Stanton Nuclear Security Fellows Seminar

PANEL 1: Nuclear Crisis

1. Booseung Chang, RAND

Can the U.S. Stop South Korea from Going Nuclear? How to Deter a Democratic Ally from Acquiring

For my Stanton project I plan to explore the issue of how the United States can discourage a democratic ally from acquiring nuclear weapons. This issue is important because stemming the spread of nuclear weapons—whether to a friendly nation or a potential enemy—is a key U.S. priority. If a democratic, industrially advanced, close ally of the United States acquires nuclear weapons—albeit a nation friendly to it—that acquisition will pose a serious challenge to the NPT regime, one of the core U.S. means for preventing nuclear proliferation.

My primary research question is, "Can the United States stop South Korea from going nuclear?" This question is becoming quite prominent in South Korea as well as in the United States. After the fifth nuclear test that North Korea conducted in September 2016, intellectuals and politicians from both sides of South Korean politics began to raise the need to publicly discuss options available to counter possible North Korean nuclear attacks and provocations on the South.

Research Approach

I will leverage historical cases to understand and specify the ways in which the U.S. government has attempted to stop and prevent democratic allies from acquiring nuclear weapons. I will then apply those ways or other new options to the current context and environment that South Korea faces and test the feasibility and effectiveness of each option. As my research progresses, I will focus on the options that seem more feasible and effective than other options in order to develop them into more recommendable forms.

The main research method of this study will be archival research to obtain first-hand and second-hand descriptions of the selected cases. In analyzing these cases, the focus will be on the strategies of the democratic allies and the U.S. counter-strategies. Particular attention will be paid to the policy tools that were judged to be available or not available by U.S. policymakers in the cases, and the reasons why they reached that judgment. Most importantly, this study is interested in how the fact that these countries were democracies and/or advanced economies that have dense interactions with the U.S. economy figured in the calculation of Washington and its allies.

As part of my research project I will examine similar cases where the United States succeeded or failed in stopping nuclear proliferation. For example, I will investigate the cases of the United Kingdom (1952), France (1960), and West Germany (before it entered the NPT). Additionally, I will also look into the cases where Washington had to deal with democracies that were determined to go nuclear, although they were not explicitly military allies of the United States, such as Israel (1966) and India (1974).

Initial Findings and Observations

Returning to my primary research question, I believe the answer is a conditional yes; but some adjustments in U.S. nuclear strategy and policy are required. From a broader perspective, the United States has three categories of options: (1) Reassurance (raising the client's psychological expectation that it will be protected), (2) Repression (raising the cost of going nuclear), and (3) Reduction (lowering the client's threat perception). The challenge will be to find the best combination of options from these three categories.

It is hard to predict which of the three categories will be the primary focus at the end of this study. However, given the expected difficulties involved in slowing down the North Korean nuclear program, and imposing sanctions against a possible South Korean nuclear weapon project, the primary focus will be put on the reassurance side.

One promising way to improve the reassurance option might be to organize better coordination between the United States and South Korea regarding the strategy and planning over nuclear deterrence against North Korea. For example, we can think of a new, separate Track 1.5 committee where experts and practitioners from both countries work on the strategy for deterring North Korean nuclear attacks, participate in a regular dialogue to compare ideas, and periodically report to the existing U.S.-Korea Deterrence Strategy Committee.

Alternative Arguments or Explanations

The existing South Korean discussion regarding this issue is heavily tilted toward the reintroduction of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons, the demonstration of U.S. offensive capability, and/or preparing for preemptive strike on North Korea as a means to prove the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces' will to protect South Korea.

However, tactical nuclear weapons on South Korean soil will not add additional value because the United States can operate such weapons from the sea or from the air. Even if Washington decides to deploy such weapons, it may be hard to find an acceptable place for nuclear weapon deployment in South Korea considering the expected local resistance. China and Russia would strongly object to their deployment, too.

Demonstrations of U.S. offensive capability such as more strategic bombers flying over the Korean peninsula may raise the probability of nuclear reactions by North Korea. Without a carefully thought-out plan, it might make the situation more precarious, not less.

