in Northeast Asia*, tend to focus on economic development and political differences. He argues the pursuit of national identities, while not getting caught up in globalism, helps to capitalize on anxieties held by both Japan and Korea preventing a multilateral security agreement. Both of these authors help identify some of the root causes to why bilateral security agreements work in Northeast Asia and multilateralism would fail. However, they do not explore bilateral or multilateral impacts to deterrence. This paper will explore when partner nations have a similar patron, with vastly differing national security objectives and the impacts to deterrence.

Thesis and Hypothesis

Multilateral treaty organizations align security concerns, remove antagonistic behavior and dissuade third party armed interference, thus improving deterrence. This paper will look at how multilateral security agreements aligned national security concerns and create a positive impact on deterrence. Deterrence should not be limited to the threat of the use of nuclear weapons, rather using a combination of diplomatic and military instruments of power coupled with nuclear weapon in order to create a deterrent effect. NATO, a multilateral security agreement, prevented major armed conflicts between great powers due to the aligned security objectives, a unified front and strong political, economic and military capacities. I will test in this paper my hypothesis of: Lack of a multilateral alliance system in Northeast Asia, among U.S. partners, developed hollow and unaligned security concerns among regional partner nations eroding at fundamental aspects of deterrence. To test this hypothesis, the paper will use case studies, outlined in the next paragraph below, analyzing actions between the aligned and the "aggressor nations:" looking how intentions were communicated, if security objective and threat are aligned, and if the actions led to reduced or increased antagonistic behaviors.

In answering the first question posed: "Why did the United States not establish a multilateral security agreement in Northeast Asia," this paper will need to cover a few topics first. First, a brief discussion on some fundamental aspects of deterrence: reduced aggressive armed behavior between unitary actors; opened dialogue among unitary actors, creating a mutual understanding of "red lines," and the prevention of great-power conflict. Next, a discussion on the academic research accomplished on bilateral and multilateral security agreements and the benefits and limitations inherent in each of these security architectures. This discussion will cover how these security agreements influence deterrence. The paper will then look at the history between Japan and Korea and explore why bilateral security agreements were first established and why they still hold today. Next, this paper will use case studies with evidence from the Korean War, Cold War, Gulf War and Kosovo conflict. The Korean War will look at how weak bilateral security agreements fail to prevent conflict, thus impacting the fundamental aspect of deterrence of reduced aggressive behavior. With 43 years of events in the Cold War, the paper will look at Berlin Blockade of 1948-9, and the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The Berlin Blockade will discuss how a combined effort and resolve provides "teeth" to a war of words and creating an aligned interest. The invasion of Czechoslovakia will explore the idea of how "détente" revitalized collective defense and the impact on continued Soviet expansion. Both the lessons from the Berlin Blockade and the invasion of Czechoslovakia will show

how aligned interest can bolster deterrence by creating “red lines” for each party. The Gulf War of 1991 will discuss how aligned security interest in a strong multilateral alliance can create the understanding of “red lines” and reduce antagonistic behavior. This will be juxtaposed against the 1999 Kosovo conflict where a strong multilateral alliance with unaligned lines of effort can embolden antagonistic behavior even if strong “red lines” were established. Finally, the paper will develop conclusions based on the case studies on how security alignments impact deterrence, which will lead to a policy recommendation of the United States’ pursuit of a multilateral security agreement among East Asian partner nations.

Deterrence Fundamentals

Deterrence theory is the strategic coercion based on a states’ ability to dissuade an adversary from using military forces by persuading an adversary that the cost of doing an action will be greater than the political gains.⁴ It assumes a unitary rational actor whose threat of use of force is credible and has the capability to carry out said threat.⁵ In the case of security alliances where some countries have nuclear weapons and others do not, the non-nuclear country can receive the benefits of deterrence through their aligned patron state under extended deterrence. Extended deterrence might be afforded to all parties involved in the security agreement; given the aligned states believe their nuclear patron will act in good faith. American bilateral or multilateral security agreements do extend deterrence to our allies if attacked; this may not guarantee that an in-kind attack using nuclear weapons, but it does not rule it out. Deterrence, extended or otherwise, has three fundamental aspects that are impacted by security agreements: reduced aggressive armed behavior between unitary actors; open dialogue among unitary actors, which creates a mutual understanding of “red lines,” and prevention of great-power conflict. The first two fundamentals will be the focus of this section of the paper. The prevention of great-power conflict can be explained by the lack of great-power wars since the dawn of the nuclear weapon. Creating mutual understanding and reduced aggressive behavior are explored in this section through the lens of security agreements.

Prior to the advent of nuclear weapons, deterrence consisted of a large standing army. The Romans believed *Si vis pacem, para bellum* (if you wish for peace prepare for war).⁶ The idea of preparing for war could reduce aggressive behavior is seen throughout the history of the world. The prudent calculations and some level of risk among governments was the means for which deterrence was first established. Thucydides’ writings about the Peloponnesian War featured how coercive diplomacy played a role as a means to change the behavior of an adversary.⁷ The “Melian Dialogue” is seen as a clear case of coercive diplomacy. In this dialogue, the Melians were threatened with war by a large and growing standing army unless they joined the Athenians.⁸ Albeit war between the two parties occurred, coercive diplomacy applied by the Athenians aimed to align the Melians with the empire in order to grow their influence, assure the empires’ promulgation, and improve national security. The alliance between the Melians and the Athenians, albeit forced after war, aligned their security concerns, protected the expanded state, and expand their influence creating regional stability. The larger their army grew the more deterrent it became and few nations challenged their regional hegemony. After nuclear weapons became the preferred method of deterrence, a large standing army was not needed to assure

national security. However, as the geopolitics continues to evolve, the bomb may no longer provide the end all, be all to deterrence.

Nuclear weapons changed the need for a large army, improved relations among allied partners due to extended deterrence and afforded weaker states the opportunity to develop and grow out of WW2. Deterrence could now be accomplished with one bomber over a large army. One nuclear weapon on one bomber now could provide the same destructive force of more than 100 bomber sorties.⁹ Weaker states recognizing the value of a partner with nuclear weapons, turned to a nuclear patron and allied, which in turn allows them to reduce the size of their militaries and focus on internal matters. The alignment with a nuclear patron required the states align their security concerns in order to receive the deterrence benefits provided by nuclear weapons, which in some cases led to compromise on both sides. Thomas Schelling, in discussing alliances noted compromise was required for an alliance to work. “We not only give them (potential destruction options) up in exchange for commitments to us by our allies; we give them up on our own account to make our intentions clear to potential enemies.”¹⁰ Compromising for alignment gave each state more power, if aligned states maintained unaligned security concerns and did not compromise on some matters, an enemy might see the lack of willingness to act on behalf of the other nation as a sign of a weak alliance, eroding at extended deterrence.

The other fundamental of deterrence is it opens a dialogue between antagonistic states and assures each party knows the other parties “red-line.” During the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, nuclear weapons were placed in Cuba by the Soviet Union. The United States saw this as an act of provocation. In response, coercive and political actions were taken to inform the Soviet Union that the United States was not okay with this act. Prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Soviet Union’s support to Castro was limited to conventional arms and political support in order to bolster the defenses of Cuba against an attack by the United States.¹¹ The United States had protested, both privately and publicly. However, these political protests did not prevent the Soviet Union from putting nuclear missiles in Cuba. The United States did not firmly communicate if the Soviet Union were to put missiles in Cuba that it crossed a “red line” and action would be taken.¹² Tensions continued to rise, driving each party deeper into taking action. The United States established a naval blockade, called up reserve troops, and deployed military forces within striking distance of Cuba, while increasing the readiness of the nuclear force.¹³ The Soviet Union and the United States recognized the potential powder keg of a situation and agreed these missile deployments to Cuba was too far of an action and the antagonistic behavior must stop. Since neither party wanted nuclear war, the communication of the “red line,” through diplomatic channels and military actions added to the confidence deterrence had in the 20th century while creating the mutual understanding of permissible actions. Deterrence, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, created conditions that led to each party reducing antagonistic behavior and establishing clear “red lines.”

Scholarly Work on Bilateral and Multilateral Security

Alliance theory in international security frames foreign policy and actions as a “game” between and with aligned members. The game between aligned members serves as a means of increasing security capacity and inherently creates a deterrent effect against would be aggressors.¹⁴ Fundamental to these alliances are trust and an aligned security concern. Alliances create trust and generate centralized norms and rules of behavior among the partners in order to support the security needs of the individual states.¹⁵ Whether the alliance structure is bilateral or multilateral it can provide a clear message to any potential aggressors. Addressing the first question: Why did the United States choose bilateral over multilateral security structures in Asia, one has to understand the nature of the potential aggressors and the nature of the relationship between potential alliance partners. Generally speaking, the historical animosity, differing political ideologies and general distrust between Japan and Korea is a simplified understanding of the relationship between these two actors. This animosity between the two U.S. partner nations quickly lends itself to a simple understanding of why bilateral security arrangements were established. However, it fails to factor in the threat, and type of influence the United States intended for the region.

The post-WWII threat was the expansionism of communism and the potential decrease of influence the United States could have in the region. Communism, bolstered by the Soviet Union, pursued its ends through military might in Europe and relied on political partners in Asia. The United States and its allies faced formidable Soviet ground divisions, outnumbered 12 to one along the border of Western and Eastern Europe. In Asia, China, Vietnam and North Korea were attempting to spread communism through Asia by means of a popular uprising.¹⁶ While military action was taken in both Vietnam and North Korea, the actions were taken as a means to uproot the established political party for a new one or as a means to reunify the nation. Additional factors that determined the type of alliance structure is geography. The threat axis in Europe was focused along the contiguous borders of East and West. Some land obstacles stood in the way of the large standing Soviet army, but not enough to stop the rapid deployment of Soviet forces.¹⁷ Threat access to Western Europe determined the need for a multilateral alliance structure. In Asia, by contrast there was no similar large military contingency in the Soviet Far East as that in Western Europe. There were land contingencies in Northeast Asia (Korea) and in Southeast Asia (Indochina), but there was also a maritime theater in Northeast Asia (the Taiwan Straits) as well as allied responsibilities as far as the South Pacific Ocean, but each of these areas was independent of each other. The threat and the geographic structure did not warrant a single overarching collective umbrella alliance.

Much like geography played a role in the threat, it also plays a role in developing the influence in the region. The influence the United States desired in each region was different. In Western Europe, the United States watched the as many European allies disagreed with the bilateral nature that was forming under the Marshall Plan and the grants to build up their militaries and economies.¹⁸ The European allies felt the American missions were intrusive, frequently numerous and frankly “smacked of imperial arrogance” as seen by numerous examples of the Military Assistance Advisory Groups (MAAG) stationed throughout Europe.¹⁹ One prime example of this is the size of the MAAG in Oslo, Norway. Larger than the entire Norwegian Foreign Office, the MAAG in Oslo eroded at the trust of the Norwegian people and their government, which could have had strategic consequences in the influence the United States, was attempting to garner in Europe. These

attitudes expressed by partner nations was starting to erode at the bilateral trade agreements and at collective influence in Europe, coupled with the development of the Brussels Pact the United States was losing some influence in the region. The Brussels Pact recognized the Western European nations could not take on the Soviet armies themselves and saw the need to engage militarily with the United States. The Brussels Pact did include the U.S. military, rather more specifically American airmen operating high above the ground forces. The rest of the forces would act as “cannon fodder.”²⁰ The British government initiated the approach of engagement with Washington in January 1948, when they discussed the need for all parties to engage in collaborative measures of mutual assistance of Western Europe.²¹ Out of these disagreements, need for assistance and security the United States recognized its influence could be increased in Europe. NATO formed and the U.S. military presence today may have shrunk since the end of the Cold War, but its influence in the region is still significant. Multilateralism structures, like NATO is the best way to dampen unilateralist, within the structure and outside the structure actions, providing internal and external containment of great powers due to the committee-based decision making.²² NATO today is held as the benchmark for multilateral security agreements and held as the bulwark against Soviet aggression into Western Europe, a deterrent effect.

Conversely to Europe, Asia did not develop multilateralism because of an unaligned threat and non-contiguous borders along with American intentions and influence in the region. The United States divided up the Japanese Empire with the Soviet Union and returned parts once governed back to China, maintaining little control on the Asian continent in South Korea. The Truman administration during the, waning days of nuclear primacy, recognized a multilateral security architecture was impractical due to the countries of the region poor quality of militaries. The regional militaries would have little value-added in terms of deterrence while only heightening American fears of being entrapped into a conflict started by one of the bloc’s emboldened members.²³ This set the stage for bilateral security agreements in the region.

Dr. Victor Cha describes the importance of bilateral security agreements in Asia in *Powerplay*. Bilateral security alliances seek to bring two parties together in the common defense of their national security interests. When each party is similar in military, economic and political strength there is no patron. However, in the case of the Japan-United States and Korea-United States security agreements, the United States is the patron and the security alliance is typically more beneficial to the patron or a “powerplay.” “Powerplay is the creation of an alliance tie for the purpose of inhibiting the ally’s unilateral actions.”²⁴ Bilateral agreements give alliances partners an institution to improve their security while creating a tool for risk management. The risk of abandonment by the smaller party and or fear of entrapment from the stronger party can lead to neglect in the security alliance providing adversaries an opportunity to interject themselves thus disrupting the security alliance and potentially eroding at a nuclear power’s deterrence capacity.

The United States during the Eisenhower administration continued the development of bilateral security agreements due to the fear of entrapment and recognition that the regional militaries still needed work, utilizing the Truman doctrine of massive retaliation as the enforcement mechanism. The geographic and socio-political differences drove the costs of maintaining a multilateral security architecture in Asia as cost prohibitive.²⁵ With regional conflicts, size, and cost-control driving the decision to bilateralism in Asia, the United States sought out a strong and reliable partner in Asia.

Japan, while ravaged from WWII, was economically and technologically more advanced than South Korea, making it a prime candidate for rebuilding and becoming a controllable regional power.²⁶ This did not prevent the United States from seeking a bilateral agreement with Korea after WWII, but the military and economic support given to South Korea paled in comparison. Nearly 200,000 occupation troops were in Japan. In Korea, only a small force was left and that dwindled down to 500 advisors prior to the Korean War. Japan received a \$1 billion as an initial investment in humanitarian aid and \$400 million annually thereafter. South Korea only received \$845 billion. This set the stage for Japan becoming the regional power and the development of divergent security concerns.²⁷ Without a strong threat and lacking contiguous borders, bilateralism effectively provided the United States the control and influence it needed in the region. By aligning Japan's security interests with the U.S. security interests, the United States could avoid entrapment and abate the abandonment fears, creating a strong front against adversaries buttressing deterrence that might bleed over to other allied countries in the region.

History of Northeast Asia Security Alliances since 1945

The focus of rebuilding Europe and Asia were fundamentally different due to nationalism, geography, and economic interdependence all bundled as competition between two political ideologies – democracy or communism. The United States focused more of its energy into the redevelopment of Europe in the post-war era than in the development of Asia in order to combat an expansionist and possibly an adventurous communist threat.²⁸ This focus gave birth to multilateralism and exceptional growth and trust in institutionalism in Europe. A fractured indirectly connected Asia-Pacific region did not uphold the cornerstones of a post-WWII era. Rather multilateralism was rebuked for bilateral security agreements and continued national independence as the foundation for development.²⁹ The bilateral approach was a function of cultural and domestic political differences, Japanese Imperial aggression of Korea and Manchuria and, international political differences.

Interaction between Japan and Korea is steep in historical animosity. More recently, the 20th century provides better context to why the rift between the two regional nations exists. Given the geographic proximity of the neighboring countries, one may think their cultures and domestic political systems are relatively similar. This is not the case. Each of these countries has history steeped in tradition that evolved independently. Early in the 20th century, Japanese culture evolved from a feudal Confucianism to having the appearances of a western style democracy, or imperial democracy. Japan's democracy still had a ruling class, but created a government structure that allowed for populist engagement in political affairs, which led to reforms in the responsibilities of its citizens, land distribution and class restructuring.³⁰ Korean culture, on the other hand, maintained Confucian Sinocentric world order, dominated by Confucian codes of morality, propriety and citizenship within the Chinese tributary states.³¹ In 1910, Imperial Japan annexed Korea, seeing its Westphalia culture as far more advanced than the Korean culture. The actions taken by the Japanese created catastrophic cultural and political ideological differences that set Japanese and Korean people against each other and the cultural and political distain can still be felt today. From 1910 to 1945, Koreans were subject to harsh colonial rule where ruthless behavior led to treating Koreans as secondary citizens in their own lands. "Comfort women" abuses during WWII, and the overall "Japanization" of the

Korean people created a historical rift between the two nations.³² A 2015 agreement between Japan and Korea, the issue concerning comfort women, showed signs of a reconciliation between the two nations. However, in January 2018, Seoul asked Tokyo to reissue an apology statement because the victims were kept out of the negotiations and the apology statement.³³ This animosity is one of the significant factors that played into why a bilateral security agreement was established.

The cultural and domestic political issues between Japan and Korea have not stifled all talks or cooperation between the two nations. Each of these nations is intertwined economically and in regional affairs. The economic ties between Japan and Korea are valued at \$24.6 billion, accounting for five percent of Korea's trade and 7.6 percent of Japan's trade.³⁴ Economic indicators between Japan and Korea show a slight change in their international political behavior, accepting trade from their former rival. In 2010, South Korean exports to Japan were 2.2 times higher than in 1990 and 3.5 percent higher in Japan.³⁵ This may be attributed to a globalized modern economy. However, it shows that Japan and Korea are willing to set aside their differences when it benefits each other. At the international political level, the differences between Japan and Korea are seen in the valuation of threats against their national security.

As regional affairs start to flare up, global commons access, nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and a rising regional hegemon, Japan and Korea have seen increased cooperation. Starting with bilateral security cooperation in 2009 this included sharing intelligence and logistical support and providing joint humanitarian assistance during maritime operations.³⁶ Recently, the United States, Japan and South Korea participated in a joint missile tracking drill on the heels of North Korean improvement to its missile technology.³⁷ Overcoming historical animosity and rising to meet a threat against both countries shows there is an opportunity for both Japan and Korea to set aside their differences and focus on conducting operations together. These operations and an increasing economic relationship provide a framework for which Japan and Korea may work together in a multilateral security agreement.

Case Studies

Each of the case studies is a small sampling discussing fundamental principles of extended deterrence, strength of the alliance as the means to convey "red lines," and how aligned interest impact antagonistic behavior among all parties.

The Korean War provides a great example of how a weak bilateral alliance with poorly aligned security concerns does not prevent armed antagonistic behavior. When North Korean troops, with Soviet political approval, crossed into South Korea on June 25, 1950, the exploitation of a weak bilateral security agreement disrupted the Truman Doctrine of massive retaliation. While initially established to provide support to Turkey and Greece against the Soviet Union, it was the American Cold War policy around the world.³⁸ The Truman Doctrine had strong words, but not ability to back those words up with action in East Asia. The United States had removed most of its occupying force down to 500 advisors pinning regional stability on the United States military forces assigned to Japan.³⁹ This created a crisis on the peninsula that the United States did not expect to encounter. North Korea signed security cooperation agreements with both the Soviet Union and China, value maximizing the regimes' power and increased military assistance, in terms of military technology, positioning themselves to take advantage of a weakened South

Korea.⁴⁰ A weakened security agreement created by removing military forces and an unreliable specific policy of “total and retaliatory attack” including the use of nuclear weapons did not prevent the North Koreans’ military from attacking across the border. Extended deterrence failed in Korea due to a lack of capability and willingness of the United States to back its commitments.

The United States and coalition response to the Berlin Blockade by the Soviet Union, while not an act of armed military aggression, provides us the insight in how aligned security interests in a combined effort provide the “teeth” for policy and improve extended deterrence. After WWII, Germany was split into East and West Germany with Berlin being split the same. The East was controlled and governed by the Soviet Union, whereas the West was controlled and governed by the Western Allies of the United Kingdom, France, and the United States. On June 24, 1948, the East cut off ground access into Berlin in an attempt to prevent the circulation of the new German Deutsche Mark, effectively disrupting Soviet control and raw material support to industrial complexes in West Berlin.⁴¹ Each of the western allies refused to give in to the Soviet blockade and came together delivering 81,730 tons of food and fuel in order to supply the surrounded city.⁴² The resolve and aligned security concern of West Berlin eventually broke down the Soviet blockade so food and fuel flowed overland. The action sent a clear message to adversarial nations that a multinational coalition working together with shared interest would do what was necessary to assure its security. These partners working in concert increased deterrence by showing resolve of their aligned interest communicating clearly intent to take action when necessary.

The invasion of Czechoslovakia came as a shock to Western allies. Seen as a socialist republic in support of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia was under internal strife that led to the subsequent invasion by the Eastern Bloc on Aug. 20, 1968.⁴³ Détente came into vogue during this period as the United States was looking to end its commitment in Vietnam, while maintaining level military power with the Soviet Union.⁴⁴ The friction with the two superpowers did not give way to war, rather respect for each other power. Europeans during the invasion of Czechoslovakia came to respect the Warsaw Pact as seen in a December meeting between the two superpowers. “The communiqué (Harmel Report) looked forward to détente’s success in negotiations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Recognizing the swiftness of the Warsaw Pact in the takeover of Czechoslovakia, European leaders inside NATO met with Soviet Union officials as a means to increase détente among the parties.⁴⁵ The Harmel Report provided the groundwork for showing resolve in the collective self-defense of the nations, opening the dialogue that reduced antagonistic behavior and created an understanding of “red lines” in Europe. Years after the Czechoslovakia crisis, détente held firm and deterrence, both extended and immediate, were bolstered by the Harmel Report.⁴⁶ The Cold War remained cold and deterrence continued to work, even after the fall of the Soviet Union.

The end of the Cold War left the United States as the sole remaining superpower. That leaves the question, what to do with deterrence? The threat of nuclear war was not an issue for the world for the first time since 1949, when the Soviet Union achieved nuclear weapons status. However, the world was far from ending war. The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990, as a means to wipe out its debt, Kuwaiti oil fields with possible aspiration of removing Saudi Arabia’s dominance of the oil supply led to the Gulf War.⁴⁷ NATO recognized how destabilizing this action could be to the region, and with interest in the

region postured itself to take action.⁴⁸ NATO's strong alliance and aligned security interest created strong "red lines" for the Iraqi Army. While Article 5 was not invoked to defend Western Europe and North American interests, a common cause for action was required. The United States, England and France committed ground and air forces in order to protect their interest. The collective security showed Iraq its actions were unacceptable and the nation had crossed a "red line." As coalition forces moved into western Iraq, Iraqi forces pulled out of Kuwait, reducing the antagonistic behavior against Kuwait. On Feb. 28, 1991, hostilities ceased.⁴⁹ The actions by the coalition showed that when "red lines" are crossed action must be taken. When this action is taken in concert with partner nations, the punishment can be swift and deadly.

