

# U.S. Extended Deterrence and Assurance for Allies in Northeast Asia

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## Introduction

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Strategies for deterrence need to be tailored to specific adversaries and take into consideration the actions to be deterred, personalities and cultural norms of adversary leaders, and numerous other contextual factors. Similarly, assurance and extended deterrence commitments need to be tailored for each ally and threat environment. This paper examines the history of extended deterrence commitments and other assurance measures for two U.S. allies located in Northeast Asia—the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Japan.

The two countries share several similarities. Both the ROK and Japan were devastated by war during the middle of the twentieth century. Both allies are nonnuclear weapons states; both are located in close proximity to potential adversaries (North Korea, China, Russia) armed with nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD). For decades, both allies have been recipients of extended nuclear deterrence commitments from the United States and both have periodically considered an alternative—developing an indigenous nuclear weapon capability. Despite these similarities, the perspectives in each country regarding direct threats to their security and the desired modality of U.S. assurance measures and extended deterrence guarantees differ significantly.

U.S. security commitments to the ROK and Japan have existed for more than five decades. Over that period significant changes have occurred in the global security context (e.g., the breakup of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union) and the regional security environment in Northeast Asia. This paper examines the security relationships between the United States and its allies in Northeast Asia and the means with which U.S. assurance measures, including extended nuclear deterrence, have been codified and adjusted over time. For each ally, the paper identifies the formal defense agreements that established U.S. security guarantees, and examines the evolution of the bilateral relationship. Although each relationship has changed significantly over the years, the U.S. extended nuclear deterrence commitment to each has remained an important component of assurance measures provided by the United States.

This paper concludes with a summary comparison of the two bilateral relationships, and the actions and means that demonstrate the viability of U.S. assurance measures for each ally. Of specific interest is the role of U.S. nuclear weapon capabilities and the “nuclear umbrella.”





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## The U.S. Nuclear Umbrella and the Assurance of South Korea

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The Republic of Korea (ROK) is one of several allies to which the United States extends the protection of its nuclear umbrella. By this pledge, or nuclear guarantee, the United States communicates its readiness to use nuclear forces to deter or defend against an attack on the ROK. For 60 years, the ROK has been threatened by North Korean aggression. For nearly as long, the nuclear umbrella has covered South Korea. During that time, the nuclear guarantee has served two fundamental purposes: to discourage an attack by the North (extended deterrence) and to give ROK leaders confidence in the U.S. commitment to the defense of the South (assurance). To be effective, the guarantee must be credible to both Pyongyang and Seoul. While the nuclear umbrella often is discussed in terms of its credibility to adversaries, the sections that follow consider its credibility to South Korea, a key ally. How does the United States assure South Korea of its security commitment in general and its nuclear guarantee in particular? Examined below are five factors critical to the assurance provided the ROK by the U.S. nuclear guarantee: 1) the *overall relationship* between the two countries; 2) aspects of their *formal alliance*; 3) *official statements* affirming the U.S. nuclear commitment; 4) *forward deployments* of U.S. forces in and around South Korea; and 5) *exercises and operations* for the defense of the ROK. For each factor, the connection to the nuclear umbrella is described, the details for the South Korean case are discussed, and the central points then are summarized.

### ***Overall Relationship***

The state of the overall relationship between the United States and an ally covered by the U.S. nuclear umbrella can add to, or detract from, the credibility of that nuclear guarantee. Strong bilateral ties—historical bonds, economic trade, cultural connections, diplomatic intercourse, and military cooperation—give the United States a stake in the security of the ally and increase the perceived likelihood of U.S. military action if that country falls prey to armed aggression. Where the U.S. stake is high, and nonnuclear alternatives are insufficient, the possibility of U.S. nuclear use to defend the ally is more plausible.

With regard to the United States and the ROK, the overall relationship between the two countries lends credibility to the U.S. nuclear guarantee. Defense of South Korea is important to U.S. political, economic, and military interests. The U.S. stake in the security of the ROK was forged in the crucible of war. Before the North Korean invasion in June 1950, South Korea lay outside the U.S. “line of defense” against “Asiatic aggression.”<sup>1</sup> After the attack, the United States incurred more than 30,000 combat deaths in a three-year war to defend the ROK.<sup>2</sup> Nearly six decades after the Korean armistice was signed, American and South Korean officials still refer to their alliance as

one born in blood. (The chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff has said the alliance is “based on mutually shared blood,” echoing a South Korean defense ministry statement that “[t]he ROK and U.S. have shed blood together in war and will remain staunch allies for years to come.”)<sup>3</sup> Aligned with the United States, South Korea became, like its ally, a liberal democracy with a market economy. As a beneficiary of the “democratic peace” (democracies tend not to wage war with each other), the United States has a clear interest in helping defend a large democracy like the ROK, and, according to one observer, would do so even in the absence of a formal alliance.<sup>4</sup> Of comparable importance to American security, the ROK is the world’s 14<sup>th</sup> largest economy; a leading producer of ships, cars, electronics, and steel; and the seventh largest trading partner of the United States.<sup>5</sup> In addition, South Korean positions on international problems beyond the confrontation on the peninsula generally coincide with those of the United States. The ROK has provided support to U.S. military operations (in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq) and both countries see the alliance evolving to address “wide-ranging global security challenges,” through peacekeeping deployments and other joint activities.<sup>6</sup> Aside from the value of defending a key ally, fellow democracy, and critical trading partner, the United States has a major interest in maintaining peace in Korea because any war there could drag in the other powers of Northeast Asia—Japan, China, and Russia—with adverse, and potentially catastrophic, consequences for U.S. security.

These interests in the security of South Korea are the foundation for the American defense commitment and nuclear guarantee to that country. They are reasons for Seoul to believe the repeated pledges of the United States to defend the ROK, including, if necessary, with nuclear weapons. While Seoul at times has questioned the credibility of those pledges because of U.S. troop withdrawals, heightened concern about the North Korean threat, and fear the United States would be unwilling to suffer the cost of another Korean war, the underlying U.S. interests in South Korean security have given the alliance ballast for withstanding such doubts.

### ***Formal Alliance***

A military pact reflects and underscores U.S. interests in the security of another country. By assuming the obligation to aid in the defense of that country, the United States offers assurance to the ally and warning to its adversaries. A treaty also establishes the groundwork for the combined endeavors—consultations, commands, planning, exchanges, deployments, exercises, operations, and the like—that comprise a military alliance, reinforce ties between its members, and demonstrate its strength. While none of the defense treaties between the United States and countries under the nuclear umbrella incorporates a nuclear guarantee, each agreement is the formal basis for U.S. nuclear protection.

The Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the ROK, signed in October 1953, two months after the Korean War armistice, was intended in large part to assure Seoul that, though the war was over, South Korea would not be abandoned by the

United States.<sup>7</sup> The treaty thus declares the determination of the two parties “to defend themselves against external armed attack *so that no potential aggressor could be under the illusion that either of them stands alone* in the Pacific area.” Each recognizes that “an armed attack in the Pacific area on either of the Parties...would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares it would act to meet the common danger.” Because an American military presence on or near the peninsula was, and is, considered by South Korea to be an essential earnest of the U.S. commitment, the treaty grants the United States “the right to dispose [its] land, air and sea forces in and about the territory of the Republic of Korea as determined by mutual agreement.”<sup>8</sup> Though U.S. troop strength in South Korea was substantially reduced after the war, a sizable force remained (the more than 300,000 soldiers stationed there in 1953 dropped to 85,000 two years later).<sup>9</sup> Today, roughly 28,500 service members are deployed in the ROK.<sup>10</sup>

While the assurance benefit of forward-deployed forces often is recognized (and is discussed below), another element of the U.S.-ROK alliance that assures—command arrangements—is worth noting. The South Koreans have seen these arrangements as a valuable means of tying the United States more tightly to their security. After the Korean War, the ROK gave the United Nations (UN) Command, led by a U.S. general, command authority over its armed forces. As with the Mutual Defense Treaty and the effort to keep U.S. troops on Korean soil, Seoul’s aim was to engage the United States more deeply in the defense of South Korea and make abandonment of the ROK more difficult. In the 1970s, South Korea once again worried about the U.S. defense commitment. This was the result of weak U.S. responses to a series of North Korean provocations, the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam and call for greater self-reliance by Asian allies, American troop reductions in South Korea, and criticisms from Washington concerning human rights violations by the government in Seoul. As part of an effort to bolster South Korean trust in the alliance, a unified U.S.-ROK command structure, the Combined Forces Command (CFC), was established in 1978. The CFC “was an important turning point in the ROK-U.S. military relationship, reducing South Korea’s feeling of insecurity.”<sup>11</sup> Under the CFC, the United States retained wartime operational control (OPCON) of ROK forces, but peacetime OPCON was transferred to South Korea in 1994. “[T]he wartime operational control of the Combined Forces Command,” a prominent South Korean legislator has said, “is symbolic of the alliance. It’s like living in one house under one roof, thinking together about threats and fighting together.”<sup>12</sup>

During the administration of President Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2008), Seoul sought and secured U.S. agreement for the transfer of wartime OPCON to the ROK, effective in April 2012. The change arose from renewed national pride and self-confidence in South Korea and the related “cooperative self-reliant defense” policy pursued by President Roh. The policy aimed at maintaining a close, but more equal, alliance relationship with the United States. Many in South Korea have, however, expressed misgivings about the shift of wartime OPCON. They fear that the changeover could cause the “weakening or dismantling of the structural links between the ROK military and the USFK [United States Forces Korea Command]”<sup>13</sup> and be interpreted by Pyongyang as a U.S. move toward disengagement from Korea.<sup>14</sup> They see the planned transition as dangerous at a time of

increased tension on the peninsula following the two North Korean nuclear tests (in October 2006 and May 2009) and the breakdown of the Six-Party Talks.<sup>15</sup> At a July 2009 meeting of South Korean and American security specialists, the ROK representatives raised doubts about wartime OPCON transfer, but seemed resigned to the change. According to the summary of that “strategic dialogue,”

While South Korean participants professed some discomfort with the transfer deadlines, resistance is diminishing. Part of that reflects growing confidence in ROK capabilities, but it is also acknowledgement of the fact that there are political consequences in Seoul and in alliance relations in reopening discussions. That said, several ROK participants said they would be happy if the process was slowed. Ominously, one warned that the U.S. should explore whether such a move is good for the long-term health of the alliance.

That warning was ambiguous, but it appeared to reflect Korean fears that the transfer signals a desire to loosen ties between the allies.<sup>16</sup>

Despite these concerns, the ROK and U.S. governments both remain committed to the 2012 deadline.<sup>17</sup>

Although the basic defense agreement between the United States and the ROK does not include an explicit nuclear guarantee, the nuclear umbrella has been provided for South Korea “consistent with the Mutual Defense Treaty.”<sup>18</sup> Since 1978, the U.S. pledge of nuclear protection for the ROK has been reaffirmed by the secretary of defense in each of the annual Security Consultative Meetings (SCMs) with the South Korean minister of defense.<sup>19</sup> (The meetings are used to coordinate security policies between the two countries and issue mutually developed strategic direction for the defense of the ROK.) This does not mean that South Korea was outside the nuclear umbrella prior to 1978. During the Korean War, the Truman and Eisenhower administrations considered nuclear use and made nuclear threats aimed at ending the conflict.<sup>20</sup> As part of its preparations for defending South Korea, the United States began deploying nuclear weapons in the ROK in the late 1950s, where they remained for more than three decades.<sup>21</sup> When it was necessary to deter Pyongyang or assure Seoul, American officials drew attention to U.S. nuclear capabilities. Shortly after the fall of Saigon, for example, Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger hoped to ease anxiety in Seoul about the U.S. commitment to South Korean security by warning that “if circumstances were to require use of tactical nuclear weapons [to defend the ROK] I think that that would be carefully considered,” and added, “I do not think it would be wise to test [U.S.] reactions.”<sup>22</sup> In short, South Korea has been covered by a U.S. nuclear guarantee since the early years of the alliance.

Less than two weeks after the October 2006 North Korean nuclear test, South Korean officials insisted on a change in the formulation of the U.S. nuclear guarantee as expressed in the communiqués of the Security Consultative Meetings. The communiqué for the preceding year had hewed to long-standing convention and said, “Secretary [of

Defense Donald] Rumsfeld reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to the security of the ROK, and to the continued provision of a nuclear umbrella for the ROK, consistent with the Mutual Defense Treaty.” In contrast, the communiqué for 2006 read, “Secretary Rumsfeld offered 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, consistent with the Mutual Defense Treaty.” (This revised statement of the nuclear guarantee was repeated in the 2007 and 2008 communiqués.)<sup>23</sup> From the South Korean perspective, the addition of “extended deterrence” appears to have two purposes. First, to make stronger and more salient the U.S. nuclear commitment.<sup>24</sup> Second, to provide a reason for South Korea and the United States to discuss the nature and means of that commitment. Confronted by the North Korean nuclear threat, Seoul sees assurance in both purposes.

Following the 2006 SCM, the South Korean press reported that “South Korea attempted to persuade the U.S. to specify how it would retaliate against North Korea and with what types of nuclear weapons in the event of North Korea’s nuclear attack on the South.” The chief of the strategic planning department for the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff said publicly, according to a news summary, that the “South Korean and U.S. militaries agreed to work out measures for a concrete nuclear umbrella extension,” but “stressed that they [would] not spell out U.S. military measures aimed at retaliating against North Korea with nuclear weapons in the case of a nuclear attack.”<sup>25</sup> Similarly, in June 2009, after President Obama and South Korean President Lee Myung-bak issued their “joint vision” for the alliance, which includes a reaffirmation of the “continuing commitment to extended deterrence, including the nuclear umbrella,”<sup>26</sup> an ROK defense ministry spokesman said that officials of the two countries would discuss “ways to embody” the commitment to extended deterrence.<sup>27</sup> Such a discussion reportedly was part of the U.S.-ROK Security Policy Initiative (SPI) talks held in Seoul in July 2009.<sup>28</sup> (The SPI is a Defense Department-Ministry of Defense consultative mechanism at the deputy assistant secretary/deputy minister level.) The results of the SPI talks may have contributed to the expanded definition of “extended deterrence” included in the communiqué of the October 2009 SCM. In that statement, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates “reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to provide extended deterrence for the ROK, using *the full range of military capabilities, to include the U.S. nuclear umbrella, conventional strike, and missile defense capabilities.*”<sup>29</sup>

This inclusion of conventional strike and missile defense capabilities as part of “extended deterrence” is at odds with the long-established meaning of the term, which is limited to U.S. nuclear retaliatory threats to deter aggression against allies.<sup>30</sup> Given that reducing the role of nuclear weapons is an avowed objective of the Obama administration’s emerging national security strategy,<sup>31</sup> the redefinition of extended deterrence for the ROK may indicate a U.S. intent to place more reliance on capabilities for conventional strike and missile defense and less on nuclear forces in deterring attack against South Korea.

