ANALYSIS

THE IMPACT OF ARMS CONTROL MISCONCEPTIONS ON EXTENDED DETERRENCE AND ASSURANCE

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Much has been written about arms control. Yet, there has been little examination of the pernicious, unintended impact arms control has had on U.S. extended deterrence credibility and the assurance of allies. When Washington's policies create unintended problems for extended deterrence and assurance, it is Washington that then must seek to ameliorate those problems it has created for the alliance and itself. This is an unfortunate circle of Washington engendering alliance problems that it must then acknowledge and address.

The credibility of U.S. extended deterrence for allies depends on whether the United States possesses the requisite military capabilities and apparent willingness not only to defend its homeland against aggression but to defend the independence and territorial sovereignty of others. Whether allies and strategic partners are assured of the U.S. commitment to their security depends on their perceptions of U.S. military prowess and willingness to employ force against adversaries who threaten peace and the existing world order. Washington's deep reluctance to engage in what may seem as escalatory moves for fear of provoking foes has been on full display for many months in Europe and the Middle East—likely undermining the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence commitments and allied assurance.

This manifest U.S. reluctance is not simply a matter of leadership will in a vacuum; it follows from changing military realities and risk. The military balance has shifted in favor of opponents, as U.S. military capabilities—both nuclear and conventional—have declined relative to those of opponents and U.S. global power projection capabilities have contracted. Under Washington's general arms control mandate to reduce the role and number of nuclear weapons, the United States has eliminated or rejected select nuclear capabilities, particularly including theater nuclear forces. And the contemporary U.S. nuclear modernization program of record remains lethargic and unfulfilled since initially proposed by the Obama Administration nearly a decade and a half ago, in part to facilitate arms control ratification by the U.S. senate. Allied leaderships must make large or small decisions, virtually on a daily basis, that are affected by their judgments as to whether Washington is gaining or losing strength vis-à-vis the foes that threaten them—whether they should continue to side with the United States or hedge their bets. A trend toward decisions based on the latter judgment will ultimately prove fatal to U.S. alliances.

Continuing U.S. efforts to reduce the role of nuclear weapons—in a threat environment that sees opponents emphasizing nuclear weapons in their expansionist strategies that threaten allies—have contributed to conditions that undermine the credibility of extended deterrence, and thus allied assurance. These conditions include: America's unmitigated vulnerability to Russian and Chinese coercive nuclear threats, and the deep reduction of U.S. non-strategic nuclear capabilities vis-à-vis opponents who are heavily nuclear-armed,

cooperating, and explicitly threatening U.S. allies and partners. The challenges these conditions pose for the continuing credibility of the U.S. extended deterrent and allied assurance cannot be "papered over" by robust words and makeshift gestures from Washington because they are, in large part, based on material realities.

While arms control treaties and U.S. arms control enthusiasms have steadily reduced U.S. strategic and non-strategic nuclear forces over the past four decades, America's main nuclear rivals have more recently increased their nuclear forces and capabilities. This disparity clearly has degraded the credibility of the U.S. extended deterrent in the minds of some key allies who have come to rely on the United States as the ultimate guarantor of their security—and likely in the view of foes.

A Checkered History

Limitations on Strategic Defenses

The initial U.S.-Soviet strategic arms limitation treaties in 1972, the SALT I and the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, were hailed by advocates at the time as stabilizing accords that would help preserve a "balance of terror" between the United States and the Soviet Union and reduce the risk of nuclear conflict. The ABM Treaty, in particular, was considered the "crown jewel" of arms control and prohibited a nationwide territorial defense of the United States, essentially giving Soviet intercontinental-range ballistic missiles (ICBMs) a "free ride" to their American targets.[1] Mutual vulnerability was equated with strategic stability; yet the codified vulnerability of the U.S. homeland carried increased risks for extended deterrence and assurance. It raised the logical question of whether Washington could credibly extend nuclear deterrence on behalf of distant allies when the U.S. homeland itself was vulnerable to Soviet nuclear forces. Correspondingly, a publication of the Chinese Communist Party recently seemingly endorsed a Chinese "expert" regarding the credibility of the U.S. extended deterrent: "In American logic, US' homeland security takes precedence… The interests of US allies rank fourth. That says, if defending Japan with nuclear weapons poses any risk to US homeland security, Washington will think twice... The US' nuclear umbrella only protects itself."[2]