In contrast to the Gulf War, the 1999 Kosovo conflict did have the support of a multilateral security agreement, but not the full spectrum of military capabilities. As Serbia waged war in Kosovo, NATO stood up to prevent the attacks. However, the response was limited to air power.⁵⁰ The decision to commit only air forces was seen as a positive among some of the NATO nations, but not by all. Military planners in the United States worked to get ground forces in place to provide a backstop and strengthen the lines of effort for the air campaign. However, NATO ruled out using ground forces.⁵¹ This drove what was expected to be a short conflict into a 78-day air campaign, where there was an increase of attack on Kosovar Albanians.⁵² Even as "red lines" were communicated, the limited use of military power emboldened an antagonistic behavior eroding at the credibility of the multilateral force. Overall, the air war failed to deter actions taken by Serbian forces because there was no credible threat. Without a credible threat of the use of all aspects of military force, deterrence is eroded.

Conclusions

Alliance structures play a pivotal role in the credibility of deterrence. Aligning strategic interests and concerns provide the credibility to the structure. When these interests are aligned under a unified front, deterrence is bolstered because it shows a potential armed aggressor there are "red lines" that are unacceptable to cross or actions will be taken. This in itself opens the dialogue between actors that reduced armed aggression and prevents great power conflict.

Deterrence in the post-nuclear age must adapt in a rapidly evolving environment from a bipolar to a hegemonic unipolar world to the rise of globalization and multipolarity is highly complex. Reliance on nuclear weapons as a credible and reliable means of deterrence may not work in the future. Deterrence theory and the fundamental aspects of deterrence coupled security agreements provide options for unitary actors when dealing with adversarial behavior. When aligned security partners interest and goals are in concert, deterrence and the fundamental aspect of reducing antagonistic behavior is bolstered as seen during the coalition operations in the Gulf War, Berlin Airlift and Hamel Report (*détente*) discussions. When they are not aligned, antagonistic behavior continues and deterrence of action is eroded as seen during the 1999 Kosovo conflict and Korean War. When alliance structure is poorly aligned or weak (Korea) and the means of each party does not match (Kosovo) antagonistic behavior is not deterred. The Czechoslovakia invasions and subsequent NATO response of *détente*, opened lines of communication with the Soviet Union that clearly defined "red lines" neither party was willing to cross.

Multilateral security organizations provide structure for creating a shared security concern and policy. By getting each party in the multilateral agreement to agree to a combined security concern, in itself is a feat. However, the benefits of a unified front, known “red-lines,” open dialogue among antagonistic nations, and stronger geopolitical and military might empowers deterrence. In East Asia, American deterrence and extended deterrence failed to stop aggressive and antagonistic behavior, from North Korea invading South Korea to Chinese militarization of the South China Sea due to the misaligned security interests between the United States and her partners – Japan and South Korea. Japanese and Korean relations over the years has slowly improved, allowing for economic engagement, some, albeit limited, military interoperability and sharing of information setting up the potential for the United States to reshape Northeast Asia defense strategy. Critical to reshaping defense strategy discussion is deterrence and how security alliance can impact the credibility of deterrence.

Policy Implications

The United States’ backseat approach to Asia worked for a pre-interconnected, developing industrial and slow transportation era. However, this approach in an interconnected, digital information age of rapid acquisition and transportation should be readdressed in order to meet a contested regional security environment. Security concerns for Seoul cannot be divorced from the security concerns of Tokyo. Divorcing the security concerns between the two nations in Northeast Asia erodes at the ability of the United States to uphold its deterrence. The results of a Japan-Korea opinion poll conducted in June-July 2016, concerning countries that may poses a military threat, provides key evidence that U.S. national security objectives are not being aligned among our partner nations and eroding at deterrence. Japanese respondents stated China (80 percent) followed by North Korea (73 percent) then Russia (50 percent) and finally South Korea (17 percent). Conversely, South Korean respondents stated North Korea (84 percent), Japan (38 percent), and then China (36 percent), finally Russia (7 percent).⁵³ While both countries agree North Korea is the most significant military threat to the other nation, they still feel the other is a threat to each other. The study is a public opinion, and not the opinion of the governments. However, one can deduce the feeling with the public in democratic society are not much farther from the government. This causes problems when aligning security interests, developing cooperation and trust, which then erode at the foundation of deterrence and the fundamental aspects.

The 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy outlines the importance of advancing American influence in the world as a means to assure liberty, democracy and the rule of law outlining the importance of “compete(ing) and lead(ing) in multilateral organizations so that U.S interests and principles are protected.”⁵⁴ Moreover specifically discussing the Indo-Pacific region, “U.S. allies are critical to responding to mutual threats . . . and preserving our mutual interests in the Indo-Pacific region⁵⁵.” However, the current U.S. security strategy in the region relies heavily on bilateral security agreements, separating individual nations’ interests from the collective interest of the United States in the region. Cultural differences and historical animosity, distances among nations – more specifically the lack of contiguous borders among nations, and a system that continues to separate security concerns in East Asia have kept the current bilateral security agreements in place.⁵⁶ If the 2017 NSS were to be taken seriously, U.S. political and military planners need to

reconsider multilateralism in Northeast Asia as a means of preserving the mutual interests in the region.

“States may tighten rather than loosen the alliance in order to exert more direct restraint and stop the ally from taking undesirable actions.”⁵⁷ This was required post-WWII when Japanese and South Korean tensions were at its highest. Since the end of the Cold War, tensions between Japan and Korea have been relaxing and more and more cooperation is taking hold. All the while regional threats grow. A nuclear regional threat is taking shape in North Korea, while China ignores the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the rulings of The Hague concerning the South China Sea, each bucking against the security interests of the United States, Japan and South Korea. The lack of an immediate existential threat may preclude a multilateral security agreement, but it is necessary for the future stability of the region.

It is my recommendation that the United States work with our allied nations in East Asia and to build and strengthen relationships so a multilateral security agreement can take hold and provide for stability. This process will take time and will require either South Korea or Japan to take the lead on the majority of the effort. The United States’ role in this endeavor will be to shape the aligned security objectives so that deterrence in the region will have credibility.

Notes

¹ I wish to thank Dr. Todd Robinson and Dr. Jim Platte for their thoughtful insights into this research. All errors found herein are my own.

² I would like to thank Major Richard Harr and Major Dan Walton for their thoughtful comments and suggestions. All errors found therein are my own.

³ Conflicts in Asia Korean War, Vietnam War, Indian-Pakistan War, Sino-Indian War, Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan.

⁴ Deterrence theory presented during the AY18 Deterrence Task Force.

⁵ Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966, 2008 ed), 23-31.

⁶ Lawrence Freedman. *Deterrence* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 2004), 7.

⁷ Andrew O'Neil, *Asia, the US and Extended Nuclear Deterrence: Atomic Umbrellas in the Twenty-First Century* (New York, NY.: Routledge, 2013), 9.

⁸ O'Neil, 9.

⁹ Number determined by determining the destructive force of a 2000-pound Mark 84 bomb, then how many it would take to create the same effect as a nuclear weapon: 2000 bombs, then determining how many Mark 84 bombs a B-52 could carry, 18; then dividing $2000/18= 111.1$; approximately 100+ sorties are required verses 1.

¹⁰ Schelling, 44.

¹¹ Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, (New York, NY: Longman, 1999), 78.

¹² Allison and Zelikow, 80.

¹³ Allison and Zelikow, 77.

¹⁴ Victor D. Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism: The US-Korea-Japan Security Triangle*. (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 1999), 36.

¹⁵ Victor D. Cha, *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 20.

¹⁶ Tony Judt, *.Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2005), 117-118 and 150.

¹⁷ Judt, 147-149.

¹⁸ Lawrence S. Kaplan, *NATO Divided, NATO United: The Evolution of an Alliance* (Westport, CT.: Praeger, 2004), 5-7.

¹⁹ Kaplan, 7.

- ²⁰ Kaplan, 6.
- ²¹ Judt, 149.
- ²² Cha, *Powerplay*, 5.
- ²³ Cha, *Powerplay*, 172.
- ²⁴ Cha, *Powerplay*, 19.
- ²⁵ Cha, *Powerplay*, 10.
- ²⁶ Cha, *Powerplay*, 122.
- ²⁷ Cha, *Powerplay*, 123, Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism*, 25.
- ²⁸ Judt, 63 – 65
- ²⁹ Cha, *Powerplay*, 27.
- ³⁰ Michael Hoffman, “The Taisho Era: When Modernity Ruled Japan’s Masses,” *Japan Times*, July 29, 2012. Accessed at www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2012/07/29/general/the-taisho-era-when-modernity-ruled-japans-masses/#.VOTctfnF98F.
- ³¹ Gilbert Rozman, *U.S. Leadership, History, and Bilateral Relations in Northeast Asia*. (Cambridge, MA.: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 103.
- ³² Rozman, 103.
- ³³ Tomohiro Osaki, “Abe rejects Seoul’s new call for apology on ‘comfort women’ issue. *Japan Times*. Jan. 12, 2018. Accessed at www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/01/12/national/politics-diplomacy/abe-rejects-kangs-new-apology-call-comfort-women-issue/#.WooCJspMGha.
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- ³⁵ Hidehiko Mukoyama, “Japan-South Korea Economic Relations Grow Stronger in a Globalized Environment,” *Pacific Business and Industries*, Vol XII, No. 43 (2012) accessed at www.jri.co.jp/MediaLibrary/file/english/periodical/rim/2012/43.pdf
- ³⁶ Junya Nishino, “Japan’s Security Relationship with the Republic of Korea: Opportunities and Challenges,” (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 6, 2017), 6.
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- ³⁸ Dennis Merrill, “The Truman Doctrine: Containing Communism and Modernity,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 36, no. 1 (February 8, 2006), 27-37.
- ³⁹ *Overview of the Korean War*, Army Historical Series: American Military History, (Center of Military History, 1989).
- ⁴⁰ Victor D. Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future* (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 2013), 29.

⁴¹ Roger G. Miller, *To Save a City: The Berlin Airlift, 1948 -1949* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 29.

⁴² Miller, 109.

⁴³ Judt, 432-433.

⁴⁴ Kaplan, 57.

⁴⁵ Kaplan, 58.

⁴⁶ Kaplan, 58.

⁴⁷ Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals' War* (Boston, MA.: Little, Brown & Co, 1995), 32-33.

⁴⁸ Kaplan, 110.

⁴⁹ Gordon and Trainor, 185.

⁵⁰ Benjamin S. Lambeth, *NATO's AirWar for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Publishing, 2001). 14.

⁵¹ Lambeth, 12.

⁵² Lambeth, 26.

⁵³ Genron NPO and East Asia Institute. "The 4th Japan-South Korea Joint Public Opinion Poll (2016) Analysis Report on Comparative Data." *Genron NPO and East Asia Institute* (July 2016), 28.

⁵⁴ The White House, *National Security Strategy*, December 2017, 4.

⁵⁵ NSS, 2017, 46

⁵⁶ Michael J. Green and Bates Gill, *Asia's New Multilateralism: Cooperation, Competition, and the Search for Community* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2009) 175.

⁵⁷ Cha, *Powerplay*, 7.

PART II:
ADVERSARIES' PERCEPTIONS
OF
STRATEGIC STABILITY

CHAPTER 7

Iranian Perspectives of Strategic Stability and Their Nuclear Program Decision Making

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“If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the results of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.” – Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

Iranian views of strategic stability have changed over time. Two distinct periods are pre- and post-Iranian Revolution, identified respectively as during the Shah of Iran’s regime and after the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. There are a myriad of factors that influence Iranian views of their strategic stability. This paper examines Iranian strategic stability from an *Iranian* perspective. Furthermore, the central research question is: What does Iranian nuclear program decisions say about their perspectives on strategic stability?

A qualitative approach is used to argue that Iranian national interest concerns influence their nuclear program decision-making. Kayhan Barzegar, former Harvard research fellow and director of the Center for Middle East Strategic Studies in Tehran, characterized strategic stability under the Shah of Iran’s regime as being defined “within comprehensive economic, political, and military proximity with the Western bloc and its regional allies.” Additionally, Barzegar contends that “during the Islamic Republic, that [earlier] strategy reversed and making a distance from the West and reliance on independent national relations have become significant.”¹ According to Barzegar, Iran’s views on its strategic stability are shaped by its understanding of strategic stability in the region. It is in this context that “strategic issues in Iran’s foreign policy such as establishing political coalitions, adopting deterrence policies, arms control and rivalry, cultural, economic, and energy integration policies, and even the advancement of the country’s nuclear activities have been formed.”² As it relates to Iran’s nuclear program, much debate has been made regarding the true intentions of their program. Iran contends that its nuclear program is for peaceful and/or civil purposes and points to its need to be less reliant on fossil fuels to supply its energy needs. The United States and others in the international community have concerns and contend that Iran is building the capability to develop and eventually obtain a nuclear weapon. It is this fundamental disagreement that drives United States foreign policy with regard to Iran.

With regards to the Iranian nuclear program, in the book *Living on the Edge: Iran and the Practice of Nuclear Hedging*, author Wyn Bowen brings up the question of whether or not Iran is using a strategy of nuclear hedging to advance its nuclear program in an effort to move closer to nuclear weapons capability.³ The book provides a relatively objective perspective regarding the Iranian nuclear issue from the discovery of undeclared Iranian nuclear facilities in 2002 through the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

(JCPOA) by Iran and the P5+1 in 2015. The book is relevant in discussions of Iranian strategic stability in how it connects Iranian pursuit of “peacefully nuclear energy” to less reliance on outside nation states. A key concept identified in the book is the desire for Iran to operate as a sovereign (i.e. autonomous) nation with little to no outside influence. It is my assertion that Iranian concerns regarding their national interest influence their nuclear program decision making and overall strategic stability. Iranian national interests/concerns that influence Iranian strategic stability are 1) strategic security (i.e. threats from external actors), 2) autonomy (i.e. maintaining the existing leadership and system of governance), and 3) economic security. One area this paper will particularly address is Iran’s nuclear program decision making as it relates to the JCPOA. The overarching factors of strategic security, autonomy, and economic security will address the question: “What does Iranian nuclear program decision making say about their perspectives on strategic stability?” My thesis is that Iranian national interest concerns influence their nuclear program decision-making.

Iranian Strategic Stability

The mere definition of strategic stability has in itself presented a challenge. As such, it is appropriate for this discussion of Iranian strategic stability to take a broader look at how strategic stability is defined. “There is no consensus on the definition of strategic stability nor is there common understanding of what it comprises; it is also reasonable to assume that there probably never will be.”⁴ Vijay Shankar, former Commander-in-Chief, Strategic Forces Command of India, published a rather insightful article in the *Strategist*, titled “What is Strategic Stability?”⁵ In the article, Shankar compared and contrasted the traditional view of strategic stability (i.e., the Cold War paradigm) with a new “Alternative Characterization.” It is the latter definition that is best suited for describing Iranian perceptions of their strategic stability. “For the Cold Warriors, strategic stability was a military rationale. It was all about surviving a first nuclear strike and then credibly being able to respond with a massive retaliatory nuclear strike.”⁶

Applying the Alternative Characterization of strategic stability as defined below gets at the true nature of what is Iranian strategic stability and how is it defined.

Therefore, it is not in the Cold War paradigm – which sought strategic stability in parity of nuclear arsenals in terms of capabilities, numbers, conceptual permissiveness of limited nuclear war fighting and conformity of intent – that one can find understanding of strategic stability. Neither can pure military analysis of inter-state relations provide comprehension of what makes for strategic stability. An alternative characterization perhaps lies in a holistic inquiry into the matter where the parts determine, and in varying degrees, influence the whole. Following this thread, nine determinants of strategic stability may be identified. These include: civilizational memory, recent history, geographical context, political proclivity, social structures, economic interests, religious orthodoxy, technological prowess, leadership and military power. The real question to now answer is what manner, proportion and to what intensity do these determinants influence inter-state relations?⁷

As Shankar stated, “the real question to now answer is what manner, proportion and to what intensity do these determinants influence inter-state relations? A report in these

terms would offer an insight into strategic stability; this conceivably provides a more sophisticated approach to the matter.”⁸

To understand Iranian perspectives on strategic stability is to understand Iranian history because Iranian interpretations of strategic stability are not formed in a vacuum. In fact, Iranian views of strategic stability are shaped by a number of factors to include internal, external, and historical dynamics. The Iranian perspective of national greatness traces its roots to the Persian Empire founded under Cyrus the Great in the 6th century B.C.⁹ Iran’s decline in relative power and frequent interventions by the great powers over the past two centuries have instilled elements of insecurity, resentment, and distrust toward the West and Russia.¹⁰ These feelings of insecurity, resentments, and distrust toward the West and Russia invigorate the desire to both achieve and maintain autonomy. Relative to the sense of national greatness, Iranians also perceive a right of regional hegemony. The Iranian people desire to return to an era of greatness, similar to that of the Persian Empire. Iran sees itself as the rightful leaders of the Middle East and desire recognition as a significant global player.

Iranian national interests run parallel with views and/or perceptions of their own strategic stability. Iran seeks to ensure its national security by way of protecting itself from external attacks. Iran also seeks to maintain its government and leadership. “Iran is a fundamentally defensive state. It is principally concerned with its own stability and regime survival, and its main strategic goals are to mitigate its relative isolation while deterring potential attack from multiple regional adversaries.”¹¹ Underpinning the Iranian desire to 1) protect itself (i.e. strategic security) and 2) maintain its leadership and system of governance (i.e. autonomy) is the need to 3) ensure internal stability with a vibrant economy (i.e. economic security). These are the three primary national interest concerns of the Iranians. The essence of Iranian strategic stability is defined by ensuring these national interests concerns are satisfied. In the next three sections, I will take a look at these national interest concerns as components of Iranian strategic stability and demonstrate how they influence Iranian nuclear program decision making.

Iranian Strategic Security

A critical component of Iranian strategic stability is the ability to defend itself from external threats. The ability to defend against external threats is strategic security. Real and/or perceived external threats have led Iran to pursue military capabilities to deter aggression. To the extent that these threats are real, having a nuclear deterrence capability appears to be a rational course of action. Iran sees external threats emanating from countries in the Middle East as well as the United States. With regard to the United States, these threats are not merely perceived. In an interview with the *New York Times* after a historic nuclear deal was concluded with Iran, President Barack Obama stated, “Even with your adversaries, I do think that you have to have the capacity to put yourself occasionally in their shoes, and if you look at Iranian history, the fact is that we had some involvement with overthrowing a democratically elected regime in Iran.” In his interview, President Obama was referring to the 1953 CIA coup that overthrew Mohammad Mosaddegh, a secular democratic leader who nationalized Iran’s oil industry. “We have in the past supported Saddam Hussein when we know he used chemical weapons in the war between Iran and Iraq, and so, as a consequence, they have their own security concerns, their own narrative.” The Reagan administration re-established diplomatic relations with the Iraqi

dictator in the 1980s, providing intelligence that facilitated Iraq's invasion of Iran. This part of the historical record is rarely brought up in the United States domestic discourse on Iran and the Middle East.¹²

The recent security alliance between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates has also heightened Iran's concerns relative to Saudi Arabia. "An alliance between Saudi Arabia under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the United Arab Emirates under Crown Prince Mohammad bin Zayed is seen as multiplying the threat. Riyadh and Abu Dhabi share hawkish views on Iran's role in the region."¹³ Additionally, Israel has declared that Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon, indicating that Israel would take whatever steps are necessary to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

The Iranian ballistic missile program, much like the Iranian nuclear program, has also been of much debate. In recent years, Iran has invested in the development of its ballistic missiles, focusing more so on accuracy than range. Some point to this move as signaling a concern of threats from regional states/actors. Recently, the United States has mentioned setting additional conditions in the JCPOA regarding Iran's ballistic missile program and Iran's presence in the region. Senior foreign policy adviser to the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ali Akbar Velayati, in comments he provided to Iranian media on Oct. 17, 2017, stated: "To say that they accept the JCPOA but should negotiate on Iran's regional presence or talk about Iran's missile defenses is to set conditions on the JCPOA, and this is not at all acceptable."¹⁴ The Iranians see criticism of their ballistic missile program as illegitimate and see their ballistic missile program as a critical deterrent against regional states such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Iran also perceives the United States' massive military arms sales to Saudi Arabia as undermining Iranian strategic security.¹⁵

As it relates to its nuclear program's ability to transition to a nuclear weapons program, Iran has been accused of engaging in a long and deliberate strategy of nuclear hedging. So is Iran using a strategy of nuclear hedging to advance its nuclear program in an effort to move closer to nuclear weapons capability? There is much debate around this question. I would contend that Iran has developed a certain level of nuclear deterrence in its ability to reach a nuclear weapons capability threshold. In other words, there is nuclear deterrence value in just being "close" to developing a nuclear weapon. Iran's signing of the JCPOA signaled which national interest was most important at the time. Clearly allowing for more transparency and confidence building measures around the Iranian nuclear program was worth having international economic sanctions lifted.

Iranian Autonomy

Iranian autonomy refers, in part, to the ability to maintain the Iranian leadership and system of governance. For other countries, this can be viewed as the desire to prevent regime change. Iranian autonomy also alludes to the desire to operate in a sovereign manner. To conduct internal affairs free of outside influence and pressure. Given the national greatness perceived by the Iranians, they see it as Iran's right to serve as the regional leader in the Middle East.

Iran's pursuit of regional hegemony began under the Shah, prior to the Islamic Revolution, when Iran was seen as the "keeper of the Gulf."¹⁶ Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has indicated in speeches, press releases, and even social media his disdain for United States attacks on Iranian autonomy. Social media outlets such as

Twitter have become a preferred method of promoting his ideology. For example, on December 27, 2017, Khamenei released the following Twitter messages meant to highlight United States domestic and foreign policy:



Khamenei.ir @khamenei_ir · 27 Dec 2017

Reagan was both wiser and more powerful than Trump. They took measures against Iran: they shot down one of our passenger aircrafts. But where is Reagan, and how powerful is the Islamic Republic now?



Khamenei.ir @khamenei_ir · 27 Dec 2017

The U.S. gov. commits oppression inside the U.S., too. U.S. police murder black women, men, & children for no justifiable reason, and the murderers are acquitted in U.S. courts. This is their judicial system! And they slam other countries' and our country's judicial system. #BLM



Khamenei.ir @khamenei_ir · 27 Dec 2017

Our main enemy—the U.S. regime—leads the most corrupt and oppressive govt. According to news we've received, they're still supporting ISIS and the like. They support the Saudi tyrannical ruling family in their crimes against #Yemen, & support Zionist atrocities in #Palestine.

These messages by Khamenei are indicative of the deep and long lasting distrust many Iranians have regarding the United States. The United States' involvement in overthrowing the regime of Prime Minister Muhammad Mussadeq, and its support of the Shah, serves as one source of contention between Iran and the United States.¹⁷ Iran continues to have concerns about United States attempt to bring about regime change, as it did in Iraq and Afghanistan. Iran perceives United States policies as an attack on Iranian autonomy and therefore remain resistant and suspicious of United States foreign policy relative to Iran and the Middle East.