Any final alternative that remains after comparing available options will have to prudently consider the interests of both South Korea and the United States in a fair manner. For example, if South Korea demands too strongly that the United States should prove its will to protect South Korea by flying higher-tech bombers more frequently over the Korean peninsula despite expected nuclear reactions from the North, then the U.S. side might begin to worry about the possibility of escalation. On the other hand, if South Korea chooses to go nuclear, then it would have to risk the U.S. abandonment of the U.S.-ROK alliance and resulting insecurity in Korea. One objective of this study is to find a framework that can improve the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence options in a manner as satisfactory as possible to both the United States and South Korea.

My study can help the audience better understand the unique aspects of the Korean context. First of all, U.S. nuclear second-strike capability against North Korea is not enough to reassure South Korea. If North Korea begins with a small-scale conventional provocation, and continues to escalate, it is hard to determine at what point nuclear weapons would be considered as a viable response option. If, for example, North Korea has a credible second-strike capability that could target the U.S. mainland, it might be politically impossible for Washington to react with nuclear weapons as long as North Korean provocations are short of nuclear preemption. And yet, North Korea can devastate South Korea even without nuclear weapons. In other words, the United States can deter North Korea's nuclear preemption, but for South Korea, equally threatening are their conventional capabilities. Given this 'mismatch of threats and deterrence,' even if Washington verbally renews its commitment to use nuclear weapons to protect South Korea, Seoul may not trust it.

The goal of North Korea can be more political than strategic. Pyongyang may want to undercut the U.S. influence in Korea. For this purpose, Kim Jong-un can be quite aggressive. When a conventional conflict is on the verge of nuclear escalation, Kim Jong-un might threaten Washington with nuclear blackmail to not intervene. Obviously, this blackmail will also be aimed at his domestic audience to discourage any possible challenge against his authority within North Korea. From now on, therefore, when writing nuclear as well as conventional contingency plans in Korea, the U.S./ROK must explicitly take this political motive of North Korea into consideration.

Another unique aspect of the Korean context is the existence of China. West Germany in the 1950s, for example, did not have a viable alternative to which it could switch its allegiance. However, some South Koreans may view Beijing as another potential provider of extended deterrence whether or not the Chinese are actually willing to provide it. This added factor might make my assessment all the more complicated.

This study is itself a hedge against the movement toward a future ROK nuclear program. Through this study, we can better understand the source of the problem: the fear that South Koreans feel. The United States can take some recommended actions now to discourage South Korean interest in nuclear weapons, while preparing other actions to counter potential developments in South Korea that would lead toward a nuclear weapon program.

Policy Implications

The United States should develop a more serious strategy for assuring its allies and convincing them to not develop nuclear weapons. The United States has three broad categories of actions available: (1) reassuring the ROK, (2) repressing ROK nuclear weapon development, and (3) reducing the threats felt by the ROK. The United States needs to take all three kinds of actions, with a particular focus on assuring its ROK allies by sharing with them development of nuclear strategy and execution of nuclear retaliation (as the United States does with its NATO allies).

Risks and Areas for Feedback

The United States has been reluctant to take actions that would involve the ROK in nuclear strategy or execution. Convincing senior U.S. officials to take these actions may be difficult. I would appreciate feedback on actions that could be taken to convince U.S. security personnel that U.S. nuclear authority will not be lost, while ROK participation will strengthen deterrence of North Korea.

2. Ulrich Kühn, CEIP

Preventing Nuclear Escalation in the Baltic Region: Defense, Resilience, Arms Control

- Topic and Significance

As a result of the war in Eastern Ukraine and the annexation of the Crimean peninsula, NATO has identified Russia as a "challenge [to] the Alliance" and "a source of regional instability" (NATO 2016). The challenge it now faces is how to (better) reassure its easternmost members (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland), deter Russia and strengthen alliance unity, while avoiding unintended escalation. At the recent NATO Summit in Warsaw, allies identified deterrence in the nuclear and conventional realms, resilience to prevent a hybrid attack, and dialogue with Russia on military risk reduction as critical means to accomplish these goals. However, a possible chain reaction of events in the Baltic region could result in nuclear escalation largely because NATO's current policies are too unbalanced to comprehensively address this risk.

- Central Research Question and Focus

What more could NATO do to prevent nuclear escalation with Russia without undermining reassurance, deterrence or unity?