One of the most influential strategic thinkers during the Cold War, Herman Kahn, argued that leaving the American homeland vulnerable to Soviet missile attack was not only imprudent for U.S. security, but would negatively impact the U.S. ability to extend deterrence credibly to U.S. allies. As he stated in 1960, without some means of protecting the homeland,

[1] Statement of Henry A. Kissinger, cited in Brad Knickerbocker, "US prepares new concessions, new initiatives on arms. ABM debate revived as both sides seem poised to break treaty," *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 20, 1984, available at https://www.csmonitor.com/1984/0920/092021.html.

[2] Editorial, "Will US Defend Japan With Nukes or Turn it Into the Line of Fire," *Global Times* (Japan), July 23, 2024, p. 5.

"…it is hard for me to visualize the Soviets' believing that the United States would willingly commit suicide" on behalf of an ally.[3]

In part, the independent French nuclear deterrent grew out of concern that the growing vulnerability of the United States itself to nuclear attack would lessen the credibility of American security guarantees to Europe. As French General Pierre Marie Gallois recounted:

> Before 1960, when the Americans were out of reach… we had no doubt in our minds that they would use atomic weapons from the onset of any serious attack against any country of Europe, because they were out of reach themselves. The risks were, risks were small, after all. But, it was easy to foresee that ten years later, the situation would change and that America being the first lines, in the same position vis-à-vis the enemy than Europe, they would change their strategy, and try to reduce the atomic commitments.[4]

The 1972 ABM Treaty, which codified U.S. vulnerability to Soviet nuclear missile strikes, ultimately reinforced some allied concerns over U.S. extended deterrence credibility and diminished the U.S. assurance of allies. The extended deterrence and assurance value of missile defenses to protect the U.S. homeland has generally been recognized by U.S. allies and partners who feel threatened by regional actors with nuclear weapons. For example, as one Japanese analyst commented:

> If missile defense is deployed to counter ballistic missile attacks from rogue states, the U.S. can then pursue military operations against these countries without fearing retaliation against its mainland or forces stationed overseas. Military commitments to allies and the performance of extended deterrence will become more credible and reliable…. Key to increasing the credibility of the threat of nuclear use and subsequent nuclear escalation is the damage-limitation capability of the country providing the nuclear umbrella and the strength of political relations between the country providing the nuclear umbrella and its protege.[5]

Despite the fact that the United States withdrew from the ABM Treaty more than two decades ago, U.S. policy continues to reject missile defense capabilities vis-à-vis Russian and Chinese strategic ballistic missiles. Indeed, there have been continuing domestic calls for negotiated restrictions on U.S. missile defenses to ensure continuing American vulnerability to Russian and Chinese missiles as part of a broader arms control agenda.[6] Yet, as Herman

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[3] Herman Kahn, *The Nature and Feasibility of War and Deterrence* (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, January 20, 1960), p. 16, available at https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/papers/2005/P1888.pdf.

[4] Interview with Pierre M. Gallois, *War and Peace in the Nuclear Age*, June 11, 1986, available at https://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/V_A5E2A43ED3F84292B85F66FE35C38F90.

[5] Shinichi Ogawa, "Missile Defense and Deterrence" (Tokyo, Japan: National Institute for Defense Studies, 2001), pp. 32, 34, available at https://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/kiyo/pdf/bulletin_e2001_2.pdf.

[6] Steven Pifer, "Enhancing Strategic Stability: New START and Beyond," *Arms Control Today*, January/February 2021, available at https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2021-01/features/enhancing-strategic-stability-new-start-beyond.

Kahn noted, constraints on U.S. strategic missile defense capabilities render U.S. extended deterrence credibility and corresponding allied assurance goals problematic.