In discussions with their South Korean counterparts, American officials reportedly are reluctant to specify in advance the nature of the U.S. response to a North Korean nuclear attack against the ROK, because a detailed pledge could lock the United States into certain retaliatory options, limit the flexibility of U.S. military plans, and arouse criticism from other countries in the region.<sup>32</sup> Even though South Koreans want to “discuss strategy, structure, operational doctrine, and even nuclear targeting,” they could discover drawbacks in such talks, as recognized in the U.S.-ROK “strategic dialogue” referred to earlier:

While Koreans seek reassurance from the U.S. and insist that their inclusion in the planning process would help achieve that objective, there is also fear that South Korean politicians and the public are not prepared for such discussions. Our ROK participants were doubtful that anyone in their government would want to be known to be taking part in discussions about using nuclear weapons against other Koreans. As one ROK participant explained, “the use of nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula is not acceptable; threatening their use is.” Another added that nuclear retaliation by the U.S. in response to a North Korean nuclear attack against the South would be acceptable, but he wasn’t sure that the ROK public would agree to such a response to a nuclear attack against Japan. As one participant concluded, alliance discussions of this sort would be a “political bombshell,” and he wasn’t sure that Korean society is prepared for them.<sup>33</sup>

Here it should be pointed out that during the 30-some years in which the United States had nuclear weapons deployed on the Korean peninsula, only the South Korean president was informed of their types and locations. “[I]t was taboo even to talk about the American tactical nuclear weapons,” according to one senior ROK official. “[F]or us,” he said, “they were shocking to consider.”<sup>34</sup>

The “software” of the U.S.-ROK security partnership, including the Mutual Defense Treaty, the integrated command of the two militaries, and the U.S. nuclear guarantee, plays an essential role in assuring Seoul of the U.S. defense commitment. The treaty places the United States under solemn obligation to stand with the South Koreans against the danger of aggression. The Combined Forces Command strengthens the U.S. tie to South Korean security. (Care should be taken to ensure that the transfer of wartime OPCON does not weaken this command bond.) The nuclear umbrella has been, and remains, essential to assuring the South Koreans. Bilateral discussions regarding the nature of the nuclear guarantee could ease South Korean concerns in the face of the nascent North Korean nuclear arsenal, but also have the potential to create controversy counterproductive to the goal of assurance.

### ***Official Statements***

U.S. restatements of a nuclear guarantee, like those in the SCM communiqués and the U.S.-ROK Joint Vision, reassure the protected ally by reinforcing the U.S. commitment.

The circumstances and purpose behind a statement reaffirming the guarantee will determine the way it is worded, how it is conveyed, and by whom. Statements can be designed to deter, assure, or both. They can be public or private. And they can be made by the president, a cabinet officer, or lower-ranking official. While they can be general, as in President Obama's Prague speech ("[a]s long as [nuclear] weapons exist, the United States will maintain [an] effective arsenal to deter any adversary, and guarantee that defense to our allies"),<sup>35</sup> they are likely to have the greatest effect when made for a specific ally, as in the Joint Vision. (Of the Joint Vision statement, South Korean President Lee said, "President Obama has reaffirmed [the] firm commitment to ensuring the security of South Korea through extended deterrence, which includes the nuclear umbrella, and this has given the South Korean people a greater sense of security," a reaction the Prague pledge unsurprisingly did not evoke.)<sup>36</sup> The role that official statements play in the assurance of allies was highlighted by an assistant secretary of state during visits to Seoul and Tokyo in July 2009: "there is a deep reflection and recognition that underscoring the importance of an extended deterrence is a clear and enduring mission of the United States, particularly in Asia. And so you're going to find that almost every senior interlocutor, in his or her meetings with the Japanese or Korean counterparts, underscores the importance of extended deterrence, in the Asian context."<sup>37</sup>

Some might dismiss reiterations of the nuclear guarantee to the ROK as little more than diplomatic boilerplate. Such a view misreads reality. Allies, not others, decide what assures, that is, what promises, policies, plans, capabilities, or actions give confidence in U.S. commitments. And the evidence is unambiguous that the South Koreans want clear, authoritative, and repeated statements of the U.S. nuclear guarantee. After the first North Korean nuclear test, for example, it was Seoul that pressed for the insertion of "extended deterrence" in the 2006 SCM communiqué as a way of emphasizing the protection of the nuclear umbrella.<sup>38</sup> Following the second test by Pyongyang, Seoul likewise insisted that President Obama endorse the nuclear guarantee with the U.S.-ROK Joint Vision.<sup>39</sup> "Strong reaffirmation of the U.S. extended deterrence commitment," two South Korean defense analysts observe, "has raised South Korea's confidence in its security and strengthened the U.S. position when dealing with North Korea."<sup>40</sup>

South Koreans believe frequent statements of the U.S. nuclear guarantee constitute a key part of the deterrent to North Korean aggression. In their eyes, the statements stand as a "warning to North Korea," help pressure Pyongyang to "give up its nuclear development and not to dream such a futile dream," and "make North Korea realize that its possession of nuclear weapons will not provide any leverage in dealing with South Korea, and also that it could lead to its collapse if it ever tries to use them against the U.S. or its allies."<sup>41</sup> In general, what deters an adversary does not necessarily assure an ally,<sup>42</sup> but in the case of South Korea, Seoul finds the U.S. nuclear guarantee assuring precisely because it is seen as deterring the North.

The value of restatements of the U.S. security commitment, including the nuclear umbrella, is evident in a number of episodes in U.S.-ROK relations. In the late 1960s,

for example, South Korea was reluctant to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Concerned about the possibility of a nuclear attack by China or the transfer of nuclear weapons to North Korea, Seoul wanted to preserve the option of acquiring nuclear weapons of its own. The United States ultimately persuaded South Korea to sign the treaty in July 1968 by reaffirming its commitment to the defense of the ROK.<sup>43</sup>

During the 1970s, South Korea began a clandestine nuclear weapons program because of serious doubts about the reliability of the United States. This lack of confidence was due to U.S. troop withdrawals from the peninsula, insufficient U.S. responses to aggressive acts by the North, the Vietnam pullout, the perceived U.S. abandonment of Taiwan for rapprochement with China, and other indications of diminished U.S. commitment to allies in Asia. When the program was discovered, the United States acted to prevent certain nuclear technology transfers to South Korea, threatened to block financial assistance for South Korean civilian nuclear power, and warned that the U.S.-ROK security relationship itself was in danger. After Seoul backed off from the weapons project and ratified the NPT in 1975, the United States restated its security commitment to assure the ROK.<sup>44</sup>

At the end of 1991, the United States removed its nonstrategic nuclear weapons from South Korean soil. The dominant view among U.S. officials was that these weapons no longer were needed for the defense of the ROK. For negotiations with North Korea at that time, the withdrawal was intended to help induce Pyongyang to abandon its pursuit of nuclear arms and accept inspections of its nuclear facilities. The withdrawal also was part of a broader initiative by President George H.W. Bush for the worldwide elimination of U.S. ground-launched theater nuclear weapons and tactical nuclear weapons on surface ships and submarines. (While air-delivered nuclear bombs were kept in Europe, they, too, were removed from South Korea.) The United States hoped Moscow would reciprocate this initiative, leading to a more secure nuclear stockpile in the unstable Soviet Union. Seoul accepted the U.S. nuclear withdrawal.<sup>45</sup> To reassure the South Korean government, President Bush told President Roh Tae Woo in a private meeting that the ROK would remain covered by the U.S. nuclear umbrella, even without nuclear weapons deployed on the peninsula.<sup>46</sup>

More recently, top U.S. officials have been quick to emphasize the U.S. commitment to South Korea in the wake of each nuclear test by North Korea. Hours after the October 2006 test, President George W. Bush publicly “affirmed to our allies in the region, including South Korea and Japan, that the United States will meet the full range of our deterrent and security commitments.”<sup>47</sup> Ten days later, the SCM communiqué for that year promised, as noted, continuation of the extended deterrence afforded by the U.S. nuclear umbrella.

Similarly, within hours of the May 2009 test, President Obama called and “assured President Lee of the unequivocal commitment of the United States to the defense of the Republic of Korea.”<sup>48</sup> Two days later, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton “underscore[d] the commitments that the United States has and intends always to honor for the defense



of South Korea and Japan.”<sup>49</sup> (A short time afterward, she met with the South Korean foreign minister and “agreed on the need for...‘extended deterrence’” protection of the ROK.)<sup>50</sup> On an Asian trip at the end of May, Secretary of Defense Gates warned that the United States “will not accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state. North Korea’s nuclear program and actions constitute a threat to regional peace and security. We unequivocally reaffirm our commitment to the defense of our allies in the region. ...We will not stand idly by as North Korea builds the capability to wreak destruction on any target in the region—or on us.” The United States, Gates added, will “maintain its firm commitment to security on the peninsula” and remain “fully prepared to carry out all—and I repeat, all—of our alliance commitments.”<sup>51</sup> Military officials traveling with the secretary said his statement was deliberately meant to assure South Korea and other Asian allies.<sup>52</sup> Two weeks later, Gates met in Washington with President Lee and, according to a South Korean spokesman, “reaffirmed the United States will fulfill its commitment to the joint defense of South Korea through all necessary means, such as provision of a nuclear umbrella.”<sup>53</sup> The next day, Presidents Obama and Lee announced their Joint Vision for the alliance, including the explicit reference to the U.S. nuclear guarantee. And, as with the SCM communiqué that followed the 2006 test, the October 2009 communiqué also contained a statement on extended deterrence and the nuclear umbrella.

Repeated affirmations of the nuclear guarantee, particularly when delivered by the president or the secretary of defense, are an essential part of assuring South Korea of the solidity of that pledge and of the broader U.S. security commitment. They are important for assurance because, first and foremost, the South Koreans consider them important. For this reason, official restatements of the guarantee have been useful in convincing Seoul at various times to eschew an indigenous nuclear arsenal, accept the withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons from South Korean territory, and react in a measured way to nuclear provocations by the North.

### ***Forward Deployments***

The forward presence of U.S. military forces has value for deterrence and assurance that is well recognized. Forces routinely deployed on or near the territory of an ally not only, or even primarily, augment the armed strength of that country, but also serve as a concrete and continuing reminder that the United States has a strong interest in its security and will fight in its defense. Permanently stationed ground forces, in particular, seem to have an assurance effect not duplicated by temporary deployments (port calls to show the flag, for example), probably because they are unlikely to be withdrawn overnight and often are positioned where they will be directly engaged by an enemy attack, thus ensuring U.S. involvement in a conflict. The likelihood, if not certainty, that U.S. forces would be engaged in a conflict can lend credibility to an associated nuclear guarantee. If forward deployments include U.S. nuclear weapons, those arms themselves offer a tangible assurance that the ally is covered by the nuclear umbrella.

The United States has deployed general purpose forces in South Korea for more than a half century. From the mid-1950s to the late 1960s, the U.S. troop level in the ROK was 60,000-70,000. During the Vietnam War, in line with his “Guam Doctrine” to make U.S. allies in Asia shoulder more of the defense burden, President Nixon ordered the withdrawal of some 18,000 troops from South Korea, reducing the total there to 43,000. In the 1976 presidential campaign, Jimmy Carter pledged to pull out all U.S. ground forces from South Korea, but as president removed only a token number (roughly 3,000 troops). The Carter cut subsequently was reversed by President Reagan to bolster the U.S. commitment to the ROK. As part of the post-Cold War retraction of American forces from overseas deployments, President George H.W. Bush ordered the troop level in South Korea reduced to 36,000 and then suspended further withdrawals in light of concern about the North Korean nuclear weapons program. The U.S. force on the peninsula increased slightly and stabilized at somewhat more than 37,000 during the Clinton administration. Between 2004 and 2006, as a result of the Global Posture Review conducted by the George W. Bush administration, the number of troops dropped to 28,500, where it remains today.<sup>54</sup> At this level, South Korea is the country with the third largest peacetime deployment of American troops, behind only Germany (54,000) and Japan (33,000).<sup>55</sup> One South Korean observer cites this ranking as an indication of the high priority the United States assigns to the defense of the ROK.<sup>56</sup> According to an opinion survey conducted in early 2008, most South Koreans (70 percent) see the overall U.S. military presence in East Asia as contributing to regional stability.<sup>57</sup>

The disposition of U.S. troops in South Korea has been as important as their number. Since the end of the Korean War, U.S. ground forces have been deployed astride the invasion corridors between the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and Seoul. Stationed in this manner, they have functioned as a trip wire that, by making U.S. involvement in a war “automatic,” presumably has helped deter the North from launching an attack and certainly has helped allay fear in the South of abandonment by the United States. This situation is changing, however. In a process initiated by the Global Posture Review, the United States is repositioning its forces away from the DMZ to locations farther south on the peninsula. The objectives of the relocation are several: to move U.S. forces beyond the range of North Korean artillery; strengthen their ability to counterattack an invasion; increase their availability for contingencies outside Korea (by consolidating forces around two basing “hubs” with ready access to air- and sealift); achieve a better balance between U.S. and South Korean military responsibilities (by improving ROK capabilities and making U.S. capabilities more “air and naval-centric”); and lessen tensions with the South Korean population (by reducing the number of bases and returning land for civilian use).<sup>58</sup> This changed disposition of U.S. forces has raised two concerns in South Korea. First, without the trip wire of American troops near the DMZ, the deterrent to North Korean attack might be weaker.<sup>59</sup> Second, the availability of U.S. forces on the peninsula for other contingencies could result in “the denuding and decoupling of the U.S. security presence.”<sup>60</sup>

In response to these concerns, American officials argue that the United States remains firmly committed to the defense of South Korea and that the “trip wire” for that

commitment is not “how many U.S. troops are arranged in any particular location on the peninsula,” but “the letter and spirit of our mutual defense treaty, backed up by the substance of our alliance and our strong military forces.”<sup>61</sup> They also point to plans for three-year, family-accompanied tours of duty by U.S. military personnel in South Korea as a clear sign that the United States intends to maintain its commitment to the ROK for the long haul. By 2020, up to 14,000 families of American service members could be on the peninsula.<sup>62</sup> While longer, accompanied tours offer a number of advantages over the current one-year stints (reduced training demands, for example), their assurance value has been emphasized by Secretary of Defense Gates, Adm. Michael Mullen, the Joint Chiefs chairman, and Gen. Walter Sharp, the commander of U.S. forces in Korea:

*Secretary Gates:* “[T]he United States will maintain an enduring and capable military presence on the Korean Peninsula. Our long-term commitment is signified by our plans to make three year accompanied tours the norm for most U.S. troops in Korea—similar to arrangements we have in Europe.”<sup>63</sup>

*Adm. Mullen:* “The whole issue of extending the tours, bringing the families, investing the money is a significant increase in the commitment to the Republic of Korea and to the alliance....”<sup>64</sup>

*Gen. Sharp:* “[Family-accompanied tours] hugely shows our commitment to Northeast Asia. One of the fears you hear on OpCon Transition in Korea is what is the US going to do on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2012, after OpCon Transition? Are you all out of here? We remind the Koreans we would be really stupid to do that. They remind us occasionally we have done stupid things in the past. But then when we point to the fact that hey, we’re bringing all of these families over. And it’s not just about North and South Korea, it is about the importance of the region to the United States, the vital national interest. ...the more presence we have in Korea of families shows the commitment of the United States and I think that in and of itself reduces the likelihood of [North Korean leader] Kim Jong Il making a mistake in doing an attack. Many of us lived in Germany in the mid ‘80s across the Fulda Gap where there were lots of nuclear weapons. ...it’s not exactly the same [in Korea], but there is a parallel there of being shown that you’re dedicated and that you’re not leaving is a great deterrent value that’s there.”<sup>65</sup>

In short, U.S. troops in South Korea no longer may be a trip wire, but they—and now their dependents as well—still provide an immediate presence that symbolizes the U.S. commitment to the defense of the ROK.

