



**Extended Deterrence and Arms Control**  
**Series Capstone Workshop**  
Final Report

Hosted by  
Air Force Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)  
and  
USAF Strategic Plans and Policies Division (A5XP)

Science Applications International Corporation  
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## **INSS Extended Deterrence Capstone Workshop**

The USAF Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) and the USAF Strategic Plans and Policy Division (HQ USAF/A5XP) held a half day Extended Deterrence Capstone Workshop on Thursday, September 20 at SAIC in Crystal City, Virginia. The workshop provided a recap of three previous workshops: “Extended Deterrence and NATO/Europe (22-23 June 2011), “Extended Deterrence and Northeast Asia” (22-23 September 2011), and “Extended Deterrence and the Middle East” (18-19 April 2012). Following a summary of each of the workshops, the attendees engaged in an open discussion on implications of the workshop series’ findings for Air Force extended deterrence and arms control policies.

### **Extended Deterrence and NATO/Europe**

The purpose of the NATO workshop was to examine the current status and projected future of various issues that shape the U.S. extended deterrence posture toward NATO and Europe.

During the Cold War, U.S. non-strategic nuclear weapons (NSNW) in Europe peaked at 7300 warheads in the 1970s. This included eleven delivery types plus additional support infrastructure. In addition, the presence of U.S. conventional forces in Europe (along with their families) served as a tripwire for future U.S. nuclear involvement in a large scale European conflict.

Allies in Europe offer varying perspectives of the deployment of NSNWs. “Old” Europe, to include Germany and the Low Countries, are more in favor of ending U.S. NSNW deployments. Although these countries comprise most of the dual capable aircraft in NATO, they are also the most anti-nuclear and pro-arms control proponents in NATO. “New” NATO, comprised of Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltics, are more conservative and prefer traditional military capabilities, including forward-deployed U.S. nuclear weapons. They also continue to worry about Russia. Turkey meanwhile, walks a balancing act between NATO allegiance and regional interests.

There are a variety of arguments for the continued presence of U.S. NSNW in Europe, as well as for removing them. U.S. NSNW continue to play a role in deterring existential threats such as Russia and Iran and create uncertainty in the minds of potential adversaries. NSNW serve as an indispensable link between U.S. and European security and prevent allies from feeling abandoned or vulnerable. On the other hand, some view NATO as no longer having an enemy as it did during the Cold War. NATO maintains conventional superiority over Russia, and there is little likelihood of nuclear weapons being used against any potential near-term adversary. New capabilities such as missile defense may one day be able to supplant nuclear sharing among allies.

In summarizing the key themes from the workshop working groups, it was clear that U.S. leadership needs to counter the rising sentiment in Europe that opposes the traditional tools of extended deterrence. In addition, the United States must avoid reducing numbers to such a low level that the margin of safety for the mission is compromised. (Since this workshop took place, the Alliance has agreed to the publicly released Deterrence and Defense Posture Review, which called for maintain the status quo in Europe with respect to nuclear policy and forward-deployed U.S. nonstrategic nuclear weapons.) Finally, the Air Force, as part of ongoing efforts to revitalize the nuclear enterprise across the Service, should focus on the following areas: 1) maintaining robust command and control (C2) systems and procedures; 2) ensuring its nuclear forces are safe, secure, reliable, and survivable, and; 3) fostering a culture of warrior excellence in regard to the nuclear mission.

### **Extended Deterrence and the Middle East**

The purpose of the Middle East workshop was to examine the current status and projected future of various issues shaping the U.S. extended deterrence posture toward the Middle East.

There was broad consensus that Iran was only months away from possessing an indigenous nuclear weapons capability, yet there is continued uncertainty over Iran's strategy. Iran continues to publicly disavow nuclear weapons. This may cause Iran to decide to stop short of building or testing a nuclear weapon in order to avoid withdrawing from the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Workshop participants acknowledged concerns that Iran might represent a "risk-taking" nuclear power, but were skeptical of the threat of Tehran initiating a suicidal nuclear conflict or transferring nuclear weapons to a proxy.