Offensive Nuclear Arms Reductions

Offensive nuclear arms reductions have also impacted extended deterrence and assurance. The deployment of non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe has traditionally been seen as a way to "couple" European security to that of the United States by providing a crucial deterrence means between conventional forces and America's strategic nuclear arsenal. However, in the 1990s, under George H. W. Bush's Presidential Nuclear Initiatives (PNIs), the United States eliminated most of its non-strategic nuclear weapons, including nuclear artillery shells, nuclear warheads on short-range ballistic missiles, and naval anti-submarine nuclear capabilities. Unfortunately, the Soviet Union (and later Russia) ultimately did not follow suit. This asymmetry in non-strategic nuclear forces has created heightened allied anxiety over the credibility of the U.S. extended nuclear deterrent as the possibility of a U.S. nuclear response to a limited nuclear attack on American allies largely receded to a highly escalatory, and thus potentially incredible, strategic nuclear exchange. As noted, most recently in Ukraine, Washington has repeatedly demonstrated great caution with regard to escalatory steps that might provoke Moscow. As Henry Kissinger much earlier stated, "…we must face the fact that it is absurd to base the strategy of the West on the credibility of the threat of mutual suicide…because if we execute, we risk the destruction of civilization."[7]

Similarly, the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty was hailed as a major arms control breakthrough that eliminated an entire class of ground-based nuclear systems in Europe. Yet, it contributed to the deep reduction of U.S. intermediate-range theater forces intended to provide credible means in support of the U.S. extended nuclear threat. As Russia continued to build and deploy shorter-range nuclear systems, the asymmetry between U.S. and Russian non-strategic weapons grew.

Continued Russian expansion of its non-strategic nuclear delivery systems provides Moscow with numerous theater nuclear options with which to threaten or strike NATO Europe. The lack of comparable U.S. theater capabilities can only diminish allied confidence in the willingness of the United States to threaten limited, non-strategic nuclear escalation (or a limited, non-strategic response) on behalf of distant allies, including NATO members.

U.S. allies in the Indo-Pacific have also expressed growing alarm over the credibility of Washington's security assurances as a result of the reductions in U.S. nuclear capabilities that underpin American extended deterrence guarantees. For example, the decision by the Obama Administration in 2010 to retire and eliminate the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile-Nuclear (TLAM-N), a regional, non-strategic nuclear capability, caused consternation among Asian allies, who saw the decision as evidence of a weakening U.S. commitment to extended nuclear deterrence as the threats grew. The 2009 Strategic Posture Commission warned, "In

[7] Henry Kissinger, "The Future of NATO," in Kenneth Myers, ed., *NATO, the Next Thirty Years* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979), p. 8.

Asia, extended deterrence relies heavily on the deployment of nuclear cruise missiles on some Los Angeles class attack submarines—the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile/Nuclear (TLAM/N)…. In our work as a Commission it has become clear to us that some U.S. allies in Asia would be very concerned by TLAM/N retirement."[8]

Subsequently, in its 2018 *Nuclear Posture Review* (NPR), the Trump Administration called for the development and deployment of a new nuclear sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM-N), noting that it would provide an important non-strategic, regional deterrent capability.[9] In addition, the 2018 NPR stated that the SLCM-N would help tailor deterrence and enhance assurance by providing greater "flexibility and diversity"—attributes that would be responsive to extended deterrence requirements given changes in the strategic environment "in the near term and beyond."[10]

Despite the likely extended deterrence and assurance value of restoring a regional sub-strategic nuclear capability, the Biden Administration refused to support the SLCM-N, arguing that the deterrence capabilities it would provide are unnecessary, redundant, costly, and unlikely to "provide leverage to negotiate arms control limits" on Russia's extensive non-strategic nuclear forces.[11] Nevertheless, Congress has continued to provide modest funding to sustain the program.[12]

Strategic Arms Control Efforts

Historically, nuclear arms control treaties have generally focused on reducing and capping the number of nuclear launchers or weapons at fixed ceilings over an extended period of time. Such an approach essentially presumes the continuation of the conditions that led to the agreements. Yet, international threat conditions can worsen quickly and, correspondingly, the requirements for extended deterrence can change rapidly. Understandably, as an analyst has noted, in a dynamic threat environment: "As [U.S.] numbers go down, extended deterrence concerns go up."[13]

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[8] William J. Perry, James R. Schlesinger, et al., *America's Strategic Posture: The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2009), p. 26, available at https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/America's_Strategic_Posture_Auth_Ed.pdf.