Along with general purpose forces, the United States has deployed nuclear weapons in South Korea. According to open-source accounts, the United States between 1958 and 1991 kept a changing mix of nuclear weapons in the ROK, including artillery shells, warheads for surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, atomic demolition munitions, and air-delivered bombs.<sup>66</sup> The number of nuclear weapons is said to have peaked at

several hundred in the late 1960s and early 1970s and then declined to perhaps 100 nuclear shells and bombs before all of the weapons were withdrawn.<sup>67</sup> Like U.S. conventional forces in South Korea, the nuclear arms deployed there manifested the American pledge, particularly the nuclear guarantee, to protect the ROK from aggression. And, like U.S. conventional forces, they could be used in the direct defense of the South. Indeed, until the military balance on the peninsula shifted against Pyongyang, the nonstrategic nuclear weapons in South Korea were seen as an important offset to North Korean conventional advantages.<sup>68</sup> By 1990, however, the commander of U.S. forces in Korea regarded withdrawal of those weapons as an acceptable option<sup>69</sup> and, as discussed above, the following year they were ordered removed by President George H.W. Bush. Since then, the nuclear guarantee to Seoul has been maintained by U.S. nonstrategic and strategic nuclear forces located offshore.

In recent years, some South Koreans have called for the return of U.S. nuclear weapons to their soil. When Seoul agreed to the U.S. nuclear withdrawal, North Korea did not have nuclear weapons and there was hope that a combination of carrots and sticks would persuade Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear program. But in the past two decades, the United States, South Korea, and others have failed to roll back that program. Now North Korea has built several nuclear weapons (with more in prospect), staged two nuclear tests, and developed nuclear-capable missiles.<sup>70</sup> It is the nuclear threat from the North that is the cause of the second thoughts in the South. Just three days after the initial North Korean test, a group of former ROK defense ministers issued a statement urging redeployment of U.S. nuclear weapons to the peninsula.<sup>71</sup> In the view of an analyst at the Korea Institute for National Unification (an arm of the South Korean government), redeployment is necessary because the future vulnerability of the United States to North Korean nuclear-armed, long-range ballistic missiles will undermine the credibility of the U.S. nuclear guarantee. "There is doubt," says this analyst, "that the United States could protect Seoul at the risk of nuclear attacks on New York or Los Angeles. The United States should consider redeploying tactical nuclear weapons to South Korea to effectively deter North Korea's threats."<sup>72</sup> An ROK military official believes that "[i]f there were 10 tactical nuclear weapons in the South, North Korea's nuclear threat could be easily neutralized."<sup>73</sup> In addition to the potential enhancement of deterrence and assurance, the return of U.S. nuclear weapons to the ROK could be used as leverage, one South Korean proponent asserts, to pressure Pyongyang into giving up its nuclear capabilities: "The United States can tell the North to dismantle its nuclear weapons by 2012 or Washington would deploy a nuclear arsenal again in the South."<sup>74</sup> Advocates maintain that redeployment of U.S. air-delivered nuclear weapons to South Korea would not be inconsistent with the 1991 nuclear initiative of President George H.W. Bush, which required the elimination of only U.S. ground-launched theater nuclear weapons.<sup>75</sup> (Any U.S. nuclear redeployment, whether of ground-launched or air-delivered weapons, would be inconsistent with the 1992 agreement in which both Koreas promised not to "test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons," although that agreement obviously already has been broken by the North.)<sup>76</sup>

The South Korean government at present is not seeking the return of U.S. nonstrategic nuclear weapons. In July 2009, then-Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee explained that, "The government has constantly pushed for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula since joining the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1975 and will continue to do so. The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula should be maintained. ...Some people say that [U.S.] nuclear weapons should be redeployed on the Korean Peninsula but we should think carefully about that."<sup>77</sup> Such a move would be controversial in South Korea, the surrounding region, and the United States. An ROK "Army commanding general, who has been in charge of military operations," judges that "[r]ealistically, it's impossible and not feasible."<sup>78</sup> Consequently, the redeployment idea to date has had "little backing" in South Korea.<sup>79</sup>

Seoul instead sees other means, both diplomatic and military, of dealing with the North Korean nuclear danger. On the diplomatic front, there are the talks, sanctions, and inducements intended to convince Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons capabilities. The military response likewise involves multiple measures. Two weeks after the first North Korean nuclear test, Gen. Lee Sang-hee, then-chairman of the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff, issued a directive to the chiefs setting forth a three-part approach to the new threat: deterrence of nuclear aggression; precision strikes against enemy nuclear facilities; and defense against nuclear attack.<sup>80</sup> For deterrence, Seoul will continue to rely on the U.S. nuclear guarantee. That guarantee, according to South Korean sources, is backed by nuclear Tomahawk land-attack missiles on attack submarines, nuclear cruise missiles or free-fall bombs on B-52H or B-2 long-range bombers, or nuclear bombs on shorter-range F-15E or F-16 strike aircraft.<sup>81</sup> If deterrence fails, the ROK military expects to detect indications that a North Korean nuclear attack is imminent and then conduct preemptive air and missile strikes against nuclear-related targets.<sup>82</sup> For this purpose, the military plans to acquire improved intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities (airborne and ground-based early warning radar and Global Hawk drones),<sup>83</sup> upgraded strike aircraft (F-15Ks),<sup>84</sup> precision-guided munitions (Joint Direct Attack Munitions, Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles, and laser-guided penetrating bombs),<sup>85</sup> and longer-range missiles (the 1,000-km Hyunmu 3 cruise missile and a 500-km ballistic missile now in research and development).<sup>86</sup> To counter North Korean nuclear missiles that escape destruction on the ground, additional active defenses (Aegis-equipped destroyers and advanced Patriot batteries) will be deployed.<sup>87</sup> Implementation of the ambitious second and third parts of the approach (precision-strike capabilities and defenses) has been hampered by fiscal constraints on the ROK defense budget.<sup>88</sup> The central importance of the first part, the U.S. nuclear guarantee, is evident in the previously discussed South Korean efforts to underscore and understand more fully that commitment.

Forward deployment of forces, then, is one of the principal ways in which the United States assures the South Koreans of its commitment to their defense. Forward-deployed forces are the embodiment of that commitment and the mechanism by which the United States would become engaged in any new Korean war. In certain circumstances, the direct engagement of American conventional forces in such a conflict

could increase the prospect of U.S. nuclear use. This connection reinforces the nuclear guarantee to Seoul. For these purposes, the presence of some not-insignificant U.S. ground force in South Korea is more important than the specific number of troops or their disposition. While U.S. nuclear weapons in the past were forward deployed in South Korea, a nuclear presence on the peninsula has not been essential to the nuclear guarantee.

### ***Exercises and Operations***

Military exercises and operations, particularly shows of force, are venerable instruments of deterrence. (Indicative of their deterrent effect are the endless North Korean denunciations of U.S. and ROK exercises.)<sup>89</sup> But exercises and operations also contribute to the assurance of allies. Like integrated command arrangements and forward deployments, combined exercises tie the United States more closely to the defense of its allies. Operations in which American forces deploy to defend an ally during a crisis demonstrate the U.S. commitment to that country. Repeated crisis deployments establish a track record that strengthens the credibility of that commitment. And a credible U.S. security commitment is a mainstay of an effective nuclear guarantee. If exercises with allies or crisis operations for allied defense involve U.S. nuclear-armed (or nuclear-capable) forces, the support for the nuclear guarantee will be more direct.

After reviewing the various allied exercises in South Korea, a professor at the Korea Military Academy concluded that “combined exercises clearly strengthen the ROK-U.S. Alliance and improve deterrence.”<sup>90</sup> The largest of these exercises has been Team Spirit, which, with the exception of 1992, was held annually from 1976 to 1993.<sup>91</sup> Team Spirit was a comprehensive field maneuver exercise used to train U.S. and ROK forces in repelling a North Korean invasion. Some 100,000 to 200,000 American and South Korean military personnel participated in each Team Spirit exercise, including forces stationed on the peninsula as well as U.S. reinforcements that would deploy from other Pacific bases and from the United States itself in the event of conflict. South Korean political and military officials “viewed [Team Spirit] as invaluable in maintaining military readiness and conducting a show of force against the North.”<sup>92</sup> Team Spirit was canceled in 1992 as an inducement for North Korea to accept inspections of its nuclear-related sites and canceled again in 1994 with the negotiation of the U.S.-North Korean Agreed Framework under which Pyongyang promised to freeze its nuclear program. The high cost of the exercise in an era of declining U.S. defense budgets was another factor in its cancellation. Since 1994, Team Spirit has been dormant.

A number of smaller, related exercises have replaced Team Spirit.<sup>93</sup> One is Foal Eagle, an annual field training exercise that involves “special forces operations; rear area defenses; force-on-force field maneuvering; anti-air, -surface, and -submarine operations by naval forces; close-air support; defensive and offensive counter-air operations by air forces; and amphibious landings.”<sup>94</sup> Participating in the exercise are U.S. forces in South Korea, most of the ROK armed forces, and several thousand U.S. military

personnel temporarily deployed from bases in the United States. Foal Eagle is conducted in conjunction with both Key Resolve, a command post exercise (CPX) that tests the readiness of the current Combined Forces Command to command and control U.S. and ROK forces, and RSOI,<sup>95</sup> which is largely a computer-simulation exercise to prepare for the crisis deployment of augmentation forces to the peninsula. Another annual computer-simulation CPX, called Ulchi Freedom Guardian, is used to evaluate and refine the planned command structure that will replace the CFC after the 2012 wartime OPCON transfer to the ROK. In addition to these training activities, South Korea participates with the United States in multilateral exercises in the Pacific area and also conducts exercises of its own.

With regard to military operations, three examples illustrate their value in assuring Seoul of the U.S. defense commitment. The first is the U.S. response to the 1976 tree-cutting incident.<sup>96</sup> In August of that year, a small U.S.-ROK detail attempted to trim a poplar tree that obstructed the view between two guard posts at Panmunjom in the DMZ. North Korean soldiers attacked the detail, beating two American officers to death and injuring a South Korean officer and several U.S. and ROK enlisted men. Three days later, the United States, in coordination with South Korea, carried out Operation Paul Bunyan (the official code name) to demonstrate to Pyongyang that such provocations would not be tolerated. A 60-man U.S.-ROK task force returned to chop down the tree. The task force was backed by a large-scale show of force. A heavily armed ROK reconnaissance company and U.S. teams equipped with anti-tank missiles deployed nearby. Additional U.S. troops orbited near the area in utility helicopters escorted by helicopter gunships. Reinforcements were stationed at outpost positions along the DMZ. Nuclear and conventional artillery and missiles were moved forward to concrete bunkers. Aerial reconnaissance over the North was stepped up. F-4 fighter-bombers, deployed from Okinawa, escorted B-52Ds, deployed from Guam, that flew mock bomb runs to within 50 miles of the DMZ during the operation. Care was taken to ensure that the B-52Ds were detected by North Korean radar. F-111 fighter-bombers, deployed from Idaho, were on alert at Osan Air Base. A U.S. carrier task group from Japan, led by U.S.S. *Midway*, was stationed offshore. The readiness of all U.S. forces on the peninsula was increased from Defense Condition (DEFCON) 4 to DEFCON 3. As a result of these actions, the tree was felled and North Korean leader Kim Il-sung issued a rare near-apology, saying, "It is regrettable that an incident occurred."<sup>97</sup>

Gen. Richard Stilwell, commander of U.S. and allied forces in Korea at the time of the tree-cutting incident, had met with South Korean President Park Chung Hee as the United States planned its response to the provocation. Stilwell felt he had "Park's complete confidence in and support for his operation."<sup>98</sup> In one of their meetings, Park advised Stilwell that if the North Koreans tried to prevent the tree from being cut down, they should be "taught a lesson" without the use of firearms. For this purpose, he recommended that the operation include 50 or so members of the ROK special forces who were black belts in taekwondo, an offer Stilwell accepted.