Iranian Economic Security

Iranian economic security as a component of its overall strategic stability has evolved over time. Iran's security policy is often described as a blend of Islamic and nationalist objectives. These factors, however, have carried less weight in recent years than have more standard political considerations. Geopolitics has reasserted its importance, and economics has grown from a foreign policy irrelevance to a leading factor. Preserving regional stability and improving Iran's economy has forced the clerical regime to cultivate neighboring governments, even at the expense of revolutionary principles. As a result of this shift, Iran often favors far more cautious policies than its Islamic and nationalist ethos might otherwise dictate.¹⁸

While the P5+1 states, consisting of China, Russia, France, United States, United Kingdom, and Germany, may have viewed the JCPOA as a “nuclear” deal, for Iran it was an “economic” deal. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who presided over the JCPOA, presented the JCPOA to the Iranian people as an agreement that would usher in a new age

of economic prosperity for Iran. While the signing of the JCPOA and lifting of United Nations sanctions has created jobs due to investments by western companies such as Boeing, these gains were counterbalanced by decreases in the global oil prices, which caused less than expected revenues for Iranian oil. In 2016, Iranian gross domestic product (GDP) growth was 4.5 percent, recovering to 2014 levels after it plummeted to 0.4 percent in 2015. Before President Rouhani took office, 15.5 percent of the country was unemployed. When sanctions peaked between 2011 and 2014, Iranians saw their incomes drop by more than 20 percent, to just over \$5,300 on average. At one point, the Iranian rial fell by up to 80 percent, the price of basic goods skyrocketed and the economy suffered a period of hyperinflation.¹⁹ Sanctions cost Tehran about \$50 billion in lost revenue each year. The importance of economic security overrode the desire for advancements in the Iranian nuclear program, which led to Iran seeing the advantages of signing the JCPOA.

So what does strategic stability look like for Iran? While Iranian national interests and concerns inform their view/perception of strategic stability, what strategic stability looks like from an Iranian perspective is Israel, Saudi Arabia, United States, and other hostile powers being held at bay. Iranian acceptance and compliance with the JCPOA, as a result of their nuclear program decision making, keeps those hostile powers at bay because clear Iranian compliance garners United Nations and international support.

Iranian Nuclear Program Decision Making

Iran's nuclear program was intended to increase Iranian national pride and unite the population behind the regime.²⁰ Iranian national interest concerns influence their nuclear program decision making. Iranian nuclear program decision making is shaped by their desire to support the three national interest of 1) strategic security (i.e. threats from external actors), 2) autonomy (i.e. maintaining the existing leadership and system of governance), and 3) economic security. Additionally, Iranian national security concerns can be determined by examining their National Security Strategy and sources of foreign policy (see table 2.1).²¹

Table 2.1
Drivers of Iran's Foreign Policy Compared

Selected Issue	Revolutionary Islam	Geopolitics	Nationalism	Ethnicity	Economics	Actual Policy
Defense spending level	—	Low	High	—	Low	Low
Ties to revolutionary movements	Strong ties to Muslim groups, particularly Shi'a	Ties to groups in key states, such as Iraq	Ties to groups in the Gulf region, Central Asia, and other historical areas of interest	Reject most ties; strong ties to governments	Reject most ties that might hinder trade or stability	Cautious ties to various religious groups; decline in support in recent years
Relations with the Gulf states	Competition and rejection of legitimacy	Attempt to decrease U.S. influence	Seek recognition of Iran's leadership	Avoid policies that might anger Arab Iranians	Seek close ties to gain goodwill of West, improve oil cooperation	Steady rapprochement
Relations with Central Asia and the Caucasus	Support for religious groups	Balance Azerbaijan (and Turkey) with Armenia	Seek influence in Tajikistan, other Persian areas	Strong ties to governments to prevent irredentism	Pursue close economic ties	Pursue economic ties; good relations with regional governments
Relations with the United States	Reject ties	Recognize U.S. power; avoid confrontation; minimize U.S. influence	Reject ties, particularly if perceived as subordinate	—	Seek good relations with Washington	Continued resistance to normalization

Iran's National Security Strategy outlines six key areas of concern: 1) acceptance and recognition of the Islamic revolution and the Islamic regime, 2) guarantees for Iran's territorial integrity and security, 3) extraction of Iran's natural resources and conversion to economic welfare, 4) "regional hegemony" in the sense of influence and veto rights over occurrences in Iran's near environment and in the "heart of the Middle East" (Syria, Lebanon, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, etc.), 5) recognition of its leading international status, and 6) leadership of the Islamic camp.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action of July 14, 2015, between the Iran and the P5+1 states, consisting of China, Russia, France, United States, United Kingdom, and Germany, was a landmark nuclear deal to address concern regarding Iran's nuclear program. A fully implemented JCPOA would, "ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme," and "reaffirms that under no circumstances will Iran ever seek, develop or acquire any nuclear weapons" and "will produce the comprehensive lifting of all United Nations Security Council sanctions as well as multilateral and national sanctions related to Iran's nuclear program, including steps on access in areas of trade, technology, finance and energy."²² While the P5+1 may have perceived the JCPOA as a "nuclear" deal, I would contend that Iran saw the JCPOA as an "economic" deal. From a purely Iranian perspective, the JCPOA affords Iran the opportunity to provide transparency regarding its nuclear program. Through the JCPOA, the Iranians are able to prove to the international community that their nuclear program is for peaceful purposes in keeping with both scientific and economic justifications. As previously mentioned the JCPOA was primarily an economic deal for the Iranians. Iranian acceptance and compliance with the JCPOA

would allow for the lifting of several United Nations sanctions aimed at the Iranian economy.

The sanctions lifted by the JCPOA not only addressed the United Nations sanctions but also multilateral, bilateral, and national sanctions targeted at Iran's nuclear program, trade, technology sector, financial institutions, and energy related industry. The P5+1 envisioned that the JCPOA would allow for more transparency regarding Iran's nuclear program and allow the P5+1 countries to gain confidence in Iranian assertion that their nuclear program was exclusively for peaceful purposes. The JCPOA reflects "mutually determined parameters, consistent with practical needs, with agreed limits on the scope of Iran's nuclear program, including enrichment activities and research & development. The JCPOA addresses the P5+1 security concerns by way of comprehensive measures providing for transparency and verification.²³ One of the transparency measures addressed in the JCPOA is a measure to include a long-term International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) presence in Iran. The JCPOA calls for 25 years of monitoring and verifications of uranium ore concentrate produced by Iran from all of its uranium ore concentrate plants/facilities. Additionally, the JCPOA calls for 20 years of containment and surveillance of centrifuge rotors and bellows. The JCPOA also has provisions and measures for the use of IAEA approved and certified modern technologies including on-line enrichment measurement and electronic seals.

Iran's acceptance and compliance with the JCPOA demonstrates how Iran measures its strategic stability. Both the strength of the Iranian military and the strength of the Iranian economy are important components of Iranian strategic stability. However, Iranian nuclear program decision making insofar as acceptance and compliance with the JCPOA clearly demonstrates the importance economic relief is regarding overall Iranian strategic stability.

United States and Iran Relations

There are a number of factors, both internal and external, that influence Iran's perspective of its strategic stability. Outside factors include historical relations with foreign powers such as the United States and European countries. As it relates to Iranian strategic stability, this section will focus primarily on United States and Iranian relations because the United States has remained the most dominant and influential global power since the end of the World War II. Currently the United States maintains a strained "diplomatic" relationship with Iran. This strained relationship has not always been the case. The United States first established diplomatic relations with Iran in 1850. Diplomatic relations between the United States and Iran ended in 1980 as a result of the Iranian hostage incident. No formal diplomatic relations currently exist between the United States and Iran. However, contacts are carried out through the Iranian Interests Section of the Pakistani Embassy in Washington, D.C. and the U.S. Interests Section of the Swiss Embassy in Tehran.

Prior to the 1979 Iranian revolution and the 1979-81 Iranian hostage incident, Iran was a critical ally of the United States. In fact, the United States maintained a long and productive relationship with Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran. Additionally, the United States supported the coup against Iran's Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953 and aided in the re-installment of the Shah of Iran soon thereafter. United States economic interest in Iranian oil appears to have driven its interest in both Iran and the broader Middle East. The United States engaged in quid pro quo

foreign policy with Iran. With U.S. assistance, Mohammad Reza carried out a national development program, called the White Revolution. This included construction of expanded road, rail, and air networks, a number of dam and irrigation projects, the eradication of diseases such as malaria, the encouragement and support of industrial growth, and land reform. He also established a literacy corps and a health corps for the large, but isolated rural population.²⁴

During the Cold War, Iran served as a strategic ally of the United States. Iran benefited from this relationship through an influx of United States funding and assistance. In exchange, United States investments in Iran solidified continued access to Iranian oil. Iran and the United States enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship until the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Dissatisfaction of the government and specifically the Shah led to the Iranian Revolution. The Shah was overthrown and the religious leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini captured power, openly criticizing the United States as the “Great Satan.”²⁵ The Iranian Hostage incident caused an end to diplomatic relations and the United States froze billions of dollars of Iranian assets in the United States.

Supported by the United States in 1980, Saddam Hussein launched a war against Iran and started the Iran-Iraq War. It lasted for eight years at the cost of more than a million lives. In 1986, the United States found itself in the middle of controversy as a result of the Iran-Contra affair when it was discovered that the United States was selling weapons to Iran to support a covert war in Central America. The United States and Iranian relationship continued to remain contentious throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The Iranians mined the Persian Gulf, the United States attacked Iranian oil installations, and the United States downed an Iranian civilian passenger jet, killing 290 people.

During the 1990s, Iran was the constant target of United States accusations of being a state sponsor of terrorism due to its support of Hezbollah. An attack on the Israeli Embassy and a Jewish community center in Argentina were blamed on Hezbollah and Iran indirectly. In 1995, the United States placed additional economic sanctions on Iran. The 2000s brought about the discovery of undeclared Iranian nuclear facilities in 2002. The United States served as a lightning rod to bring about international action against Iran’s nuclear program. United Nations resolutions and sanctions between 2006 and 2008 called for an end of Iranian uranium enrichment. Additional United Nations sanctions were imposed upon Iran in an effort to target Iranian oil exports. The economic sanctions served to stir up internal discontent and paved the way for Iranian nuclear program discussions.

Changes in American and Iranian leadership opened the door for a nuclear deal. A 2013 call between United States President Barack Obama and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani marked the first exchange in over three decades between top leadership of the United States and Iran. The exchange would serve as the beginning of a dialogue that would eventually lead to the Iranian nuclear deal formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

U.S. National Security Concerns

The United States has long valued the concepts of international security and stability. These values are codified in the National Security Strategy that shapes our foreign policy. The United States National Security Strategy serves as the overarching document that guides our country's priorities, vision, and direction. United States national security concerns relative to Iran are identified in the current National Security Strategy released on December 18, 2017. The National Security Strategy calls out Iran no less than 17 separate times and specifically states the need to "work with partners to deny the Iranian regime all paths to a nuclear weapon and neutralize Iranian malign influence."

The National Security Strategy states that the "United States seeks a Middle East that is not a safe haven or breeding ground for jihadist terrorists, not dominated by any power hostile to the United States, and that contributes to a stable global energy market." As it relates to the Middle East and Iran, the National Security Strategy goes on to state that "for years, the interconnected problems of Iranian expansion, state collapse, jihadist ideology, socio-economic stagnation, and regional rivalries have convulsed the Middle East."²⁶ The current strategy goes on to further describe the current Iranian government as a dictatorship that is at odds with the CIA assessment that categorizes Iran's government as a theocratic republic.²⁷ A theocratic republic, such as the Islamic Republic of Iran, has components of a theocracy and a republic. Iran has a supreme religious leader and it has representative democracy. Iran in fact, as the CIA correctly assessed, is not a dictatorship. According to the CIA, a dictatorship is a form of government in which a ruler or small clique wield absolute power (not restricted by a constitution or laws).²⁸ Words matter and so do facts. The National Security Strategy addresses threats both real and perceived. The National Security Strategy identifies Iran as a "rogue state," a "dictatorship," its efforts at regional hegemony as "destabilizing," and as state sponsors of terrorism.²⁹

The United States, as articulated in its National Security Strategy, views Iran as a ballistic missile threat and priorities enhanced missile defense for a layered missile defense system focused on North Korea and Iran to defend the homeland against missile attacks.³⁰ The United States has identified its national security concerns regarding Iran as follows: "The Iranian regime sponsors terrorism around the world. It is developing more capable ballistic missiles and has the potential to resume its work on nuclear weapons that could threaten the United States and our partners."

The objectives laid out in the U.S. National Security Strategy are at odds with those of Iran's national interests and the objectives identified in Iran's National Security Strategy. Acceptance and recognition of the Islamic revolution and the Islamic regime, is not provided by the United States. In fact, as mentioned previously, the United States refers to Iran as a dictatorship in its latest National Security Strategy. Iranian aspirations for regional hegemony and recognition of its leading international status are characterized as "destabilizing." A basic lack of an understanding of adversarial perspectives will lead to continued diplomatic stalemates between the United States and Iran.

Recommendations

I offer two concepts to consider (CTCs) as they relate to the following recommendations. The first CTC is: "Understanding Iranian strategic stability concerns will enable the United States to address national security concerns related to Middle East

regional stability.” The second CTC is: “Concerted diplomatic efforts by the United States will lead to improved relations with Iran.”

Implement a whole-of-government approach

United States strategy that relies disproportionately on the military instrument of power has often led to a failure to meet desired political end states. Consideration of the political environment led Carl von Clausewitz to generate his famous second definition of war as “merely the continuation of policy by other means.”³¹ Since war is a continuation of politics, it would be prudent to ensure that all efforts are focused on meeting the political end states. However, a nation does not have to go to war to meet its political end states or more specifically put, a nation need not only utilize its military to meet political end states.

Often the best way to achieve the desired political end state is employing a whole-of-government approach. The whole-of-government approach is defined as using all the instruments of power, expressed as DIMEFIL for diplomatic, information, military, economic, financial, intelligence, and law enforcement, to respond to a strategic challenge. The reason for introducing the whole-of-government concept was to reflect the reality that military power alone cannot solve our national security problems.³² During the Cold War, due to economic, diplomatic, and military power, the United States and the Soviet Union were the two global superpowers. Today, given the United States global power in the economic, diplomatic, and military spheres of influence, one could argue that it holds hegemony in the global environment.

Increase diplomatic engagements

Hegemony is one state holding a preponderance of power in the international system, allowing it to single-handedly dominate the rules and arrangements by which international political and economic relations are conducted.³³ As the saying goes, if you want to know what someone’s priorities are then take a look at where they spend their money. The United States spends more on its military than the next eight countries combined including China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, India, France, United Kingdom, Japan, and Germany.³⁴ United States defense spending in 2016 was \$611 billion versus \$595 billion for the next eight countries, of which five of the eight are allies of the United States. The overemphasis of the military to address political end states is symptomatic of a larger issue of misaligning national instruments of power. Evidence of this overemphasis can be seen in recent efforts to reprioritize government spending to “revitalize” the military. The State Department, the United States led for diplomatic engagements and foreign policy, recently suffered budgetary cuts apparently in an effort to further increase military spending.³⁵ The overreliance of the military instrument of power has created a diplomacy deficit.

Conclusion

This paper has asserted that “Iranian concerns regarding their national interest influence their nuclear program decision making and overall strategic stability.” These national interests that influence Iranian strategic stability are: 1) threats from external actors (i.e. strategic security), 2) maintaining the existing leadership and system of governance (i.e. autonomy), and 3) economic security. A clear demonstration of Iran’s

nuclear program decision making in action was its acceptance of the JCPOA. Iran sees the JCPOA as a way of addressing its need to ensure its national interest of “economic security” is met. The lifting of the United Nations sanctions provides Iran the space it needs to grow its economy. Of course, there are those that contend that Iran’s acceptance and compliance with the JCPOA is simply a part of its grand strategy of nuclear hedging. In effect, Iran would simply be buying itself time to advance its nuclear program closer to a nuclear weapons capability.

Critics of the JCPOA and proponents of Iran executing a nuclear hedging strategy assert that: “Iran will be a nuclear-weapons threshold state operating more than 5,000 centrifuges, with more than 14,000 additional ones at hand but deactivated – assuming the July 14, 2015, accord is implemented and survives its infancy. It will be openly engaged in research and development on advanced centrifuges. Its heavy water reactor and its underground second enrichment facility will both be modified, but otherwise intact and in use. Iran will have successfully defied multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions by refusing to suspend uranium enrichment, to dismantle illicitly built nuclear infrastructure, and to make a full declaration regarding its past clandestine nuclear activities or fully address IAEA inquiries about them.”³⁶

While these concerns are certainly valid, the fact still remains that Iran makes calculated decisions regarding its nuclear program based on a cost-benefit analysis of other national interests. As it relates to nuclear program decision making and the JCPOA, Iran has signaled that the national interest of economic security outweighed considerations relative to the advancement of their nuclear program.

U.S. military power is not enough to provide the enduring peace, stability, and influence that political end states often demand. The relationship between ends and means is critical in determining a nation’s success or failure in meeting its political end states. United States strategy that relies disproportionately on the military instrument of power has often times led to a failure to meet desired political end states.

Colin S. Gray, in *Why Strategy is Difficult*, summed this assertion up best when he stated: “First, strategy is neither policy nor armed combat; rather it is the bridge between them. The strategist can be thwarted if the military wages the wrong war well or the right war badly. Neither experts in politics and policymaking nor experts in fighting need necessarily be experts in strategy. The strategist must relate military power (strategic effect) to the goals of policy.”³⁷ Employing a whole-of-government approach that includes the diplomatic, information, military, economic, financial, intelligence, and law enforcement instruments of national power will serve the United States best in addressing national security and strategic challenges. Failure to employ a whole-of-government approach is why despite overwhelming military power, the United States has sometimes struggled to achieve its political objectives.

According to the Central Intelligence Agency,³⁸ a common assessment error is falling into the trap of mirror imaging. An example of the failure/consequence of mirror imaging can be found in a report completed by the Congressional Research Service³⁹ where Admiral David E. Jeremiah addressed the failure to predict the Indian nuclear test in May 1998. Many in the intelligence community pointed to mirror imaging as a major factor in the failure to predict the Indian nuclear test. A concept closely related to mirror imaging is the rational actor hypothesis, which attributes rational behavior to one group according to the definitions derived from one’s own culture. Mirror imaging and the rational actor

hypothesis are frequent and dangerous assumptions because other countries in fact do not always behave and react in the same manner as the United States. The United States should guard itself against mirror imaging. Any deterrence strategies must be mindful of mirror imaging because in deterrence the adversary gets a vote. Therefore, U.S. strategies must be derived from adversarial perspectives and what they fear and value.⁴⁰

Notes

¹ Kayhan Barzegar, “A Nuclear Deal Could Change Iran’s Understanding of ‘Strategic Stability’ in the Region,” *Iran Review*, April 3, 2015, www.iranreview.org/content/Document/A-Nuclear-Deal-Could-Change-Iran-s-Understanding-of-Strategic-Stability-in-the-Region.htm.

² Ibid.

³ Wyn Bowen, Matthew Moran and Dina Esfandiary. *Living on the Edge: Iran and the Practice of Nuclear Hedging* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

⁴ Vijay Shankar, “What is Strategic Stability,” *The Strategist*, October 12, 2015.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. There is no consensus on the definition of strategic stability nor is there common understanding of what it comprises; it is also reasonable to assume that there probably never will be. Yet, the awkward irony is that nations of every predilection individually clamor for strategic stability and therefore rises the need for determining its significance. For the Cold Warriors, strategic stability was a military rationale. It was all about surviving a first nuclear strike and then credibly being able to respond with a massive retaliatory nuclear strike. Moony mirrored rationality, mutually assured destruction and a willingness to fight limited nuclear wars (as if control over the escalatory ladder existed!) were of the essence. However, as history so starkly illustrated, such an approach catalyzed great instability at the regional level and if the regional players were themselves nuclear weapon states then stability persistently teetered on the brink.

⁷ Ibid. So, it is not in the Cold War paradigm – which sought strategic stability in parity of nuclear arsenals in terms of capabilities, numbers, conceptual permissiveness of limited nuclear war fighting and conformity of intent – that one can find understanding of strategic stability. Neither can pure military analysis of inter-state relations provide comprehension of what makes for strategic stability. An alternative characterization perhaps lies in a holistic inquiry into the matter where the parts determine, and in varying degrees, influence the whole. Following this thread, nine determinants of strategic stability may be identified, these include: civilizational memory, recent history, geographical context, political proclivity, social structures, economic interests, religious orthodoxy, technological prowess, leadership and military power. The real question to answer now is what manner, proportion and to what intensity do these determinants influence inter-state relations? A report in these terms would offer an insight into strategic stability; this conceivably provides a more sophisticated approach to the matter. Intuitively, the absence of strategic stability is perceived as a proneness to friction and conflict between states.

⁸ Ibid. The Cold War Paradigm.

⁹ Steven R. Ward, *Immortal: A Military History of Iran and Its Armed Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2009).

¹⁰ Matthew J. McInnis, *Iran’s Strategic Thinking: Origins and Evolution*, American Enterprise Institute, May 2015.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Eldar Mamedov, “Europe and Iran’s Threat Perception,” lobelog.com/europe-and-irans-threat-perception/

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- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Thomas Buonomo, "U.S., Iran Need to Engage in Substantive Negotiations on Regional Issues," <http://lobelog.com/u-s-iran-need-to-engage-in-substantive-negotiations-on-regional-issues/>
- ¹⁵ Eldar Mamedov, "Europe and Iran's Threat Perception."
- ¹⁶ Ephraim Kam, "From Terror to Nuclear Power: the Meaning of the Iranian Threat," (Tel Aviv: INSS, 2004), 31-33.
- ¹⁷ Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*, Jerusalem: Carmel, 2005.
- ¹⁸ Daniel Byman, et al., *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2001).
- ¹⁹ Tamara Qiblawi, "A beginner's guide to Iran's presidential election," www.cnn.com/2017/05/16/middleeast/iran-election-beginners-guide/index.html.
- ²⁰ Shahram Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment, 2006), 26
- ²¹ Daniel Byman, et al., *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era*.
- ²² United States Department of State, "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action," dated July 14, 2015
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica, 2017, www.britannica.com/biography/Mohammad-Reza-Shah-Pahlavi
- ²⁵ Hamid Dabashi, "Who is the Great Satan?" *Aljazeera*, www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/09/great-satan-150920072643884.html
- ²⁶ The White House, *National Security Strategy*, 2017.
- ²⁷ CIA World Factbook, www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ White House, *National Security Strategy*, 2017.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Alan Beyerchen, "Clausewitz, Nonlinearity and the Unpredictability of War," *International Security*, vol. 17, no. 3 (Winter 1992), 68.
- ³² Jeffrey W. Meiser, "Are Our Strategic Models Flawed?" *Parameters*, vol. 46, no. 4 (Winter, 2016-17), 84.
- ³³ Joshua S. Goldstein and Jon C. Pevehouse, *International Relations: 10th Edition* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson, 2013), 49
- ³⁴ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI Military Expenditures Database, April 2017
- ³⁵ Dan Merica, "Trump's 'hard power budget' increases defense spending, cuts to State Dept, EPA", *CNN*, March 16, 2017

³⁶ Michael Singh, “Addressing Threats to National Security: Iran,” John Hay Institute, Jan. 18, 2016

³⁷ Colin S. Gray, “Why Strategy is Difficult,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* (Fort McNair, DC: NDU, 1999) 9

³⁸ Congressional Research Service Report, “U.S. Intelligence and India’s Nuclear Test: Lessons Learned,” June 2, 1998

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Memorandum, Headquarters, Air Force Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration, subject: “Air War College Call for Research Topics,” 2017

CHAPTER 8

Nuclear Ballistic Missile Submarines and Chinese Strategic Objectives

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China is a rising power on the global stage. It can be argued that the Chinese have already achieved regional hegemony with their current combination of diplomatic influence, economic and military power in the region. Given the steady ascension of China's global power as a nation, it is important to examine, not just how the United States views them as an adversary, but how the Chinese themselves view their strategic objectives.