I start from the assumption that Russia could either attack one or more members in the Baltic region or that an unintended military incident between allied and Russian forces could lead to an escalating conflict. I aim to analyze the risks, given NATO's current policies, that such a conflict might culminate in nuclear threats or even nuclear use. I seek to develop policy options for preventing nuclear escalation, whether by strengthening defenses, improving soft power resilience measures in the Baltic states or by conceptualizing and putting forward concrete arms control proposals. I also aim to analyze any potential trade-offs between these options and NATO's other goals of reassurance, deterrence and unity.

- Methodology and Procedure

In order to answer the central research question, I will develop an analytical framework of three possible escalation challenges confronting NATO:

a conventional Russian military attack on one or more Baltic states, including closure of air space through A2/AD deployments, supported by nuclear threats;

a 'hybrid' Russian attack to destabilize the Baltics including a conventional build-up, large-scale nuclear exercises, deployment of Russian TNWs to the Kaliningrad oblast and/or nuclear signaling;

an accidental military incident between NATO and Russian forces over the Baltic Sea which leads to mutual recriminations and increased alert levels of conventional forces on both sides, followed by Russian nuclear threats if NATO 'were to further beef up its military presence in the region'.

Each challenge will first be assessed in terms of the adequacy of NATO's existing policies, i.e., to assess the risk of nuclear escalation under current policies. My assessment of the adequacy of policies will rely on current works on the NATO-Russia conflict (e.g., Rehman 2015, Kulesa 2016, Shlapak and Johnson 2016) and on more classical theoretical accounts of conflict research (e.g., Herz 1950, Schelling 1961, Delpech 2012). This should help me identify possible shortcomings of NATO's current policies. Then, I will develop possible options for dealing with those shortcomings by suggesting measures from the three realms of defense, resilience and arms control, and discuss the potential political trade-offs and/or synergies as well as the pros and cons of each of the three approaches.

A number of sequential steps shall guide the research process:

Step 1: literature review on defense, resilience and arms control in the current and former NATO-Russia context as well as on other regional conflictual relationships;

Step 2: interviews with defense and foreign and security officials and experts from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland about regional policy preferences and choices with regards to current and potential future defense, resilience and arms control policies in order to critically assess and compare possible convergent/divergent views and approaches with regards to NATO's current policies and my own proposals;

Step 3: critical analysis based on the three challenges framework, the reviewed literature and assessment of the interviews with the aim of identifying possible research gaps and/or additional significant issues that should be covered in the further research process;

Step 4: developing concrete policy proposals in the three realms in order to avoid nuclear escalation in the Baltic region; host one-day in-house meeting at CEIP with a small number of selected experts from and on Russia to discuss likely policy implications of the proposals vis-à-vis Russia;

Step 5: report-writing including discussion on political implications and feasibility of suggested policy proposals; presentation of report at CEIP and other outreach and dissemination activities.

- Tentative Conclusions

NATO could do more and better to prevent nuclear escalation with Russia. Advancing certain policies in the three realms described could help to achieve that aim. Possible trade-offs and/or synergies might exist between those policies vis-à-vis Russia. However, certain trade-offs and/or synergies might turn out to be risky and might even lead to a higher chance of escalation or could undermine NATO's other goals. As a trade-off example, NATO putting forward a mutual arms control regime with Russia might lessen the danger of escalation but could leave certain allies in an increased state of (perceived) insecurity. As a synergy example, NATO could threaten to further beef up defenses in order to better assure allies and in the hope that Russia might return to the negotiation table – a risky policy which ultimately could lead to escalation.

- Current and Previous Research

Existing analysis of the U.S.-Russia relationship largely focuses on strengthened defense (cf. Kroenig 2014), resilience (cf. NATO Parliamentary Assembly 2015) or arms control (cf. Richter 2016) separately, without identifying the possible problematic and/or beneficiary links that exist between those three realms. As I have argued elsewhere (cf. Kühn 2015), there are clear gaps in the literature regarding the interconnectedness of weaknesses of NATO's existing policies.

- Alternative Arguments and Explanations

  Possible alternative arguments or explanations take into account the larger political context of the current confrontation and argue that even the best defense and/or arms control proposals might not make allies more secure if the underlying problems of the NATO-Russia relationship are not adequately tackled (see. Charap and Shapiro 2016). Other arguments depict either strengthened defense (cf. Colby and Solomon 2015) or arms control (cf. Richter 2016) measures as the only viable policy choice vis-à-vis Russia.