Park was not the only South Korean assured by the U.S. reaction to the attack at Panmunjom. “The ROK was generally satisfied with the apparent outcome of the crisis,” according to one account,

and particularly pleased with the [task force part of the] operation and their participation in it. The immediate deployment of U.S. forces to Korea...impressed the South Koreans with the sincerity of the US commitment to the ROK. Some within the senior ranks of the ROK military felt that some form of retribution was a more appropriate action against the [North Korean army], e.g., killing two [North Korean] guards. In the streets, the solid bond between Americans and their Korean hosts grew even stronger. In the bars, “hostesses” even bought US soldiers drinks, at least for a few days. All of South Korea realized that they had witnessed a rare event in which they had played a key part—North Korea had lost face in the world’s eyes.<sup>99</sup>

The United States again demonstrated its commitment to the defense of the ROK during the 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis.<sup>100</sup> At that time, North Korea, which had signed both the NPT and a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), removed spent fuel rods from its reactor at Yongbyon without the supervision of agency inspectors. It was feared that reprocessing of the fuel rods could yield enough plutonium for five or six nuclear weapons. The United States, South Korea, and other countries threatened North Korea with economic sanctions. Pyongyang retorted that sanctions would mean war. And a North Korean diplomat warned his ROK counterpart that, “If war breaks out, it will be a sea of fire [for Seoul].”<sup>101</sup>

To deter or, if necessary, counter a North Korean attack, the United States took steps to improve its military capabilities on the peninsula. A battalion of new Apache attack helicopters replaced two squadrons of Cobra helicopters. Twelve more A-10 close support aircraft were deployed. Twenty-four armored personnel carriers were replaced by 28 Bradley fighting vehicles with anti-tank missiles. An advanced radar tracking system for targeting North Korean artillery was readied for deployment. Additional aircraft spare parts and maintenance crews arrived in South Korea and Japan. Roughly 1,000 more troops were sent to the ROK, with plans made for deployment of considerably larger ground, air, and naval forces. Secretary of Defense William Perry traveled to the region and in South Korea visited an ROK division positioned between Seoul and the DMZ. In a subsequent speech, he declared, “There can be no doubt that the combined U.S.-Republic of Korea forces would decisively and rapidly defeat any attack from the North.”<sup>102</sup>

While the South Koreans understandably were concerned that the crisis could escalate to a devastating war, there also is evidence that they were assured by the U.S. response. This was especially true regarding the Patriot missile defense battalion sent to South Korea during the confrontation. Four days after the North Korean “sea of fire” threat, the South Korean foreign minister met in Washington with Secretary Perry and



Secretary of State Warren Christopher. The two secretaries “reassured him by underlining America’s commitment to South Korean security; a commitment amply demonstrated by the arrival in Pusan of three Patriot missile batteries and eighty-four Stinger anti-aircraft missiles to defend them.”<sup>103</sup>

The crisis ended when Kim Il-sung, in unofficial talks with former President Carter, pledged to freeze activity at the Yonbyon nuclear complex and permit IAEA inspectors to maintain a presence at the site. Near the end of 1994, that promise and other obligations assumed by both North Korea and the United States were incorporated in the Agreed Framework accord.

In 2002, however, the United States determined that North Korea had a uranium enrichment program for nuclear weapons production in violation of the Agreed Framework as well as other international agreements. U.S. officials insisted that Pyongyang terminate the program. In response, North Korea withdrew from the NPT, expelled IAEA inspectors, and announced the restarting of its plutonium production facilities at Yongbyon.<sup>104</sup> These moves, along with the crisis and then war with Iraq, occasioned a third case in which the United States acted to ensure the security of its South Korean ally. In spring 2003, additional U.S. forces were temporarily deployed to East Asia to discourage opportunistic aggression by North Korea while the United States was preoccupied with Iraq.<sup>105</sup> Six F-117A strike aircraft and 20 F-15 fighters were dispatched to bases in South Korea, a carrier battle group visited Pusan, and 24 B-52H and B-1B bombers were sent to Guam, a location well within striking distance of North Korea.<sup>106</sup> These shifts in forces reportedly “alarmed” the North Koreans and, in combination with the initial success of Operation Iraqi Freedom, convinced Kim Jong-il to go into hiding for seven weeks (from mid-February to early April 2003).<sup>107</sup> The perceived threat from the United States probably also contributed to the decision by North Korea to participate in the talks on its nuclear program that were held in Beijing at the end of April.

If strong U.S. military responses to increases in the danger of North Korean aggression have reassured Seoul, the reverse also has been true: responses perceived as weak have raised anxiety. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the North committed a number of armed provocations, including three assassination attempts against President Park, seizure of U.S.S. *Pueblo* (an intelligence-gathering ship operating in international waters), guerrilla infiltrations, and the shooting down of a U.S. EC-121 reconnaissance aircraft over the Sea of Japan. Tied down in Vietnam and loath to become involved in another war, the United States “failed to satisfy Seoul’s desire for a tough U.S. military response to North Korea’s provocations,” which “undermined the credibility of the U.S. security commitment in the perception of South Korea.”<sup>108</sup> This, in turn, was one reason President Park initiated a nuclear weapons program,<sup>109</sup> an undertaking ultimately brought to an end through a combination of U.S. pressure and reassurance.

Peacetime exercises and crisis deployments, then, are ways in which the United States shows its readiness to use force in the defense of South Korea. Team Spirit, Foal Eagle, and other exercises are seen by the South Koreans as a valuable tie between the

U.S. and ROK militaries and a part of the continuing deterrent to North Korean aggression. In the crises of 1976, 1994, and 2003, the United States demonstrated its willingness not only to practice for the combined defense of the ROK, but to prepare for war in periods of heightened danger. Although nuclear-capable forces were involved in two of the three episodes (1976 and 2003), no explicit nuclear threats were made by the United States. Nonetheless, the U.S. military responses in the three cases are part of the security backdrop that supports the credibility of the nuclear guarantee to Seoul.

### **Summary**

South Korea has been the beneficiary of a U.S. nuclear guarantee for more than a half century. Throughout that time, the guarantee has helped deter nonnuclear aggression by North Korea. In more recent years, the prevention of North Korean nuclear coercion or use has been added to the deterrence task. The nuclear guarantee is grounded in, not apart from, the basic structure of the U.S. alliance with the ROK. U.S. reaffirmations of the guarantee are essential for assuring Seoul, but they gain much of their credibility from the broader relationship between the two countries, their long-standing military pact, the forward deployment of U.S. forces, the combined exercises of the two militaries, and the U.S. track record in coming to the aid of South Korea. The United States thus assures South Korea of its military commitment and nuclear guarantee by the security interests it *shares*, the mutual defense treaty it *signed*, the words it *says*, the troops it *stations*, and the force it *shows*. This approach to assurance, by and large, has been successful. At different points, however, South Korean confidence in the American security commitment has been diminished by U.S. troop withdrawals and redeployments, increases in the North Korean threat, seemingly weak U.S. responses to North Korean provocations, change in alliance command arrangements, and perceived U.S. abandonment of other Asian allies. In the end, though, the U.S. nuclear guarantee has retained its assurance value.

North Korea's acquisition of nuclear weapons poses a new challenge to nuclear assurance. South Korea's strategy for dealing with this danger depends on continued coverage by the U.S. nuclear umbrella. To maintain the credibility of the guarantee, the United States may need to give South Korea a better window into its planning for nuclear contingencies on the peninsula. And while Seoul has done without U.S. forward-deployed weapons for nearly two decades, and has made no request for their return, some form of nuclear redeployment might gain greater support in the future.

The adverse consequences of a U.S. nuclear guarantee that no longer assures Seoul should not be underestimated. Coverage by the nuclear umbrella has played an important role in discouraging South Korea from building a nuclear arsenal of its own, for example. If the guarantee were to lack credibility, one of the barriers to a revived South Korean nuclear weapons program would be lowered. And a nuclear ROK would be a wild card in a region already faced with the prospect of greater instability in the future.

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## The U.S. Nuclear Umbrella and the Assurance of Japan

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In the wake of World War II, the United States was unique among combatants in that essentially no damage to its homeland had been sustained and a robust manufacturing base was intact and operating. Japan, in contrast, was devastated by the war and had neither a military left with which to defend itself (or threaten others) nor a manufacturing base to rebuild its devastated economy. Geographically, Japan's location was important. It was surrounded by former adversaries—China, the Koreans, and the Soviet Union. Additionally, for the United States Northeast Asia was a region of vital importance for national security. Former U.S. Ambassador to Japan Michael Mansfield described U.S. bases in Japan and the Philippines as “the outer perimeter of our own defenses” and a counter to a massive Soviet buildup in the Far East.<sup>110</sup> Thus, the United States had both a responsibility and an opportunity: A responsibility to protect a defenseless Japan against the growing Communist threat, and an opportunity to better defend itself through the use of overseas bases and its commitment to defend Japan. It was in this context that the U.S. relationship with Japan evolved into a formal alliance that included an extended nuclear deterrence commitment.

### *Japan-U.S. Relationship During the Cold War*

In 1946, post-World War II Japan adopted a constitution that “forever renounce[d] war as a sovereign right of the nation.” In 1951, the Treaty of Peace between Japan and the allied powers resolved numerous territorial and pecuniary issues from the war. The treaty officially terminated the state of war, returned to Tokyo full sovereignty over Japan and its territorial waters, and recognized the independence of Korea. Under the treaty, Japan granted the United States military basing rights on its territory in return for a pledge to protect its security. Furthermore, the treaty acknowledged that Japan, as a sovereign nation, possessed the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense referred to in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and that Japan may voluntarily enter into collective security arrangements.

Japan's unique relationship with nuclear weapons has profoundly affected its policies. During the early 1940s, Japan pursued two secret plans to develop nuclear weapons. However, other wartime needs took priority and the two programs never produced results.<sup>111</sup> Having experienced the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japanese leaders had to address national security issues while outwardly embracing the constitutional commitment to pacifism and a populace that embraced a cultural taboo against nuclear weapons. Periodically, an interest in nuclear weapons was stoked by regional security concerns. However, external pressures combined with internal cultural norms have (until recently) derailed serious discussion of the nuclear option among Japanese leaders.

In 1952, a Mutual Security Assistance Pact between the United States and Japan set the stage for further security arrangements between the two countries. The pact was succeeded by the 1960 Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, which declared that both nations would maintain and develop their capacities to resist armed attack in common and that each recognized that an armed attack on either one in territories administered by Japan would be considered dangerous to the safety of the other. While the wording reflected mutual cooperation for security matters, the implementation was anything but mutual. The United States provided the military capabilities; Japan provided the bases on which U.S. forces could be forward deployed. Also, Japan's constitutional prohibition of participating in external military operations relieved it from any obligation to defend the United States if it were attacked outside of Japanese territories.

In the early 1960s, old rivalries in the region began to take on a nuclear dimension. In October 1964, in the immediate aftermath of China's first nuclear test, Japanese leaders began to worry that they might be held hostage to a nuclear-armed China. U.S. intervention in Vietnam was straining relations between the United States and China. Japanese leaders were uncertain how these new developments would affect continued U.S. willingness to meet its security commitments to Japan.

At the same time, U.S. officials in the Johnson administration grew worried about the potential flood of proliferation in the near future. Among those countries at the top of the list of proliferation concerns was Japan. In late 1964, U.S. intelligence warned the Johnson administration that the incoming prime minister and foreign minister of Japan were "hot for proliferation." In 1965, the new Japanese prime minister told President Johnson that, "nuclear weapons in Japan just make sense." He felt that if China had nuclear weapons, so should Japan.<sup>112</sup>

Over the next few years, Japanese leaders carefully examined benefits and costs associated with developing nuclear weapons while the United States and others hammered out language for what would become the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The Johnson administration was concerned about the intentions of Japanese leaders and made a priority of securing Japan's participation in the NPT regime as a committed nonnuclear weapons state.

During the same timeframe in which the Johnson administration was working to bring the NPT to fruition, a secret, nongovernmental study in Japan was examining the nuclear issue. The study's findings were summarized in a document called *The 1968/1970 Internal Report*. This study concluded that it was in Japan's interest to remain nonnuclear. The reasons were three-fold:

1. The U.S. nuclear umbrella would be sufficient to protect both Japan and South Korea from Chinese aggression;
2. Japan is densely populated and even a single nuclear detonation would be devastating; and

3. Japan's nuclearization would lead to its extreme isolation.<sup>113</sup>

This report provided the public rationale for Japan to set aside, at least for the time, the option of developing nuclear weapons. Japan signed the NPT in 1970, joining as a nonnuclear weapons state. However, the commitment to forswear nuclear weapons—especially in the wake of China's emerging nuclear capability—continued to be controversial within Japan. A year later (1971), then-Prime Minister, Eisaku Sato, enshrined in a Diet resolution what became known as "Japan's Three No's": Japan will not 1) possess, 2) manufacture, or 3) allow nuclear weapons to be introduced to Japanese territory. For this, and his signing of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Sato became the first Japanese awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace (1974).

Japanese leaders indicated that Tokyo's policy of Three Non-Nuclear Principles was dependent on other policies which included the continued reliance and dependence on U.S. extended deterrence guarantees. It took six years of internal deliberation before Tokyo finally ratified its entry into the NPT regime. It did so only after West Germany joined the NPT regime and the United States agreed not to interfere with Tokyo's nuclear material reprocessing capabilities associated with its civilian nuclear power program. According to a senior Japanese official, the most important factor that swayed the debate in favor of ratification was the U.S. offer of extended deterrence and the credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrent.<sup>114</sup>

Kurt Campbell and Tsuyoshi Sunohara report that Japanese elites "felt comfortable focusing on economic reconstruction because they had strong confidence that the United States would defend Japan against any external military threats—even if such a defense required Washington to threaten the use of nuclear weapons."<sup>115</sup> A degree of caution, however, is evident in Japan's delay of six years between signing of the NPT and its ratification. Japan's statement to the United Nations accompanying its membership in the NPT as a nonnuclear weapons state is particularly revealing. For example, the letter states, while "The Government of Japan ... has always been in favor of *the spirit* underlying this Treaty," it notes a number of concerns, including:

- France and China both already had nuclear weapons and had not yet joined the NPT;
- The "discrimination [between nuclear weapons states and nonnuclear weapons states] should ultimately be made to disappear;"
- States must refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against any other state;
- The great importance attached "to the declarations of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union affirming their intention to seek immediate Security Council action ... to any nonnuclear weapon State, party to the Treaty, that is a victim of an act of aggression..."
- The right to withdraw from the Treaty if "extraordinary events jeopardize its supreme interest."<sup>116</sup>

Despite Japan's actions in the 1970s of formally declaring itself a nonnuclear weapons state and taking the extra step of adopting the Three No's, observers caution that Japanese leaders, highly dependent on continued willingness of the United States to defend Japan, did not foreclose a future nuclear option.