The goal of this paper is to use China's nuclear weapons program as a mechanism to further understand what the Chinese view of strategic stability looks like. The specific focus of this research paper is to examine China's development of nuclear ballistic missile submarines, and what that says about its view of strategic stability. In current U.S. policy, as well as many articles on the subject, China is frequently painted as an adversary with global objectives. Global force projection is one of the primary assumed goals of China by many who write on the subject. I argue that China's regional concerns are their primary concern, not global force projection. For the purposes of this paper, "global force projection" refers to military hard power projection to include displays of military power abroad, engaging in military conflicts, and stationing military assets away from sovereign territories. Traditionally accepted forms of soft power, to include humanitarian responses, and protection or evacuation of sovereign assets do not fall under the scope of "force projection" within the confines of this paper.

Despite significant economic connectedness between the two nations, the United States defines China as an adversary. In fact, the U.S. adversarial tone concerning China has increased, as evidenced by the increased focus on China (and Russia) between the last National Security Strategy (NSS) and the 2017 version. The 2017 NSS emphasized this view, stating: "China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity."¹ This shift to a more adversarial tone is due to several factors.

First, recent territorial disputes in the South China Sea are causing significant friction between China and the United States and directly threatening the sovereignty of U.S. allies in the region. With China continuing to assert influence in the form of island building and military presence in the South China Sea, the United States and the international community see this as a direct threat to critical, and massive, open international trade routes in the area. Also, China continues to modernize its military, across the board. Developments in conventional and nuclear capabilities are steadily improving and increasing, causing significant American concern for what their national objectives may be. China's international economic influence has increased significantly, and steadily, as well. The 2017 NSS points to Chinese regional economic influence as

destabilizing, and not mutually beneficial, to nations in the region. The United States is concerned, primarily, with losing comparatively recent historical advantages in global economic and military power.²

China may not be the adversary the United States thinks it is. Attempts to paint China's military advances, and changes in nuclear posture, as an aggressive march towards global dominance, ignore the security dilemmas that China faces in its own backyard. China's primary concern is to further enable its regional security and stability, not project power on a global scale. With this in mind, U.S. policy makers must ensure that they are properly leveraging diplomatic actions, and military assets, in order to achieve strategic stability with China. This article seeks to examine China's national objectives by discussing its security concerns, advancements in military technologies, force structure, capabilities and posture; specifically, China's nuclear ballistic missile capable submarine (SSBN) force. China's SSBN capabilities and posture reinforce their stated policies of nuclear second strike and avoiding aims of hegemony.³

It's not realistic to think that China will be able to solve its regional security woes anytime soon. Off its East coast, the dispute with Japan over the Senkaku Islands, an area rich with oil reserves and fishing rights, is of primary concern to China.⁴ This is coupled with fears of a nuclear-armed Japan down the road. Given that Japan has the technical ability to achieve a nuclear "break-out" at any time it sees fit, China has a vested interest in advancing its military capabilities in response to this perceived threat to its security.

In Northeast Asia, the Korean Peninsula was already proving to be a perceived threat to China's security with the presence of the U.S. Terminal High Altitude Defense System (THAAD) in South Korea. Now, North Korean nuclear provocations further complicate matters on the peninsula. China does not want a unified peninsula with a U.S.-backed adversary on its border, but doesn't seem to fully endorse the North Korean regime's current trajectory either. Recent nuclear attack drills in Chinese cities along the Korean border underscore their concerns about North Korea's emerging nuclear capabilities, and the possibility of a U.S. nuclear strike near state borders.⁵ Looking to the southwest, China has an adversary in India, with whom the Chinese have ongoing territorial disputes. Also, China has declared that the "9-dash line" encompasses its sovereign territory in the South China Sea region, and has initiated island building and basing operations. This has been met with regional and international resistance, as most countries dispute the validity of this claim.⁶ China also has the stated objective, under the "One China" policy, to draw Taiwan back into the mainland. This is a lengthy list of regional security and stability concerns that plague the People's Republic of China (PRC). It is with these regional concerns in mind that China continues to develop its nuclear posture; specifically, its SSBN capabilities.

Research Design

The type of research used in this paper is qualitative research. I will examine the most recent, and authoritative, strategic nuclear and national defense policy statements from India, France, and China. Statements that support regional security concerns, or force projection aims, will be highlighted. If there is a specific mention of SSBN use, or posture, relevant to the research, that also will be singled out. The intent is to identify overall nuclear and defense policy aims, and whether they support regional security, force projection, or both.

I will then examine existing SSBN capabilities in order to see if there are similarities or differences between states with an SSBN program. The intent is to determine what a SSBN program means in terms of the state's overall view of strategic stability. By comparing India and France, and their respective SSBN programs, to China's development of an SSBN program, the intent is to identify key indicators that will provide evidence as to what China sees as its strategic stability goals. My hypothesis is that China is building SSBN capabilities to achieve regional stability, not global force projection. I will compare the results of India's and France's policies and SSBN capabilities to China's, in order to test the hypothesis.

There are currently six nations that are reported to have SSBN capabilities: France, India, China, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. This research will focus on France and India's policies and SSBN programs, and what they say about their views of strategic stability, and then compare those results to China. I will not use Russia, the United States, or the United Kingdom in this research, as their SSBN programs were developed during the bipolar, Cold War era.⁷ Noted nuclear deterrence scholar, Vipin Narang, stated, "The superpower model of nuclear strategy and deterrence does not seem to be applicable, for example, to India and Pakistan, which have small arsenals and where an active and enduring territorial rivalry is punctuated by repeated crisis that openly risk nuclear war."⁸ While this statement is specific to India and Pakistan, it illustrates the point that regional powers are dealing with a much different deterrence environment than great powers did during the Cold War era.

The United Kingdom developed its SSBNs in direct correlation with U.S. developments at the time, and, as such, I have omitted that nation from this research. Russia developed ballistic missile-capable submarines, and the United States responded with the first nuclear-powered ballistic missile-capable submarines shortly thereafter. These nations were already considered great powers at the time of their SSBN programs. This research is focused on China, not yet universally considered a great power, and the only other nation-states that exist with SSBN programs that are not great powers, and that have comparably sized nuclear capabilities are France and India.

First, I will provide an analysis of India's defense and nuclear policies, along with its SSBN capabilities, and then determine what it means in regards to the Indian view of strategic stability, global force projection or regional stability strategic objectives. Next, I will examine France's nuclear/defense policies, and SSBN capabilities, to determine its strategic goals. The results of these two analyses will then be compared to China with the idea that similar, or contrasting, indicators will help further define what China's view of strategic stability is, global force projection or regional stability, as viewed through the lens of policies and SSBN capabilities.

Indian Nuclear Policy

India currently has a "no first use" nuclear weapons policy. This was first stated in a 1999 draft of Indian nuclear doctrine that was publicly released, yet never formally signed, by the government. However, it is still available for public release on the Indian government's official Ministry of External Affairs website, which is a strong indicator of its continued relevance, and importance, to the current Indian government. It is also commonly referenced by academics and journalists, as far as providing an in-depth view of where the Indian government was in that timeframe, and how it supports the current

policy views. Since the release of the 1999 nuclear doctrine draft, the Indian Cabinet Committee on Security Reviews released a revised, and condensed, outline of current Indian nuclear weapons policy, in 2003. These two sources are the most commonly referred to, publicly available, and “most official,” concerning Indian nuclear policy, to date. As such, these are the two documents that I will analyze to define India’s strategic objectives as it relates to nuclear weapons.

In 1999, a draft document was released by the Indian government titled “Draft Report of National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine.” Of note are specific statements that clearly point to regional security as the objective, with specific key indicator words focused on regional concerns, not global force projection. Emphasis had been added by the author. Policy statements, of interest, include:

“India’s security is an integral component of its development process. India continuously aims at promoting an ever-expanding area of peace and stability around it so that developmental priorities can be pursued without disruption.”

*“This is consistent with the U.N. Charter, which sanctions the **right of self-defense.**”*

“The requirements of deterrence should be carefully weighed in the design of Indian nuclear forces and in the strategy to provide for a level of capability consistent with maximum credibility, survivability, effectiveness, safety and security.”

*“The fundamental purpose of Indian nuclear weapons is to deter the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons by any State or entity **against India and its forces.** India **will not be the first to initiate a nuclear strike,** but will respond with punitive retaliation should deterrence fail.”*

*“India’s nuclear forces will be effective ... with the concept of **credible minimum deterrence.**”*

*“Nuclear arms control measures shall be sought ... to **protect our own capability and its effectiveness.**”*

The majority of the 1999 document points to the stated nuclear weapons policy of “no first use” and concerns about aggressors to the state. There is no mention of force projection on a global scale, only references to India’s sovereignty. This document clearly points to its nuclear weapons policy as structured towards regional security of the state. There is no specific mention of SSBNs at this time, as they were not developed at this time. This document also provides the context with which India would continue forward with its nuclear submarine development in subsequent years.

The next official document concerning Indian nuclear policy is the 2003 nuclear doctrine release from the Indian Cabinet Committee on Security. It is much shorter than the 1999 draft, constructed in an outline format. Several statements concerning India’s views of strategic stability are of note, with emphasis added by the author, to include:

“A posture of “No First Use:” nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or on Indian forces anywhere.”

“Nuclear retaliation to a first strike ...”

“... in the event of a major attack against India, or Indian forces anywhere ...”

The 2003 nuclear policy doctrine release clearly points to regional security concerns of the Indian government. Global force projection aims are not mentioned in this release. Also, it should be noted that the 2015 Indian Maritime Doctrine states: “The primary military objective for the Indian Navy is to deter any military adventurism against the country ...”⁹ and that this deterrence is accomplished through developing and fielding SSBN capabilities. This statement further illustrates the idea that India is primarily concerned with regional security, and not with aims of future global force projection.

Indian SSBN Capabilities

Next, I examine India’s SSBN capabilities, and posture, to identify whether Indians are concerned with regional security or global force projection. India is the most recent nation among the five SSBN-capable states to begin fielding ballistic missile-capable submarines. The development of SSBNs completes India’s nuclear triad. Open-source reporting has identified a total of two SSBNs that have been built thus far, with a goal of building and fielding four in total. The Indian *Arihant*-class submarine is a nuclear-powered, ballistic missile-capable submarine, based on a Soviet design.¹⁰ There are currently two *Arihant*-class SSBNs that have been fielded, albeit, with delays and issues, as identified in open-source reporting.¹¹ Each *Arihant*-class SSBN can hold up to 12 K-15 Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBM) with a range of 700 kilometers, or four K-4 SLBM’s, with a range of 3,500 kilometers. Cruise missile launch capabilities are being developed currently as well.¹² Open-source reporting has indicated that India has had several accidents, or delays, in the fielding of its SSBN fleet.¹³ As a result, India’s SSBN fleet does not currently have the ability to maintain a continuous, at-sea, presence. In regards to stealth, Indian SSBNs are reported to be noisy and easily detectable. Indian SSBNs are currently located at the naval port of Visakhapatam, with plans to move to a SSBN-specific facility in the future. The new facility is still under construction, with no near-term plans to open.¹⁴ An analysis of Indian SSBN capabilities and posture, as described above, do not currently support the ability to conduct effective force projection activities. Combined with the analysis of India’s defense doctrine, the conclusion can be made that India’s SSBN capabilities support regional security concerns, and not global force projection.

French Nuclear Policy

France’s nuclear policy is originally derived from its security concerns during the Cold War. France’s physical location, in relation to the Soviet Union, and its potential ability to push conventional forces all the way to France’s borders, combined with concerns over U.S. and British abandonment, were driving factors in influencing France’s nuclear deterrence policies.¹⁵ France’s history of being invaded and occupied, along with having

conventional forces that did not compare in scope, or capabilities, to the Soviet Union at the time, eventually led to an escalatory nuclear policy.¹⁶ Upon the collapse of the Soviet Union, France maintained an escalatory nuclear deterrence policy that leaves open the possibility of initiating a first strike, or retaliation, against both conventional and nuclear threats to its sovereignty, as well as any interests deemed vital.¹⁷

France's nuclear policy is declared in the 2017 Defense and National Security Strategic Review. This is the most current and authoritative strategic document concerning French nuclear policy. In previous years, France's nuclear policy was described in the 2008 and 2013 "White Papers." For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on the two most recent documents, the 2013 White Paper and the 2017 Defense and National Security Strategic Review in order to examine global force projection and regional security statements.

In the 2013 White Paper, the term "force projection" is mentioned six times, although this is primarily a title of a military sea vessel, not an explicit statement concerning policy aims. However, there are multiple instances where forces being deployed in areas outside France's national border and territories correspond with the goal of force projection. Emphasis has been added by the author. Statements, of note, include:

*"They will therefore have at their disposal four **Nuclear-powered, ballistic missile-carrying submarines**, six nuclear-powered attack submarines, one aircraft carrier, 15 front-line frigates, some 15 patrol boats, six surveillance frigates, three combined force projection and command vessels (BPC), maritime patrol aircraft and a mine-warfare capacity suitable for the protection of our approach and for deployment in operations **outside the national territory**."*¹⁸

*"The naval forces will have at their disposal **four ballistic missile-carrying submarines (SSBN)**, six attack submarines, one aircraft carrier, 15 front-line frigates, some 15 patrol boats, six surveillance frigates, three force projection and command vessels, maritime patrol aircraft and a mine-warfare capacity to protect our approaches and **for deployment in external operations**."*¹⁹

*"The armed forces must also carry out non-permanent missions of intervention **outside our borders**."*²⁰

*"France must be able to **deploy** the following resources, together with the associated command and support functions ... **a nuclear attack submarine** ..."*²¹

*"France should retain its capacity to **deploy** a combined joint force capable of participating in a crisis management operation **over a long period**."*²²

While there are additional instances of power projection, the above excerpts provide a clear picture of French military, and nuclear, forces that are tailored to deploy across the globe, as a means of force projection.

The 2013 White Paper also explicitly mentions regional security several times, to include (with added emphasis by the author):

“Protect the national territory and French nationals abroad, and guarantee the continuity of the Nation’s essential functions.”²³

“Protection of the national territory, its population and French nationals abroad is a vital and fundamental obligation of the State, which must also guarantee the continuity of the Nation’s essential functions.”²⁴

These, and other statements, from the 2013 White Paper point clearly to regional security concerns. After an analysis of the 2013 White Paper, it can be concluded that French policy firmly supports both regional security concerns, as well as power projection aims.

French SSBN Capabilities

France’s nuclear posture does not include a land component. Having previously decommissioned their land nuclear weapons platforms, only air and sea nuclear weapons platforms are currently in operation.²⁵ France currently has four SSBNs in operation, decreased from a previous fleet of six *Le Redoutable*-class SSBNs. Currently, French SSBNs are identified as *Le Triomphant*-class submarines, each carrying (or are reported to be carrying, in the near future) 16 M-51 SLBMs, with a range of 11,000 kilometers. French SSBNs currently have the ability to conduct continuous at-sea presence operations. Concerning vulnerabilities, such as issues with stealth or detection, there was no open-source reporting that supported any identified issues. I have made the assumption, based on lack of reporting, that French SSBNs are not easily detectable by their adversaries, and do not pose an issue with their ability to provide an effective nuclear deterrent at this time. Currently, the entire SSBN fleet is stationed out of L’ile Longue naval base in a southeastern harbor inside the coastline of France.²⁶ After examining France’s capabilities, in combination with their policies, it can be determined that the French SSBN program supports both regional security, and global force projection objectives.

Chinese Nuclear Policy

China’s nuclear policy has historically been one of assured retaliation, or “no first use.” This is supported by the most recent 2015 Military Strategy White Paper, which stated: “China has always pursued the policy of no first use of nuclear weapons and adhered to a self-defensive nuclear strategy that is defensive in nature. China will unconditionally not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or in nuclear-weapon-free zones, and will never enter into a nuclear arms race with any other country. China will optimize its nuclear force structure, improve strategic early warning, command and control, missile penetration, rapid reaction, and survivability and protection, and deter other countries from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against China.”²⁷

China’s most recent, and authoritative, national defense policy was released in 2013. Titled “The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces,” alternately, as the “2013 White Paper,” it was published by the Information Office of the State Council. This document outlines the official and most current overall Chinese defense policy. Many Western analysts have determined that China’s declared policies do not necessarily align with their actions, or actual global objectives. I argue that when Chinese policy is viewed in light of their regional security concerns, coupled with their current SSBN development,

capabilities and fielding, as well as compared to the above case studies of nuclear SSBN-armed states, it points to a focus on regional security concerns, not global force projection.

Here, I will examine the 2013 White Paper for explicitly stated policy objectives and highlight regional security concerns. Emphasis has been added by the author. Statements, of interest, include:

“China opposes any form of hegemonism or power politics, and does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.”²⁸

“China will never seek hegemony or behave in a hegemonic manner, nor will it engage in military expansion.”²⁹

*“The issues of subsistence and development security and the traditional and non-traditional **threats to security** are interwoven. Therefore, China has an arduous task to **safeguard its national unification, territorial integrity** and development interests. Some [countries have] strengthened its Asia-Pacific military alliances, **expanded its military presence in the region**, and frequently **makes the situation there tenser.**”³⁰*

*“On the issues concerning China’s **territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests**, some **neighboring countries are taking action that complicate or exacerbate the situation**, and Japan is making trouble over the issue of the Diaoyu Islands.”³¹*

*“China’s armed forces broaden their visions of **national security strategy** and military strategy, aim at **winning local wars** ... deal effectively with **various security threats** and accomplish diversified military tasks.”³²*

*“We will **not attack unless we are attacked; but we will surely counterattack if attacked.**” Following this principle, China will resolutely take all necessary measures to **safeguard its national sovereignty and territorial integrity.**”³³*

*“China’s armed forces firmly base their military preparedness on **winning local wars** ...”³⁴*

*“The PLA Navy (PLAN) is China’s mainstay for operations at sea, and is responsible for safeguarding its maritime security and **maintaining its sovereignty over its territorial seas along with its maritime rights and interests.**”³⁵*

*“The fundamental tasks of China’s armed forces **are consolidating national defense, resisting foreign aggression and defending the motherland.**”³⁶*

As the above excerpts from the 2013 White Paper show, China has stated throughout the white paper that regional security concerns are incredibly important to the state. Chinese defense policy statements also explicitly state that they will not enter into global hegemonic activities, to include restricting military expansion to furtherance of that

goal. It is clear that China's biggest concern, as stated in the white paper, is centered around regional security, and defense of the nation.

Next, I will examine the Chinese 2013 White Paper for statements that focus on global concerns, and force projection. Emphasis added by the author. Statements of note include:

*"... and the security risks to China's overseas interests are on the increase."*³⁷

*"In addition, they [China's armed forces] strengthen overseas operational capabilities such as emergency response and rescue, merchant vessel protection at sea and evacuation of Chinese nationals, and provide reliable support for China's interests overseas."*³⁸

*"China's armed forces work to ... conduct joint exercises and training with foreign counterparts; conscientiously assume their due international responsibilities; and play an active role in maintaining world peace, security and stability."*³⁹

*"In line with the strategic requirements of mobile operations and multi-dimensional offense and defense, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been reoriented from theater defense to trans-theater mobility."*⁴⁰

*"Furthermore, it [PLAN] develops blue-water capabilities of conducting mobile operations, carrying out international cooperation, and countering non-traditional security threats, and enhances its capabilities of strategic deterrence and counterattack."*⁴¹

*"With the gradual integration of China's economy into the world economic system, overseas interests have become an integral component of China's national interests."*⁴²

The above excerpts capture global aims of China, as stated by its own defense policy. The majority of the statements center on protection of sovereign assets, located abroad. Joint exercises and foreign training are also mentioned. These are indicators of soft power, not hard power, or force projection. The naval excerpts focus largely on deterrence, which does not conflict with the previously stated assured retaliation nuclear posture of China. There is one instance of a statement potentially supporting force projection, when the term "trans-theatre mobility" is mentioned (listed above), in reference to the army component. Within the context of the document, it seems to be centered around deployments in support of "safeguarding national sovereignty."⁴³ This would seem to support the preponderance of statements that identify national security concerns throughout the document. It can be determined that Chinese policy statements above support primarily soft power, not hard power, or force projection aims.

China SSBN Capabilities

China currently has four *Jin*-class SSBNs in service, with a fifth being built, according to open-source reporting. Each SSBN can carry 12 JL-2 SLBMs with a range of 7000 kilometers.⁴⁴ China's development of SSBNs point towards a focus on their regional security issues, not aims of force projection. A number of factors point to this. Their SSBNs are too easy to detect with anti-submarine detection. There are several key detection choke points that China would have to navigate in order to reach the seas beyond their region. Command and control technology and doctrine is still in the early phases of development.⁴⁵ The Chinese have only one submarine base, the Yulin Naval Base, with only one entrance and exit point.⁴⁶ They have yet to send a SSBN on a deterrence patrol, despite having the reported ability to do so. Even if they started deterrence patrols, some assessments conclude that they would need at least five SSBNs to maintain a constant at-sea presence, and the Chinese have only built four thus far.⁴⁷ The Chinese are also building a massive submarine manufacturing facility, but this doesn't necessarily mean that SSBN production will greatly increase, or that the facility will even be building nuclear capable submarines. Conventional diesel-powered attack submarines are valuable to China's ability to defend its territory and may actually be the focus of the manufacturing facility at this time.⁴⁸ After reviewing the analysis of Chinese SSBN capabilities and posture, it can be determined that they clearly support China's stated aims of national defense, regional security, as well as avoidance of power projection, or global hegemony.

Comparison of country-specific policies and SSBN capabilities

After examining Indian, French, and Chinese nuclear and defense policies, as well as their respective SSBN programs, there are several determinations that can be made. This research has led to several determinations concerning regional security objectives, and force projection aims. First, India's policy statements, and SSBN capabilities, clearly point to regional security concerns, and no force projection aims. Second, France's policy statements, and SSBN capabilities, clearly point to both regional security aims, as well as force projection goals. Finally, Chinese policy statements, and SSBN capabilities, can be determined to be focused almost entirely on regional security, and defense of sovereign interests. They do not support aims of global force projection. A side-by-side comparison of defense policies, as well as several key SSBN program characteristics, will serve to further illuminate the findings in this paper. As in the analyses above, concerning each country, I have identified whether a give country's policies support regional concerns, force projection, or both. Concerning SSBN capabilities, I chose to use several key characteristics that indicate whether the SSBN program supports regional security, force projection, or both. The following table sums up the specific points that I have compared between the countries included in this research.