[9] Department of Defense, *Nuclear Posture Review*, February 2018, p. 55, available at https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872886/-1/-1/1/2018-NUCLEAR-POSTURE-REVIEW-FINAL-REPORT.PDF.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Department of Defense, *2022 Nuclear Posture Review*, p. 20, available at https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1/-1/1/2022-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY-NPR-MDR.PDF.

[12] See, in particular, Section 1640 of the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024*, Public Law 118-31, December 22, 2023, available at https://www.congress.gov/118/plaws/publ31/PLAW-118publ31.pdf.

[13] Chris Jones, "The Shades of Extended Deterrence," Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 4, 2010, cited in David J. Trachtenberg, "US Extended Deterrence: How Much Strategic Force Is Too Little?," *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Summer 2012, p. 86, available at https://www.jstor.org/stable/26270524.

A notable exception to a lengthy arms control commitment to a specific lowered ceiling was the 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT, aka, the "Moscow Treaty"), which allowed for a range of between 1,700 and 2,200 deployed strategic nuclear weapons, consistent with the U.S. reductions announced in the 2001 NPR. The ability to move between the higher and lower quantitative limits of the Treaty allowed for an atypical degree of flexibility in deployment numbers given the possibility of significant changes in the international security environment. The Treaty's range of 1,700-2,200 was agreed to, in part, to accommodate allied concerns regarding the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence guarantees. As then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers informed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the permissible range of operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons was, in part, based on "an assurance-related requirement for U.S. nuclear forces that they be judged second to none."[14]

Washington's Policies and Preferences

The credibility of extended deterrence is shaped by Washington's apparent willingness to accept risks on behalf of allies, and on U.S. nuclear capabilities that backstop the U.S. willingness to do so. Reducing the role of nuclear weapons has been a recurring U.S. arms control theme for decades, and is again emphasized repeatedly in the 2022 NPR.[15] Yet, as executed, Washington's continuing drive to reduce the role and number of nuclear weapons has undermined extended deterrence and the assurance of allies. As noted above, there is a striking inconsistency between this U.S. enthusiasm and that of opponents. Indeed, Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran have all been moving in the *opposite* direction, increasing emphasis on (or, in Iran's case, seeking the capability to acquire) nuclear weapons for the coercive role they can play in deterring the United States and its allies from challenging their aggressive behavior. Russia, in particular, has made extensive and unprecedented nuclear threats against the West in connection with its illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

In this harsh context, continuing moves to limit U.S. nuclear deterrence capabilities as part of an enduring effort to reduce U.S. reliance on nuclear weapons would further increase allied concerns over the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence commitments. As allied officials, including German and Japanese, have observed over many years, their countries' security relies on the credibility of the U.S. extended nuclear deterrent.

Allied concerns were exacerbated when President Biden, while running for office, expressed his belief that the only U.S. use of nuclear weapons should be in response to a

[14] Written response for the record in Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reduction: The Moscow Treaty*, S. Hrg. 107-622, 107th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2002), p. 117, available at https://www.congress.gov/107/chrg/CHRG-107shrg81339/CHRG-107shrg81339.pdf.

[15] *2022 Nuclear Posture Review*, op. cit., pp. 1, 3, 7, 11, 16, 25.

nuclear attack.[16] This "sole purpose" statement tracked with his earlier comment that the United States should adopt such a policy with respect to nuclear weapons.[17] Such a policy, if it were adopted, would clearly increase fears among U.S. allies in Europe and Asia about the credibility of the U.S. extended deterrent. As one analyst noted, foreswearing the first use of nuclear weapons by the United States would be "cold comfort for countries like Japan, Taiwan, and Australia all of which would have to contend with superior PLA [People's Liberation Army] conventional forces in the event of hostilities with China."[18] The 2022 NPR ultimately rejected a "sole purpose" policy, but also likely disturbed allies by highlighting a continuing U.S. aspiration for it.[19]

Conclusions and Recommendations

U.S. arms control goals, agreements and proposals, including the continuing policy limitations on U.S. strategic ballistic missile defense, the near elimination of non-strategic nuclear options, and Washington's continuing aspiration for a No First Use policy—intentionally or not—have contributed to allied concerns about the credibility of repeated "ironclad" U.S. extended deterrence commitments.

