

STRATEGIC CONCEPTS ROUNDTABLE

EXTENDED DETERRENCE: TAKING STOCK OF CURRENT POLICY AND UPDATING THE RESEARCH AND PME AGENDAS

Falcon Club
US Air Force Academy

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Key Workshop Issues & Questions

The Extended Deterrence/Assurance panels focused on current and projected extended deterrence challenges in the multiple regions, how deterrence and assurance requirements are changing, and the associated policy issues.

Do we truly understand the emerging deterrence challenges facing our allies?

Is current US policy part of the solution or does it contribute to the problem?

Is the current US posture/force structure optimal for the extended deterrence and assurance challenges of the future?

The Research and PME Agendas panel examined the current state of strategic education, particularly within the United States Air Force, identified shortfalls, and looked for ways to better provide current and future leaders with access to quality education on the strategic issues that they will face during their careers.

How well prepared are senior military (and civilian) leaders to manage a complex, escalating crisis with a nuclear adversary?

How can we reinvigorate nuclear education?

How can we utilize the new modalities of communication to educate the next generation?

Strategic Concepts Roundtable

Extended Deterrence: Taking Stock of Current Policy and Updating the Research and PME Agendas

The Conference and Venue

The INSS “Extended Deterrence: Taking Stock of Current policy and Updating the Research and PME Agendas” workshop took place August 5-6, 2014 at the Falcon Club on the grounds of the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The event was hosted by the Air Force Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) which is sponsored by the Air Force Strategic Plans and Policy Division (A5XP).

Subject matter experts on five panels considered issues related to extended deterrence and assurance. Presentations were given on extended deterrence and assurance in NATO/Europe, Northeast Asia, and the Middle East; extended deterrence/assurance policy issues, and research and professional military education.

Introduction and Overview

Dr. James Smith, Director of the Air Force Institute for National Security Studies made introductory remarks highlighting the importance of this study to the group of assembled experts.

The workshop capped a series of studies undertaken across an international group of think tanks, universities, and government research organizations over the past five years. It asked participants to examine questions such as:

- What are the current challenges to extended deterrence and assurance?
- Are any of these challenges being inadequately or improperly addressed?
- Do the current US policies, strategies, and postures meet the assurance expectations of our allies?
- How will the anticipated regional security environments of 2015-2020 generate new requirements and expectations?
- Which extended deterrence and assurance issues require expanded investigation and analysis?
- Are current US deterrence and assurance strategies and postures adequately “tailored” for each region?
- What kinds of knowledge and skill sets will mid- to senior-level Department of Defense military and civilian personnel need in order to meet the challenges of the emerging strategic environment?

INSS anticipated that the discussion would be influenced by current developments such as:

- The Russian incursion into Crimea and the threat to Ukrainian independence and sovereignty

- Overall Russian intransigence and stridency
- Chinese military development and maritime stridency
- North Korean nuclear weapons and delivery system development as well as general DPRK adventurism
- Iranian nuclear program developments

INSS asked the participants to identify and discuss the mid- to long-term implications of and requirements for extended deterrence and assurance. An important desired outcome of the Strategic Concepts Roundtable was to set preliminary agendas for (a) future-oriented research, and (b) the education of the officer force that will be tasked with these issues in the coming 3-5 years and beyond. INSS asked participants to focus on assurance issues as much as deterrence issues, and to include discussion of cross-regional issues and influences.

Extended Deterrence/Assurance and NATO/Europe

Over the past twenty years NATO has been focused primarily on out of area activities, NATO military activities have been expeditionary in nature, and member states have put little thought into collective defense in Europe. The fall of the Berlin wall, the reduced threat from the East, and the subsequent peace dividend led to a reduction in defense spending throughout Europe. As a result, NATO conventional forces are now in short supply and the Alliance does not have the full range of conventional capabilities necessary for today's security environment. Given the current level of readiness, and the time it would take to reach consensus on a decision to act, it is assumed that it would take six to seven weeks for NATO to respond militarily to crisis. Despite the conventional shortfalls NATO member states are resistant to talking about or planning for nuclear contingencies due to the anti-nuclear sentiments of many Europeans. One would expect that the degraded state of NATO's conventional resources would lead to increased emphasis on nuclear deterrence, but this has not been the case.

Three pillars support the NATO alliance posture – deterrence and defense, consequence management and cooperative security. The situation in Ukraine is a prime example of the continued need for strong collective defense within Europe. NATO cannot be one dimensional; it must be capable of responding to a variety of challenges (conventional, cyber, nuclear, terrorism etc.) NATO must continue to invest in partnerships and recognize that partnerships are a two-way street. Burden sharing is an important element in the NATO nuclear mission. NATO will remain a nuclear alliance as long as nuclear weapons exist; many NATO member states need to take a more active role in supporting the mission by contributing physical and monetary resources. Member states are supposed to contribute 2% of their GDP to the alliance, but in reality the majority of them contribute much less.