Japan has a long-standing security policy of maintaining the "minimum necessary basic defense capability as an independent state" so as not to allow a power vacuum to develop and thereby become a destabilizing factor in the region.<sup>117</sup> For Japan, this policy translated to a self-imposed limit on its spending on military capabilities. In 1976, Japan established the policy of not spending more than one percent of its gross national product (GNP) on the military. Staying within this limit often took some creative bookkeeping on the part of Japan. In December 1986, when Prime Minister Nakasone announced that Japan would spend 1.004 percent of GNP in 1987, this event made headlines world-wide.<sup>118</sup>

As the Japanese economy grew stronger, the United States urged Japanese leaders to assume greater responsibility for aspects of their security. For example, in April of 1981 Japanese Prime Minister Suzuki met with President Reagan. Now declassified documents reveal that the Secretary of Defense prepared talking points for the President to use with Prime Minister Suzuki to encourage greater defense-related spending in Japan and more responsibility for its own self-defense, to protect shipping lanes near the Philippines and Guam, and for air defense for U.S. and Japanese common defense.<sup>119</sup>

### ***U.S. Measures to Assure Japan During the Cold War***

During the Cold War, the regional security context and recent wartime history dictated the best measures to deter aggression against Japan and to assure Japanese leaders. The primary threat to be deterred was a nuclear-armed behemoth—the Soviet Union. Other lesser, but potential threats included China, an historical adversary of Japan. During this era, North Korea also provided a feasible, but not serious, regional threat to Japan. At times, the collapse of North Korea appeared imminent.

Japan, completely disarmed and embracing pacifism in order to rebuild its economy, provided numerous bases—for land, air, and sea forces of the United States. Japanese leaders rationalized this arrangement by defining these forces as needed to help sustain peace and stability in the region. Periodic bilateral consultations routinely restated U.S. assurance commitments including the U.S. extended nuclear deterrence commitment. In this arrangement, Japanese leaders were largely content to trust their superpower partner with the military details.

During the Cold War, the United States maintained a large, diverse general purpose force and a nuclear arsenal that was either superior to, or on par with, that of the Soviet Union. U.S. military units were forward-deployed throughout the region and based in Japan, South Korea, Okinawa<sup>120</sup>, and the Philippines.

The United States maintained a large arsenal of both strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons. No nuclear weapons were forward-deployed and stored on Japanese territory; however, the status of sea-based nuclear forces was often opaque. The U.S. policy to “neither confirm nor deny (NCND)” the presence of nuclear weapons aboard any specific base or ship allowed both parties to circumvent the issue of meeting Japan’s security needs and observing its Three No’s.

The U.S.-Japan Security Treaty provided for a Japan that limited its military capability to self-defense of its territory, but that could also be interpreted more broadly to allow Japanese capabilities to be used to help maintain peace and security in the Far East. This enabled Tokyo to permit the United States to use its bases in Japan for Vietnam-related operations in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>121</sup> Both sides interpreted the standing agreements as allowing Japan to support the United States in a potential contingency on the Korean Peninsula.<sup>122</sup> Since Japan had little offensive capability to contribute to military operations for the alliance, bilateral consultations focused primarily on non-military issues.

Thus, during the Cold War the following assurance measures were provided by the United States to Japan:

- **Formal agreements.** The 1960 Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States served as the foundational document for security cooperation.
- **Declaratory policy.** Periodic public statements declared that the United States would defend Japan with all available means including, if necessary, the use of nuclear weapons.
- **Military presence.** Large numbers of military personnel and forces (air, land, and sea) were based in the region and in Japan. Over fifty thousand military personnel were based in Japan. The United States forward based both fighter aircraft and naval forces, including an aircraft carrier and its air wing, in Japan.
- **Joint military operations.** Japan’s Self-Defense Forces participated in joint military operations such as the annual RIMPAC (“Rim of the Pacific”) exercise.
- **U.S. nuclear posture.** Japanese officials and public were aware that the United States possessed a large nuclear arsenal and that nuclear weapons were probably deployed in South Korea, and possibly elsewhere in the Pacific, but not in Japan.
- **High level Japan-U.S. discussions.** In keeping with Japan’s constitutional identity and reliance on the United States for military capabilities, discussions typically focused on non-military matters. Nuclear weapon-related issues were not discussed. The NCND policy was observed by both sides and the issue of whether or not nuclear weapons were carried by U.S. ships within Japan’s territorial waters was not discussed publicly.

### ***End of the Cold War: A Changing Security Context—A Changing Relationship***

The two decades following the end of the Cold War have brought fundamental changes in the security context and compelled appropriate adjustments in the Japan-U.S. relationship. A brief review of shifting perspectives during this period is important because they helped to shape current views on security issues.

The first decade following the fall of the Berlin Wall was characterized by the United States “cashing in its peace dividend” from the conclusion of the Cold War and then expanding its military operations to far-flung regions (e.g., Iraq, Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia). The second decade shifted the security focus to emerging threats from non-state groups and terrorism while the emerging military power of China loomed ominously in the western Pacific. Throughout both decades, North Korea oscillated between imminent collapse and flagrant demonstrations of its military capabilities.

In 1990, as the disintegration of the Soviet empire was underway, the Japanese government expressed its intention to continue to rely on the security arrangements initially outlined in the 1960 Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security.<sup>123</sup> However, the changing security environment raised new issues for Japan. The substantial growth of the Chinese economy provided an important trade partner for Japan, but the growing Chinese military capabilities made Tokyo nervous. The impressive performance of U.S. military forces in the 1991 Gulf War and lack of an adversary capable of challenging the powerful conventional military of the United States provided a compelling rationale for U.S. officials to dramatically reduce defense investment and cut force structure. As U.S. defense spending decreased, Japanese and U.S. officials examined ways to shift more of the defense burden to Japan.

With the Soviet threat in the past, U.S. and Japanese officials reexamined the U.S.-Japan security alliance. The 1997 Defense Guidelines for the Japan-United States Defense Cooperation Agreement provided a start in a new direction. It included language that explicitly gave Japan responsibility in “areas surrounding Japan.” In addition, it called for Japanese Self-Defense Forces to contribute to cooperative measures for supply and transportation in “the Far East” which Japanese governments have broadly interpreted to mean anywhere north of the Philippines.<sup>124</sup>

During the second decade of the post-Cold War period, three events are noteworthy: the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001; the sustained rise of the Chinese military; and North Korean missile and nuclear tests.

**Terrorism.** The attacks on the United States on 9-11 provided another impetus to adjust the evolving relationship. A Japanese law enacted in October 2001 (reviewed annually) specified that Japanese Self-Defense Forces could provide certain types of support for the U.S. Global War on Terror. Specifically, the new law authorized Japanese forces to help provide supply and transportation in areas well beyond those in its security zone, explicitly including the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, the territories of countries located on the coast of the Indian Ocean, Diego Garcia, and Australia. The



following month, November 2001, Japan began refueling operations in support of maritime interdiction operations for Operation Enduring Freedom. From a U.S. perspective, the Japanese contributions were relatively minor; from a Japanese perspective, they were precedent-setting.

**China Rising.** The rise of China both economically and militarily has posed a concern for Japanese leaders. At one point in a joint U.S.-Japanese discussion leading up to the 1997 Defense Guidelines agreement, anxious Japanese leaders privately asked U.S. officials if the United States would desert Japan in favor of China. One U.S. official responded to his Japanese counterpart,

There is little prospect of such a reversal for two reasons. First, China poses a potential threat while Japan does not. Second, we share democratic values with Japan and China is not a democracy.<sup>125</sup>

The Japan-United States Defense Cooperation Agreement in 1997 did not escape notice from Japan's neighbors in East Asia. For example, a Chinese article on international relations noted that in the post-Cold War environment Japan had been "adjusting its relations with the United States and China." Citing the 1997 agreement, the Chinese author opined that "Japan has decided to sacrifice the security interests of China to serve the Japan-US relationship." As evidence, the article noted further that the agreement did not "clearly exclude Taiwan out of its [Japan's] surrounding areas..."<sup>126</sup>

Since the late 1990s, the growth of the Chinese military has continued unabated. The commander of the Pacific Command, Admiral Robert Willard, went further when he told reporters, "I would contend that in the past decade or so, China has exceeded most of our intelligence estimates of their military capability and capacity every year. They've grown at an unprecedented rate..."<sup>127</sup> In the area of nuclear weapons, China's growth is of particular concern for Japan. China is seldom listed as a potential threat in public Japanese documents, but concerns over potential Chinese influence are often behind carefully worded statements. When Japanese leaders call for "U.S. superiority" in nuclear weapons to support extended nuclear deterrence, China is likely the unstated reason.

**Nuclear North Korea.** The North Korean nuclear test in 2006 sent shock waves through national security circles in Japan. Tokyo sought and received "high level U.S. reassurances that the 'nuclear' remained in the U.S. 'nuclear umbrella.'" Some in the Japanese media called on Japan to get over its "nuclear allergy."<sup>128</sup> In May 2007, a joint statement by U.S. and Japanese foreign and defense ministers stated that, "United States extended deterrence underpins the defense of Japan" and that, "the full range of U.S. military capabilities—both nuclear and nonnuclear strike force and defensive capabilities—form the core of extended deterrence."<sup>129</sup>

After the North Korean nuclear test, Japan stated that its constitution "does not necessarily ban the country from possession of any weapons, even though they are

nuclear ones, if they are the necessary minimum for self defense.”<sup>130</sup> Then-Defense Minister Fumio Kyuma declared that, “The strongest deterrence would be when the United States explicitly says, ‘If you drop one nuclear bomb on Japan, the United States will retaliate by dropping 10 on you.’”<sup>131</sup> Noboru Hoshuyama, former Director General of the Defense Facilities Administration Agency, stated that, “The first specific issue to be studied concerns improving the reliability of the nuclear umbrella and reviewing the Three Nonnuclear Principles of abjuring manufacture, possession, and introduction of nuclear weapons.”<sup>132</sup>

Given this record of North Korea flaunting its ability to threaten its neighbors and the apparent lack of military response from the United States, it should be no surprise that Asian allies are concerned. One noteworthy example of allied concerns occurred in the fall of 2006, in the immediate wake of the North Korean nuclear test. Noboru Hoshuyama, former director general of the Defense Facilities Administration Agency and managing director of the Research Institute for Peace and Security, issued a report that recent aggressive behavior by North Korea was evidence of a weakening of influence of the United Nations (UN) Security Council and a decline in U.S. influence over international issues. The report went on to say that Japan must consider the dire security environment based on the following factors:

1. Political, military, and economic emergence of China;
2. Declining U.S. involvement in pending global situations;
3. Manifestation of threats emanating from nuclear, biological, chemical, radiological, and missile weapons;
4. Posture of surrounding nations towards Japan; and
5. North Korean nuclear-weapon and missile tests.

The report predicted that, “conditions would probably exacerbate further.” Of the recommendations that followed, the first recommendation was to study “concerns [for] improving the reliability of the nuclear umbrella and reviewing the ‘Three Non-Nuclear Principles’ [of abjuring manufacture, possession, and introduction of nuclear weapons].”<sup>133</sup>

### ***Japanese Views on Contemporary Security Issues***

Currently, as the second decade of the post-Cold War period draws to a close, Japanese officials are carefully observing security developments and growing increasingly nervous. Their primary security partner, the United States, has significantly reduced its general purpose force structure, cut its nuclear forces to a fraction of Cold War levels, and devoted increased attention to combating terrorism. At the same time, potential threats in the region from North Korea and China have grown and show no signs of abating.

Uncertain over the intentions of China or the willingness of the United States to exert its influence on Japan’s behalf, Japanese leaders appear to be taking steps to expand their

political options and improve military capabilities. Initial steps in that direction were evident in December 2004, when the Japanese government formulated a new course for national defense capabilities. Japan's National Defense Program Guidelines specified two security objectives and laid out a three-pronged approach to achieve them. The security objectives are:

- To prevent any threat from reaching Japan and, in the event it does, repel it and minimize any damage. And;
- To improve the international security environment so as to reduce the chances that any threat will reach Japan in the first place.

These objectives are to be accomplished by efforts that combine Japan's own efforts with continued bilateral cooperation with the United States, and broadening cooperation with the international community.

More recently, in January 2007, Japan's Defense Agency was formally upgraded to a full ministry. This organizational change was needed to give the ministry more leverage in budget and policy-making decisions within the Japanese government.<sup>134</sup> According to the *2008 East Asian Strategic Review*, "This move was motivated by the growing need for Japan to respond to the changing international security environment and the diversifying roles of defense in the international community." This move was framed to be consistent with Japan's constitution and specified that self-defense roles included: 1) peacekeeping and international relief operations; 2) rear area support in areas surrounding Japan; and 3) minesweeping and emergency transport of Japanese nationals.<sup>135</sup>

Currently, Japanese officials are continuing to evolve their security posture. In early August 2009, a security and defense panel studying a possible revision of the National Defense Program Guidelines submitted its report to then-Prime Minister Aso. The report recommended two seemingly contradictory, but parallel, tracks. The first track suggested strengthening the Japan-U.S. security alliance. The second called for Japan and European countries to take a larger role in solving international security problems because of "the United States' declining influence." On this latter track, the report called for the government to change its interpretation of the constitution to enable the nation "to exercise its right to collective self-defense" and "re-define the meaning of strictly defensive measures." Specifically, the report called for Japanese Self-Defense Forces to be allowed to shoot down missiles launched from North Korea that target the United States, to come to the assistance of U.S. warships defending against North Korea's missiles (even if Japan is not under direct attack), and to relax Japanese rules on arms exports and allow Japanese companies to take part in joint conventional weapons development.<sup>136</sup> The report was released by the outgoing Aso administration and, according to one official, was intended to present a Japanese perspective as an input to the 2009 U.S. Quadrennial Defense Review.<sup>137</sup>

The defense panel, headed by the chairman of the Tokyo Electric Power Company, also called on the government to “study the advisability of Japan possessing capabilities to attack enemy bases...”<sup>138</sup> This recommendation is couched in language to conform to the Japanese Constitution. The recommendation is for a “defensive strike capability” to destroy an adversary’s weapons before they are fired or to deter their use. One retired Japanese military officer admitted that, “the SDF is conducting research on submarine-based cruise missiles.”<sup>139</sup>

The most recent defense white paper speaks to shifting emphasis away from “deterrent effects” and to “response capability.”<sup>140</sup> By this, Japanese officials are acknowledging that the evolving security context will require Japan to have “multifunctional, flexible, and effective defense capabilities” that can respond appropriately to various contingencies.<sup>141</sup>

The year 2010 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. In preparation for that event, and to chart a course toward the future, a distinguished group of former senior Japanese officials and academics (hereafter referred to as the Japan-U.S. Alliance Working Group) recently completed a report from a three-year project entitled “The Japan-U.S. Alliance Toward 2020: Evolving Roles in Regional Development.” The preface to the project report states, “...this report will discuss in general terms ... the roles that the estimated 120 million Japanese citizens in Japan are ready to assume for themselves.”<sup>142</sup> Recommendations from that report and recent developments in several areas of Japan’s security evolution are briefly discussed below. Specifically, the areas discussed are: 1) Japan’s unilateral efforts; 2) Japan-U.S. cooperation; 3) broader international cooperation; and 4) extended deterrence and the nuclear dimension.