The United States policy toward Iran is currently one of prevention. The United States is pursuing engagement via the P5+1 process, and has instituted economic sanctions to influence Iran. Despite the range of U.S. capabilities in the Middle East, a strike against Iran's nuclear program would only delay its progress. Although there is no continuous presence of U.S. nuclear-capable systems in the region, this may need to be reexamined in the future not only to deter Iran, and discourage allies from pursuing their own nuclear weapons programs.

Regional allies do not have a common perception of the threat posed by Iran. Questions involving Israel revolve around whether a nuclear Iran poses an existential threat and whether or not Israel would launch a unilateral pre-emptive strike. Arab states are worried that a nuclear Iran would further seek to destabilize the region, while smaller states are wary of Saudi Arabia's intentions. Arab states are also unlikely to ask publicly for protection under the U.S. nuclear umbrella, or to pursue their own nuclear programs. Should they feel threatened by a nuclear-armed adversary, their leaders are more likely to seek personal assurances – offered behind closed doors – from their U.S. counterparts that Washington will protect them with nuclear forces.

## **Extended Deterrence and Northeast Asia**

The “Extended Deterrence and Northeast Asia” workshop reviewed the Asia-Pacific security environment and identified implications for extended deterrence and the Air Force. China and North Korea were the key countries discussed.

China’s drivers are continued economic growth, maintenance of territorial integrity, avoidance of containment, and domestic stability. China represents an evolving society with new voices emerging on strategic issues. Currently, China has a minimal deterrent strategy and a “no first use” declaratory policy. In the strategic context, a question is raised as to whether China is the subject of, or a partner in, Northeast Asian security considerations.

For North Korea, drivers include regime survival under the Kim family and maintenance of their freedom of action. However, North Korea’s strategy is in flux. While their conventional capacity declines, North Korea strives to have a strong deterrent capability and is reluctant to disarm. North Korea also has an emerging intercontinental missile capability.

There is an increasing sense among U.S. allies that there is a need for a more robust and visible deterrent in Northeast Asia due to the increasingly uncertain international security environment. Concerns over Japan-South Korea disagreements impede trilateral action, and South Korea is becoming increasingly impatient with North Korean provocations.

For the Air Force, there is an increased burden of supplying extended deterrence due to the retirement of the Navy’s TLAM-N. The Air Force must rely on land-based missiles, heavy bombers, and dual capable aircraft to implement extended deterrence and assurance strategies in the Asia-Pacific region, none of which are permanently stationed in the theater. Although the United States has an emerging missile defense capability, it is not clear whether allies and adversaries perceive its deterrent value.

## **Open Discussion**

After the recap of the previous extended deterrence workshops, the capstone workshop participants engaged in an open discussion.

### *External Deterrence*

A question was posed as to what Air Force system attributes are required for extended deterrence. A participant noted that we must first distinguish between requirements for deterrence and assurance. A CONUS-based delivery system with global reach has deterrence value in regard to any adversary. U.S. allies, however, ask for visible systems in the region. This leads to several questions. Is a nuclear-capable F-35 deployed or stationed abroad necessary for allied assurance? Does this raise the profile of non-strategic nuclear weapons within U.S. extended deterrence and assurance strategies? Participants noted that NSNW possess several

characteristics that are important to these strategies. They are able to be deployed in-theater; for example, and can be integrated into COCOM planning and visibility. r.

A participant noted that there is growing interest by allies in the Asia-Pacific in maintaining or increasing the U.S. defense presence in the region. This includes U.S. naval visits, missile defenses stationed in the region, and the suggestion by some Korean analysts to reintroduce U.S. nuclear weapons into South Korea. Allies have also publicly expressed their concerns over the extent of the U.S. commitment to their defense.

The role of the Air Force as a nuclear delivery service provider was discussed. The United States has a broad spectrum of requirements for different potential conflicts that the Air Force must be prepared to engage in. There are also big differences between commander's perspectives in different regions of the world. The physical infrastructure requirements to forward deploy nuclear weapons are extensive and different by region.