- Added Value of My Research Approach

  Focusing simultaneously on all three realms (defense, resilience, arms control) gives me the advantage of discussing the adequacy of NATO's existing policies, including the ones agreed to in Warsaw, from a holistic angle and identifying possible shortcomings. This should help me highlighting potential political trade-offs that might result from differently emphasizing policies in the three realms.

- Most Significant Contribution

  My most significant contribution would be contributing to a more stable and predictable NATO-Russia relationship by putting forward concrete policy recommendations in all three realms.

- Policy Implications and Recommendations

My work would suggest that NATO reevaluate its overall approach towards Russia and invest more time and conceptual thought in order to bring together divergent policy approaches amongst allies in all three realms. In the realm of defense, NATO could engage in efforts to improve readiness of its forward-deployed nuclear assets as well as intra-alliance consultations and arrangements in times of crisis in order to change Moscow's calculus with regards to employing nuclear threats. In the realm of resilience, NATO could enhance its intra-alliance public communications with regards its nuclear posture in order to make Western European societies less prone to nuclear blackmail, clarify its potential responses to a hybrid scenario and improve the integration of Russian minorities in the three Baltic states. In the realm of arms control, NATO could do better in conceptualizing clear-cut nuclear risk reduction measures such as multilateralizing existing Cold War U.S.-Russian agreements (e.g. INCSEA, DMA) and possible regional conventional arms control and transparency measures (including mutually verifiable regional ceilings akin to the earlier CFE Treaty) vis-à-vis Russia.

- Shortcomings of and Feedback to My Research Proposal

The weakest aspect of my study is probably that the current NATO-Russia context is not very conducive to implementing any significant policy change right now. I would be happy to hear feedback on my suggested methodology.

Addendum

References

Charap, Samuel and Jeremy Shapiro (2016), "US–Russian relations: The middle cannot hold", *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 72(3): 150–5.

Colby, Elbridge and Jonathan Solomon (2015), "Facing Russia: Conventional Defence and Deterrence in Europe", *Survival*, 57(6): 21–49.

Delpech, Thérèse (2012), *Nuclear Deterrence in the 21st Century. Lessons from the Cold War for a New Era of Strategic Piracy*. Santa Monica: RAND.

Herz, John H. (1950), "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma", *World Politics*, 2(2): 157–80.

Kroenig, Matthew (2015), "Facing Reality: Getting NATO Ready for a New Cold War", *Survival*, 57(1): 49–70.

Kühn, Ulrich (2015), "Deter and Engage: Making the Case for Harmel 2.0 as NATO's New Strategy", *New Perspectives, Interdisciplinary Journal of Central & East European Politics and International Relations* 23(1): 127–57.

Kulesa, Łukasz (2016), *Towards a new equilibrium: Minimizing the risks of Russia and NATO's new military postures*. London: ELN. http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/medialibrary/2016/02/07/180d69f6/Towards%20a%20New%20Equilibrium%202016.pdf (accessed August 7, 2016).

NATO (2016), *Warsaw Summit Communiqué Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8-9 July 2016*. http://www.mfa.gov.pl/resource/283018e4-2eb2-414f-b69f-de85afa1ac08:JCR (accessed August 2, 2016).

NATO Parliamentary Assembly (2015), *Hybrid Warfare: NATO's New Strategic Challenge? DSC 2015 General Report presented by Julio Miranda Calha*. http://www.nato-pa.int/shortcut.asp?FILE=4202 (accessed January 19, 2016).

Rehman, Iskander (2015), "Radioactive in Riga: The Latvian Nuclear Standoff of 2018, Part I", *War on the Rocks*. http://warontherocks.com/2015/11/radioactive-in-riga-the-latvian-nuclear-standoff-of-2018-part-i/ (accessed August 4, 2016).

Richter, Wolfgang (2016), *Sub-Regional Arms Control for the Baltics: What Is Desirable? What Is Feasible?* (Deep Cuts Working Paper No. 8). Hamburg: IFSH. http://deepcuts.org/images/PDF/DeepCuts_WP8_Richter_UK.pdf (accessed August 7, 2016).

Schelling, Thomas C. (1961), “The Future of Arms Control”, *Operations Research*, 9(5): 722–31.

Shlapak, David A. and Michael W. Johnson (2016), *Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO’s Eastern Flank. Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics*. Santa Monica: RAND. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1200/RR1253/RAND_RR1253.pdf (accessed August 7, 2016).

