

JIIA Forum (May 26)

(1) Report by Linton F. Brooks: “US Nuclear Policy at Present”

[Summary]

The “Prague Speech” given by President Obama in April 2009 set out the president’s own vision for nuclear policy. The two key points in that vision are (1) the US should pursue efforts toward a world without nuclear weapons while at the same time (2) maintaining sufficient deterrence capability and accordingly providing guarantees to its allies for as long as the threat of nuclear weapons exists.

The Nuclear Posture Review (“NPR”) released in April 2010 could be regarded as an attempt to pursue two objectives simultaneously that, as will be shown below, are partly contradictory.

This latest NPR, prepared with the participation of the president as well as many departments within the US government, established the basic guidelines for nuclear policy for the next five to ten years. This is a response developed by the president to the two decades of discussions on nuclear issues that have taken place since the end of the Cold War. At the same time, it also represents something of a reflective standpoint vis-à-vis the various speculative and erroneous views circulating in the absence of a clear nuclear policy from the Bush administration. In this regard, Obama’s NPR is the only one not accompanied by secret or undisclosed supplementary provisions.

The NPR stresses five points: (1) preventing nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism, (2) reducing the role of nuclear weapons in the US’ security regime, (3) maintaining deterrence and stability in the process of reducing nuclear forces, (4) strengthening regional-level deterrence capabilities and providing sufficient guarantees to allies, and (5) maintaining reliable and effective weapons systems. Small-scale arms reductions premised on a balance with Russia, a force composition of ballistic missiles, bomber aircraft, etc., and an emphasis on expanded deterrence for allies are among the points carried over from the previous policy. Of these, the commitment to expanded deterrence was made by the US in close cooperation with its allies in Europe and Asia, with the result being, for instance, that no withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from Europe was suggested. With respect to force composition, the withdrawal of Tomahawk cruise missiles has been finalized and, given the enormity of US military strength, I believe personally that is an appropriate decision.

Turning our attention to nuclear policy changes, the first thing we should notice is that nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism have been positioned as the highest policy priorities. The US in future will likely reaffirm the importance of Article VI of the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) (obligating signatory countries to conduct nuclear disarmament negotiations) and more actively seek to bolster proliferation prevention regimes and control of nuclear-related

materials.

The second change is the US' declaratory policy on the use of nuclear weapons. The US has switched from its "strategy of vagueness" in place since the Cold War and will not likely use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states complying (or even those clearly not complying) with the NPT except in extreme circumstances. In other words, the fundamental role of nuclear weapons will be limited to deterring an enemy nuclear attack.

As mentioned at the beginning, the above elements reflect somewhat of an internal contradiction in the nuclear strategy portrayed by the president. Set against a backdrop of calls for further reductions and even the abolition of nuclear weapons, the NPR asserts the aims of suspending new nuclear warhead development and nuclear testing as well as ratifying and promptly implementing a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). On the other hand, it provides for the modernization of nuclear weapons production/research facilities and increased budgets for that purpose to prevent the deterioration of its relative nuclear weapons capability and to dispel any concerns among allies in this regard. It continues to support efforts toward the abolition of nuclear weapons by all nuclear-armed states as a long-term objective and stipulates a number of specific missions, including strengthening regional security, improving non-nuclear deterrence capabilities, and undertaking new arms reduction negotiations with Russia.

In essence, President Obama's NPR was a product of compromise, stemming from the inherent complexity of the problems the president must consider. It is probably not possible to derive an answer to this complexity that would satisfy everyone. I should add here at the end, however, that experts in US nuclear strategy are nearly unanimous in their contention that this NPR has succeeded in striking a rational balance among the differing objectives of maintaining/providing deterrence capabilities for the US itself and its allies and reducing the quantity of nuclear warheads, and that this will likely constitute the core of the US' nuclear policy for at least the next few years.

(2) Report by Morton H. Halperin: "Japan-US Relations and Non-proliferation" **[Summary]**

My report covers the changes in and prospects of Japan-US relations using the "Nuclear Policy Review" (NPR) as an example.

Generally speaking, the content of the latest NPR can be said to incorporate much of the report "America's Strategic Posture" submitted in 2009. This report was prepared by the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States (commonly known as the Perry-Schlesinger Commission for William J. Perry, the Chairman, and James R. Schlesinger, the Deputy Chairman) on which I served as a member. Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of this report is its recommendation that the US conduct with Japan

intense and deep discussions on nuclear policy similar to those it has held with its NATO allies for the past 40 years or more. A variety of reasons can be given for such discussions not having been pursued by Japan and the US to date, among them being (1) the lack of interest shown by the Japanese government, (2) the fundamental focus of US nuclear policy on the Soviet presence in Europe, and (3) the NATO orientation of many of the US' nuclear experts, but the importance of Japan-US discussions today in the 21st century is growing day by day. Above all, as emphasized in the NPR, the US urgently needs to pursue adequate discussions with Japan and close communications thereby in the midst of heightening awareness of the dangers of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism.

What has pleased me as well as surprised me in this context is that the governments of Japan and the US engaged in a frank exchange of views on broad topics and on details, similar to those with the aforementioned NATO allies, when drafting the recent NPR. Many of the views of the Japanese side were consequently reflected in the NPR but, from my perspective, there are three points of particular importance in these Japan-US discussions.