Prior to the 2012 Deterrence and Defence Posture Review (DDPR) there was an expectation among the NGO community that the US non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe would soon be

removed and dismantled. There was some disappointment when the DDPR reaffirmed nuclear weapons as a core component of NATO's overall capabilities. The DDPR drew a line in the sand regarding the further reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons by stipulating that no reductions would be made unless Russia agreed to reciprocal reductions in its own non-strategic nuclear arsenal.

There is some concern in Europe regarding US credibility. If the United States allows "red lines" it has drawn to be crossed without consequence, how can allies be certain that they can rely on the United States to come to their defense in times of crisis? The United States does not have the ability to rapidly deploy large numbers of troops and the necessary equipment to Europe. There are further concerns regarding the diminishment of nuclear US capabilities due to the age of the current systems, lack of plans for modernization, and numeric reductions. On the other hand, the United States is concerned that it will be expected to more of the heavy lifting within NATO while the European member states do less. For instance, it is still unclear if Germany will continue to provide dual-capable aircraft (DCA) in support of the nuclear mission.

One participant suggested that a study on the European force posture in terms of air craft might be valuable. There seems to be a fundamental disconnect between some regarding the difference between extended deterrence and assurance. Not everyone understands that the physical presence of US aircraft in Europe matters to our NATO allies. US credibility could be further undermined if NATO allies became aware of contention within the Pentagon and the US air staff on whether or not to cut aircraft.

Relations between NATO and Russia were fairly positive before the crisis in Ukraine, but now there are serious concerns regarding Russia's intentions for the future of the region. At the present time Russia is cooperating with counter-WMD efforts, but there is no guarantee that this cooperation will continue. Russia has been investing heavily in the development and modernization of its military capabilities and every capital city in Europe may now be within range of a new Russian cruise missile. High levels of Russian air activity near the Latvian boarder during one recent exercise were described by Moscow as a demonstration of Russia's ability to project force. It has been suggested that as long as Russian President Putin retains a high approval rating, his aggressive policies will continue to threaten peace and stability in Europe. In addition to the potential Russian military threat, European states are also vulnerable to elements of Russian economic and energy policies.

Key Questions

- How can NATO allies be expected to trust the United States to come to their aid when the United States allows its "red lines" to be crossed without consequence?
- How can the United States increase its credibility worldwide?

- What does that say about the credibility of NATO nuclear deterrence when the United States deploys strategic forces to the European theater instead of relying on the non-strategic forces that are already there?
- What is the DCA path forward in NATO?
- Will Germany commit to a continued DCA role?
- Is it in the best interest of the United States to remain committed to NATO?
- Deterrence strategies are intended to prevent war; do we have a viable plan for what to do if deterrence fails?

Extended Deterrence/Assurance and Northeast Asia

Current trends indicate that the balance of power in Northeast Asia is shifting and the strengthening of regional alliances will be a key US objective in the coming years. For these efforts to be successful it will be imperative that US policy makers make every effort to understand and appreciate the diverse perspectives of regional actors, particularly those of allies Japan and South Korea.

Japan is reassessing its position, posture, and interests in the region. From the Japanese perspective both China and North Korea pose significant national security threats. Japan feels particularly vulnerable to a North Korean nuclear strike and, as a result, Tokyo may be hesitant to permit US forces to “flow through” Japanese territory in response to a conflict on the Korean Peninsula. A very real fear of North Korean retaliation could put Japanese leaders in a position where they had to choose between denying an important ally access to critical facilities, or supporting the United States (and subsequently South Korea) and thereby risking a nuclear attack on its homeland.

South Korea will continue to focus on the security challenges posed by North Korea for years to come. While US security guarantees to South Korea are greatly valued, Seoul would like the United States to clearly communicate specific conditions that might prompt increased US military activities on the Korean Peninsula. Seoul would also like to see additional high visibility demonstrations (like military exercises) of the United States’ willingness to uphold its security commitments. South Korea has mixed feelings regarding China; on one hand it sees China as a potential partner in reigning in the Kim regime, but on the other hand it fears an asymmetrical response from China should it disagree with South Korean actions.

North Korea’s aggressive posture constitutes a continued threat to the peace and stability of Northeast Asia. The past couple of years have shown Kim Jong-Un to be a belligerent, risk- and cost-acceptant leader who is willing to accept short-term risk for long-term gain. Kim’s regime has shown no interest in denuclearization and – if North Korea’s nuclear weapons and missile programs continue to progress at the current rate – it is estimated that North Korea will have a sufficient quantity of usable nuclear weapons to coerce, blackmail, and essentially hold

neighboring states hostage within the next 10-15 years. Pyongyang also maintains a substantial conventional capability which must not be underestimated.