The consequences of this concern are illustrated by recent public opinion polls that show an increasing desire on the part of some allies to consider their own nuclear weapons as a deterrent, and by calls by some to move toward decoupling allied security from the United States. These developments suggest a growing disillusionment with the credibility of American security guarantees. The *consequences* of U.S. arms control enthusiasms have stoked anxiety among U.S. allies by restricting the very capabilities that backstop the apparent U.S. willingness to defend them. That understandable reaction has become increasingly pronounced in a dramatically worsening international threat environment.

To help strengthen extended deterrence and assurance commitments to allies, the U.S. approach to arms control and deterrence must reflect realism and acknowledge that opponents who seek to overturn the existing world order are exceedingly unlikely to engage in a benign "action-reaction" arms control dynamic led by U.S. restraint, or agree to measures that help Washington to satisfy its extended deterrence commitments intended to check their aggressive moves. In a threat environment that is more dangerous and complex than was the case during the Cold War, Washington's approach to nuclear arms, and thus arms

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[16] Joseph R. Biden, Jr., "Why America Must Lead Again: Rescuing U.S. Foreign Policy After Trump," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2020, available at https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-01-23/why-america-must-lead-again.

[17] The White House, "Remarks by the Vice President on Nuclear Security," January 11, 2017, available at https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/12/remarks-vice-president-nuclear-security.

[18] Andrew O'Neil, "A 'No-First-Use' doctrine would undermine American nuclear deterrence," January 21, 2021, available at https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/no-first-use-doctrine-would-undermine-american-nuclear-deterrence.

[19] See the discussion in, Michaela Dodge and Keith B. Payne, "No First Use: Threatening Alliance Cohesion, Assurance and Non-Proliferation," *Information Series*, No. 588, June 6, 2024, p. 507. See also, Department of Defense, *2022 Nuclear Posture Review*, op. cit., p. 9.

control, must be to facilitate the policy and force *flexibility* that best supports U.S. deterrence and assurance goals.

Some senior U.S. officials continue to tout arms control as a realistic solution to contemporary threats to U.S. and allied security and have been reluctant to move in ways inconsistent with past arms control endeavors. For example, the Biden Administration's 2022 *Nuclear Posture Review* repeatedly emphasizes the continuing priority attributed to arms control—asserting against all reason in the contemporary era that, "… arms control offers the most effective, durable, and responsible path to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our strategy and to prevent their use."[20] With this in mind, the United States should adopt the following principles in order to ensure that any future agreement or initiative serves U.S. national security interests and helps to assure allies via a credible extended deterrent:[21]

1. Expectations that China or Russia will reciprocate U.S. arms control enthusiasms ignore reality; the enduring U.S. confidence in a benign action-reaction dynamic led by U.S. restraint should be banished from U.S. policy planning. No member of the looming entente arrayed against the United States will respond to U.S arms control self-restraint in a reciprocal fashion in the absence of a compelling reason to do so. There is no plausible benign "action-reaction" dynamic led by U.S. restraint at play. These foes see such U.S. gestures as indications of weakness rather than incentives to reciprocate. The means to encourage foes to accept limitations is their fear of the prospective U.S. capabilities they will face in the absence of limitations. Consequently, if Washington seeks to encourage new arms agreements, or the resuscitation of past agreements, it must devote the resources needed toward the programs that can actually facilitate agreements, and will strengthen deterrence if agreements do not materialize.
2. The United States must develop an adequate strategy for a two-nuclear-peer environment and an entente among multiple hostile foes. Washington must resource that strategy appropriately, and procure the capabilities necessary for deterrence, including extended deterrence, *before formulating any arms control proposals*. As the bipartisan Strategic Posture Commission suggested, this is a