3. Zoë I. Levornik, MIT SSP

Constructive Intervention in Ukraine

This paper examines the effect of constructive intervention on states' foreign policy. Constructive Intervention is an underdeveloped term in the field of international relations. Therefore, the first part of the paper is dedicated to the theoretical development of the term constructive intervention. Since constructive intervention lacks a specific definition I begin by providing a definition for the term. I then offer a theoretical explanation, which regards constructive intervention as the mechanism used by international organizations when socializing states with the aim of promoting the internalization of Western norms and Western national identity. Constructive intervention is understood to refer to a wide range of activities, conducted by international organizations, from monitoring elections to nation building. Moreover, constructive intervention involves a process of teaching or 'schooling,' often through training seminars, workshops, and participation in joint missions, of newly independent or post crisis nations, which focus on international law, practices, and norms. I argue that constructive intervention can have a significant influence on states domestic and foreign policies. In the second part of this study, I use the case of Ukraine's decision to relinquish the nuclear weapons it inherited after the collapse of the Soviet Union in order to examine the effect of constructive intervention. I argue that the extensive constructive intervention that took place in Ukraine immediately after its independence facilitated Ukraine's decision to relinquish the nuclear weapons through a process of socialization, which led to the internalization of Western norms and values and to the construction of a Western national identity in the newly independent Ukraine.

As an independent state Ukraine inherited the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world. Although Ukraine initially committed to becoming a nonnuclear state, it later began to backtrack and waver on its earlier agreements to denuclearize. The change in Ukraine's position was motivated mostly by its security and economic concerns. Ukraine came to view the nuclear weapons in its possession as a 'bargaining chip' it could use in order to get security guarantees and financial compensation from the West. The Ukrainian leadership also believed that the nuclear weapons could be used to deter Russia and to gain international standing for Ukraine. Thus, the Ukrainian parliament placed condition on the disarmament of Ukraine's nuclear arsenal. However, even though Ukraine was not successful in obtaining the guarantees and assistance it sought it eventually relinquished its nuclear weapons and acceded to the NPT as a nonnuclear state.

How can we explain Ukraine's decision to relinquish its nuclear weapons even though it did not receive the security gauntness and financial assistance it sought? Some scholars argue that Ukraine's role identity as a Western state and its adherence to Western ideas and beliefs affected its decision to give up its nuclear weapons. However, these scholars do not offer an explanation as to how these beliefs and ideas took hold in Ukraine, a nation that has been under the Soviet Union sphere of influence for decades. I argue that the extended international intervention that took place immediately after Ukraine's independence facilitate the process of Ukraine integration into the international

community and the internalization of Western values and norms including the nuclear nonproliferation norm.

The paper will use process tracing and discourse analysis in order to examine the effect of constructive intervention on Ukraine's decision to relinquish the nuclear weapons. Frist I trace the intervention that took place in Ukraine, its scope, aims, and contributions. Second, I examine the internal debate about Ukraine's nuclear posture that took place in parliament and among the political and military elite from the time of Ukraine's independence and until its decision to accede to the NPT as a nonnuclear state. I focus on three important areas, perceptions of nuclear weapons, perceptions of security, and perceptions of identity.

This paper suggests that constructive intervention can have a significant effect on states' policies. As shown by the case of Ukraine it can have important implication for the nonproliferation regime. In certain cases, constructive intervention can help prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and strengthen the nonproliferation regime. However, the effect of constructive intervention goes beyond the nuclear policies of states. Constructive intervention can have a much broader effect on states' domestic and foreign policies, which requires further study.

4. Oriana Mastro, CFR

The Ultimate Korea Crisis: China, the United States, and the Rush to Secure DPRK WMD

1) Issue: The US strategic community has expended great effort to prepare for contingencies involving the end of the North Korean regime, either due to internal collapse or war.[1] Among these contingencies, the US ability to secure DPRK weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and associated facilities is considered "the most critical US task" because of potential damage to US and allied forces, and the risk of uncontrolled proliferation.[2] The 2014 QDR emphasized the importance of "preventing the acquisition of, accounting for, securing, and destroying as appropriate WMD abroad."[3] At the operational level, US Pacific Command considers North Korean WMD issues to be "the most urgent security threat in the region," and a key focus of military planning.[4] Securing Pyongyang's WMD would be the ultimate – the most acute and the final – Korean crisis.