From the US perspective China may pose a more formidable regional security concern than North Korea. China's power is on the rise. Chinese leadership appears assertive, rational, and ambitious, and Beijing is steadily developing a greater power projection capability. It is difficult, if not impossible, to extrapolate China's intentions for the future, but a strong sense of nationalism certainly exists and Beijing may well be maneuvering toward an increasingly hegemonic position in the region. Conventional escalatory dynamics will intensify as China's power increases and, should China match or exceed US conventional capabilities, the United States could lose its escalation advantage. It is imperative that the United States work to maintain sufficient power so as not to become vulnerable to, or dependent on, China.

Nuclear weapons will play an increasingly important role in Northeast Asia causing escalation control to become more important and nuclear signaling to become more complex. Conventional escalatory dynamics will become more intense as conventional capabilities approach equilibrium. Conventional prompt strike capabilities may be useful, but there are some unresolved questions regarding their utility. Increased ballistic missile defense capabilities in the region could reduce the probability of a North Korean "cheap shot" but would not provide a complete or cost effective solution. Accurate and timely strategic communications between the United States, its allies, and its adversaries will be imperative. Further, for extended deterrence guarantees to retain their value the United States must be crystal clear regarding the resoluteness of its resolve.

The United States is committed to defending and supporting its Northeast Asian allies, but it is not keen on bearing the brunt of the burden itself. Increased contributions toward the preservation of regional security by Japan and South Korea would be welcomed and appreciated. It was suggested during the discussion that the extended deterrence dialogue should be expanded and "joint deterrence" should be explored.

Key Questions

- North Korean escalatory provocations appear to be causing more consternation in South Korea than they have in the past. Are there any potential dialogue mechanisms that could mitigate this issue?
- How can we incentivize restraint by North Korea during a crisis given that Pyongyang will likely perceive any conflict with the United States as being total?
- What would "joint deterrence" look like in Northeast Asia? Is it something that should be pursued?

Extended Deterrence /Assurance and the Middle East

The Middle East is a region that is known for constant, endemic, and enduring conflicts. One participant described the region as “an example of the limited utility of nuclear weapons.” Recent events in the Middle East have generated grave international security concerns. During the summer of 2013 Iran built a target barge that was a scale model of a Nimitz-class aircraft carrier. In April 2014 Saudi Arabia publically displayed two missiles in order to demonstrate its deterrent capability in greater detail. In June 2014 the kidnapping and killing of Israeli teenage boys sparked a war between Israel and Hamas that continues to rage. There is also an ongoing regional proxy war between supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood and those that oppose them.

It is critical that the US policy makers understand and appreciated how adversaries see the United States. Allies and adversaries alike believe that US policy is a major driver of instability in the Middle East. This is partly due to the default action of the United States to support Sunnis as opposed to Shias; this “preference” does not go unnoticed within the Middle East. US allies see the United States as an essential player in the Middle East, but the assumption that the United States is the only state which can play the role that it does in the region needs to be challenged. The idea that the United States must automatically get involved in conflicts in the Middle East is illogical; the US ability to shape events is actually very limited. US leaders should emphasize the importance of relationships as a lot can be mitigated by relationship building. Within US policy, we have indicated uncertainty about who our friends and allies are. It is often difficult to identify exactly which US allies we should consider trustworthy; for example, Saudi Arabia supports jihadi fundamentalists in Syria and elsewhere.

A discussion of extended deterrence and the Middle East must take WMD/CBRN policies and weapons conventions into account. In October 2014 Syria acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention, but it is unclear if (and unlikely that) all chemical weapons have since been removed. In light of this, what message does the United States send when it doesn’t ensure accountability? The United States must follow through on its commitments. Following initiatives through to completion, and being forthright about doing so, are things that should be expected of all states. It is feared throughout the Middle East that back-channel negotiations are taking place within the Rouhani regime. There is wide-spread belief that Iran’s long-term intention is to be a nuclear power, even if it is not seen as a near-term goal.

It is crucial to take the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) into account when discussing the current security concerns in the Middle East. In order to defend against and defeat ISIS we must understand that terrorism is a political problem, not a military problem, and that a military solution to ISIS will only come after political decisions have been made. However, the situation could change drastically and military engagement may become necessary. It is imperative that the United States identify achievable objectives, pursue sustainable actions, improve “train and equip” efforts, work to improve cyber security in the region, and demonstrate that it is committed to the achievement of a permanent solution.