**Japan’s Unilateral Efforts.** Fewer restrictions on self-defense forces and a broader interpretation of what constitutes self-defense would provide additional opportunities for Japan to build indigenous military infrastructure and capabilities.

Assuming that China, among others, will continue to build and deploy submarines in the region, Japan has the world’s largest inventory of P-3C anti-submarine aircraft. These anti-submarine aircraft are complemented by SH-60 sub-hunting helicopters which operate from helicopter carriers. Some in Japan favor expanding the size of the Navy’s submarine fleet to deal with the projected growth of Chinese submarines in the region. However, at present, Japan’s National Defense Program limits the fleet to 16 submarines.<sup>143</sup>

Japan estimates that within 12 to 13 years two of its neighbors, Russia and China, will deploy fifth-generation fighter aircraft. Currently, the Japanese Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) relies on its fleet of versatile but aging F-4J aircraft, as well as more modern and capable F-15 aircraft. Japanese officials worry that they will lose the technical edge for air superiority unless the ASDF is modernized. Tokyo is reportedly seeking to purchase U.S. F-22s. U.S. Secretary of Defense Gates has reportedly told his Japanese counterpart that any exports of the F-22 are forbidden under U.S. law and the F-35 is

Japan's best bet for developing a fleet of next-generation fighters.<sup>144</sup> According to one Japanese defense industry executive, Japan wants the F-22 version with ground attack capability so they would be able to attack enemy bases.<sup>145</sup>

Japan also may be hedging its bets should it decide an indigenous ballistic missile capability is needed. Japan has demonstrated large-diameter, solid rocket motor technology from its mature space-launch capability. In 1970, Japan launched a satellite and became the world's fourth nation to attain a space-launch capability. Until recently, its constitution limited its space development to peaceful purposes. However, as regional threats increased Japan's leaders grew increasingly uncomfortable with their dependence on U.S. reconnaissance satellites for intelligence and warning. Unnerved by the North Korean test in July 2006, the Japanese parliament passed the Basic Space Law. This law, enacted in May 2008, allows "nonaggressive" military use of space. This new law seems to allow for broad interpretation and a range of potential space-based missions.<sup>146</sup>

Japan's industries continue to improve satellite launch capabilities. The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency announced plans to begin full-scale development of a three-stage Advanced Solid Rocket (ASR). The rocket is intended to be used to lift medium scientific payloads, up to 1.2 tons, into low-Earth orbit. First launch is expected in 2012 or 2013.<sup>147</sup> The ASR is planned to be a less costly version of its predecessor, the Mitsubishi M-V. One unnamed source in Japan's rocket industry has commented on alternative applications for the M-V solid fuel rocket. He speculates that this could be converted for use as a ballistic missile with a range of 9,000 kilometers.<sup>148</sup>

Japan also has developed a vibrant nuclear power industry. In 1999, it reportedly had an inventory of approximately 5,000 kilograms of separated plutonium and more than 45,000 kilograms of stored spent nuclear fuel. One source estimates this material is enough for about 5,000 nuclear bombs.<sup>149</sup> The Congressional Research Service confirms that Japan possesses sufficient technology and fissile material to fabricate nuclear weapons, but its estimate of the potential nuclear arsenal is significantly lower: over 1,000 nuclear weapons.<sup>150</sup>

Ballistic missile defense (BMD) provides Japan the opportunity to hedge against failure of deterrence (much within control of Japan) as well as an active military partnership with the United States. Japan has plans to acquire a multi-layer BMD system that includes Patriot Advanced Capability-3 terminal defense capabilities as well as Aegis destroyers with SM-3 missiles. In addition, Japanese news reports state that Japan plans to invest in the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system.

Japan's defense budget for 2007 remained within its self-imposed policy limit of one percent of GDP. This equates to about \$40 billion dollars and was slightly higher than the defense budget of either Germany or France.<sup>151</sup>

**Japan-U.S. Cooperation.** The special relationship between the United States and Japan is based on interests that run deeper than just mutual security interests. Japan's Defense White Paper – 2008 characterizes “the relationship between Japan and the United States in which they, as nations that share fundamental values and interests, work together on political, economic, and security issues, based on the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements.”<sup>152</sup>

Currently, Japan hosts the second largest contingent of deployed U.S. forces and provides a home port for the only U.S. aircraft carrier (the nuclear-powered USS *George Washington*) based outside the United States. Ongoing changes include the relocation of a Marine Corps Air Station on Okinawa to a more remote location on the island, transferring about 8,000 Marines from Okinawa to Guam, moving an Army headquarters for I Corps from the United States to Japan, and integrating U.S. and Japanese air defense functions in a joint center on Yokota Air Base.<sup>153</sup>

In recent years, joint cooperation on ballistic missile defense has been growing in importance and activity. Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (2+2) meetings typically included discussion of cooperative measures for BMD. In November 2007, the defense ministers from both countries met and agreed to advance joint efforts to cooperate on operational aspects.<sup>154</sup>

In December 2007, a joint BMD test used a SM-3 interceptor fired from a Japanese destroyer, Kongo. This successful joint live-fire test marked a major milestone in missile defense cooperation with the United States. In November 2008, a subsequent BMD test involving an interceptor fired by a ship in the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force was partially successful. On October 28, 2009, a Japanese destroyer, JS *Myoko*, fired an SM-3 interceptor missile which successfully impacted a medium-range ballistic missile about 100 miles above the Pacific Ocean.<sup>155</sup> The United States and Japan are continuing to work together to increase the range and lethality of the SM-3 Block IIA interceptor.<sup>156</sup>

Japan hosts an X-band radar which is an integral part of the U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS). Japanese and U.S. forces cooperate in missile defense exercises and are continuing to improve interoperability between elements of each other's defensive systems.

The most recent Japan Defense White Paper calls for continued cooperation with the United States to further strengthen security arrangements on “defense operations.” Specifically, it calls for joint exercises and training to be enhanced, continued stationing of U.S. forces in Japan (but a “realignment of those forces”), cooperation on ballistic missile defense, and close collaboration with the United States in international security efforts. Consistent with this goal, the United States and Japan recently expanded the size and complexity of the annual exercise, Yama Sakura (Mountain Cherry Blossom). The exercise, conducted in December 2009 on the northern island of Hokkaido, included over 5,000 troops and involved ballistic missile defense training.<sup>157</sup>

Japanese officials have recently added an important topic to those for “close cooperation”: extended nuclear deterrence. With the threats from North Korea and China growing steadily, they are no longer willing to be silent partners. Recently, U.S. and Japanese officials have announced plans to conduct joint discussions on U.S. nuclear capabilities and deterrence.<sup>158</sup>

The recent transfer of government power to the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) is likely to place many of these cooperative measures under review. Previously, the DPJ has been critical of Japanese plans to pay for its portion of U.S. base realignment costs, and observers have speculated that Japan, under DPJ leadership, may seek a closer relationship with China and other Asian neighbors and less reliance on the United States.

**Broader International Cooperation.** While continuing to engage its traditional ally, the United States, Japanese officials are expanding security cooperation efforts in their region. Efforts include improved bilateral ties with Australia and India, as well as multilateral networks such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). On June 5, 2007, Japanese and Australian defense ministers and foreign ministers met in Tokyo. Previously, Japan’s only 2+2 partner had been the United States. This was followed four days later by a meeting of the heads of state, Japanese Prime Minister Abe and Australian Prime Minister Howard.<sup>159</sup> In addition, Japan’s leaders have sought bilateral cooperation with India—a growing regional power and rival of China. Bilateral meetings by heads of state in 2000 and 2005 led to a joint statement with a lengthy title: “Japan-India Partnership in a New Asian Era: Strategic Orientation of Japan-India Global Partnership.” This led to a formal statement of commitment to strengthen defense cooperation between the two countries in December 2006 and the inaugural Japan-India Defense Policy Dialogue in April 2007.<sup>160</sup>

**Extended Deterrence and the Nuclear Dimension.** One area in which Japanese officials continue to rely completely on the United States is that of nuclear weapons for extended deterrence. The most recent defense white paper states, “To combat the threat of nuclear weapons, Japan will rely on the U.S. nuclear deterrent...”<sup>161</sup> However, even in this area Japanese officials condition their continued reliance on the United States on a strong reciprocal commitment from their partner. In the past, Japanese officials did not openly delve into or discuss nuclear weapon issues. In the words of one official, “We were asleep on these matters during the Cold War.”<sup>162</sup>

The prospect of a nuclear-armed Japan has been a factor influencing the U.S.-Japanese relationship for decades. In December 1986, the head of the military history department of Japan’s Defense Studies Institute warned that although Japan is officially committed not to possess nuclear weapons, a major change in the nation’s security situation might change that as well. Furthermore, “We have the capability to make the bomb. We have the technology, the materials, the expertise. Within three months, we could have a 20-kiloton Hiroshima-type bomb; within a year, 40 of them.”<sup>163</sup>

In the future, a new generation of leaders in Tokyo may no longer be willing to blindly trust the United States. Recently, Japanese officials have stated their intent to be more active in understanding and influencing the policies on which their security is based. It is clear that some Japanese officials are concerned about deep cuts in the U.S. arsenal and consideration of a no-first-use policy. Regarding a potential U.S. interest in a no-first-use nuclear policy, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, Yasunari Morino, stated, "If you promised no first use, the effect of deterrence would be weakened considerably. We strongly doubt whether we could guarantee the security of Japan." Japanese leaders have also been vocal in warning the United States not to limit its nuclear policy to deterring only nuclear attack. Government officials and security experts in Japan worry that this would leave them vulnerable to coercion by China or North Korea with conventional forces or chemical and biological weapons.<sup>164</sup>

In the contemporary environment, public statements by the Japanese government often endorse a vision of nuclear disarmament; these statements reflect the unique perspective of Japan's history, but do not provide a complete picture of Tokyo's views regarding national security. Evidence of a more pragmatic view has been apparent as early as 1965, just after China's first nuclear test. Japanese Prime Minister Eisaku Sato, a future Nobel Peace laureate, who in 1967 conceived Japan's Three Non-Nuclear Principles, told Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara that in the event of war, "we expect the United States to *retaliate immediately using nuclear [weapons]*" which would be launched "on China by sea if needed."<sup>165</sup>

In Japan, prior to the 2006 North Korean nuclear test, Japanese officials had begun examining options that might be needed to deal with growing regional threats. In a report of one such study, former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone opined that, "There is a need to also study the issue of nuclear weapons. ... It's wrong to think that Japan can defend itself without addressing the nuclear issue."<sup>166</sup> In private, Japanese officials have expressed concern about the viability of U.S. nuclear weapons policy and nuclear deterrence commitments. Japanese journalist Hidemichi Katsumata wrote that Japanese defense officials are concerned that, "In recent years, the United States has steadily decreased the number of strategic nuclear arms within the nuclear umbrella."<sup>167</sup>

Currently, the concern in Japanese defense circles is whether the United States will continue to fulfill its extended nuclear deterrence commitment to the degree that Japanese leaders are well assured. The Japan-U.S. Alliance Working Group expressed serious concern over U.S. President Obama's stated pursuit of a world without nuclear weapons. Japan, consistent in its endorsement of nuclear disarmament, has also warned that Japan's security needs must be protected. When former Foreign Minister Nakasone presented Japan's Eleven Benchmarks for Global Disarmament on April 27, 2009, he cautioned, "In light of the situation in East Asia that I mentioned earlier, it goes without saying that the extended deterrent *including nuclear deterrence* under the Japan-U.S. security arrangements is of critical importance for Japan." (emphasis added)



This concern was echoed by the September 2009 report of the Japan-US Alliance Working Group which singled out China as a serious security concern:

Even as the USA and Russia downsize their nuclear arsenals, China may continue to modernize its nuclear forces. That would contribute to further deterioration of the strategic environment in East Asia. ... If China keeps on expanding its nuclear capabilities while the USA and Russia proceed with strategic reductions, however, the ability of the US to deter Chinese encroachments will decline.<sup>168</sup>

The working group went on to warn that if the security environment vis-à-vis China worsens, Japan would have to take actions “toward a more advanced extended deterrence posture than the present one that rests almost exclusively on declaratory policy.” Actions listed in the report that could enhance the extended deterrence posture include:

- A bilateral planning group, such as NATO’s Nuclear Planning Group, to discuss how best to employ nuclear weapons for the defense of Japan;
- Modification of Japan’s Three Non-Nuclear Principles to allow the introduction of U.S. nuclear weapons into Japan;
- Japanese weapon delivery vehicles that could be armed with U.S.-provided (and controlled) nuclear warheads;
- Transfer of a limited amount of technology from the USA to Japan to enable Japan to quickly attain a limited nuclear capability.