The first is the retirement of the Tomahawk cruise missiles. Opinion on this issue was divided within the Japanese government when the discussions began, but in the end it was determined, through an agreement among Japanese officials premised on close communications and maintenance of US deterrence capabilities, that this somewhat outdated weapons system would be abolished. At the same time, the US responded by asserting its clear intention to maintain a diverse force composition that includes bomber aircraft for the purpose of nuclear deterrence.

Secondly, there is the change in the declaratory policy. Naturally the US government did not accede across the board to Japan's views, but it is a fact that Japanese interest in the issue, as described below, has had a certain impact on US policy changes. The NPR advocates (1) a reduced dependency on nuclear weapons, presuming that deterrence capabilities will remain capable of protecting allies, (2) the promotion of US efforts towards a world without nuclear weapons, and (3) the possession of nuclear weapons by the US for the "sole purpose" of deterring a nuclear attack by another country. An even more important change, as pointed out by Mr. Brooks, was the clear presentation for the first time of a policy of "negative security assurance," that is, entering into a nuclear non-proliferation treaty and not using nuclear weapons against compliant countries.

The third point of discussion was partially addressed in this latest NPR but requires closer and more wide-ranging discussions between Japan and the US in future: dealing with China. The NPR calls for "strengthening strategic stability" with China but what this entails specifically has not yet been defined even in the US. What is for the most part certain, however, is that (1) the US will emphasize relations with China in future, and this topic will be intensely discussed within the US government over the next one to two years, and (2)

dialogue will begin between the US and China over nuclear issues based on these discussions, likely within a few years. In view of these developments, it is extremely important that the Japanese government engage in robust discussions with the US on this US-China nuclear strategy dialogue and deepen mutual understanding and shared perceptions between Japan and the US.

Finally, let me reiterate that dealing with China on nuclear issues will undoubtedly become a major issue in the US' nuclear strategy in the span of the next few months to the next few years. I would expect that both Japan and the US would necessarily engage in serious discussions on this matter. The discussions about the NPR over the past several months can be said to have been a touchstone for these new Japan-US relations.

(3) Report by Walter B. Slocombe: “Ballistic Missile Defense”

[Summary]

Ballistic missile defense, the topic of my talk and an important part of US security strategy, is a critical issue that has major implications for expanded deterrence.

With the threat of ballistic missiles on the rise, ballistic missile defense is becoming increasingly significant. Many countries, in particular North Korea and Iran, are improving their ability to deliver nuclear warheads to distant countries. Though not given sufficient attention, the threat of ballistic missiles armed with conventional warheads is similarly climbing. In this regard, China is endeavoring to enhance what it terms “anti-access systems,” and it is pursuing improvements to its ballistic missile forces and other military capabilities in critical regions where there is a possibility of a US-China clash in order to prevent tactical military action by US air, naval or other forces. Anti-access is frequently said to be an effective strategy, offering the options of direct attacks on aircraft carriers and indirect attacks on the same by targeting air bases, port facilities, communications and intelligence facilities, etc.

Ballistic missile defense has three interrelated but differing objectives: (1) defense of the US mainland, (2) defense of US allies and friends, and (3) defense of US military forces deployed to the above. The technical requirements and military objectives for these respective missions differ. For example, greater defense capabilities are required for (1) and (2) than for (3). While (1) involves intercepting long-range missiles approaching at high altitudes and extremely high speeds, (2) requires responding to short- and medium-range missiles.

On this point, it is crucial for the US to affirm what is not part of its ballistic missile defense mission. Put bluntly, the mission is not to defend against a full-scale attack by Russia or China using strategic weapons; defense against strategic nuclear weapons launched by these major nuclear powers would be both technically daunting and very expensive. Were Russia and China so inclined, they could likely bolster their second-strike capabilities further,

and indeed they are securing their second-strike capabilities by such measures as placing missiles aboard submarines and increasing the number of weapons actually deployed. Consequently, comprehensive defense against these weapons is not the objective of ballistic missile defense. Including Chinese and Russian strategic nuclear weapons among the targets for US defense would not make for an effective defense and would only spur Russia and China to augment their nuclear arsenals.

Mr. Halperin and Mr. Brooks spoke on the recent Nuclear Policy Review (NPR) from the broader context of nuclear issues. I will discuss the NPR from the perspective of ballistic missile defense.

First, people frequently focus their attention on the technical aspects of ballistic missile defense, but I always assure them that the technical obstacles can be overcome. Japan and the US have worked in close cooperation to implement the first stage of the missile defense plan, and Aegis destroyers and US military radar units have already been deployed. We are now moving into the next stage focused on standard missiles.

At least three advantages of ballistic missile defense can be noted that contribute to expanded deterrence. The first goes without saying: ballistic missile defense provides an effective defense capability to US allies and friends. It reduces the enormous damage that would come with an enemy attack, and excels in providing defense not dependent on retaliation. The second point is in my view more important: truly effective defense capabilities can reduce the possibility of political threats and military intimidation toward the US and its allies by countries such as North Korea that might utilize nuclear weapons. Finally, ballistic missile defense can achieve extended deterrence without constituting a threat to other parties because its deterrence does not require strengthening offensive capabilities.