It can reasonably be expected that the current security challenges in the Middle East will persist for years to come. The United States must include its Middle Eastern allies and partners in extended deterrence dialogues; relationship building will help to improve our standing in the region. The Middle Eastern countries are beginning to coalesce around shared interests; some are looking to acquire advanced weaponry as well as assurances from President Obama. The road to improved security conditions in the Middle East will inevitably be a long and hard, but hopefully it will also be paved with many positive opportunities for the United States in the long run.

Key Questions

- What happens if the US cannot manage fall outs and/or stops influencing developments in the Middle East?
- Defining US allies in the region has become problematic. How do we determine who are our real “friends”?
- Are current Air Force equities in the region adequate to keep Iran at bay?
- In regards to the Chemical Weapons Convention, what message does the United States send when it doesn’t ensure accountability?
- Is Israel’s nuclear opacity stance still pertinent?
- Expected that Saudi Arabia will pursue nuclear weapons in the event of Iranian proliferation?
- Any expected implications for nuclear posturing once a king is selected from the next generation of the Saudi royal family?

Extended Deterrence/Assurance Policy Issues

The current strategic context indicates that relative US power is waning due primarily to the rise of other powers and political dysfunction in Washington. The decline of US global leadership has had negative consequences for national security, the economy, and American credibility in terms of global governance. The United States’ ability to influence global events and achieve desired outcomes through economic policy and leadership in global governance has diminished. The BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) are now challenging US leadership – particularly in the economic dominion. The underperformance of organizations such as the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund has given the BRICs incentives to establish parallel institutions. The United States must find ways to maneuver more effectively in an increasingly multi-polar global society if it is to maintain a leadership position in world affairs.

The shifting balance of power in Europe has generated new challenges for extended deterrence and assurance. Western Europe is in strategic decline; it would take a great deal of effort and dedication by all NATO member states for the alliance to reclaim its former political and military strength. One participant noted that our allies are “graying, fraying, and in difficulty”

while Russia is actively investing in and modernizing its military capabilities. More questions than answers were identified during the discussion on NATO's emerging challenges. What, specifically, does NATO seek to deter and what capabilities are required to do so effectively? How can NATO counter Russia's emerging strategy and hybrid tactics? Will NATO nuclear weapons be relevant for deterring Russia into the future? Will a more prominent role for conventional deterrence emerge? (Social science tells us that conventional deterrence is prone to failure.) Another challenge NATO will have to confront in coming years is the erosion of alliance cohesion. There is concern that Germany might decrease its participation in the alliance as Berlin moves toward an increasingly independent posture. What costs and risks would NATO face if Germany were to take a less active role? Do we really understand all of these challenges and their implications?

The 2010 US Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) characterized extended nuclear deterrence as an instrument of nonproliferation based on the premise that parties protected by US extended deterrence guarantees would not be compelled to pursue nuclear weapons of their own. However, given the ever-changing nature of international security, allies will have to consider important factors beyond the coverage of the US nuclear umbrella. Nuclear proliferation is easier than it has ever been. It's no longer prohibitively difficult for states to acquire the knowledge and build the infrastructure necessary for indigenous nuclear weapons programs. This reality may increase the probability of additional nuclear proliferation by US adversaries *or* allies. It is conceivable that an ally with growing security concerns and decreasing confidence in US credibility, capability, or resolve could come to the conclusion that its national security would be better secured with its own nuclear weapons capability. Would it be in the United States' interest for allies to acquire nuclear weapons? The answer is unclear. An ally's nuclear capability united with US capabilities against a common foe could be beneficial. However, there's no guarantee that today's ally won't become tomorrow's adversary.

Understanding the perspectives of individual allies is an important element in alliance relations. Accurate assessments of allied perceptions, strengths, and vulnerabilities can provide the United States with the means to accurately tailor assurance messages. The way in which a state perceives its global and regional positions influence the degree to which that state may feel that its national security is threatened. For instance, Germany seems rather comfortable with its position in the world at the present time. It has emerged from the financial crisis in Europe in a favorable position and the German public is confident in its political leadership and optimistic about the future. From this place of strength and confidence Germany may adopt a more independent posture and subsequently reduce its participation in NATO. On the other side of the spectrum, if Japanese concerns regarding China and North Korea were to surpass its confidence in US credibility, Japan could conclude that an indigenous nuclear weapons capability was necessary for its national defense.