Following this list of possible actions, the working group once again restated the importance of U.S. extended deterrence: “...as long as...the US extended deterrence remains credible, Japan would have no intention to build an independent nuclear force, even though it may be assumed to possess the necessary economic and technological wherewithal.”<sup>169</sup>

### ***The Future: Assurance and Extended Nuclear Deterrence***

In March 2007, Tokyo’s *Daily Yomiuri* reported that Japan seeks to “reinforce the U.S. nuclear and conventional deterrents,” and wants “consultations with the U.S. to deepen dialogue with Washington over the U.S. use of nuclear weapons.”<sup>170</sup>

Japanese officials cite the important role of U.S. attack submarines that can carry nuclear sea-launched cruise missiles. These submarines can be deployed to a threat region to enhance deterrence and, if needed, provide an appropriate offensive response. In November 2007, Fumio Kyuma acknowledged that Tokyo was interested in such options when he stated that, “If U.S. submarines (with nuclear weapons) come extremely close to Japanese territory, it doesn’t constitute allowing introduction of the arms into the nation. We can act wisely to enhance deterrence by letting (U.S. submarines) come close to the nation.”<sup>171</sup> The *Daily Yomiuri* quoted “a source close to Japan-U.S. diplomatic affairs” as saying that, “A nuclear-powered submarine can gradually approach

the target, allowing time for diplomatic negotiations while applying military pressure. If the submarine is close enough, it could have the option to launch highly accurate nuclear-tipped cruise missiles.”<sup>172</sup> Professor Terumasa Nakanishi of Kyoto University called for the open or covert introduction of U.S. nuclear weapons into Japan because, “Maintaining all three principles doesn’t match the reality. If they’re reduced to ‘two’ or ‘2-1/2,’ the United States’ nuclear umbrella can work more effectively.”<sup>173</sup>

Just as Japanese officials place value on the ability of U.S. attack submarines equipped with cruise missiles to deploy to their region, they also place significant value on U.S. ballistic missile submarines that are based in the Pacific. One official opined that during a time of heightened tension, the United States could strengthen deterrence by announcing that a ballistic missile submarine with Trident II D5 missiles was being “deployed to the Western Pacific.”<sup>174</sup>

Nuclear-powered guided missile submarines (SSGNs)—former ballistic missile submarines converted to carry conventional cruise missiles—already have been used to demonstrate U.S. presence. On its initial deployment in the Pacific last year, the newly converted U.S.S. *Ohio* visited the ports of Busan, South Korea and Yokosuka, Japan. Upon arriving in Japan, its commanding officer said, “The Japanese-American alliance is very important, and visiting Yokosuka gives us the opportunity to outwardly demonstrate the U.S. commitment to Japan and the East Asian region.”<sup>175</sup>

The contemporary challenge in this regard is obvious: as WMD capabilities spread, U.S. allies in rough neighborhoods become increasingly concerned about the details of U.S. extended deterrence commitments and the capabilities and forces that the United States maintains to respond on their behalf. Japanese officials are explicit that U.S. nuclear weapons must be “on-call” in a timely fashion. They add a condition that nuclear forces are not to be deployed on Japanese territory, but may traverse territorial waters.

Senior Japanese officials are becoming more interested in understanding U.S. plans that underpin extended deterrence. The nuclear ambitions of North Korea are usually used as a pretext for these inquiries, but it is often apparent that Tokyo is also nervously watching China modernize and expand its nuclear arsenal. When asked about Tokyo’s views regarding further significant reductions in the U.S. nuclear force, a senior official stated that the United States should be very cautious in considering further reductions so as not to encourage China to continue expanding its nuclear arsenal.

Japan is one of several allies that have recently been explicit that the U.S. extended nuclear deterrent is a key to their assurance and that they link their own willingness to remain nonnuclear to the continuation of a credible U.S. nuclear guarantee. Senior Japanese officials have recently made the following points:<sup>176</sup>

- Some Japanese officials are seriously concerned about the credibility of the U.S. extended nuclear deterrent;

- If the U.S. extended nuclear deterrent loses credibility, some in Japan believe that other security options will have to be examined;
- Some in Japan see specific characteristics of U.S. nuclear forces as particularly beneficial for extended deterrence. Valued force characteristics include a range of nuclear capabilities: flexibility, promptness, and precision to allow U.S. deterrent threats that do not lack credibility because of excessive collateral damage;
- U.S. “superiority” in nuclear weapons may be helpful for U.S. extended deterrence responsibilities;
- The overall quantity of U.S. nuclear weapons is important to the credibility of the extended deterrent, and any further U.S. reductions should come only as part of a multilateral agreement for reductions among all nuclear weapons states.

### ***Japan: Assurance, Extended Deterrence, and the Way Ahead***

The Japan-U.S. relationship has evolved as contextual factors and policies have shifted over the past few decades. Important factors include: the regional threat environment, the broader global context, the economy of each, and available defense technology. The relative importance of each factor is viewed in Japan through the cultural lens of a nation that publicly states its embrace of pacifism, but understands the changing nature of the threat environment and the need for stability in Northeast Asia. Tokyo is compelled to endorse the goal of nuclear disarmament, but takes seriously the need to deter regional threats—which are growing in number and lethality. While the immediate threat is from a North Korea armed with ballistic missiles and nuclear and chemical warheads, the longer-term concern is China.

Japan continues to rely primarily on its partnership with the United States. However, leaders in Japan view U.S. influence in world affairs as declining and are willing to take on more responsibility for Japan’s defense and peacekeeping in the region.<sup>177</sup> In this regard, Japan is expanding its international cooperation in the region, in particular with India and Australia. Japan continues to strengthen its ballistic missile defense capabilities and is seriously evaluating the need for conventional offensive weapons (sea-launched cruise missiles) that could be used, if needed, for defensive purposes.

Japan supports the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons, but states that this must be done in a careful, step-by-step manner that ensures Japanese security throughout the process; this mandates the maintenance of a credible U.S. nuclear deterrent for the foreseeable future. A joint U.S.-Japanese statement released in November 2009 endorsed the goal of nuclear elimination, but with the condition that practical steps toward that goal “... do not in any way diminish the national security of Japan or the United States of America and its allies.”<sup>178</sup>

Until the recent change of administrations in Tokyo, Japanese leaders have been clear that they strongly prefer to continue to depend on the United States for extended nuclear deterrence and they were willing to examine, and modify if necessary, their long-

standing policies (e.g., Three No's) to help make U.S. deterrent capabilities more effective. However, the newly installed DPJ government has been highly critical of past policies that they argue, give Washington, D.C. leverage over Tokyo. No longer willing to be passive observers of deterrence, Japanese officials are becoming better informed and want to understand how their U.S. partner intends to fulfill its obligations to Japan.

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## **Assurance of South Korea and Japan: A Summary Comparison**

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Both Japan and South Korea are among the principal allies of the United States and perhaps its most important allies in the Asia-Pacific region. U.S. defense ties with both countries are nearly six decades old and the United States has major political, economic, and military interests in the continued security of each. The two are key diplomatic, democratic, trading, and military partners of the United States. The grave obligations associated with the U.S. nuclear guarantees to Seoul and Tokyo are consistent with the high stakes the United States has in their safety from aggression.

Both countries are in the cockpit of Northeast Asia, an area of competition for power, influence, and security that also includes China, Russia, the United States, and North Korea. Within this political-military setting, the ROK sees North Korea as its primary threat. Renewed conflict between the North and South has loomed as a danger on the peninsula for more than 50 years. Pyongyang's acquisition of nuclear weapons adds a new dimension to the threat. Japan, while alarmed by the North Korean nuclear tests, also views the growing military power, including nuclear capabilities, of China as a matter of serious concern. The contrast between the threat perceptions of the Japanese and the South Koreans has been summarized in the following way: "Japanese talk about North Korea but really worry about China. South Koreans worry about North Korea.... They share Japan's concern about the implications of China's rise on regional security dynamics in the long run, but do not think of China in extended deterrent terms—they are more concerned that unchecked North Korean nuclear ambitions may compel Tokyo to follow suit. The 'Chinese threat' is more territorial and psychological than nuclear."<sup>179</sup> These two developments—North Korea's nascent nuclear arsenal and the military buildup accompanying China's rise—have caused Japan and the ROK to raise questions about their protection under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. For the ROK, those questions relate to nuclear-armed North Korea. For Japan, they are due in large part to the increasing military strength of China.

In the face of these and other threats (notably the Soviet danger during the Cold War), U.S. nuclear guarantees have been, and continue to be, critical to the national security strategies of both Japan and South Korea. In this regard, the nuclear umbrella has played an essential role in discouraging both Seoul and Tokyo from acquiring nuclear weapons of their own. By the same token, when there have been doubts about the credibility of the U.S. nuclear guarantee, both countries have considered the nuclear option, with the ROK actually embarking on a dedicated nuclear weapons program in the 1970s. Although today there is some discussion in Japan and, to an even lesser extent, in South Korea about acquisition of indigenous nuclear weapons, this seems less a sign of future proliferation in Northeast Asia than an indication of the need for measures to bolster the nuclear guarantees to these two allies.

To date, those guarantees in both cases have rested on similar foundations. Long-standing mutual defense treaties underpin U.S. nuclear commitments to Japan and South Korea. Periodic U.S. public declarations and private assurances to Seoul and Tokyo underscore those commitments. Significant American military forces are forward deployed in each country to ensure its defense and symbolize the alliance tie with the United States. While general purpose forces are stationed in both Japan and South Korea, only the latter once hosted U.S. nuclear weapons. In deference to Japan's "third 'no'" policy (no nuclear weapons within Japanese territory) and the U.S. policy of neither confirming nor denying the locations of U.S. nuclear weapons, the two countries have avoided public discussion of whether U.S. ships in Japanese territorial water have carried nuclear arms. In addition to its forward-deployed forces, the United States demonstrates its security commitments to South Korea and Japan through routine exercises with both allies as well as by occasional crisis deployments to the region. In the area of defense cooperation, Japan has worked closely with the United States on ballistic missile defense, but the ROK, while procuring Patriot and Aegis defenses, has declined to participate in the U.S. BMD network.<sup>180</sup>

Japanese and South Korean responses to current concerns about the U.S. nuclear umbrella also have both similarities and differences. After largely shunning the subject for decades, both Tokyo and Seoul are interested in substantive discussions with the United States regarding plans and preparations for regional contingencies that might involve the threat or use of nuclear weapons. Some in each country have proposed the deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons on national territory to anchor the nuclear umbrella, but, at this point, such a step seems unlikely in both cases. Instead, both allies continue to rely on offshore U.S. nuclear forces. South Korea seems to have no clear preferences regarding the characteristics of the forces needed to back the U.S. nuclear guarantee, but the same is not true for Japan. The Japanese see special deterrent value in deployable, sea-based nuclear capabilities, such as the TLAM-N. In general, they favor U.S. forces that are flexible, prompt, and relatively precise in effect. Furthermore, the Japanese are more attentive to the details of the U.S. nuclear balance with Russia and China, believing that the United States should maintain superiority with respect to Beijing. South Koreans, in contrast, "do not worry that the U.S. commitment to deep strategic cuts and disarmament risks compromising [the] U.S. extended deterrent, given the size and capabilities of the U.S. nuclear arsenal vis-à-vis North Korea—it's the 'will to use' not numbers that matters,"<sup>181</sup> a belief reflected in Seoul's insistence on repeated U.S. affirmations of the nuclear guarantee. Along with continued reliance on the U.S. nuclear umbrella, both the ROK and Japan are carrying out, or at least considering, improvements in their own strike capabilities (aircraft, cruise missiles, ballistic missiles) and defensive systems for countering the threats they face.

These, then, are some of the ways in which the problems and means of assurance are both the same and different for two key U.S. allies, Japan and South Korea. Further research and analysis might lead to refinements in the comparison or point to other important similarities or contrasts. Overall, this study suggests that assurance of allies,

like the deterrence of adversaries, should be tailored to specific countries and strategic circumstances.





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## Notes

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- <sup>2</sup> Defense Manpower Data Center, *Korean War—Casualty Summary* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, May 16, 2008).
- <sup>3</sup> Adm. Michael Mullen, “All Hands Call,” U.S. Army Garrison, Yongsan, South Korea, October 21, 2009, Department of Defense (DoD) release; and ROK Ministry of National Defense (MOD), *Defense White Paper 2008* (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, 2008), p. 83.
- <sup>4</sup> Patrick Morgan, “Considerations Bearing on a Possible Retraction of the American Nuclear Umbrella Over the ROK,” n.d., pp. 4, 5-6, prepared for the US Korea Institute-Weatherhead East Asian Institute project on “Improving Regional Security and Denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula: U.S. Policy Interests and Options.”
- <sup>5</sup> Size of economy (gross domestic product at purchasing power parity exchange rates): Central Intelligence Agency, *World Factbook*, available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>; top producer: Sunyuk Kim and Wonhyuk Lim, “How to Deal with South Korea,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Spring 2007), p. 73; and trading partner rank: Foreign Trade Division, Census Bureau, “Foreign Trade Statistics: Top Trading Partners—Total Trade, Exports & Imports,” Year-to-Date August 2009, available at <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/highlights/top/top0908yr.html>.
- <sup>6</sup> 41<sup>st</sup> U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting Joint Communiqué, October 22, 2009, DoD release.
- <sup>7</sup> Kang Choi and Joon-Sung Park, “South Korea: Fears of Abandonment and Entrapment,” in Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *The Long Shadow: Nuclear Weapons and Security in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Asia* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2008), p. 374.
- <sup>8</sup> Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea, signed October 1, 1953, ratifications exchanged November 17, 1954, in Department of State, *American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955: Basic Documents, Vol. I*, Department of State Publication 6446 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1957) (emphasis added).
- <sup>9</sup> Choi and Park, “South Korea: Fears of Abandonment and Entrapment,” op. cit., p. 397.
- <sup>10</sup> Jim Tice and Michael Hoffman, “Accompanied Tours to Double in South Korea,” *Army Times*, June 23, 2009.
- <sup>11</sup> Choi and Park, “South Korea: Fears of Abandonment and Entrapment,” op. cit., pp. 374, 375-378 (quote is from p. 378).
- <sup>12</sup> Hwang Jin-ha (a former military officer and member of the ruling Grand National Party who serves as a representative in the National Assembly), quoted in Norimitsu Ohnishi, “U.S. Discusses Giving Seoul Command of Combined Forces,” *New York Times*, October 5, 2006.
- <sup>13</sup> Choi and Park, “South Korea: Fear of Abandonment and Entrapment,” op. cit., p. 389.
- <sup>14</sup> Song Dae-Sung, “Change in U.S. Forces in Korea and Korea’s Security,” *Sejong Policy Research*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2007), pp. 42-46 (in Korean), cited in Elizabeth Bakanic et al., *Preventing Nuclear Proliferation Chain Reactions: Japan, South Korea, and Egypt* (Princeton, N.J.: Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, January 2008), pp. 13-14.
- <sup>15</sup> Jung Sung-ki, “Calls Grow to Reschedule Command Transfer,” *Korea Times*, May 27, 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Pacific Forum CSIS, "A Question of Confidence: The First U.S.-ROK Strategic Dialogue," *Issues and Insights*, Vol. 9, No. 18 (September 2009), p. 18. ROK participants included academics and representatives from the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, the Ministry of Defense, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

<sup>17</sup> "S. Korea's Stance on Transfer of Wartime Operational Control Remains Unchanged: DM," Xinhua News Agency, October 19, 2009; and Kurt Achin, "U.S., South Korea Reaffirm Timetable for Command Hand-Over," Voice of America News, October 22, 2009.