Policy Statements In Support Of:	India	France	China
Regional Security	Yes	Yes	Yes
SSBN Support to Regional Security	Yes*	Yes	Yes**
Force Projection	No	Yes	No
SSBN support to force projection	No	Yes	No
SSBN Capabilities:			
Conducted Deterrence Patrols	No	Yes	No
Continuous At-Sea Presence	No	Yes	No
Noisy/Easily Detected	Yes	No	Yes

*SSBNs are not specifically mentioned; instead "nuclear forces" is used in policy statements. As SSBNs are considered nuclear forces, I have placed a "yes" in this column.

**China broadly mentions that the PLA Navy is charged with territorial security and does not explicitly mention SSBNs. However, as Chinese SSBNs fall under the PLA Navy, I have placed a "yes" in this column.

Table 1: Side-by-side Comparison of India, France, and China

Conclusion and Policy Implications

As indicated by the research, India’s policies, and SSBN capabilities, support regional concerns, not force projection aims. Of note, India and France show opposing indicators in every category other than regional security, in Table 1. Upon completion of the research, India and France display opposing indicators, and show a strong alignment between their respective policies, and SSBN programs, in regards to regional security and force projection. When compared to China, there is a clear determination that is supported. Not only did an individual analysis of each country determine whether they supported regional security, or force projection, clearly define their goals, but a side-by-side comparison clearly shows that China’s policies and SSBN program are comparable to India, and not France. I conclude that China’s policies support regional security concerns, and not force projection objectives. Also, China’s SSBN program supports Chinese policy. As such, China’s SSBN capabilities clearly show that the Chinese view of strategic stability is one of regional security focus, and not concerned with global force projection.

This research has implications for U.S. national policy. The 2017 NSS, in regards to Russia and China, states: “Today they are fielding military capabilities designed to deny America access in times of crisis and to contest our ability to operate freely in critical commercial zones during peacetime.”⁴⁹ Admittedly, this statement, and others throughout the document, describe a wide array of Chinese military developments, capabilities, and U.S. concerns. The goal of this research was to attempt to identify how strategic stability is viewed by China, not the United States, and to use specific indicators to determine those views. In this case, policies were examined in conjunction with, specifically, SSBN

capabilities and posture, in order to draw conclusions about Chinese strategic concerns. If the conclusions drawn from this research are accurate, then there are policy implications to be aware of. Some U.S. policy makers, and leading decision makers, may be making assumptions that align only with U.S. perceptions, and not with the actual direction and intent of China's strategic views. Strategic perceptions that have flaws, have the potential to increase diplomatic tensions, and unnecessarily increase defense expenditures in the form of location, posture or capabilities, when responding to a threat that may not be there. It may also drive China to align its military's posture more towards the United States when the original intent was to concentrate on regional state actors for the purposes of security.

This research does not seek to invalidate the number of security and diplomatic concerns that the United States has with China. It does, however, seek to present an alternate view of China's views of strategic stability, in one specific area, grounded in research, in direct contrast to assumptions to the contrary. If Chinese views of stability, in regards to their SSBN program, are off target, then there are other strategic areas that may require more research, so as to avoid potentially inaccurate assumptions about Chinese strategic goals.

Notes

I would like to thank Dr. Jim Platte, and Dr. Todd Robinson, for their thoughtful comments and suggestions. All errors found herein are my own

¹ The White House, *National Security Strategy*, December 2017, 2.

² *Ibid.*, 1-55.

³ *USNI News*, “Document: Chinese Military Strategy,” May 26, 2015, <https://news.usni.org/2015/05/26/document-chinas-military-strategy>.

⁴ Council on Foreign Relations, “China’s Maritime Disputes: A CFR InfoGuide Presentation,” www.cfr.org/interactives/chinas-maritime-disputes?cid=otr-marketing_use-china_sea_InfoGuide#!/chinas-maritime-disputes?cid=otr-marketing_use-china_sea_InfoGuide.

⁵ *NBC News*, “North Korean Crisis: China Paper Publishes Nuclear Attack Device,” www.nbcnews.com/news/north-korea/north-korea-crisis-china-paper-publishes-nuclear-attack-advice-n826916.

⁶ Council on Foreign Relations, “China’s Maritime Disputes.”

⁷ Vipin Narang, *Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era: Regional Powers and International Conflict* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 1.

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⁹ Naval Strategic Publication 1.1, *Indian Maritime Doctrine*, 2015, www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/indian-maritime-doctrine-2015-version.

¹⁰ Nuclear Threat Initiative, “India Submarine Capabilities,” www.nti.org/analysis/articles/india-submarine-capabilities/.

¹¹ Christina Zhao, “India \$2.9 Billion Nuclear Ballistic Missile Submarine Flooded and Almost Sank After Someone Left the Hatch Open,” *Newsweek*, Jan. 11, 2018, www.newsweek.com/indian-india-nuclear-submarine-ballistic-missile-sank-hatch-left-open-777804.

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¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Nuclear Threat Initiative, “Indian Eastern Naval Command,” Nov. 19, 2013, www.nti.org/learn/facilities/939/.

¹⁵ Narang, *Nuclear Strategy*, 153-154.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 154.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹⁸ Francois Hollande, *French White Paper: Defense and National Security*, Republique Francaise, 2013, 91.

¹⁹ Ibid., 131.

²⁰ Ibid., 87.

²¹ Ibid., 87-88.

²² Ibid., 88.

²³ Ibid., 47.

²⁴ Ibid., 48.

²⁵ Nuclear Threat Initiative, “France Nuclear,” May 2016
www.nti.org/learn/countries/france/nuclear/.

²⁶ Naval Technology, “L’ile Longue Submarine Base,” www.naval-technology.com/projects/lilelonguesubmarineb/.

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²⁹ Ibid., 2

³⁰ Ibid., 3

³¹ Ibid., 3

³² Ibid., 3

³³ Ibid., 3

³⁴ Ibid., 3

³⁵ Ibid., 6

³⁶ Ibid., 7

³⁷ Ibid., 3

³⁸ Ibid., 4

³⁹ Ibid., 4

⁴⁰ Ibid., 4

⁴¹ Ibid., 6

⁴² Ibid., 17

⁴³ Ibid., 5

⁴⁴ Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, “Chinese Nuclear Forces, 2016,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 72, no. 4, June 13, 2016, www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2016.1194054.

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CHAPTER 9

China Strategic Stability: Rationale for Nuclear Modernization

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The recent modernization efforts of China have left many questions in the minds of observers, but the key question is what message is China sending with its nuclear modernization efforts? The strategic message China is sending with its nuclear modernization is the Chinese are attempting to match the United States’ influence in East Asia with a credible nuclear deterrent. There are three key reasons this assessment is made: 1) the rhetoric from China’s core interest, 2) China’s modernization efforts are stated as a direct response to U.S. capabilities, and 3) since the economic collapse of the United States in 2008, China has attempted to reestablish power in Southeast Asia. China’s interest is what drives its nuclear modernization efforts and is the reason the Chinese want a force capable of contending with the United States. This research paper sets out to test if U.S. nuclear and conventional superiority has driven China away from an assured retaliation posture. The null hypothesis is that China has not moved away from an assured retaliation posture.

There are several areas that were researched to test the hypothesis. The first area that is discussed is China’s nuclear evolution. The evolution of the Chinese program is broken down into three separate timeframes: mid-1950s to 1967, 1967 to 1981, and post-1981. The next area reviews its force structure and highlights the changes to this structure in recent years. The intent is to highlight the change in importance China now places on its nuclear forces. The third area covers China’s stated nuclear policy, which has not changed since 1964. The paper then focuses on China’s strategic views of the United States and identifies areas where that affected Chinese-American relations with respect to strategic stability. The paper then switches gears and focuses on China’s modernization efforts, discussing where its focus is now, China’s current status, and why the Chinese are modernizing their force. The final sections in this paper answer the question of whether China’s nuclear posture has changed and identify what the United States should take away from China’s modernization. In order to develop the answers to the original question of why is China modernizing its nuclear force, the reader must first understand why China began a nuclear weapons program.

China’s Nuclear Evolution: Mid 1950s to 1967

China’s strategic forces evolution is separated into three periods. The early development spans from 1955 to 1966. During this period, China focused on thermonuclear warhead and ballistic missile development. The second period spans from 1967 to 1981 when China developed its first generation of operational strategic systems.¹ The last period in China’s evolution spans from 1981 to the current modernization efforts. During this

period, China focused on completing the deployment of its first-generation systems while shifting to solid propellants and miniaturizing nuclear warheads.² These periods span more than 50 years and show the length of time it has taken China to evolve to where its nuclear force is today.

The decision for China to acquire a nuclear capability with both nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles came in 1955 following direct nuclear threats from the United States. The thought of China acquiring nuclear weapons came earlier that year when Chinese scientists provided Mao Zedong with presentations on nuclear weapons. The final decision to acquire nuclear weapons rest with “an explicit nuclear threat” from the United States.³ During this period, China had a good working relationship with the Soviet Union and the Chinese relied on the Soviets to help jump start their nuclear program. Initially, Moscow provided assistance, which led to Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, establishing “that China’s nuclear program would be a complete set and form an independent nuclear force.”⁴ China had a goal to develop an independent program, but also wanted to ensure it did not develop an excessive force, which would potentially add them to the arms race that was already brewing between the Soviet Union and the United States. The intent of China was established and the nation pushed forward with cementing the relationship between itself and the Soviet Union.

China and the Soviet Union signed six agreements with respect to defense technology. This led to the signing in October 1957 of the Agreement on Producing New Weapons and Military Technical Equipment and Building a Comprehensive Nuclear Industry in China.⁵ The key aspect of this agreement is that the Soviet Union would provide China with a nuclear device prototype. The assistance from the Soviet Union did not last long and the prototype device was never delivered to China. The relations between the two nations deteriorated rapidly and eventually terminated in June 1959. The rationale provided by the Soviet Union was because of the test ban negotiations. These actions led to China focusing on a domestic solution to developing its nuclear program. In 1959, China issued *The Guidelines for Developing Nuclear Weapons*, which gave “the basic parameters for Chinese nuclear weapons.”⁶ The focus of the *Guidelines* was to develop retaliatory doctrine that focused on high-yield nuclear warheads and missiles with long-range capability. China was very clear it did not want to develop tactical warheads or short-range capabilities.

The intent of the *Guidelines* stemmed from several areas that Chinese leaders focused on. These areas included the actual physical effects of nuclear weapons, how likely the enemy was to use nuclear weapons, political preconditions for use, and political repercussions for using nuclear weapons.⁷ Chinese leaders were very in tune with the bigger picture when it came to nuclear weapons use. Mark Ryan stated the Chinese attitudes “depended in part upon a measure of psychological realism, an ability to look clearly at both the enemy’s and one’s own advantages, disadvantages, hopes, fears, and general psychological deportment.”⁸ This thought process and mindset by the Chinese led to their decision, with respect to role of nuclear weapons, as a minimum deterrent posture. Now that China defined its posture, the Chinese had to figure the way to move forward with their nuclear program development.

When the Soviet Union withdrew from China, the Chinese had to build a plan to continue their nuclear program. The first part for moving forward was figuring out how to produce the fissile material for the weapon. Issues with plutonium development led to China’s first nuclear weapon being developed with highly enriched uranium. The second

part to moving forward was to figure a way around the budgetary and technical constraints during the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward.⁹ The argument during this time was that strategic programs were impeding on other parts of the economy. This resulted in a group in government for strategic weapons development and a group opposed to the cost of strategic weapons development. The Central Committee eventually decided to push forward with strategic forces at the expense of conventional forces modernization.

The result of the Central Committee's decision was a 15-member Special Commission of the Central Committee (CSC), which exercised central control over the military science and technology industry.¹⁰ The CSC decided that ballistic missiles would be the delivery vehicle for nuclear weapons instead of aircraft. The decision to use ballistic missiles as the delivery vehicle allowed Chinese scientists to focus on a more complicated design as opposed to a simpler gun-type carried on a bomber. This decision also made more efficient use of Chinese fissile material. This was key with a young program and the issues China was already facing with having to use uranium instead plutonium for its early weapons. China was now on a path with a clear plan to completing its first nuclear weapon.

The first weapon ready for testing neared completion in 1964. During this period, China became concerned that the United States would try to disrupt, if not destroy, its nuclear weapons program. Focusing on a potential American intervention, China faced the decision to test the device as soon as possible, or halt efforts and focus on defending its nuclear program. The CSC decided having a functional device provides a deterrent and it was better to test the device as soon as possible. In October 1964, China detonated its first atomic bomb, and reiterated its position of no first use of nuclear weapons. The completion of the test allowed China to focus on two paths, developing a thermonuclear warhead and developing nuclear devices for missile and aircraft employment.

The first step in moving forward was attempting to develop a thermonuclear warhead capable of being mated to a ballistic missile. China chose a complicated multi-stage design, carrying a greater yield than a boosted device. China stuck strictly to the *Guidelines* issued in 1958. It quickly made progress and tested a two-stage device in 1967. The device was heavy and dropped from a bomber, but the test was successful. Then, China moved in the direction to miniaturize a weapon for placement on a ballistic missile.

The second step was developing operational warheads for aircraft and ballistic missiles. During the period between 1965 and 1966, China made significant weapons progress testing nuclear fission devices on both aircraft and ballistic missiles. The early success of China's nuclear program led to the first generation of China's operational strategic systems.

1967-1981 First Generation of Operational Strategic Systems

The first generation of operational strategic systems for China focused on improving nuclear weapons, an eight-year plan for the development of ballistic missile systems. Early nuclear weapons tests for China between 1968 and 1974 were probably devices made extensively of uranium.¹¹ The first certified thermonuclear device for production came in 1970.

In 1971, China began the next phase, which focused on including plutonium in the warheads. In 1976, China tested a four-megaton device that the Swedish Defense Research Establishment stated contained 7.7 kilograms of plutonium.¹² The amount of plutonium used leads to the assessment that early Chinese weapons were less efficient than those

developed by the United States. By the early 1980s, China developed three types of warheads: “a 15-kiloton fission device, a three-megaton thermonuclear device, and a four- to five-megaton thermonuclear device.”¹³ The 15-kiloton device was the first device designed and tested by China. Even though the yield was significantly lower, the warhead kept China in the nuclear game until the development of its thermonuclear warheads. The three-megaton device was the result of China’s first successful thermonuclear test. The four- to five-megaton device was of a similar design as the three megaton, but this device included plutonium and uranium in the primary, where the three-megaton device was a completely uranium primary.¹⁴ These warheads were designed for specific use with the ballistic missiles developed.

The beginning of the Chinese ballistic missile program dated back to the 1950s, but the real start was in 1965 with the *Eight Year Plan for the Development of Rocket Technology*.¹⁵ The *Eight Year Plan* laid out four missiles for development beginning in 1965 and going until 1972. The intent was to deploy medium-range missiles while developing long-range missiles. Additionally, China planned to develop solid-fueled ballistic missiles. The medium-range missiles, Dongfeng DF-2 and DF-3, were tested and deployed on time, but the long-range missiles, DF-4 and DF-5, were not deployed until 1980.

The medium-range missiles took priority due to tensions with the Soviet Union. The tensions were a result of the 1969 border crisis between China and the Soviet Union. This crisis took China’s strategic focus away from the United States and there was now an emphasis on the threat from the Soviet Union.¹⁶ The threat from the Soviet Union included reports of Soviet leadership “ordering extensive preparation for a disarming first strike against China.”¹⁷ This threat led to China changing its nuclear posture. Ultimately, the decision was made to modify the medium-range missiles for a potential nuclear war with the Soviet Union. The range of the DF-4 was increased to 4,500 kilometers to reach Moscow and the DF-5 was redesigned to penetrate the Moscow missile defense system. The ballistic missile program also saw a focus on enhancements to reduce missile vulnerability.¹⁸

The improvements to Chinese survivability were a result of the increased accuracy of both U.S. and Soviet missiles. These improvements included more survivable basing modes for the silo-based missiles and an accelerated timeline for the development of the mobile missile program. Eventually, China authorized the basing modes for the DF-4 to mountain caves and “authorized studies on ship-mobile, rail-mobile, and various camouflaged fixed-based modes for both the DF-4 and DF-5.”¹⁹ Additionally, the Central Military Commission called for an accelerated deployment of the DF-4 and DF-5. The commission also called for development of a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) program by the first half of 1980. The commission settled on basing modes for the DF-4 and DF-5, where the DF-4 would be based in mountains and the DF-5 would use camouflage. These modes left the Chinese confident they could retaliate against any Soviet attack.

Post 1981 Strategic Systems

During the 1980s, China slowed deployment and development of its nuclear force. The Chinese focus throughout this period remained on improving their first generation missiles while developing their second-generation missiles. The increased confidence

Chinese leaders placed in doubts nuclear war would actually happen, allowed leaders to drastically reduce their nuclear force from 150 in 1984 to less than 70 in 1994. In the early 1980s, China put heavy emphasis on land variants while also working on submarine variants. China also developed a substantial number of medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBM), which were a result of tensions with the Soviet Union and delays to its long-range ballistic missile program. In 1984, China maintained 110 DF-3 MRBMs, which accounted for 75 percent of China's deployed warheads.²⁰ The DF-3 was modified in 1986 and based on those modifications China dropped the number of deployed DF-3 missiles to less than 50 by 1993. The DF-5 saw a similar course of action with a modification program lasting from 1983 to 1986. This modification "improved the range, operability, and reliability."²¹ The modification also led to China deploying only four modified DF-5s during the late 1980s, and seven by 1993. The changes were not only seen in the deployment of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), but also in the development of future programs.

There were several programs during the late 1980s that China developed as its second-generation nuclear force. The first two were solid-propellant missile development, Julang-1 (JL) and 092 Xia ballistic missile submarine (SSBN). The JL-1 was the submarine variant and experienced several failures during 1985, but ultimately achieved successful testing during 1988. Even with the testing, China placed little emphasis on SSBNs and SSBN missile development and the program was eventually canceled. The Xia submarines were expected to be deployed by 1994, but were too noisy during the initial trials. The Xia submarine program was also canceled in favor of a more advanced submarine.

The next program that was underdevelopment was the land-based variant of the JL-1, the DF-21. This program underwent testing in 1985. Testing went well, but deployment of the missile was delayed until the early 1990s. The U.S. intelligence community in 1996 noted that only a "handful" of DF-21s were deployed.²² The assumption is the delay was caused by issues with China's ability to miniaturize warheads for the missile. As China achieved success with the DF-21, its focus turned to developing its second generation of solid-propelled ballistic missiles.

The second generation of solid-propellant ballistic missiles included the DF-31 and the JL-2. The focus on the second-generation missile stemmed from the deployment of the American Trident II-D5s, which was assessed to have the capability to threaten Chinese silos.²³ This scared the Chinese enough for them to ensure solid-based missiles remained the backbone of the force and were ready for rapid mobile transporter-erector-launcher operations. China then moved forward with the DF-31 and JL-2 development, and as with the DF-21, the DF-31 received priority over the JL-2. In order to put more resources toward the DF-31 and JL-2, China took resources from the Xia submarine program and a follow-on mobile liquid-fueled missile program. The DF-31 was finally flight tested in 1999 with deployments beginning in 2006. The JL-2 took much longer. Almost 30 years after it initially began development, the JL-2 reached operational capability in 2015. The timelines for the second-generation ballistic missiles were much longer than their predecessors. This came at a point when the end of the Cold War eliminated the fear of nuclear war and China slowed both development and deployment of its nuclear forces. Table 1 shows China's nuclear forces as of 2016.

Type	Number of launchers	Year deployed	Range (kilometers)	Warhead x yield (kilotons)	Number of warheads
<i>Land-based ballistic missiles</i>					
DF-4	10	1980	5500+	1 x 3300	10
DF-5A	10	1981	13,000+	1 x 4000-5000	10
DF-5B	10	2015	12,000	3 x 200-300	30
DF-15	?	1990	600	1 x ?	?
DF-21	80	1991	2150	1 x 200-300	80
DF-26	?	2017	4000+	1 x 200-300	?
DF-31	8	2006	7000+	1 x 200-300	8
DF-31A	25	2007	11000+	1 x 200-300	25
DF-41	<i>n.a.</i>	?	?	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>n.a.</i>
<i>Subtotal:</i>	<i>143</i>				<i>163</i>
<i>Submarine-launched ballistic missiles</i>					
JL-2	48	2015	7000+	1 x 200-300	48
<i>Aircraft</i>					
H-6	20	1965	3100+	1 x bomb	20
<i>Cruise Missiles</i>					
DH-10	250	2006?	1500?	1 x ?	?
Warheads for D-26, awaiting dismantlement, and spares:					29
<i>Total</i>					<i>260</i>

Table 1: Chinese Nuclear Forces²⁴

China's Nuclear Force Structure

Recently, China has placed more focus and emphasis on its nuclear forces both by modernizing its forces, but also by giving its nuclear forces a greater status. In December 2015, Chinese Premier Xi Jinping announced the People Liberation Army Second Artillery Force (PLASAF) would go from a branch to a service and change its name to the PLA Rocket Force (PLARF). The status of the PLASAF began increasing in 2008 and it was a logical and expected change.

The history of the PLASAF dates back to 1966. In a 2008 defense white paper, the PLASAF was described “as a strategic force under the direct command and control of the CMC that is mainly responsible for deterring other countries from using nuclear weapons against China and for conducting nuclear counterattacks and precision strikes with conventional missiles.”²⁵ By 2015, the PLASAF had already operated as a service with many of the attributes that came with being a separate service. As an example, the nuclear forces bypassed the PLA's command structure and operated directly under the command of the CMC. In a wartime scenario, there would be no command leadership between launch bases and the CMC, with the CMC communicating directly to the launch bases. This change shows how much the PLASAF began to stand out from the normal PLA structure.

China's army has dominated the PLA for many years. Generally, other services played a supporting role to army functions, but this changed with the PLASAF. As the importance of nuclear capability increased within China, the standing of the PLASAF increased within the PLA. One potential reason for this is the PLASAF's sophisticated conventional and nuclear systems and platforms, and its relevance for potential use in future contingencies.²⁶ Another reason is the PLASAF commander has been a member of the CMC since 2004. The position of commander for the PLASAF until recently, has not been in line with respect to rank with the other services. Early on, the position was held by a major general with years between promotions from major to lieutenant general. Recently, the position has been held by a lieutenant general initially. Within months, that general had been promoted to full general. This has now placed the PLASAF commanders in line with their counterparts in the PLA Air Force (PLAAF) and PLA Navy (PLAN). This may seem small, but this distinction now provides the PLA Rocket Force with an equal voice in the CMC and a recognized status in the PLA. This change in views also flowed down to lower levels within the PLARF.