Political, economic, and military power transitions are changing the geopolitical landscape, most prominently in Europe and Asia. Rising regional powers are naturally interested in asserting

dominance within their regions, often by challenging the status quo. *The United States.* The United States and its allies are in decline while Russia and China occupy positions of relative strength. This waning is causing a reduction in the United States' ability to project power and influence global affairs. A current example of this can be observed in the recent decisions by China, India, and Brazil to opt out of supporting US sanctions against Russia for its actions in Ukraine. *Russia.* Russia is significantly more powerful than it was at the end of the Cold War and has an economy comparable to that of Germany. Yet, at the same time, it faces unavoidable demographic and other challenges that will ultimately lead to its decline. *China.* China's power is on the rise. Even in the face of some international doubts, its economy is growing, its military capabilities are increasing, and Beijing appears determined to play a more dominant role in Asia. Growing maritime assets will provide China with a greater capacity to mobilize and assert its power in the event of a dispute or crisis at sea.

Key Questions

- Which of the following questions is more appropriate?
 - How do we restore US dominance?
 - How do we adjust to the diminishment of US dominance?
- Do we truly understand the emerging deterrence challenges facing NATO?
 - What specifically does NATO seek to deter?
 - What does NATO need in order to deter?
 - Do NATO nuclear weapons actually deter Russia?
 - What costs and risks would NATO face if Germany decreased its participation in the Alliance?
 - What roles do/should deterrence and assurance play in NATO out-of-area operations?
- Who defines the status quo?

Extended Deterrence / Assurance Research and PME Agendas

This panel discussed opportunities for further research in light of the ever-changing international security environment. It also discussed the level of comprehension regarding strategic nuclear issues within the US military (particularly USAF) and identified areas where there is significant room for improvement.

Nuclear Cascade. The concept “proliferation cascade” is ambiguous and needs to be more clearly defined. What exactly constitutes a nuclear cascade? The acquisition of a useable nuclear weapon? A latent nuclear state with the capacity to rapidly cross the nuclear threshold? Japan, for example, is said to be merely a “turn of the screwdriver away” from a nuclear weapons capability. States with security concerns may be tempted to hedge by investing in civil nuclear infrastructure which could serve as a basis for a future nuclear weapons program. During a crisis

such states could leverage their latent nuclear capacity to pressure the United States into taking action by raising the specter of a run-away regional nuclear arms race.

Nuclear Stewardship. What are the characteristics of a good nuclear steward? The United States has been a responsible steward because it has consistently sought to maintain safety and reliability, it has established a robust command and control structure, it has worked in good faith on arms control and disarmament initiatives, and it has not threatened other states with nuclear attack. A US nuclear weapon is not the moral equivalent of a nuclear weapon held by a regime of questionable integrity. Are there any specific US allies or partners which would make good – or bad – nuclear stewards?

Nuclear Deterrence at Low Numbers. The United States must consider the changing global security landscape as it contemplates further reducing its strategic arsenal. The shifting balances of power in Europe and Asia, combined with the US policy of reducing reliance on nuclear weapons, give US allies on both continents reason for concern. How many nuclear weapons are required to effectively extend nuclear deterrence guarantees to allies in Europe and Asia? Would the Asian model of extended deterrence be applicable to Europe?

US Credibility. Confidence that the United States is willing and able to take action on behalf of allies and partners in times of crisis is a critical component of extended deterrence and assurance. A number of factors negatively impact global perceptions of US credibility. Some of these factors include US global retrenchment, US domestic political deadlock on key policies, emphasis in recent US policy on a decreasing role for nuclear weapons and an increasing emphasis on non-nuclear capabilities. Would our allies have confidence in US extended deterrence underwritten by conventional capabilities as opposed to extended nuclear deterrence?

Assuring Allies. What specifically assures allies? Are there unique challenges to dealing with allies and partners during times of crisis verses during times of relative peace and stability? What are the deterrence requirements for NATO? What are the implications of the Ukraine crisis for extended nuclear deterrence?

Missile Defense. Missile defense technology is spreading. Both US allies and adversaries will likely have missile defense capabilities in the coming years. We must begin thinking about the positive and negative impacts the spread of this technology will have on US extended deterrence policy and on regional strategic stability.

Looking Ahead. Have we fully analyzed how a future conflict might unfold with a nuclear-armed adversary? Have we begun to adapt our planning processes in order to respond appropriately to emerging challenges? It is critical that US leaders be cognizant of the potential benefits and hazards of the decisions they make. How well prepared are senior leaders to manage a nuclear crisis?

Nuclear Education. Professional military education does not devote enough attention to strategic issues, there are large gaps in what it does cover, and there is no effort to coordinate across issues. The service academies are lacking in that they generally do not teach nuclear history, strategy or policy. At USAFA an entire generation of students has been provided with little to no instruction on nuclear issues. Future leaders must be educated at both the operational and conceptual levels; they must be able to see the big picture, understand how all components are integrated, and appreciate the importance of the strategic nuclear mission. There is a major lack of knowledge among up and coming USAF leaders, many do not understand the basics of US nuclear policy let alone the concept of extended nuclear deterrence. An alarming percentage of USAF personnel, including individuals occupying nuclear career paths, have little to no understanding of the role of nuclear weapons in US defense policy. Part of the problem is that individuals are instructed on how to perform their specific duties but are not educated on why the mission is important.