<sup>18</sup> 35<sup>th</sup> (2003), 36<sup>th</sup> (2004), 37<sup>th</sup> (2005), 38<sup>th</sup> (2006), 39<sup>th</sup> (2007), and 40<sup>th</sup> (2008) U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting Joint Communiqués, DoD releases.

<sup>19</sup> DoD News Briefing with Secretary [of Defense Donald] Rumsfeld and South Korean Minister of National Defense Yoon Kwang-Ung at the Pentagon, October 20, 2006, DoD release.

<sup>20</sup> Richard K. Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1987), pp. 31-47; and Roger Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy During the Korean War," *International Security*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Winter 1988/89), pp. 50-91.

<sup>21</sup> Robert J. Watson, *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Vol. IV: Into the Missile Age, 1956-1960* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1997), p. 627; United States Pacific Command, *Command History, 1991, Vol. I* (Secret/Formerly Restricted Data; declassified in part, October 10, 1997), pp. 90-92, available at [www.nautilus.org](http://www.nautilus.org); President George H.W. Bush, Address to the Nation on United States Nuclear Weapons Reductions, September 27, 1991, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Book II* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1992), p. 1222; South Korean President Roh Tae Woo, television address, December 18, 1991; and Paul Wolfowitz (deputy secretary of defense, 2001-2005), remarks at the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Seoul, June 2, 2003, DoD release.

<sup>22</sup> (Associated Press) "Schlesinger Warns N. Korea U.S. May Use Nuclear Arms," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 22, 1975.

<sup>23</sup> 37<sup>th</sup> (2005), 38<sup>th</sup> (2006), 39<sup>th</sup> (2007), and 40<sup>th</sup> (2008) U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting Joint Communiqués, DoD releases (emphasis added for the excerpt from the 2006 communiqué).

<sup>24</sup> Choi and Park, "South Korea: Fears of Abandonment and Entrapment," op. cit., pp. 381, 392; and "Extended Deterrence for S. Korea Admits North Korea's De Facto Status as a Nuclear State," *Hankyoreh*, June 18, 2009.

<sup>25</sup> "S. Korea's Military Embarks on Studies of Extended U.S. Nuclear Deterrence," Yonhap, October 24, 2006.

<sup>26</sup> Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea, June 16, 2009, White House release.

<sup>27</sup> Won Tae-jae, cited in an item at the Web site of the *Kukpang Ilbo*, June 18, 2009.

<sup>28</sup> Sam Kim, "S. Korea, U.S. Discuss Stronger Deterrence Against N. Korea," Yonhap, July 23, 2009; and Kim Se-jeong, "Details of Extended Deterrence Against N. Korea Due by 2012," *Korea Times*, July 26, 2009.

<sup>29</sup> 41<sup>st</sup> U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting Joint Communiqué, op. cit. (emphasis added). Three weeks before the SCM, Gen. Walter Sharp (commander, UN Command, Combined Forces Command, and U.S. Forces Korea) told reporters, "I think the more we talk about [extended deterrence in Korea], the more people understand that it's really, our nuclear umbrella, the great conventional strike capability that we have very early on that is targeted and very, very capable, and then the missile defense part of it." Meeting with the Defense Writers Group (a project of the Center for Media and Security), September 29, 2009, transcript, p. 11.

<sup>30</sup> In the latest edition of the Air Force doctrine document on nuclear operations, for example, extended deterrence is defined strictly in nuclear terms: "During the Cold War, the US provided for the security of its allies by threatening a nuclear response in the event of an attack on them by the Soviet Union. This policy, based on the threat of retaliation, served as the foundation for what is now called extended deterrence. ... Today, extended deterrence is less about retaliation and more about posturing to convince an enemy that

they are unlikely to achieve the political and military objectives behind any attack on the US or one of our allies. Through alliances and treaties, our extended deterrence strategy provides a nuclear umbrella to friendly and allied nations. Our nuclear umbrella assures allies of our commitment to their security and serves as a nonproliferation tool by obviating their need to develop and field their own nuclear arsenals." U.S. Air Force, *Nuclear Operations*, Air Force Doctrine Document 2-12 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Air Force, May 7, 2009), pp. 2-3.

<sup>31</sup> Remarks by President Barack Obama, Hradcany Square, Prague, Czech Republic, April 5, 2009, White House release; Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, remarks at the United States Institute of Peace, October 21, 2009, Department of State release; and Brad Roberts, deputy assistant secretary of defense for nuclear and missile defense policy, remarks at U.S. Strategic Command Deterrence Symposium, July 29, 2009, cited in Martin Matishak, "Pentagon Says Nuclear Review Will Address Disarmament, Deterrence," *Global Security Newswire*, August 4, 2009, available at <http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/>.

<sup>32</sup> "S. Korea's Military Embarks on Studies of Extended U.S. Nuclear Deterrence," op. cit.; Choi and Park, "South Korea: Fears of Abandonment and Entrapment," op. cit., p. 394; and "Extended Deterrence for S. Korea Admits North Korea's De Facto Status as a Nuclear State," op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> Pacific Forum CSIS, "A Question of Confidence: The First U.S.-ROK Strategic Dialogue," op. cit., pp. 1, 19. See also Victor Cha, "U.S.-Korea Relations: Bill's Excellent Adventure," *Comparative Connections*, October 2009, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> Cited in Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1997), p. 259.

<sup>35</sup> Remarks by President Barack Obama, Hradcany Square, Prague, Czech Republic, op. cit.

<sup>36</sup> Remarks by President Obama and President Lee Myung-bak of the Republic of Korea in Joint Press Availability, June 16, 2009, White House release.

<sup>37</sup> Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell, interview remarks excerpted in Yoichi Kato, "U.S. Warm to Proposal to Reaffirm Security Pact," *Asahi Shimbun*, July 23, 2009.

<sup>38</sup> Choi and Park, "South Korea: Fears of Abandonment and Entrapment," op. cit., p. 392.

<sup>39</sup> Blaine Harden, "S. Korea Seeks Assurances From U.S. of Nuclear Shield," *Washington Post*, June 16, 2009.

<sup>40</sup> Choi and Park, "South Korea: Fears of Abandonment and Entrapment," op. cit., p. 393.

<sup>41</sup> Won Tae-jae (spokesman for the ROK MOD), in Sam Kim, "U.S.-S. Korea Summit Carries Mixed Messages on N. Korea," *Yonhap*, June 17, 2009; Lee Sang-hee (then-ROK defense minister), in "SKorea Reaffirms It Seeks No Atomic Weapons," *Agence France Presse*, July 19, 2009; and Kim Sung-han (professor of international relations at Korea University), in Byun Duk-kun, "Lee, Obama To Discuss Denuclearizing N. Korea, Strengthening Alliance," *Yonhap*, June 16, 2009.

<sup>42</sup> In the early 1980s, for example, British historian and commentator Michael Howard noted that the planned NATO deployment of Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles might help deter a Soviet attack, but was not reassuring to the European publics and, in fact, was a source of great controversy and protest. See his discussion in "Reassurance and Deterrence: Western Defense in the 1980s," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (Winter 1982/1983), pp. 309-324.

<sup>43</sup> Choi and Park, "South Korea: Fears of Abandonment and Entrapment," op. cit., p. 399.

<sup>44</sup> Jonathan D. Pollack and Mitchell B. Reiss, "South Korea: The Tyranny of Geography and the Vexations of History," in Kurt M. Campbell et al., eds., *The Nuclear Tipping Point: Why States Reconsider Their Nuclear Choices* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2004), pp. 261-263; and Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, op. cit., pp. 68-73.

<sup>45</sup> Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 27-30.

<sup>46</sup> Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, op. cit., p. 260.

<sup>47</sup> Remarks on the Situation in North Korea, October 9, 2006, in *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (October 16, 2006), p. 1768.

<sup>48</sup> Readout of the President's Call with Republic of Korea President Lee Myung-bak, May 25, 2009, White House release.

<sup>49</sup> Press Availability With Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Ali Aboul Gheit, Washington, D.C., May 27, 2009, State Department release.

<sup>50</sup> Kim Sue-young, "US to Provide 'Extended Deterrence' for S. Korea," *Korea Times*, June 7, 2009.

<sup>51</sup> Speech to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Singapore, May 30, 2009, DoD release.

<sup>52</sup> Peter Spiegel, "U.S. to Warn North Korea Against Nuclear Activity," *Wall Street Journal*, May 30-31, 2009; and Elisabeth Bumiller, "North Korea Is Warned By Gates On Testing," *New York Times*, May 30, 2009.

<sup>53</sup> Byun Duk-kun, "Gates Says US Will Use Every Available Strength to Protect S Korea," *Yonhap*, June 15, 2009.

<sup>54</sup> Terence Roehrig, "Restructuring the U.S. Military Presence in Korea: Implications for Korean Security and the U.S.-ROK Alliance," *On Korea* (Korea Economic Institute of America), Vol. 1 (2008), pp. 133-134; and Seongho Sheen, *A Smart Alliance in the Age of Complexity: ROK-U.S. Alliance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, EAI Briefing No. MASI 2009-02 (Seoul: East Asia Institute, June 1, 2009), p. 10. Note that if there were another Korean war, additional U.S. forces would be brought to bear. According to the ROK defense ministry, "U.S. augmentation forces that will be committed to support the defense of the Republic of Korea in contingencies include approximately 690,000 Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps troops, 160 naval ships, and 2,000 aircraft." *Defense White Paper 2008*, op. cit., p. 62.

<sup>55</sup> Defense Manpower Data Center, *Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths By Regional Area and By Country (309A)* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, June 30, 2009).

<sup>56</sup> Sheen, *A Smart Alliance in the Age of Complexity*, loc. cit.

<sup>57</sup> Christopher B. Whitney and David Shambaugh, *Soft Power in Asia: Results of a 2008 Multinational Survey of Public Opinion* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2009), p. 5.

<sup>58</sup> Adm. Thomas Fargo (commander, U.S. Pacific Command, 2002-2005) and Peter Rodman (assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, 2001-2007), written responses for the record, in House International Relations Committee, *U.S. Security Policy in Asia and the Pacific: Restructuring America's Forward Deployment*, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2003), pp. 59-60, 65-67; and Gen. Walter Sharp (commander, UN Command; commander, ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command; and commander, U.S. Forces Korea), prepared statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), March 19, 2009, pp. 18, 24-25.

<sup>59</sup> Chang-hee Nam, "Realigning the U.S. Forces and South Korea's Defense Reform 2020," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring 2007), pp. 173-174; and Pollack and Reiss, "South Korea: The Tyranny of Geography and the Vexations of History," op. cit., p. 269.

<sup>60</sup> Christopher W. Hughes, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons: Implications for the Nuclear Ambitions of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan," *Asia Policy*, No. 3 (January 2007), p. 96.

<sup>61</sup> Wolfowitz, remarks at the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, op. cit. See also the comments of Gen. Leon LaPorte (commander, UN Command; commander, ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command; and commander, U.S. Forces Korea, 2003-2006), in James Brady, *Scariest Place in the World: A Marine Returns to North Korea* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin/Thomas Dunne Books, 2006), p. 125; and Kathleen Stephens (U.S. ambassador to South Korea), quoted in Evan Ramstad, "U.S. Tightens South Korean Ties," *Wall Street Journal*, September 30, 2009.

<sup>62</sup> Gen. Sharp, Meeting with Defense Writers Group, op. cit., p. 8.

- <sup>63</sup> Speech to U.S. and ROK military personnel, Seoul, October 21, 2009, DoD release.
- <sup>64</sup> "All Hands Call," op. cit.
- <sup>65</sup> Meeting with Defense Writers Group, op. cit., pp. 8, 15-16. See also Gen. Sharp, prepared statement before the SASC, op. cit., p. 22.
- <sup>66</sup> See the sources cited in note 21 and Hans M. Kristensen, "A History of U.S. Nuclear Weapons in South Korea," Nuclear Information Project, September 28, 2005, available at [www.nukestrat.com](http://www.nukestrat.com).
- <sup>67</sup> Kristensen, "A History of U.S. Nuclear Weapons in South Korea," *ibid.*; Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, op. cit., pp. 257, 258; Sigal, *Disarming Strangers*, op. cit., p. 30; and information made public by Choi Sung (Uri Party representative in the South Korean National Assembly), cited in Sohn Suk-joo, "S. Korea Divided Over Redeployment of US Tactical Nuclear Weapons," Yonhap, October 18, 2006.
- <sup>68</sup> Nonstrategic nuclear weapons in South Korea were not, however, seen as escalation links to U.S. strategic nuclear forces, a role such weapons play in the NATO alliance.
- <sup>69</sup> Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, op. cit., pp. 258-259; Sigal, *Disarming Strangers*, op. cit., p. 28; and Joel S. Wit, Daniel B. Poneman, and Robert L. Gallucci, *Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2004), p. 7.
- <sup>70</sup> International Crisis Group, *North Korea's Nuclear and Missile Programs*, Asia Report No. 168 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, June 18, 2009), pp. 9-11.
- <sup>71</sup> "Former Defense Ministers Condemn N. Korea's Nuclear Test," Yonhap, October 13, 2006.
- <sup>72</sup> Jeon Seong-hoon, cited in Lee Jong-heon, "Calls for Nuclear Weapons in South Korea," United Press International, October 21, 2009.
- <sup>73</sup> Quoted in Jung Sung-ki, "US Umbrella: Double-Edged Sword for South Korea," *Korea Times*, June 24, 2009.
- <sup>74</sup> Jeon Seong-hoon, cited in "Calls for Nuclear Weapons in South Korea," op. cit.
- <sup>75</sup> Unnamed ROK military official, cited in "US Nuclear Umbrella," op. cit. See also Je Seong-ho (professor of law and a North Korea expert at Chung-Ang University in Seoul), quoted in "S. Korea Divided Over Redeployment of US Tactical Nuclear Weapons," op. cit. For the 1991 nuclear initiative, see President George H.W. Bush, Address to the Nation on United States Nuclear Weapons Reductions, September 27, 1991, op. cit.
- <sup>76</sup> Joint Declaration of South and North Korea on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, signed January 20, 1992, entered into force February 19, 1992.
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