In recent years, there has been a trend of having a commander of the PLARF who spent the bulk of his career in or around the PLASAF. The first was Jing Zhiyuan who spent all of his career in artillery. More recently, the current commander is most likely the first commander to spend his entire career only in the PLASAF and now PLARF.²⁷ Other command slots in the PLARF even down to the brigade level have historically been filled by PLA officers. Now these same slots are filled by career Rocket Force officers. There was also another important factor for these commanders. The majority have experience in both nuclear and conventional operations.

The crossover experience in both nuclear and conventional roles, reflect the PLARF's “dual deterrence and dual operations mission.”²⁸ The first commander to have both conventional and nuclear roles was Li Xuge in 1985. His roles revolved around conventional missiles and training for the first conventional missile squadron. This makes sense given his experience with the PLASAF and its work with ballistic missiles, which

began in the 1960s. In the early 2000s, the Zhiyuan was most likely the first commander of the PLASAF that had been a commander in both conventional and nuclear roles. The current commander, Wei Fenghe, has also had experience in both conventional and nuclear roles.

The evolution of the Rocket Force has increased exponentially in recent years. The majority of the PLARF's existence has been dominated by the PLA and its roles have been subordinate to the PLA. Today, the PLARF is now its own service, and has commanders that sit at an equal level as their counterparts in the PLAAF and PLAN. Finally, the force is now to the level where its commanders are experienced in both the conventional and nuclear roles. There is still a significant question as to the command and control of the PLA Rocket Force and how this evolution of the PLARF affects that command and control.

There is not much documentation on the command and control structure for the PLARF, but it is "highly centralized, redundant, and networked."²⁹ The command and control of the PLARF is streamlined and direct from the CMC. In *Missile Combat in High Technology Warfare*, the authors describe the command and control as having four nodes which are: "1) the commander-in-chief, 2) the command organizations of the military departments, 3) the missile bases, and 4) the firing units."³⁰ The nodes establish a network for which the commands for execution will flow. The ultimate command resides with the commander-in-chief or supreme command authority. There is no open source that directly discusses how or when the command will be issued, but it is speculated the command will come directly from the commander-in-chief through the network directly to the operational units.

China's Stated Nuclear Posture

Since the beginning of its nuclear weapons program in 1964, China has adopted an assured retaliation nuclear posture. The foundation of China's nuclear arsenal is to survive a first strike and provide a nuclear response in kind. The initial method China chose to execute this stance was to rely on ambiguous numbers and deployment procedures to deter nuclear use and coercion.³¹

China's nuclear posture stems from 1964 to the late 1980s.³² During this period, China relied on "the minimal means to stage a counterattack in case [China] suffered a surprise nuclear attack by the imperialist."³³ There were many terms used to describe China's posture at the time. They included minimum deterrence and what Vipin Narang calls assured retaliation. The Chinese themselves have never called it minimum deterrence, but align more with Narang's term of assured retaliation. China calls it an effective counterattack capability. The key features of China's posture were: "No first-use made credible by strong centralized and negative controls, survivability through dispersed and concealed stewardship procedures and numerical ambiguity, and punitive retaliatory strikes against key counter-value targets and soft counterforce targets to degrade the adversary's ability to follow-on with a second wave of nuclear forces."³⁴ China's nuclear program definitely followed through with its idea of creating a force that provides a credible response to any nuclear attack. China was strict that its nuclear weapons would only be used to deter an adversary's nuclear capability. The Chinese wanted to make this distinction from other countries, such as the United States that they claimed use nuclear weapons to deter conventional attacks. There were several characteristics of the Chinese nuclear force that supported their claimed posture.

The capabilities of China during this first phase supported its nuclear posture. China developed limited forces that were only deliverable by bomber or ballistic missiles. China focused primarily on ballistic missiles with the DF family of missiles. Prior to their work on developing the solid propellant ballistic missiles, Chinese missiles were all liquid fueled and this meant several hours of preparation for launch. Additionally, China possessed a limited capability to produce warheads with a rate of 10 per year. Another capability that adds to the supporting of China's posture was the size of its warheads. They were massive and had megaton yields.³⁵ The combination of these capabilities did not give China a credible first strike threat and made clear its posture was strictly for retaliatory purposes. The procedures for China also supported the no first-use claim.

China's timeline for nuclear strike is far from that of the United States or even Russia. China's timeline includes approval from the CMC chair, arming, and missile preparation. This timeline would allow an adversary to identify the preparation and take action. This action could easily disarm China's nuclear capabilities. This leads to the assessment that any attempt at nuclear first use by China would not be wise. Meaning the only conclusion given China timeline is that of a retaliatory posture. The early detection on the part of an adversary can be attributed to the size of China's nuclear force, which has increased over the years.

China's nuclear arsenal is still relatively small in size when compared to the United States and Russia. The small size further supports that posture, but also begs the question of whether or not the size of China's arsenal actually meets the requirements to "inflict unacceptable losses."³⁶ This question, has led to an assessment that a larger force for China might be necessary to meet the minimum deterrence posture. This assessment has been expanded due to the adversary missile defense and precision strike capabilities. The missile defense and precision strike capabilities have led to modernization efforts to "improve nuclear security, reliability, survivability, mobility, and penetration capabilities."³⁷ Ultimately, parts of China's modernization can be attributed to its continued commitment to meeting its assured retaliation nuclear posture.

Chinese Strategic Views of the United States

There are several reasons that drive China's strategic views of the United States. There are historical reasons such as threats in the 1950s from the United States to China, which drove China's need for nuclear weapons. These explicit threats stemmed from China's involvement in the Korean War. These threats from the United States established the adversarial relationship between the United States and China. This relationship was also cemented by the United States relationship with Taiwan. In 1950, the United States sent its Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Straits to prevent the spread of the Korean War southward.³⁸ This move angered China, but also prevented its invasion of Taiwan. Additionally, U.S. Air Force Headquarters assured PACAF that any communist assault on offshore islands would trigger immediate nuclear retaliation.³⁹ This was not the case as President Dwight Eisenhower immediately rejected the use of nuclear weapons. Once the Korean War was over, the United States "took steps that allied it more firmly with Taiwan."⁴⁰ This relationship with Taiwan has continued throughout the decades since 1950 and continues to influence the relationship between China and the United States.

There are also more recent reasons that have altered China's behavior with respect to nuclear weapons. The first reason was the "Asian pivot" by President Barack Obama's

administration. The rhetoric by the Obama administration might have been just that, but to the public is sent a message. There was renewed focus on Asia. This focus in action had not changed much, but the Chinese noticed and through the actions that took place, renewed some tension between China and the United States. The first action the United States took was signing the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Treaty, which the first principle being noninterference in the internal affairs of other signatories.⁴¹ China's concern was the United States was trying to contain it and realistically exclude it from Southeast Asia affairs. China also felt Obama administration policies were now provocative.

In 2010, China focused on three core interests: the continued monopoly on power of the Chinese Communist Party regime; territorial integrity and sovereignty; and an environment conducive to continued economic development.⁴² The problem the United States and China faced was that the United States would only agree to the last interest. The issue was that the United States disagreed with China on China's claim to Taiwan, the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, and the islands and waters of the South China Sea.⁴³ China realized this administration had a fundamentally different approach to them than in the past and the end result was to issue diplomatic threats against the United States. China also held several disputes with other countries in the region and this was seen as being assertive, but very disruptive in the region. The bilateral relationship between China and the United States had all but dissolved and one can argue this was a turning point in its renewed focus on the nuclear mission.

The second reason China has altered its strategic view of the United States was the release of the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). When the posture review was released, China was mentioned 36 times.⁴⁴ The previous review from 2002 only mentioned China a handful of times. The United States painted China as a nuclear power on the rise and a future adversary with which it might have to contend. The NPR left China confused at the United States intentions and realistically how the United States viewed strategic stability in China-United States relations. The fear from China is the United States wants to make China more transparent without the United States actually changing its own nuclear force. The United States is focused on understanding China's nuclear force, while China wants to know on what conditions the United States will actually use its nuclear weapons.

Lora Saalman asserts the intent is for the two sides to build a relationship based on mutual vulnerability, yet China is not accepting that relationship.⁴⁵ Saalman asserts that in order for the relationship between China and the United States to improve four issues must be resolved. The first is the two countries must define strategic stability and what bilateral nuclear cooperation means. Second, the United States must define and develop confidence-building measures. The third is China should engage in strategic stability talks now before new trends (arms race) develop. The final is that the United States and China should expand cooperation measures to deepen their interaction.⁴⁶

The final reason that China's views of the United States have changed is due to the changes in the security dynamics in the Southeast Asia region. These dynamics include shifts in balance of power between the United States and China, territorial disputes, and modernization programs across the region, but more specifically for the United States and China.⁴⁷ These dynamics present several unknowns. Without these dynamics being settled, it is hard to define what strategic stability should be between China and the United States. The main dynamic that is still left to question is the balance of power in the region. China's

power has risen since the United States began facing economic challenges in 2008.⁴⁸ A second reason is the role nuclear weapons play. Andrew O’Neil states: “Nuclear weapons are playing a greater role in the strategic calculations of states across Asia.”⁴⁹ The most important aspect of the nuclear weapons is not their existence, but their modernization and how that will affect the power balance. The United States has a technological nuclear and conventional advantage. China is seeking to balance that advantage through improved technology.

China’s Nuclear Force Modernization

China has always placed an emphasis on modernization since the early days of its nuclear program. The original intent was an eight-year plan that is highlighted above. The modernization of the Chinese forces from inception and well into the 1990s was a slow and gradual process that fell in line with their stated posture, a force capable of sustaining an attack and retaliating. Recently, China has placed more importance and emphasis in its PLA Rocket Forces, but more importantly the modernization of its nuclear arsenal. China has engaged in modernizing its strategic missiles to ensure they can provide a strike capable of reaching the United States. Prior to 2006, China only had one missile that was capable of reaching the United States and only a handful of those missiles in its arsenal. The problem is this missile, the DF-5A, is a silo-based liquid-fueled missile. To solve this problem, China’s modernization efforts focused on an improved ballistic missile and a submarine capability.

The ballistic missile modernization by China provides a reliable option to counter a U.S. first strike. The missiles developed are the DF-31A and DF-41 ICBMs, along with a SSBN fleet. The DF-31As are deploying now and provide China with a mobile solid-propellant capability versus its silo-based liquid propellant DF-5s. The DF-31A is capable of reaching the United States and is slated to be more survivable because of its mobility. There are an estimated 20 to 30 DF-31As in China’s inventory.⁵⁰ The number of missiles expected to reach the United States by mid 2020s is 100.⁵¹ The DF-41 is still under development, but might include a multiple independently targeted reentry vehicle (MIRV) capability that would make China’s nuclear force that much more lethal. The fielding of the Jin SSBN with the JL-2 has also greatly improved China’s nuclear force. The modernization of China’s nuclear force has been slow, but improvements in both capability and technology have made them vitally important to U.S. interests. Additionally, the roll out of new programs and technology for China in the past five years shows a renewed focus in modernization and ramping up the deployment of the new assets.

The modernization of China’s nuclear arsenal has been tied directly to concerns of a disarming a first strike by the United States. China wants to ensure its arsenal is not vulnerable to this type of attack. China is also focused on defeating the U.S. ballistic missile defense system with MIRV technology. Along with surviving an attack from the United States, China wants to ensure the United States remains vulnerable to a retaliatory strike. China is watching the U.S. modernization efforts and the significant amount of investment that is happening within the U.S. nuclear arsenal, and this has caused concern. In an article, Gregory Kulacki states: “The United States is unwilling to accept vulnerability to a Chinese retaliatory strike.”⁵² The conclusion is the United States will continue to try to remain ahead of Chinese technology and ensure they have a strong defense for a Chinese strike. Finally, the Chinese want to ensure they protect their arsenal from an American

“conventional precision global strike.”⁵³ China does not want to leave its arsenal easily targetable, which is why a heavy emphasis is placed on a modernized mobile force.

Has China Moved Away from an Assured Retaliation Posture?

The assured retaliation posture of China is arguably the backbone and foundation of its nuclear arsenal. This research paper sets to test the hypothesis that China moved away from the assured retaliation posture due to the United States conventional and nuclear superiority. The results show the hypothesis is incorrect and China is modernizing its nuclear arsenal to ensure it can produce a retaliatory strike. This lends to accepting the null hypothesis as fact. The results first show China is maintaining commitment to a force capable of assured retaliation. China has maintained that since 1964 and that has not changed. The nuclear force of China has not changed drastically from the mid-80s. The force still maintains a low number of deployed weapons and even when new systems come on line, the old systems are removed or retired. Additionally, the only new system that has been a significant advancement is the SSBN developed by China. The SSBN force is still small, and I argue is years away from being the capable force the Chinese envision. This means that currently China is nowhere near being set-up as a first strike force.

It is also hard to argue China is moving away from an assured retaliation posture when the Chinese are simply trying to match the technological capabilities of the United States. The capabilities they have developed are directly tied to an existing capability of the United States. The United States has been very open about its capabilities and China has simply done what any other country would have, adjust and ensure it did not fall farther behind in technology. The Chinese have always seen the United States as a nuclear threat and they are intent on ensuring their deterrent remains just that, a deterrent.

A third reason the hypothesis is incorrect, is the technical capability that currently exist for China is just not capable of providing a first strike on the United States. If tensions existed between the United States and China today, the United States would undoubtedly pay heavy attention to China’s nuclear arsenal. The time it would take for China to receive the command, set-up, and launch would be well outside of the time it would take the United States to deal a disabling strike. The posture and set up of China’s PLA Rocket Forces is just not built to deal the first strike necessary to make it worthwhile.

Finally, the changes in the force structure is also a sign that China is maturing a military force and trying to remain on par with the United States when it comes to be a professional force that can deliver a devastating blow. I originally assumed China was following a Russian model and was looking to build a similar force structure as Russia, but I assess they have been paying a great deal of attention to the United States. I state this claim because the Chinese have essentially brought their PLA Rocket Forces to an equal level within the PLA, which is similar to the U.S. Air Force bringing Global Strike Command to a similar level to the other major commands.

U.S. Takeaways

There are several takeaways from this paper that can be highlighted to both improve strategic stability with China, but also improve the understanding of China’s nuclear forces. There are two takeaways that I want to highlight: China is ensuring its nuclear force remains credible for an alternate reason and in order for the United States to remain ahead in the technology gap, it must stop advertising its capabilities. The first takeaway stems

from China's thought to wrestle away the balance of power from the United States in Southeast Asia. The Chinese may not publicly state this is the case, but based on their core interest previously discussed and actions to counter the U.S. Asian pivot, I argue they are definitely trying to be the premier power in the region.

Economically, when the United States was down, China was the economic power. However, from a pure military standpoint, China was still leagues below the United States and could not compete conventionally or in the nuclear realm. In order to truly be the power in the region, the Chinese had to improve their military. The bulk of the improvement came through nuclear modernization. The nuclear modernization is key to keeping the United States at an arms distance, and second-guessing any type of military action against China. The conclusion is China realizes the importance the United States places on nuclear weapons and will use that to its advantage once the Chinese have achieved some form of technological balance with the United States. This utilization may be a more aggressive stance or it could be used diplomatically to ensure Chinese territorial claims are respected.

The second takeaway is the United States openly advertising its military capabilities and numbers for China to analyze. The Chinese have repeatedly stated the reason for their modernization was purely due to the large technological advantage the United States has. China wants to comfortably know they can retaliate against the United States after absorbing a first strike. For a good part of the 1980s and early 1990s, China believed what they had in place was fine and continued to develop and modernize at a snail's pace. It is safe to say due to the open advertisement of the advances in technology the United States has achieved, China has reversed course and is trying hard to maintain pace with the United States

I recommend the United States focus efforts on ensuring future capabilities and numbers remain ambiguous in order to ensure China does not try to match the technological advantage. I also recommend these remain ambiguous because it may bring China to the table to discuss strategic stability and how does the stability remain between the two powers. China relies on the unknown as part of its deterrent, but I argue the United States should take a page from China's book and see how they deal with the unknown. There is no guarantee at how China will react to a change in American openness, but the United States must start thinking in the same manner as China in order to maintain strategic stability in East Asia.

Conclusion

China's nuclear force roots go back to the early 1960s. China responded to an American threat and put heavy focus on developing a nuclear capability. Upon successfully testing a nuclear device, China declared an assured retaliation posture. The years that preceded this declaration saw China develop a missile force that at the time was capable of providing a retaliatory strike in Asia. China continued to progress and modernize its forces, and eventually focused development efforts towards solid-propellant missiles. This development encompassed much of China's efforts for most of the 1980s to the present today. Additionally, the Chinese focused their efforts towards SSBN development. This has led to their development efforts coming to completion and deploying in the past few years.

In recent years, China has reemphasized its nuclear force and even elevated the force to its own separate service. Additionally, China has continued progressing its force

to ensure it provides a survivable, but capable force geared toward the United States. China has consistently stated its modernization efforts are in response to American advances in technology and remains a no first-use country. While this is the case and all evidence points to this claim, China still has an unwritten goal of maintaining a credible nuclear force for deterrent purposes. These deterrent purposes are focused on balancing the United States for power in Southeast Asia and ensuring Chinese interests are both met and respected.

Notes

¹ Jeffrey Lewis, *The Minimum Means of Reprisal: China's Search for Security in the Nuclear Age* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 55.

² Ibid., 53.

³ Ibid., 55.

⁴ Ibid., 56.

⁵ Ibid., 56.

⁶ Ibid., 57.

⁷ Ibid., 57.

⁸ Ibid., 57.

⁹ Ibid., 58.

¹⁰ Ibid., 59.

¹¹ Ibid., 64.

¹² Ibid., 64.

¹³ Ibid., 65.

¹⁴ Ibid., 64.

¹⁵ Ibid., 65.

¹⁶ Ibid., 66.

¹⁷ Ibid., 66.

¹⁸ Ibid., 67.

¹⁹ Ibid., 67.

²⁰ Ibid., 69.

²¹ Ibid., 70.

²² Ibid., 71.

²³ Ibid., 72.

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Shannon

CHAPTER 10

Why Russians Value Strength Over Prosperity

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Vladimir Putin's identity conception affects Russia's development of advanced military technologies. The effect is that Putin prioritizes these technologies, particularly strategic weaponry, over other forms of state development. Putin chooses this because he is a reflection of Russian identity and the people's expectations regarding Russian leaders. Russia's identity of strength through power leads Russian governments to favor developing military strength over other forms of national strength, such as diplomacy or economics. Putin shares this preference since he shares and plays to the general Russian national identity. Thus, in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union, Putin's first priority was to restore Russia's military and strategic position *vis-a-vis* the West, particularly toward the United States. In the nuclear age, superpower military competition is defined by nuclear weapons, ballistic missile, and long-range strike capabilities. Therefore, Putin and Russia chose to bolster and modernize their nuclear arsenal, delivery systems, and anti-ballistic missile capabilities.

My research is aimed at Russia's identity of strength through power, which leads Russian governments to favor developing military strength over other forms of national strength, such as diplomacy or economics. I will seek to answer the question of how Vladimir Putin's identity conception affects Russia's development of advanced military technologies. First, the national identity of the Russian people must be understood to attempt at drawing a viable conclusion. Second, does the type of advanced technology being developed directly relate to the identity of the Russian people? A focus area of this research will be in determining a correlation between identity and advanced technological development.

Vladimir Putin's identity reflects the national identity of the Russian people, who believe that Russia must show strength and power above all else. With this in mind, I seek to prove that Vladimir Putin is driving investment in advanced technology systems. It is my belief that the reason Russia continues to develop advanced weapons is directly related to Vladimir Putin and his involvement as president and prime minister from 1999 to present. Advanced technological systems are those that strategically protect Russia, especially militarily. My hypothesis is Putin prefers to demonstrate Russian strength and guarantee Russian national security through developing advanced technology over developing other forms of state power.

Background

Vladimir Putin was born in St. Petersburg, then called Leningrad, in 1952. He had a normal upbringing and trained extensively in judo, which he became the Leningrad city champion in 1974. He has credited the sport of judo as what got him off the city streets and

forever changed his life. In 1975, Putin graduated from Leningrad State University with his law degree and was accepted into the KGB that same year.²

The career of Putin during his KGB days is sketchy at best. What is currently known today is he went to Moscow for training. He was then sent to Leningrad in the foreign intelligence division, assigned to Germany after learning to speak German, then returned to Russia in 1989.³ Putin had a reputation of a “laid back” KGB agent, which probably stems from his administrative style. Putin believes in the bureaucracy of the system and that decisions are gradually made and incremental. Further, even the most difficult problem could be solved using a structured, methodological approach.⁴

Putin received his political start when Russian President Boris Yeltsin promoted him to become his prime minister in 1999 as he had shed his “laid back” reputation for “a man that can get things done.”⁵ When Yeltsin resigned in December of that same year, he also appointed Putin as president and served two terms.⁶ Since Russian rules prevent any person serving more than two consecutive terms as president, President Dmitry Medvedev 2008 – 2012, appointed Putin to be prime minister once again. Vladimir Putin was re-elected president in 2012 and is due for re-election next year. In short, Putin has had a career as either Russia’s prime minister or president since 1999 directly affecting Russian policy for nearly 18 years. I want to determine how a country collapses at the beginning of the 1990s and continues to invest in weapons programs.

Literature Review

Some authors have discussed what it is like to be Russian and understanding them is important to the strategic picture. What they have found is that Russians are not Asians. They are not Europeans either, but they are uniquely Russian. Their national identity is vastly different from anywhere else on the globe. In the book *National Identity and Ethnicity in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, it was noted that the geographical position of Russia will tend to explain some of their different strengths and weaknesses. As we know, the country of Russia is an expansive land mass that provides almost no natural barrier to any kind of invasion. It has great expanses of land that are uninhabitable with borders stretching from both Europe and Asia.⁷ The importance of this vast expanse of land cannot be understated. It is this vast expanse of land that gives the Russian people their national identity. Russians do not view themselves as Europeans, Westerners, or Asians. The people view themselves as uniquely Russian. For example, the people that live in Siberia, where the weather is very harsh, pride themselves on their rough living conditions. They take pride in their ability to overcome the weather and make a living there. These people that live in the frozen tundra of Russia are very different from those that live in warmer climates. There was a saying that cold kept out the riff raff and the same parallel could be drawn in Russia today. Life in Russia is difficult and the people are extremely proud of that.

What also makes Russians uniquely different is the security concerns that they have. Since the Russian countryside is made up of vast expanses of land easy to invade, it makes Russians extremely sensitive to any encroachment on or around their border. Since 1812, Russia has been invaded by France’s Napoleon, Imperial Germany, and Nazi Germany. Border security is a unique challenge for the country of Russia due to the sheer size of the country. Since it is not feasible to place troops along the entire country’s border, it offers multiple potential invasion points for an adversary. Additionally, with no natural

geographic features to act as a barrier to an invading force, invaders can grab a lot of territory before Russia can mount any resistance. Furthermore, since invasion is easy and border security is difficult, the Russian people rely on a critical land buffer to halt the invading land forces before critical positions are taken within their country. Due to these unique geographical vulnerabilities, any potential aggressor along the border is cause for concern.