There is clearly a need to reinvigorate nuclear education. Efforts must be made to better educate current and future leaders on what these issues are and why they are important. Constructive dialogue on how to effectively accomplish this task should continue. Ideally, future events on this topic should be held in the Washington, DC area so that a greater number of relevant parties may participate. Better outreach will be necessary in order to engage the appropriate audiences.

Key Questions

- How well prepared are senior military (and civilian) leaders to manage a complex escalation crisis with a nuclear adversary?
- How can we reinvigorate nuclear education?
- How can we provide the basic information to the correct audiences efficiently?
- How can we make people interested in the subject?
- How can we utilize the new modalities of communication to educate the next generation?
- How can we do it economically?

SS Roundtable: Origins, Past, Current Status and Future Roles

A perpetual challenge when discussing strategic stability is coming to an agreement on precisely what the term means. In order for a relationship to be stable all parties *must* share the same definition and work within mutually agreed upon parameters, yet the definition of “strategic stability” is ambiguous and the concept is often interpreted differently by the United States, its allies, and its adversaries. One participant noted that strategic stability should both capture the benefits of the nuclear revolution and mitigate the risks associated with it. A good

definition of strategic stability should identify valid and non-valid uses of nuclear weapons, placing a premium on discriminate and accurately tailored nuclear use. Strategic stability should prevent major war while protecting the vital interests of all parties involved. It should prevent illegitimate and unnecessary use. Nuclear weapons should be reserved for political use; their intended purpose should not be to “take out” an adversary, but to demonstrate a willingness to climb the escalation ladder in order to compel the adversary to back down. Strategic stability should mitigate the emergence of the stability/instability paradox and should have practical implications for US nuclear forces and arms control policy.

A major objective of strategic stability is to prevent nuclear use – except in extreme circumstances when vital interests are at stake. What constitutes “extreme circumstances” and what exactly are “vital interests?” What is of such importance that a US president would consider the actual use of nuclear weapons in order to defend it? Under what conditions would nuclear use be an effective means of protecting a vital interest? Nuclear weapons can be thought of in terms of a Belle curve – they are valuable up to a certain point and then their value declines. There are three distinct options for “using” nuclear weapons: no use, limited use, and total use. It is difficult to imagine a situation dire enough that a president would authorize total nuclear use against an adversary.

What are the Chinese and Russian perceptions of strategic stability? One Chinese interpretation of the term is simply “don’t cause trouble.” Discussions about strategic stability with Chinese officials are difficult due to the lack of a shared vocabulary. It cannot be presumed that everyone is on the same page because the alternating sides may unwittingly have vastly differing interpretations of important terms. The United States and Russia have been working together on strategic issues long enough to be able to communicate ideas accurately, but this level of communication does not yet exist between the United States and China. However, while accurate lines of communication between the United States and Russia are well established, the nature of the US/Russia relationship is markedly different today than it was even a few years ago. It seems that Russian leaders would like to freeze the status quo so that Russia can maintain its current position of strength in international affairs.

The complexity of the contemporary security environment and the myriad of nuclear-armed states combine to complicate efforts to secure strategic stability. One participant suggested that an efficient way to analyze the prospects for strategic stability would be to

categorize relevant players into “nuclear triangles” consisting of three states, and analyze each triangle in order to gain insight into the potential for strategic stability between the respective parties. Examples of nuclear triangles include:

- The United States – Russia – China
- The United States – The United Kingdom – France
- The United States – India – Pakistan
- The United States – Japan – South Korea
- The United States – Israel – Iran

The United States Air Force (USAF) is a principal player in the preservation of strategic stability. From a USAF perspective the meaning and implications of strategic stability have changed since the conclusion of the Cold War. For instance, the term “strategic” used to refer to offensive nuclear forces and national missile defenses and the term “stability” implied a balance of strategic nuclear forces and strategic postures which were designed to avoid pre-emption. Arms control was a key mechanism for establishing and maintaining strategic stability because it limited the costs and risks associated with arms racing, shaped force structures and postures, provided a degree of valuable transparency, and served as a channel for communication and interaction between the United States and the Soviet Union on important issues of strategic concern. In the post-Cold War era strategic stability has become more dynamic giving rise to a plethora of new questions and challenges for USAF planners to grapple with.