What does it mean to have to provide extended deterrence to three regions simultaneously while also providing central deterrence? What force postures and numbers are necessary to accomplish both? How to convey the message of deterrence to different targets? The answers to these questions have major implications for Air Force force structure. The participants discussed whether it was possible to develop arrangements similar to NATO's nuclear sharing in other regions. It was noted that even within NATO there is a divergence of threat perceptions.

### *Arms Control*

Participants were divided on the long-term prospects of "traditional" arms control (such as the negotiation of bilateral, legally-binding treaties). The United States and its allies may need to find new ways to do arms control in the future. Exploring regional-based solutions through partnerships with organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or "coalitions of the willing" may provide a path forward to address some proliferation/regional arms race problems. One participant asked whether it was possible to pursue confidence and security building measures (CSBMs) in lieu of formal arms control treaties. CSBMs may provide a near-term path for the United States and Russia to address issues such as missile defenses and NSNW.

Participants also discussed a number of challenges the United States government and Air Force may face if future arms control negotiations lower the arsenal below the limits mandated by New START. One participant noted that many delivery systems and weapons are directly associated with specific critical missions. In some cases, allies also associate their assurance with particular delivery systems or warheads. In going lower, the United States will have to take care not to eliminate parts of the arsenal viewed as essential to a particular mission or its ability to extend a "nuclear umbrella" over a specific ally.

### *Role and Purpose of Nuclear Forces*

A participant commented that the Air Force must be prepared to fight in order to deter. Nuclear war-fighting, however, is a topic little discussed and poorly understood by rising officers (who joined the Air Force after the end of the Cold War) and of little or no interest to policymakers. A participant noted there is no consensus, and a lack of a grand vision, for the role and purpose of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security. They stated that the only two “visions” seem to be “go to zero” or “do nothing.” The Air Force and its sister Services should consider adding a “third vector”. Another participant stated that a key part of the problem is that COCOM leaders do not communicate with each other on nuclear issues, arguing that there needs to be a better dialogue between STRATCOM and PACOM, for example.

### *Strategic Education*

A problem impacting the Air Force (and the nation) is the lack of education, experience, and memory regarding strategic issues. While other countries are thinking about nuclear policy, the United States is not. Similarly, holistic deterrence is a new phenomenon. There are multiple agencies dealing with non-proliferation, counter proliferation, and counterterrorism, and the Department of Defense is not as involved as it could be. An entire generation of officers is schooled in counter-insurgency but knows little about nuclear or WMD issues (outside of a terrorism context). A participant also stated that many assessments of future challenges to the U.S. nuclear enterprise focus on delivery systems and warheads, While these are essential, they argued that the Air Force faces issues across the “organize, train, and equip” spectrum in regard to nuclear missions.

Air Force thought leadership should take the opportunity to help shape the national policies on allied assurance. This will enable the Air Force to shape the debate and provide inputs into what a flexible response policy would look like.



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
USAF INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES  
USAF ACADEMY, COLORADO



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**20 Sep 12**

- 0800-0820**    **Introduction and Overview**  
**A5XP/SAIC/INSS**
- 0820-0845**    **Extended Deterrence and NATO/Europe Summary**  
**Dr Jeff Larsen, SAIC/INSS**
- 0845-0915**    **Extended Deterrence and Northeast Asia Summary**  
**Mr Drew Walsh, SAIC**
- 0915-0945**    **Extended Deterrence and the Middle East Summary**  
**Mr Greg Giles, SAIC**
- 0945-1000**    **Break**
- 1000-1145**    **Guided and Open Discussion of Extended Deterrence and Arms Control**  
**Dr Jim Smith, INSS; Mr Richard Benson, A5XPI**
- 1145-1200**    **Summary and Closing**



## Workshop Participants

Dr. Justin Anderson, SAIC  
Mr. Richard Benson, AF/A5XP  
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