[20] *2022 Nuclear Posture Review*, op. cit., p. 17; and, more recently, "Japanese, U.S. ministers discuss deterrence under nuclear umbrella," *Asahi Shimbun Online* (Japan), July 29, 2024, available at https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/15366617#:~:text=Japanese%2C%20U.S.%20ministers%20discuss%20deterrence%20under%20nuclear%20umbrella,-THE%20ASAHI%20SHIMBUN&text=Japan%20and%20the%20United%20States,China%2C%20North%20Korea%20and%20Russia.

[21] Some of the recommendations that follow are addressed in more detail in Dr. Keith B. Payne, Dr. John S. Foster, Jr., et al, *A New Nuclear Review for a New Age* (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, April 2017), available at https://nipp.org/monographs_cpt/a-new-nuclear-review-for-a-new-age/. See also, Keith B. Payne and Michaela Dodge, *Stable Deterrence and Arms Control in a New Era, Occasional Paper,* Vol. 1, No. 9 (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, September 2021), pp. 52-53, available at https://nipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Payne-Dodge-OP-9.pdf.

necessary prerequisite to help ensure arms control aligns with national security requirements.[22]

3. No arms control initiative should hinder the U.S. force posture flexibility that enables the quantity and characteristics of U.S. forces needed to adapt to changing strategic circumstances, including rapidly worsening political conditions. In a harsh threat context, an agreement that enables the United States to possess a wide range of deployed and reserve systems is preferable to one that locks the United States into a reduced static number over a period of many years.
4. U.S. extended deterrence and allied assurance requirements, including the prospect for changes in those requirements, must shape any arms control negotiations. An agreement that erodes the credibility of America's extended deterrence, assurance, and nonproliferation goals will undermine U.S. security.
5. Any future arms control negotiations should focus on removing those areas of Russian and Chinese advantage that directly undercut the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence. This includes seeking to reduce Russia's enormous advantage in non-strategic nuclear systems that pose a direct threat to NATO Europe. Unless, as seems implausible at this point, the verifiable, deep reduction of Chinese and Russian nonstrategic options occurs, the United States should strengthen, not further constrain, its conventional and nuclear extended deterrent capabilities against their aggression. Specifically, U.S. non-strategic nuclear options must be expanded in Europe and the Indo-Pacific; realistic U.S moves in this direction may, in fact, be necessary to move Moscow and Beijing to more moderate behaviors.
6. Arms control limitations on missile defenses must be avoided. Improved and expanded homeland missile defenses would help bolster the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence by helping to deny Moscow and Beijing the power over Washington of their limited coercive nuclear threats, expand the decision space for a possible response, and could help reduce the level of damage should deterrence fail.
7. Given the ample history of Moscow's blatant noncompliance with arms control agreements and Beijing's purposeful lack of transparency, thorough verification and enforcement protocols, and an exit provision, are essential for any future arms control agreement. If Washington is to engage in arms control seriously, it must develop a clear compliance and enforcement policy in consultation with U.S. allies. This high bar for verification and enforcement is likely impossible given Moscow's and Beijing's contemporary goals and actions.

[22] See the discussion in Madelyn R. Creedon, Jon L. Kyl, et al, *America's Strategic Posture: The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States*, in particular, pp. 84-86,110-111, available at https://www.ida.org/-/media/feature/publications/a/am/americas-strategic-posture/strategic-posture-commission-report.ashx.

In conclusion, it should be recognized that, at present, despite continuing U.S. enthusiasm, the prospects for arms control that enhance the credibility of U.S. security guarantees to allies and strategic partners are slim. While U.S. deterrence policies should not be set by allies, as long as U.S. alliances remain critical to American national security, which will continue to be the case for the foreseeable future, these policies should be informed by the requirements for extended deterrence and assurance of allies. Washington cannot continue to so overlook the pernicious effects its arms control enthusiasms have had on the credibility of extended deterrence and the assurance of allies. The stakes simply are too great.

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