Studies suggest that even in the most permissive environments, the mission of WMD-Elimination (WMD-E) would be a logistically complex and resource-intensive process. WMD-E refers to military operations designed "to systematically locate, characterize, secure, disable, and/or destroy a state or non-state actor's WMD programs and related capabilities in hostile and uncertain environments."[5] In the event of the end of the DPRK through war or state collapse, the United States would attempt to seize and secure key sites, including nuclear research, production, storage, and delivery facilities, search and clear them of WMD, and do so possibly while sustaining major war operations. Current estimates suggest there would be 39 critical sites and 10-35 nuclear weapons – and DPRK attempts at dispersal and concealment could greatly complicate US efforts. The US response to the ultimate Korean crisis would require massive amounts of ground forces, though exact estimates vary greatly depending on whether the US would face a hostile environment.[6]

---

[1] For examples, see Paul B. Stares, et al., "Preparing for Sudden Change in North Korea," *Council on Foreign Relations Special Report*, No. 42 (January 2009); Michael O'Hanlon, "North Korea Collapse Scenarios," Brookings Northeast Asia Commentary No. 30, p. 4-5; Center for US-Korea Policy, "North Korea Contingency Planning and US-ROK Cooperation," (Asia Foundation, September 2009); For a South Korean perspective, see Jung-hyun Cho, Dong-ho Han and Ji-yong Lee, "North Korean Contingency and Resolving Conflicts among Regional States," *North Korean Review*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Spring 2012), pp. 37-52.

[2] Timothy M. Bonds, et al., *Strategy-Policy Mismatch: How the US Army Can Help Close Gaps in Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014), p. 103.

[3] *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2014), p.16.

[4] *USPACOM Strategy*. Available at: http://www.pacom.mil/AboutUSPACOM/USPACOMStrategy.aspx

[5] "DoD Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Policy," Department of Defense Directive, Number 2060.02, 19 April 2007, p. 9. Available at: http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/206002p.pdf.

[6] Bonds, *Strategy-Policy Mismatch*, pp. 102-104.

2) **Research Question:** But there is one factor that is missing from even the most comprehensive WMD-E scenarios – the role of China.[7] Specifically, how does China's rising military capabilities and expanding missions impact US security objectives with respect to a contingency on the Korean peninsula? China may be more actively involved in controlling WMD problems than US planners anticipate; Chinese writings suggest the People's Liberation Army (PLA) should be prepared to seize control over key nuclear sites, especially those close to their border, to prevent a loose nukes scenario and preempt US action.[8] With easier access and potentially better intelligence about the extent of the program, the Chinese may be better positioned to secure the nuclear facilities first. Subsequently, the presence of Chinese troops around critical facilities would complicate any plans to conduct standoff attacks.[9] Moreover, if Chinese troops and a quarter of a million US troops are rushing to the same sites, this severely increases the risks of unintentional clashes. Even without direct contact, Beijing's involvement could be detrimental to US goals – once secured, Beijing could leverage its control over WMD to prop up the flailing DPRK regime or as a bargaining chip in reunification negotiations to push US forces off the peninsula. On the other hand, theoretically China could also greatly contribute to efforts to dismantle the program once facilities and material are secured. In sum, China's role and effectiveness in a North Korean contingency depends on several unanswered questions about its intent and capabilities.

3) Methodology: Four key questions will shape this inquiry and serve as the framework for a resulting article. How do US planners account for Chinese involvement when strategizing about the WMD-E mission in the aftermath of a collapse or war? What is the likely Chinese strategy towards the DPRK nuclear program in such contingencies? What military capabilities would China use to secure WMD materials and facilities? How would China interpret and react to US WMD-E operations?

I will be conducting elite interviews and exploiting Chinese open source publications and relevant official documents to answer these questions. First, I will piece together U.S. assumptions about the actions China may take in a conflict scenario with respect to the DPRK's nuclear facilities largely through interviews in Hawaii and South Korea. The second part of the project will evaluate the wisdom of US beliefs about China's potential role. Both capabilities and intentions determine China's potential role, and therefore I'll analyze each aspect individually. My Chinese language skills will allow me to analyze open source Chinese authoritative publications and conduct interviews in Beijing on aspects of the issue that are not openly debated in print. I had the opportunity to conduct some interviews already with