These unique factors were highlighted as NATO considered admitting Georgia and Ukraine as new NATO members. What the world witnessed firsthand was Russia's reaction to a potential adversary along the border. President Putin publicly stated that admitting Georgia and Ukraine into NATO would be a threat to Russian national security.⁸ Furthermore, a Russian paper reported that while President Vladimir Putin was discussing with, at the time President George W. Bush, that Ukraine would cease to exist if it was accepted into NATO. While these comments were made publicly, both the United States and NATO failed to heed the warning by Russia that agreeing to admit Georgia and Ukraine as new members would provide a direct threat to Russian national security. It should not have come as a surprise when Russia invaded Georgia and Ukraine years later, but it was a surprise for those who ignored Russian security interests. As Mearsheimer stated, "great powers are always sensitive to potential threats near their home territory."⁹ There are arguments that Vladimir Putin is a threat to the entire region based on Russia's expansionist actions in Georgia and Ukraine. This perception is undoubtedly concerning to the rest of the world. Since Russia continues to reject Western institutions, like NATO, the view can be taken they do not want to play nicely with the rest of the world. In this sense, Russia is viewed as a threat and the blame falls squarely on President Vladimir Putin. Considering that Putin has been the president or prime minister of Russia since 1999, it makes sense to assess all bad Russian behavior is mainly the fault of Putin. While these views seem true to an outsider, we must look again at Russian actions through the lens of a Russian.

National Identity

A national identity conception (NIC) is, "an individual's understanding of the nation's identity – his or her sense of what the nation naturally stands for and of how high it naturally stands, in comparison to others in the international arena."¹⁰ The Russian people have long been invaded due to the size of the country and lack of natural barriers. Defending such a large geographic area is problematic when the land is both inviting to traverse and with a near limitless border. To make matters worse, there are large areas in the north of Russia that are mostly uninhabited and infertile. These regions must be continuously monitored by the government to detect another country with expansionary interests.¹¹ There are scholars that suggest the geographic issues have caused the Russian people to not have a unified national identity so they form an identity solely based on power or the appearance of power.¹² If there is no identity for the Russian people, except through power, then the people should respond well to Putin showcasing his power. Russians have always wanted a strong leader and they respect the strength when it becomes known to the world.

Putin's Rise

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the country descended from the world stage and retrenched. During this period, the military went into a state of disarray. The people lacked enough food to eat, and there was no sense of security for the people of Russia. As Putin rose to power in 1999, he inherited a country that could only be described as a mess. His first objective was to prop up the military and get it paid by the federal government again, as portions were being paid by regional governments to help maintain order. Getting the military functional again should have signaled to the rest of the world that the Russians view security as one of the most important tenants. After security was restored the rest of the social problems plaguing the nation were fixed.

Today President Putin is seen as the second most popular person behind Joseph Stalin.¹³ The answer for his popularity is because President Putin is behaving as a majority of Russian people want ... and they love him for his behavior. Russians have always wanted a strong leader and they respect the strength when it becomes known to the world. For example, this power identity can be explained well during a poll taken after the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, in which Putin received a 96 percent approval rating.¹⁴ Furthermore, some argue that the nuclear weapons possessed by Russia are not for strategic stability, but exist now to reinforce its national identity of power.¹⁵ President Putin is acting like any other Russian by projecting power and it should be understood by the world why Russian act the way they do. Without a strong reliance on Russia's natural resources, Putin could not have restored Russia in the way we know it today.

Beginning in 1999 and going through 2008, Russia had one of the fastest growing economies, thanks to skyrocketing oil and gas prices. Through Putin's reliance on exporting these precious resources, he was able to garner extraordinary amounts of revenue that was used to pay the Russian debt down to \$37 billion dollars.¹⁶ Instead of investing in its economy, Putin poured more money into defense programs, which will be discussed later.

Vladimir Putin's Identity

Putin's political views were very similar to the politicians in the late 1990s with the focus on restoring order within the country.¹⁷ In 1996, Russian politicians' efforts were keen on preserving what remained of the state while advocating she rise to a "state power" once again.¹⁸ The people were determined to see their country come back from the brink and into greatness. The relationship between Russia and her people are vastly different from those in the Western countries.

In Russia, the popular belief is Mother Russia must be protected by her people, but she does not protect her own citizens. This is a stark contrast compared with the United States where the government exists to protect its citizens. In this view, the state comes before the people and all people must be subordinate to Russia and her interests. Vladimir Putin views himself as a statist and has publicly presented himself in this light.¹⁹ Putin declared that he was a "*gosudarstvennik*, a builder of the state, a servant of the state." A *gosudarstvennik* is a term referring to someone who is a permanent servant to the state and only believes in the state itself.²⁰ This became apparent on Dec. 29, 1999, when the Russian government posted Putin's 5,000-word treatise commonly referred to as the "Millennium Message."²¹ In Putin's Manifesto, he stated that the Russian State lost status when its people were divided, when the common values that united Russians were lost. Russians

had falsely embraced personal freedoms and rights. They needed to stop putting themselves above Russia. If they continue down this road, it may mean the end for their country. Russian survival hinged upon patriotism, collectivism, solidarity, and the belief that Russia has always been destined to be a great power.

For us, the state and its institutions and structures have always played an exceptionally important role in the life of the country and the people. For Russians, a strong state is not an anomaly to fight against. Quite the contrary, it is the source and guarantor of order, the initiator and the main driving force of any change. Society desires the restoration of the guiding and regulating role of the state.²² The role in keeping the state at the front of his mind can also be seen with Putin's reliance on food, gas, and oil to prevent the state from collapsing.

King and Hill suggest that Vladimir Putin appears to be a survivalist and not a survivor.²³ Survivors live against the odds. A survivalist is one who is prepared for the worst. A survivalist mentality is a mindset widely shared by all Russians of all backgrounds since they have shared experiences of war and privation.²⁴ Due to these experiences, Russians constantly think of the worst-case scenario and plan for it.²⁵ This survivalist mentality can be seen when Putin began to stockpile strategic reserves as he prepared for the worst. From 2000 to 2008, Russia increased its reserves of oil, gas, and food from \$8.5 billion to more than \$600 billion.²⁶ This planning paid dividends when the stock market plummeted in 2008-2009. Thanks to these stockpiled reserves, Russia was able to ride out the crisis fairly well and reinforced Putin's survivalist mentality.²⁷ In April 2012, Putin's remarks made the case for him as a survivalist clear.

In assessing the results of the previous four years, we can state – with full justification – that Russia has not only overcome the [economic] crisis, but we have made a serious, significant, notable step forward, we have become stronger than we were before. Where can we turn to {if there is a crisis}? Well Greece can go to Brussels for money, and will get it, but who will give us money? Someone could also give it to us, but with what conditions attached? I remember this situation very well after 2000, when we were overburdened with debts and when people forced conditions on us. In Russia, we have a very specific set of circumstances – being without reserves is very dangerous.²⁸ It is clear that Vladimir Putin is both a survivalist and a statist. He acts accordingly to ensure the survival of Russia at all costs even putting the state first, which is a uniquely Russian trait.

Advanced Technology

On May 16, 2003, President Putin announced that the next generation of Russian strategic weapons are almost complete.²⁹ He was referring to a fourth-generation nuclear warhead that is designed to defeat the United States' Ballistic Missile Defense system. Additionally, by 2020 the Russians are expected to field the RS-28 Sarmat, commonly referred to as the "country killer" since it can carry 10 to 24 nuclear warheads.³⁰

Further research investment has been conducted in the fields of nanotechnology and biotechnology beginning as a stated Russian objective in 2004.³¹ In fact, Russia was investing around \$1 billion a year in nanotechnology making it one of the world leaders in 2013.³² It is not known what the strategic goals are for the program at the current time. However, the technology could be weaponized in some way. Russia currently has multiple weapons under development. The Russians are looking at fielding a new intercontinental

ballistic missile (ICBM) RS-28 Sarmat, a new nuclear missile submarine, YU-71/74 and BrahMos II hypersonic weapons, new PAK-DA long-range subsonic bomber, and S-500 air defense missiles. The question we need to look at is why they have decided to embark on a journey where these new systems will be fielded.

Results

RS-28 Sarmat ICBM

The RS-28 Sarmat ICBM was approved for development in 2012 by the Russian Defense Ministry.³³ The missile will replace the Cold War-era SS-18 Satan and carry up to 16 nuclear warheads, with a circular error probable of 10 meters, or three YU-71 hypersonic glide vehicles.³⁴ The Sarmat should be deployed by 2020.

The decision to press forward with a modern ICBM came after the Georgia and before the Ukraine incidents. NATO and Russia relations were stressed as Russia viewed potential NATO expansion as a direct threat to national security. Furthermore, the new ICBM will allow aging issues with parts to be resolved, which are similar issues facing the current Minuteman III ICBM fleet operated by the United States. Since Russia has not developed an ICBM since the Cold War ended, it seems prudent to push for a new technology that can meet the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) requirements, but give the Russian people more capability for weapon systems of tomorrow. It appears that Putin realized the aging problems that plague systems developed during the 1980s and has wanted to improve on the existing systems. This new capability would ensure his nuclear delivery platforms would be viable for years to come without the perpetual discussion of obsolescence being brought up routinely.

According to Deputy Defense Minister Yury Borisov, the new ICBM will be capable of penetrating almost any air defense system. It was developed in response to the U.S. Prompt Global Strike system of weapons.³⁵ The Moscow Times has reported the Russian government plans to spend \$23 trillion on weapons programs by 2020. The dramatic increase in defense spending, coupled with President Putin's belief in a strong state, further suggests he would rather see Russia as a strong superpower through military strength instead of boosting its own economy.

It is obvious that Putin has pushed these new ICBMs to directly counter the U.S. missile shield capability as well to enhance his nation's own survival. The older strategic nuclear weapons are left over from the Cold War and these new missiles will now surpass the United States in missile technology. The new prestigious weapons will continue to propel Putin's view as an emerging superpower while ensuring the survival of the state.

YU-71 Hypersonic Vehicle

Russia has been working on hypersonic technology since the Cold War, but only since the 2000s has the program been restarted.³⁶ YU-71 hypersonic vehicle, codenamed "Project 4202," is expected to have a speed of 7,000 miles per hour, deliver a nuclear warhead with precision accuracy, all while being incredibly difficult to detect. It is designed to be carried by the RS-28 Sarmat.³⁷ Since the YU-71 is maneuverable, and does not follow a traditional ballistic trajectory, it can easily defeat any anti-ballistic missile shield in place once fielded.

In 2001, President George W. Bush withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty that the United States signed with the Soviet Union in 1972. President Putin quickly responded that the decision was erroneous on the part of the United States as both sides have the capability to overcome missile defenses.³⁸ While President Putin seems to be publicly stating it is not a cause for concern for the United States withdrawal, the only way to overwhelm an ABM shield is by saturating the system with targets. As the United States develops the technology to defend themselves from a single strike, it would seem natural that Russia would counter the threat with a maneuverable weapon. Considering the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THADD) system has been getting better at striking targets, it makes sense for Russia to continue pushing for a way to defeat the U.S. THADD system and anywhere else the system is deployed. Without a way to mitigate the United States ABM shield threat, the Russians could find themselves at a strategic disadvantage with respect to their perceived national security threats.

Taking into account the ABM threat, Putin has raised the bar in technology against the United States. With the ability to glide nearly anywhere around the world, undeterred by a missile shield, Putin will now have the ability to be in a position of power holding nearly any target at risk. This technology ensures Russia's survival as an attack upon the country could be met with a nuclear retaliatory strike with no warning. Putin continues to play the part of survivalist while still neglecting the Russian economy in favor of military power.

Tupolev PAK-DA

The decision to proceed with the PAK-DA was made in 2012.³⁹ Currently, Russia does not have anything close to the B-2 Spirit or its replacement the B-21 Raider. The PAK-DA will be a stealth bomber that carries its payload internally whose design is a flying wing, similar to the existing B-2.⁴⁰ The idea is to complement the new Tu-160M2, which closely resembles the B-1, which will be an air launched cruise missile platform. The new PAK-DA is designed to be a territory penetrator instead of a stand-off weapons platform like the Tu-160M2.⁴¹

During 2012, President Putin said: "We have to develop work on the new PAK-DA long-range bomber aircraft for Long-Range Aviation. I know how expensive and complex this is. We have talked about this many times with ministers, and with the head of the General Staff. The task is not easy from a scientific-technical standpoint, but we need to start work."⁴² With the potential NATO encroachment issues going on, it appears Putin sees it as important to Russia to have the ability to penetrate into airspace without being seen, a capability that the United States has enjoyed for the previous two decades.

Another facet of the PAK-DA development is Russia will be able to project power around the world from any base where the PAK-DA is located. Power projection is a tool the United States relies upon for many deterrence situations. This ability allows Putin to foster his view of Russia as a great power while protecting Mother Russia simultaneously.

S-500 Air Defense Missile

The S-500 missile is designed to swat down incoming ballistic missiles and low-orbiting satellites. The system will complement the existing S-400, which are designed for anti-air attack. The S-500 will ensure a missile shield is firmly in place around wherever the system is deployed.⁴³ The new system will be very similar in capability to the U.S.

THAAD capability, but it is likely the deployment will be delayed similar to the THAAD programs issues with hitting the intended target.

While the S-500's acquisition date is unknown at the time, it is known that this weapon system would eventually provide Russia, and her allies, the protection from one to 10 re-entry vehicles, but also against the new F-22 and F-35 fighter aircraft.⁴⁴ This ability to shoot down United States aircraft has the ability to be highly desired all over the world to aggressor nations of the United States and NATO.

There is no other logical conclusion for the development of this system than the protection of Russia, which Putin lives to serve. The missile system will provide security for the entire country against missile threats and sixth-generation fighter aircraft. Vladimir Putin effectively ensures Russia's survival from nearly any outside adversary. Once again, Russia is planning for the worst-case scenario and this weapon system seems to do just that.

Implications

As noted above, Putin is behaving just like any Russian who views the survival of the state and that the people exist to serve Russia. Through this connection, it will not matter if Putin is re-elected as the president of Russia because the people believe having power, real or imagined, is important for their own national identity and this view will still be perpetuated by those at the top. With this in mind, Russians will continue to act aggressively within the international system and develop strategic weapon systems to defend their vast homeland from any perceived threat.

Russia's nuclear capabilities are another factor that makes them a threat to the United States. Russia was the only player in the Cold War, other than the United States, and they are attempting to get their prestige back as a superpower to be reckoned with. Superpowers have nuclear weapons and powerful militaries. Russia has completely modernized both of these and has touted its power by invading Crimea, indicating that Russia was acting like a superpower again. It seemed to have worked since the rest of the world looked on as Crimea was absorbed into Russia. Russia's nuclear weapons are great cause for concern for those within close proximity of Russian territory and its strategic forces are of concern for the entire world.

The NATO discussion has already been identified, but what has not been discussed is the threat of NATO expansion coupled with a misunderstanding between Russia that could lead the world into a nuclear exchange. An easy way to get into a misunderstanding involves messaging from one country to another. In the paragraphs above it is shown how President Putin made public remarks against allowing Georgia and Ukraine into NATO.

Another example is the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and the mixed signals that were unintentionally sent by both the Soviet Union and the United States.⁴⁵ In this case, the world almost experienced a World War III, even though it was apparent neither side wanted to go to war, because of messaging from one country to another. As Heisbourg notes, societies lack imagination to completely think through a problem that has not happened, which seems to be completely outside the realm of reality.⁴⁶ Knowing how Russia perceives threats to its security, it seems possible that NATO or another country could encroach upon Russia's border. This encroachment could cause Putin, or his people, to feel threatened and may escalate to conflict where Russia attacks the perceived threat, again. If the nation is a NATO member, Article V could be invoked, which will cause other

allied countries to come defend the nation under attack. This defensive rally may pressure Russia to be more threatened and cause it to potentially use nuclear weapons. As shown above, this scenario may occur, or it may not, but it can all be caused by a misunderstanding between two nations. It is important that the United States understands how actions are perceived on the other side of the table and to take the Russian threat seriously.

Now that the Russian concerns are understood, the United States can effectively develop its relationship with Russia with a selective engagement strategy. This strategy is the correct one because Russian leaders are clearly seeing the world through a realist lens and selective engagement focuses on large concentrations of power.⁴⁷ Since Russians believe their nation is a superpower, this strategy should be attractive to them while allowing the United States to pursue stabilizing security policies in the surrounding region since any great power in Eurasia remains a potential threat to the United States.⁴⁸

With Russia's significant nuclear arsenal and willingness to use military force in the region, the United States can no longer afford to deny this threat any longer. Any conflict with a U.S. ally or NATO member has the ability to draw the United States, or another great power, into conflict with Russia. It is in the best interest of the United States to avoid any war with Russia. Additionally, the selective engagement strategy, based on power, means the United States must continue to have a strong military force to properly threaten and deter potential wars.⁴⁹ Thus, constant dialogue and frank communication is required to prevent any misunderstanding between the two nations. This dialogue needs to occur at all levels of the government, especially between President Donald Trump and President Putin. United Nations ambassadors must openly discuss concerns each country has at all meetings and especially in front of the U.N. General Assembly. These discussions will show Russia that the United States understands its concerns, especially with respect to national security, and can mitigate potential problem areas other nations do not understand. While communicating with Russia is important, it must also be clearly stated that the United States is committed to defending its allies. Since the Russians hold a nation's power in high regard, this message must be made clearly to prevent any aggression by Russia.

As the United States clearly communicates intentions and their assurances to allies, they must also champion for continued NATO preservation to maintain a balance of power in Eurasia. However, the United States must maintain, that prior to any potential NATO expansion, all concerns are adequately addressed, or risk another Georgia or Ukraine incident. Maintaining a proper balance of power is critical in the region so one country does not get aspirations for expansion. NATO is a great mechanism to preserve the regional power balance and keeps the greatest threat to the United States in check.

In conclusion, the way to deal with Russia on the international stage is for the United States to continue projecting power to adversaries and allies as this is what Russia respects. A selective engagement strategy acknowledges Russian security concerns and provides a way to deal with them. Further, President Putin has traditionally acted the same way Russians do and is not an expansionist, but he is merely Russian and this behavior will not change. Finally, the United States and NATO must maintain the proper balance of power while maintaining caution in their expansion, or else they could find themselves fighting World War III.

Notes

¹ I wish to thank Dr. Todd Robinson and Dr. Jim Platte for their thoughtful insights into this research. All errors found herein are my own.

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CHAPTER 11

Russian Conception of Strategic Stability and Its Impact On Force Integration

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“Eternal peace lasts only until the next war” – Russian Proverb¹

As if the world today did not have enough threats from transnational and non-state terrorist organizations, unwanted immigration and global warming, now there are rumblings of a resurgent Russia and the beginnings of a new Cold War. More specifically, Russia’s integration of its nuclear and conventional forces is causing alarm in the West. In his paper “Nuclear Weapons in Russia’s Approach to Conflict,” Dave Johnson writes: “Russia’s reliance upon integrated conventional and nuclear capabilities in reasserting its influence in its perceived sphere of special interest, intended to contain conflicts at a manageable level, could actually increase the risk of the potential employment of nuclear weapons.”²

Similarly, Malcom Davis, writes “... it’s the integration of Russia’s conventional pre-nuclear forces with its large ‘non-strategic nuclear forces’ that’s of greatest significance. That’s shaping Russian thinking on the use of nuclear weapons ... in a way that makes the risk of a crisis with Russia much more dangerous.”³ Further examination of contemporary literature shows these two authors are not the only ones talking about the rising threat presented by Russia, its resurgence, and more specifically its integration of nuclear and conventional forces.

A change in Russia’s force posture, explicitly the change to integrate conventional and nuclear forces, must have been driven by something specific. If, as Davis, Johnson and others suggest, Russia is doing something new, why are they doing it? Was it caused by a specific event, or is it possible the integration can be viewed a different way? Perhaps this change is not a revolutionary one, but simply a change in Russia’s emphasis on nuclear weapons. How can we know? One way to examine this problem is to look at Russian military doctrine from Cold War to today. The examination should identify both what Russia considers as threats and subsequently their military capability and posture to address those threats.

Russia’s view of strategic stability in the post-Cold War era, the concept that its military must have the capability to deal with any threat to the nation and therefore the subsequent integration of conventional and nuclear forces, has been shaped by the nation’s perception of threats to its national integrity from the United States and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies and their military’s inability to deal with those threats conventionally. As such, this paper will demonstrate that: 1) Russia perceives the United States and its NATO allies as threats, 2) over time, the Russian military’s conventional capability has waxed and waned, and 3) consequently, Russia has adapted its conventional and nuclear posture based on perceived threats from the United States and its NATO allies.

In order to show why Russia has integrated its conventional and nuclear forces, this paper will focus on the Russian military's capability to address its stated threats. To do this, it will examine the Russian military doctrine with regard to time and characterize the threats and force capabilities along that timeline. It will also evaluate the context within which the doctrines were published to determine if there may be other factors worth consideration with regard to force posture. Finally, it will relate these shifts back to strategic stability to determine the level of impact the Russian idea of strategic stability has on its force posture.

What is Strategic Stability?

The Origins of the Strategic Stability Concept

The idea of strategic stability reaches back to the Cold War. Although there were a number of different interpretations of the idea, an agreed upon definition of strategic stability first appeared in the June 1990 "Soviet-United States Joint Statement on the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Arms."⁴ The joint statement presented strategic stability as "such balance of strategic forces of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. (or such state of the two powers' strategic relations) where there were no incentives for a first strike."⁵ While that context and idea worked fairly well for a bi-polar world, things have changed since the end of the Cold War. Strategic stability may no longer really have a single definition. As the well-known Thomas Schelling wrote: "Now the world is so much changed, so much more complicated, so multivariate, so unpredictable, involving so many nations and cultures and languages in nuclear relationships, many of them asymmetric, that it is even difficult to know how many meanings there are for strategic stability."⁶ With that considered, there are varying ideas of what strategic stability is in the Russian context.

Strategic Stability in the Russian Context

Even when examining the narrower field of Russian concepts of strategic stability, the field is relatively divided. As pointed out by James Acton in his chapter in the book *Strategic Stability: Contending Interpretations*, the Russians use the strategic stability term as "some form of diplomatic spackling paste." They tie it to a classic view of avoiding first use and a broader view of threats from "imbalances in 'conventional armaments and armed forces.'"⁷ Another author in the same collection, Matthew Rojansky, adds to the "diplomatic spackling paste" view when he defines it in terms of Russia's desire for security. As Rojansky puts it, "anything that appears to make Russia less secure, from NATO's encroachment into Eastern Europe, to provocations by former Soviet neighbors ... is 'destabilizing.'"⁸

Soviet and Russian Military Doctrine

Similar to the amount of published material on strategic stability, there is a fair amount of material that discusses published Russian military doctrine. Much of this material examines the individual publications and the background behind changes in the doctrine. What this paper offers in contrast is a summary of each of Russia's published doctrines, from the Cold War-era to the latest, published in 2014, with a subsequent comparison across the publications. The goal of this comparison is to establish how the

doctrine spells out how the Russian military is postured to deal with its stated threats.