Key Questions:

- How do we define strategic stability between the United States and Russia?
- How do we define strategic stability between the United States and China?
- How can we adapt Cold War concepts of strategic stability to today’s more dynamic security environment?
- Where is the line between stability and instability?
- Do we need a broader framework for analysis of strategic stability?
- How can strategic stability be realized in a more complex and ever-changing environment?
- What is of “vital interest” to the United States?
- What does strategic stability mean for military planners?
- How do force structure and military posture contribute to, or detract from, strategic stability?
- What capabilities are central to determining the strategic balance (or imbalance) between the United States, Russia, and China?
- Will nuclear arms control continue to play a critical role in strategic stability?
- How will non-nuclear capabilities affect stability?

Observations:

- We must be very careful with our terminology.
- There are many elements of strategic stability, including: political stability, deterrence stability, first-strike stability, crisis stability, escalation stability, arms race stability, and alliance stability.¹
- Technological development will continue to advance in an unpredictable manner.
- Fear comes from lack of predictability, not lack of stability.

Strategic Culture

The many definitions of strategic culture can include, “the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation with each other with regard to national security” as well as “that set of shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives.” Strategic culture is also cause and effect, beliefs, as well as action. Anthropologists have had definitional debates of strategic culture dating back to the early 1950s. Scholars of anthropology have had more than 150 definitions of culture.

The intent of strategic culture is to capture strategically relevant cultural data and employ them in ways that refine forecasting ability and offer meaningful improvements to strategic planning. Contributions of scholars in this field, such as Carl von Clausewitz, and Martin van Creveld, brought to light that war is perceived differently according to one’s own culture.

Another scholar in the field of strategic culture, Chris Twomey, represents the realist approach in his work. His cause-and-effect formula negates any effect that culture may have on battle tactics: Twomey asserts that “Tactics and strategies that disadvantage will have great and direct costs in blood and treasure.”

When analyzing actors in any form: individuals, sub national groups, non-state actors, or national polities, one finds that every actor is likely “rational” in that they pursue their own interests rather than someone else’s. Rationality is culturally programmed. The factors that may

¹ Smith, Shane “The Meaning of Strategic Stability and Implications for U.S.-China Relations,” National Defense University, INSS Research Memo, 2010.

be included in a cost-benefit analysis for one actor, may differ considerably from another actor. The approved tactics in the strategic arsenal of one actor may not be suitable or even remotely taken into consideration by another actor. Motives for beginning wars, incentives for ending them, and identities which determine how one fights are all variables within warfare that are quite often culturally derived. In order to understand the mindset and rationale of actors within an organization, we must first understand the identities, mindsets, traditions and habits which provide context for their beliefs.

“Culture shapes preference formation by military organizations by telling organizational members who they are and what is possible, and thereby suggesting what they should do. In this way, culture explains why military organizations choose the structures and strategies they do, and thus how states generate military power.” (Jeannie Johnson, Utah State University)

It is crucial for the various branches of the United States military and policy makers to recognize that frames of reference or “mindsets” are not static, and can certainly be altered; however this alteration is often slow to change. This slow pace of change can significantly impact strategic policy decisions. In terms of strategic culture as a military application, predicting behavior is difficult, but necessary. “Surprise” behaviors are precisely what intelligence analysts attempt to avoid.

Rather than being a theoretical approach, strategic culture can serve as an approach that insists that historical cultural variables be included in the assessments that scholars of strategic studies pursue. Examining history in general, specifically past behavior of cultures can help explain, predict and prescribe military strategy. This historical analysis must include how organizations and nations behave than any other aspect of the cultural package. For forecasting purposes, it is crucial to identify patterns of behavior and the circumstances that give rise to them.

When determining the actor, analysts must explore cultural data from four perspectives:

- Identity- Character traits that the group assigns to itself, reputation it pursues, individual roles designated to its members
- Norms- Accepted and expected modes of behavior
- Values- Material or ideational goods that are honored or confer increased status to members

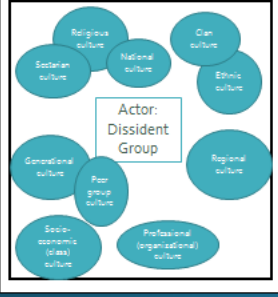
- Perceptual Lens- The filter through which this group determines “facts” about others

Key Questions:

- How can one know in advance which states or other political entities will act in ways “deviant” from realist predictions without knowing something about the influences particular to their internal calculus?

**Step 4:
Explore Cultural Data from Four Perspectives**

ISSUE: Prospects for regime-threatening political opposition in Subania during the next six months.



Begin to explore how these influences impact your actor's decisionmaking on this issue from four perspectives:

Identity: The character traits this group assigns to itself, the reputation it pursues, and individual roles and statuses it designates to members.