---

[7] Many do consider the possibility of Chinese intervention and the challenges the US may face in counter-WMD operations, but rarely in conjunction. For an example, see Bruce W. Bennett and Jennifer Lind, "The Collapse of North Korea: Military Missions and Requirements," *International Security*, Vol. 2, Iss. 36, (Fall 2011), pp. 84-119.
[8] Liu Xiangyang, Xu Sheng, Xiong Kaiping, and Zhong Chunyu, "Feizhanzheng junshixing dongtanyao [An examination of MOOTW]," *Zhongguo junshi kexue* (China Military Science), No. 3 (2008), p. 34; Andrew Scobell and Mark Cozad, "China's North Korea Policy: Rethink or Recharge?" *Parameters* 44, No. 1 (Spring 2014), p. 60.
[9] Timothy Bonds et al, "Closing the Strategy-Policy Gap in Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction," RAND Corporation Research Brief. Available at: http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9805.html.

Chinese experts and military officers and may return to do more interviews depending on how the research develops.

4) Argument: US officials, strategists and planners incorrectly assume that US forces will be in a position to forcibly eradicate North Korea's nuclear program in a conflict scenario. Instead, Chinese forces are likely to be in control of those facilities. Chinese capabilities to dismantle the program and transport materials are likely good enough to prevent accident, but its current knowledge of the program and weak verification procedures make proliferation a real threat. Potentially more damning is China's likely unwillingness to dismantle the program once they have secured major facilities. Dismantlement will be a last priority – Chinese leaders will perceive that establishing stability and bringing the regime back into power if applicable will best serve as China's strategic objectives. In other words, conflict does not provide the United States with a unique opportunity to denuclearize the peninsula. Chinese unwillingness to facilitate denuclearization will persist into a state of war and its aftermath.

5) My contribution: This research project adds a new dimension to existing scholarship on Chinese military capabilities and missions. Very little is known about Chinese WMD-E capabilities generally. Moreover, scholars focus on the question of whether China will get involved in a crisis on the peninsula, not specifically how. In US policy writings, there seems to be an unspoken assumption that if the North Korean government lost control that this would be the end of the DPRK nuclear problem - that these contingencies would finally present the United States with the opportunity to denuclearize the peninsula. The fact that this project is venturing into unchartered territory, and therefore does not clearly contribute to one main literature, is a potential downside of the project.

6) Policy Implications: Given these judgments about Chinese intent and capabilities, what are the challenges and opportunities created for the United States? What policies should the US implement in peacetime, such as potentially new areas of cooperation with China, to ensure the United States will manage WMD risks in a Korean contingency?

The first implication of this research is that China's interests no longer stop at securing its border to prevent an influx of refugees.[10] Chinese military capabilities and strategic scope of their use have greatly expanded, with China embracing new missions that seemed unthinkable just a few years ago. The rush to secure DPRK nuclear facilities introduces a higher risk of miscalculation and undermines escalation management. China's presence is likely to complicate US efforts to prevent a North Korean nuclear attack in a conflict, denuclearize the Korean peninsula, and prevent the proliferation of nuclear materials, weapons and expertise. Since the Chinese are likely to refuse to coordinate now on these issues, the United States needs to consider the benefits of unilateral communication and transparency.

The implications of the US WMD-E mission, and China's role in the issue, would extend beyond the specific crisis of the North Korean collapse or conflict. How the US manages its relations with China, both during and before such a crisis, will shape US-China bilateral relations on other issues and the future of global non-proliferation regimes. One determinant of Chinese military cooperation is whether the PLA is

[10] This is a common assumption. For an example, see Victor D. Cha, "What Do They Really Want? Obama's North Korea Conundrum," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (October 2009), p. 129.

confident it can perform. China may be more likely to get involved with international non-proliferation efforts to enhance its reputation as a responsible stakeholder if the United States helps it to develop these capabilities. Bilateral WMD-E training and exercises would be worth the operational risk if it lowers the possibility of proliferation in a DPRK contingency.

7) Feedback needed: There are two issues I foresee in this research. The first is determining what information about China's civilian nuclear safety capabilities is relevant to WMD-E capabilities. The US embassy arranged a tour for me at the Center of Excellence in Beijing where the United States and China collaborate on best practices and training in the civilian realm. When I asked questions about what Chinese weaknesses in these areas meant for Chinese ability to secure, verify, transport, etc. materials in the weapons realm, the scientists were advised not to answer. My second concern is that the topic is too narrow to inspire broad interest and appeal.