The following section lays out a summary of officially published Soviet and Russian Military Doctrine from the last years of the Cold War up to the 2014 version. At the end of the section is a table (*Table 1, Summary of Doctrine and Respective Threats and Nuclear Posture*) that summarizes the key commonalities and differences of the doctrine that help to demonstrate Russia's conception of strategic stability.

Cold War Doctrine

The Russian military doctrine in the late 1980s and early 1990s, just prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, tells much about the national priorities and perceived threats. The basics of the Gorbachev era military doctrine can be summed up as “reasonable sufficiency,” which in simple terms is a purely defensive doctrine.⁹ The Russians intent in the event of an invasion or attack was to remain on the defensive for two to three weeks during which they would attempt to make peace – and only if peace talks failed would they counterattack.¹⁰ Even more specifically, the doctrine actually barred the development of large-scale offensives and left the option of preemptive strikes on the table.¹¹ However, what drove this doctrine at a time of tension like the Cold War?

There are a couple of driving factors to the “reasonable sufficiency” doctrine in Russia. The first is the massive size and capability of the Soviet military and the second was an acknowledgement from the Soviet government that it was rejecting the previous assumption that a nuclear war could actually be won.¹² When it comes to the Soviet military, William Odem points out, “no state in the world rivals the U.S.S.R. in its combination of size, sophistication and command and control of military forces.”¹³ Overall the Soviet Union maintained more than five million personnel on active duty with another 55 million in the reserves, 200 divisions, 4,900 tactical aircraft, almost 1,200 bombers, 360 attack and cruise missile submarines, 76 ballistic missile submarines, and extensive hardened and redundant command and control facilities.¹⁴ This is an absolutely stunning military force, but what drove the Soviets to field a force so large in the first place?

According to Odem, there are three potential answers to the previous question: 1) as an “action-reaction” response to U.S. force build ups, 2) as a response to the Russian history of being invaded, and 3) as dictated by ideology, the idea that they have to be able to ensure “the victory of socialism.”¹⁵ While he offers that there is some truth to each, Odem also points out some detractors to each answer. Most pertinent to the thesis of this paper, Odem points out that a 36 of the 38 military campaigns fought by Russia between 1700 and 1890 were offensive, not defensive in nature.¹⁶ That being acknowledged, the idea of countering an invading threat does play a part in the rest of Soviet doctrine.

In an examination of Soviet military doctrine, Odem identifies what he calls the “triad” of capabilities, listed in priority: 1) defend the rear, 2) seize contiguous land theaters, and 3) project into noncontiguous theaters affecting contiguous campaigns.¹⁷ The first of these, defending the rear, focuses on providing defense for the homeland and preparing the force, both active and reserve for mobilization. It makes sense, especially considering the Russian experience in World War II and during other invasions, that Russia would see a need to provide for survivable command and control and rapidly mobilized forces. In the second, Odem highlights the Soviet goal of defeating NATO's nuclear forces using conventional Soviet weapons, again harkening back to the idea that a nuclear war cannot be won.¹⁸ Of course, the third part of the triad is the ability to reach out and impact

an outside theater, but it of the least importance when it comes to Soviet military doctrine priorities.

In summary, the Russian military doctrine prior to the end of the Cold War:

1. *Focused on defensive operations, through the use of its extremely large and capable military.*
2. *Did not condone Russian preemptive strikes.*
3. *Advocated the use of conventional weapons to defeat nuclear forces.*

Russia's 1993 Military Doctrine (The First of the Post-Cold War Doctrines)

Following the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union, the Russian military was left with an obsolete doctrine and little quality guidance on how to adjust to Russia's new place in the international system. This condition changed partially in the early summer of 1992 when the Russian government published the draft of a new military doctrine significantly different from that of the Soviet era.¹⁹ It took more than a year, but an actual approved and signed version of this draft came out in November 1993.²⁰

When it was published, the 1993 version of Russian military doctrine changed a number of things from the previous Soviet version. It changed from a defensive to offensive focus and reverted from a policy of no nuclear use to one where nuclear use is possible.²¹ Additionally, it placed more emphasis on strategic non-nuclear forces and the need for advancement in command and control, precision guided weapons, and other military technology seen in the West.²² Finally, it addressed concerns about Russian citizens living in the states of the former Soviet Union.²³

In his paper "New Russian Military Doctrine: Sign of the Times," James Slagle identified three main reasons for the development of the new doctrine and its differences from the Soviet model. First, he addressed the diminished role of the military during the Gorbachev era. A smaller emphasis on the military, especially in the policy realm, coupled with the collapse of the Soviet Union led to a large number of issues for the military. Military downsizing and lack of funding led to problems like lack of housing. Therefore, by 1993 "more than 150,000 military officers and their families who were homeless."²⁴ With these types of problems, Russia understood the limits of its military capability and updated its doctrine to allow that while the use of nuclear weapons "can have catastrophic consequences ... the evolution of conventional war into nuclear war is not ruled out."²⁵ Another factor that contributed to this change was Russia's perception of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

As the Russians examined the conduct and results of the coalition operations in Iraq, they saw a failure in their own defensive doctrine. If the Iraqis, even if they were "substandard" operators, failed using Russian doctrine and equipment, could (or would) Russia fall victim to the same fate?²⁶ Highlighted in this failure were Russia's reliance on ground control intercept, hardened aircraft shelters, inflexible central command and control, and their lack of technology like stealth and standoff precision munitions. As such, in the 1993 doctrine, Russia focused on fixes to these problems though both policy and

procurement where, for example, it states: “In military technical policy, in equipping the forces, the highest priority is on emerging, precision mobile, highly survivable, long-range weapons systems.”²⁷ A third influence on the 1993 doctrine is Russia’s loss of the Commonwealth of Independent States resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The influence of Russia’s loss of previously Soviet states on its 1993 doctrine was felt in two primary areas: the presence of Russian military forces and other ethnic Russians living in those states and the presence of former Soviet nuclear weapons in those states. The numbers are staggering to consider; 250,000 military personnel and an incredible 25 million ethnic Russians, many of whom have nothing to return “home” to but have not bothered to learn to live as natives outside of Russia.²⁸ In addition, Russia claimed it maintained responsibility for the security of those Russians living abroad, to which the doctrine pointed out, “The violation of the rights of Russian citizens ... in the former republics of the U.S.S.R. could be a serious source of conflicts.”²⁹

Similarly, the presence of both strategic and tactical nuclear weapons in former Soviet states drove further considerations of possible causes of conflict. The doctrine read: “Until the nuclear arsenals have been destroyed by all states ... we cannot rule out the threat of nuclear war.”³⁰ Furthermore, “the possibility of the outbreak of local wars and military conflicts is coming into the foreground,” and “efforts to prevent war can be effective only if they are backed up with sufficient military power for defense.”³¹ Of note with regard to the nuclear weapons located in Ukraine, an analysis at the time suggested that 65 percent of Russians and Ukrainians polled thought “Russian-Ukrainian relations were uneasy.”³² This uneasiness was only partly allayed by the eventual return of Russia’s nuclear weapons. However, today there is still significant conflict between the two states.

Overall, the 1993 doctrine demonstrated an “emphasis upon threats that may challenge Russia’s borders rather than upon power projection.”³³ In other words, it was more concerned with securing its current borders and its bordering allies from NATO and its allies, than with regaining dominance on the world stage. Consequently, the doctrine also reflected the insecurities of a less capable military as it sought a new identity and a new place back in Russian society.³⁴

In summary, the Russian military doctrine of 1993:³⁵

- 1. Moved from a focus on defensive operations to an offensive and “preemptive strike” capability.*
- 2. Changed from a posture of no nuclear use to one that envisions possible escalation toward nuclear use.*
- 3. Placed emphasis on strategic non-nuclear forces.*
- 4. In reaction to Desert Storm/Shield placed new emphasis on advancements in command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I), smart weapons, and increased mobility.*

Russia's 2000 Military Doctrine

The last Soviet-era military doctrine was signed off by Gorbachev. Its successor, the 1993 doctrine, was approved by Boris Yeltsin. It is appropriate then that the next approved doctrine was signed in April 2000 by the next leader of Russia, President Vladimir Putin. There had been a number of discussions about updating the doctrine prior to 2000, especially after the efforts to expand NATO in mid-1990s, but change did not happen until Putin came into office.

While there were many changes between the doctrines of 1993 and 2000, the two most significant were in the areas of identified threats and nuclear posturing. With regard to threats, Marcel de Haas pointed out six of them addressed in the new doctrine: “interference in RF (Russian Federation) internal affairs; attempts to ignore RF interests in resolving international security problems; attempts to oppose the increase of influence of the RF on a global level; the expansion of military blocs and alliances; the introduction of foreign troops (without UNSC [United Nations Security Council] sanction) to the territory of contiguous states friendly with the RF; and the suppression of the rights of RF citizens abroad.”³⁶ Some of these, like the issue of Russian citizens abroad, were present in the previous doctrine, but others were new, and were brought about to specifically address issues that surfaced since 1993.

Internally, the Chechen conflicts in the mid-1990s showed Russia that there were destabilizing threats internal to its borders. These included “extremist national-ethnic and religious separatism and terrorism,” all of which the doctrine attempted to address.³⁷ Perhaps more noteworthy were the external factors, as de Haas pointed out, “the prominence of negative tendencies with reference to Western security policy.”³⁸

The three aspects of this threat were:

1. *The NATO use of force in Bosnia and Kosovo.*
2. *The NATO Strategic Concept of April 1999.*
3. *The NATO enlargement effort with Russia's bordering neighbors.*³⁹

Russia viewed each of these aspects as examples of NATO's “policy of ignoring Russia as well as of disregarding the United Nations and the standards of international law,”⁴⁰ hence, the updated doctrine with updated threats. These updated threats impacted the second significant change in the 2000 doctrine, Russia's nuclear posture.

In his article, “Russia's 2000 Military Doctrine,” Nikolai Sokov pointed out a number of subtle, but important differences from the 1993 doctrine. The first difference is in the mission of nuclear deterrence. Sokov explained it as “expanded to include the ‘military security’ of Russia and ‘international stability and peace.’”⁴¹ Next, the doctrine clearly spelled out the first use policy in response to “large scale aggression involving conventional weapons in situations that are critical for the national security of the Russian Federation and its allies.”⁴² While first use was a part of the 1993 doctrine, it was not listed as explicitly in that document. The third difference was in response to a similar stance from the United States, the allowed “use of nuclear weapons in repose to the use of other weapons of mass destruction (WMD).”⁴³

The final difference, according to Sokov, is the most important. The 2000 doctrine broadened the types of conflict scenarios where nuclear weapons could play a part, specifically both regional and global war.⁴⁴ While the previous doctrine listed only global war, the nature of the threats surrounding Russia leading up to the 2000 doctrine caused the Russians to add regional war as well. As Russia watched the Kosovo conflict unfold in its back yard, and found there was nothing they could do about it, they needed to add the ability to deter that type of scenario,⁴⁵ hence the additional conflict scenario in the 2000 doctrine.

These changes, de Haas pointed out were “not unexpected, since the on-going decline in conventional strength apparently had to be compensated with emphasis on the nuclear deterrent.”⁴⁶

In summary, the Russian military doctrine of 2000:

1. *Expanded its defined threats to include internal (such as extremism and terrorism) and external (to include the United States and NATO) threats to Russia and its allies.*
2. *Expanded its posture of nuclear use to:*
 - A. *Expand the deterrence mission.*
 - B. *Clearly spell out the right for first use.*
 - C. *Allow their use in response to other WMD.*
 - D. *Add regional war to global war as a conflict scenario for nuclear use Russia’s 2010 Military Doctrine.*

Tracking with the previous three doctrines, the 2010 version was signed into effect by a new president, this time Dmitri Medvedev. While Medvedev signed it, its construction was not without the influence of former president, and then Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. In fact, as Jacob Kipp pointed out, the two were deemed by political commentators as the “Medvedev-Putin Tandem.” Together, they addressed how Russia would deal with international relations and Russian national security.⁴⁷ Also like the previous doctrines, this one made some changes to the previous versions, although as the following paragraphs will detail, this version seemed to back away from the direction the two previous publications took.

Like the 2000 doctrine, the 2010 doctrine’s main changes came in the realms of identified threats and nuclear posture. With regard to threats, Kipp writes: “The new Military Doctrine describes the threat environment facing Russia as complex and dynamic, but not dominated by the imminent threat of war.”⁴⁸ As such, the 2010 version separated its list of threats into threats and dangers with the threats being general in nature and the dangers more concrete.⁴⁹ The primary focus of the external dangers are potential actions of the United States and NATO on and around Russia’s periphery.⁵⁰ However, some including de Haas, think the labeling of the United States and NATO as dangers instead of threats

was an effort “to not complicate the on-going negotiations with America for a new START Treaty on the reduction of strategic nuclear arms.”⁵¹

Another factor that may have played a part in the different language for the West was the Obama administration’s “Reset” policy for United States-Russian relations and Russia’s attempt to somewhat manage that relationship as well.⁵² The use of threats and dangers translated to changes in the doctrine’s nuclear posture as well. As de Haas pointed out: “In response to dangers and threats, the doctrine explained that Russia retained the right to use nuclear weapons in response to a WMD attack against itself or against its allies and also against an attack with conventional weapons when the very existence of the state was under threat.”⁵³ This policy remained similar to the 2000 doctrine, but with a strongly reduced overall emphasis on the use of nuclear arms throughout the document.⁵⁴ It was almost as if the Russians were backing away from their nuclear first use policy without explicitly saying it.⁵⁵

In summary, the Russian military doctrine of 2010:

1. *Changed how it described threats by dividing them into threats and dangers.*
2. *Maintained the 2000 posture of nuclear weapon use, but with reduced overall emphasis on their use.*

Russia’s 2014 Military Doctrine

Russia published its newest military doctrine in 2014, just four years after the last one was produced. The timespan marked the shortest time between doctrine publications since the 1993 Russian doctrine replaced the previous Soviet version after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. While the short turn time might indicate some major changes in the doctrine, it was not necessarily the case, but there were three changes of note.

The first change in doctrine updated the threats and dangers conceptualized in the 2010 doctrine. This section was broadened to add a portion about military dangers domestically. As Sinovets and Renz pointed out, “one of the principal refrains in the doctrine is the importance of countering the influence of outside actors/the West in Russia’s domestic affairs and in its so-called sphere of vital interests.”⁵⁶ This treatment of a sphere of influence then transferred into the next major change. The second change in the 2014 doctrine was an increased emphasis on “Russia’s perceived need to defend what it sees as its vital sphere of interest.”⁵⁷ While it does not name any state in this sphere specifically in the doctrine, the verbiage makes it clear “to potential foes and neighboring states that it not only regards military exercises and the mobilization of forces in bordering states as a military threat.”⁵⁸ Consequently, Sinovets and Renz argue, this is demonstrated by Russia’s strategy regarding Ukraine where Russians have been willing to use their military to protect a part of their “vital sphere.”⁵⁹

The final major change in the 2014 doctrine was the inclusion of a prompt global strike concept as one of its military dangers. In the context of doctrine, Russia has previously sought to develop its non-nuclear deterrence capabilities, but by including prompt global strike in this publication, it has reemphasized its ambition in this type of capability.⁶⁰ While the capability is not in reach yet, Russian conventional forces are

growing in capacity and capability. Certainly, Russia still lags behind the United States and its NATO allies in the areas of conventional military technology and capability, but considering where it was in the 1990s Russia has made dramatic improvements.⁶¹

Even with the noted improvements in Russian conventional military capability, their shortcomings still drive the role of nuclear weapons as the “cornerstone of the Russian deterrence arsenal.”⁶² In fact, the 2014 doctrine did not change much in its treatment of nuclear weapons from the previous version. While the idea of nuclear first strike was present in the 2000 doctrine, and subsequently minimized in the 2010 version, Sinovets and Renz argue, “the idea underlying this concept was not abandoned altogether” in the 2014 version.⁶³ They point out it can be linked to the regional nuclear conflict mentioned in previous documents and the emphasis on Russia’s vital sphere where “intervention by outside actors ... will be deterred by the country’s full spectrum of capabilities to compel the enemy to “stop military actions” and to withdraw from the region.”⁶⁴

In summary, the Russian military doctrine of 2014:

1. *Maintained the use of threats and dangers as defined in the 2010 document, but added both the idea of a domestic military danger and prompt global strike as a military danger.*
2. *Emphasized the need to defend Russia’s vital sphere of interest/influence.*
3. *Maintained the 2000 posture of nuclear weapon use, but coupled it with the increased emphasis on Russia’s vital sphere.*

Overall Summary of Soviet and Russian Military Doctrine From the Cold War to 2014

When looking at the last 25 years of Soviet and Russian military doctrine, a few things stand out. First, as to be expected, Russia sees itself with a number of threats, and a majority of those, whether classified as threats or dangers, are made up of the United States and its NATO allies. The level of concern the Russian’s have displayed regarding these threats may have changed over the years based on the world situation, but they have remained.

Second, the capability of the Russian military has fluctuated greatly over the decades. Before the fall of the Soviet Union, their military was unrivaled, even by the United States. Immediately after the fall, the military collapsed in on itself. In the early years of the Russian Federation there was not much improvement, but with Putin’s rise to power in 2000 things began to change. The conventional military has steadily improved in the subsequent years, both in respect to its personnel and its equipment.⁶⁵ Not to be ignored, however, Putin has also put increased emphasis on the modernization of Russia’s nuclear forces and they are proceeding on par or better than conventional efforts.⁶⁶

Third, the Russians have adapted their conventional and nuclear posture to best address the perceived threats from the United States and NATO. During the Cold War, with the idea that a nuclear war could not be won and with a dominating military force, Russia relied on its conventional capability exclusively. As Russian military capabilities decreased, the idea of using their nuclear weapons in conventional conflict began to grow.

That concept peaked in the 2000 doctrine where a very weak military was charged with addressing the growing threat of the United States and NATO in the context of both NATO expansion along Russia’s borders and the NATO use of force in the former Yugoslavia. As the military improved under Putin’s watch, the threat from the United States and NATO was lessened by the New START treaty. An increased level of cooperation between Russia and the West was reflected in the posture found in the 2010 doctrine. However, while the military is still improving, the latest doctrine accounts for what Russia has perceived as a growing threat along their borders and internally based on the potential influence of the West, and hence have adopted a slightly more aggressive posture than taken in the previous iteration. Consequently, it is clear that since the fall of the Soviet Union, Russian military doctrine has allowed for at least some level of integration of conventional and nuclear (primarily tactical) forces to address its stated threats.

Doctrine Publication	Threats (Internal/External)	Military Capability	Posture	Conventional & Nuclear Integrated?
Cold War	External	Significant	No First Use	NO
1993	External, on borders	Weak	Limited First Use	YES
2000	Internal and External	Weak	Expanded First Use	YES
2010	Internal Threats, External “Dangers”	Moderate & improving	Minimized First Use	YES
2014	Internal and External Threats and “Dangers”	Moderate & improving	Underlying First Use	YES

Table 1, Summary of Doctrine and Respective Threats and Nuclear Posture

Conclusion

It should be clear by now that Russia’s view of strategic stability in the post-Cold War era, the concept that its military must have the capability to deal with any threat to the nation and therefore the subsequent integration of conventional and nuclear forces, has been shaped by Russia’s perception of threats to its national integrity from the United States and its NATO allies and the Russian military’s inability to deal with those threats strictly conventionally. However, what does that mean for the United States and its NATO allies? First, and maybe most important, the United States and its NATO allies need to gain a better understanding of why the Russians behave the ways they do. They can then use this understanding to modify their own behaviors and interactions with the Russians so as to decrease the perceived threat they pose and reduce the likelihood of Russian escalation to nuclear use.

Finally, the United States has to put a priority on the upgrade and modernization of its nuclear forces, both weapon systems and support facilities. President Donald Trump, in his 2018 State of the Union Address, talked about “rivals like China and Russia,” and how the United States needs to maintain a strong defense to confront “these horrible dangers.” Along the lines of this recommendation, he also pointed out that in order to do this, “we

must modernize and rebuild our nuclear arsenal ... making it so strong and so powerful that it will deter any acts of aggression.”⁶⁷ With a solid balance of behavior based on understanding and a modernized nuclear force, the United States and its NATO allies should be able to prevent the start of another Cold War or worse, an actual nuclear conflict.

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48. *Ibid.*, 63.
49. de Haas, "Russia's Military Doctrine Development," 43.
50. Kipp, "Russian Military Doctrine," 64.
51. de Haas, "Russia's Military Doctrine Development," 47.
52. Kipp, "Russian Military Doctrine," 135.
53. de Haas, "Russia's Military Doctrine Development," 45.
54. *Ibid.*, 54.
55. Kipp, "Russian Military Doctrine," 135.
56. Polina Sinovets and Bettina Renz, *Russia's "2014 Military Doctrine and beyond: Threat Perceptions, Capabilities and Ambitions,"* Research Paper (Rome, Italy: NATO Defense College, Research Division, No. 117, July 2015), 2.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*, 3.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*, 7.
62. *Ibid.*, 8.
63. *Ibid.*, 9.
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Ibid.*, 7.
66. *Ibid.*, 9-10.
67. Donald J. Trump, *State of the Union Address*, Washington, D.C., January 30, 2018.

CHAPTER 12

Conclusions

The Academic Year 2018 Deterrence Research Task Force conducted ten research projects aimed at informing two overarching questions. First, how could the United States revamp its assurance and deterrence policies in the Asia-Pacific region? Second, in order to avoid mirror imaging, what are adversaries' perceptions of strategic stability? These two questions have some overlap, as other countries' views of strategic stability have direct implications for U.S. assurance and deterrence policies. Answering both questions also requires U.S. scholars and practitioners to be able to understand the cultures, histories, politics, and worldviews of both adversaries and allies.

On U.S. assurance and deterrence in the Asia-Pacific region, the research presented here generally found that U.S. assurance and deterrence policies have been effective, and U.S. forward-deployed forces in the region remain the strongest assurance measure for regional allies. U.S. forward-deployed forces not only assure allies, but help to achieve U.S. nonproliferation objectives by suppressing demand for nuclear weapons in allies. Yet, rigorously assessing the assurant or deterrent effects of U.S. policies or missions remains challenging. U.S. policy makers and planners should better define deterrence and assurance objectives in order to evaluate effectiveness. Deterrence is a challenging concept to assess, but it becomes more difficult when deterrence objectives are not clearly defined from the beginning. Assurance and deterrence also are whole-of-government missions, and setting assurance and deterrence objectives must be done at the national level before filtering down to the operational level.

Regarding adversaries' perceptions of strategic stability, the findings help to deepen our understanding of Chinese, Russian, and Iranian intentions. The research generally found that adversaries are often driven by domestic factors, but the United States and allies also can strongly shape the views of adversaries. This emphasizes the need to engage adversaries, including China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran, in order to better understand their short- and long-term security concerns and avoid unintended consequences of U.S. policies. There obviously can be sensitives on both sides to engaging adversaries on strategic stability, so the United States can consider better using both track I and track II diplomacy initiatives to improve understanding on both sides.

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