Norms: Accepted and expected modes of behavior.

Values: Material or ideational goods that are honored or confer increased status to members.

Perceptual Lens: The filter through which this group determines “facts” about others.

In specific terms ask:

Identity:

- Which factors surrounding this issue would cause this actor's identity to be threatened or co-opted?
- Is group cohesion strong along identity lines in response to this issue? What would cause the group to fracture? Unite behind a common front?
- What roles and statuses might group members seek to protect?

Norms:

- Are social institutions or common practices under threat?
- Which practices are deeply internalized and likely to cause push-back?
- Which practices are compatible with US interests on this issue?
- Would changes in this issue area offer members a way out of increasingly unpopular normative practices?

Questions cont...:

Values:

- What is considered "honorable" behavior in this issue area?
- Which values are under threat?
- Which values might be co-opted in moving US interests forward?
- Where might value differences between target groups present an opportunity to exploit cleavages?

Perceptual Lens:

- What are the preconceived notions of this group concerning U.S. behavior? Character?
- What are group beliefs about the future?
- What hurdles must we overcome in messaging to this group on this issue?

9

Strategic Stability Study Methodology



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21st Century Strategic Stability

■ 2010 NPR

- "The United States will pursue high-level, bilateral dialogues on *strategic stability* with both Russia and China which are aimed at fostering more stable, resilient, and transparent strategic relationships"

■ Challenge

- US-RF, US-PRC subject to instability ...?
- *What is the right relationship? How stable is stable enough?*

■ Definition

- Strategic nuclear forces, and ...?
- Missile defenses could affect (in theory)
- *What capabilities are central to determining the strategic balance (or lack thereof) between US, RF, PRC?*

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4



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21st Century Strategic Stability (cont.)

■ How realized?

■ Arms race stability

- *Are US, RF, PRC engaged in arms competitions and, if so, how/when/where are they destabilizing?*

■ Crisis stability

- Strategic nuclear deterrence remains associated with crisis stability ... *does this operate the same or differently as during the Cold War? Do other capabilities matter/pose a threat to crisis stability?*
- *Does this model still work? Does it apply outside of bilateral, Cold War context?*
- *Is strategic nuclear arms control central to present and future strategic stability?*

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APPENDIX 1
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Justin Anderson, SAIC
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Kerry Kartchner, Department of State
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Jeff Larsen, NATO Defense College
Sean McDonald, OSD
Cynthia Roberts, Hunter College / Columbia University
Guy Roberts, Consultant
James Russell, NPS
James Smith, INSS
Shane Smith, NDU
Brent Talbot, USAFA
Mike Wheeler, IDA
James Wirtz, NPS

APPENDIX 2

WORKSHOP AGENDA

Strategic Concepts Roundtable
Extended Deterrence: Taking Stock of Current Policy and Updating the Research and PME
Agendas

Falcon Club, USAFA, CO
5-7 August 2014

Monday, 4 August 2014

1800 No-Host Reception (Colorado Mountain Brewery)

Tuesday, 5 August 2014 (Falcon Club, Daedalian Room)

0830-0845	Introduction and Overview Jim Smith, Institute for National Security Studies
0845-1030	Roundtable: Extended Deterrence/Assurance and NATO/Europe Jeff Larsen, NATO Defense College (Moderator/Participant) Sean McDonald, OSD Guy Roberts, Consultant
1045-1230	Roundtable: Extended Deterrence/Assurance and Northeast Asia Shane Smith, National Defense University (Moderator/Participant) Bridge Colby, Center for New American Security Brad Glosserman, Pacific Forum
1230-1400	No-Host Lunch
1400-1600	Roundtable: Extended Deterrence/Assurance and the Middle East Greg Giles, Science Applications International Corporation (Moderator/Participant) Michael Eisenstadt, Washington Institute [via Skype] James Russell, Naval Postgraduate School
1730	No-Host Reception (La Casa Fiesta)

Wednesday, 6 August 2014 (Falcon Club, Daedalian Room)

0830-1015	Roundtable: Extended Deterrence/Assurance Policy Issues Paul Bernstein, NDU Center for the Study of WMD (Moderator/Participant) Catherine Kelleher, University of Maryland [via Skype] Cynthia Roberts, Hunter College/Columbia University (Saltzman Institute) Mike Wheeler, Institute for Defense Analyses
1030-1130	Extended Deterrence and Assurance Research and PME Agendas Jim Smith, Institute for National Security Studies (Moderator/Participant) Paul Bernstein, NDU Center for the Study of WMD Kerry Kartchner, Department of State Jeff Larsen, NATO Defense College
1130-1145	Closing/Way Ahead Jim Smith, Institute for National Security Studies
1145-1300	No-Host Lunch