

# CHAPTER 1

## Getting Past Nonproliferation

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The nuclear nonproliferation regime has lost its benefits, modest though they may have been, for the United States. In the post-Cold War era, the United States is burdened by friends who happily shun the possession of nuclear weapons along with most of the other expensive attributes of military self-defense, preferring instead our too freely offered nuclear security guarantees. We offer these guarantees, known as extended deterrence, to discourage them from acquiring nuclear weapons of their own. I fear, however, we have more to fear as a nation from the costs of extended deterrence—the costs for providing conventional defenses for friends, which is, in fact, the essence of our security guarantees—than from the need to deter additional nuclear-armed enemies, which is the potential result of the end of the nuclear nonproliferation regime.

The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) when it was implemented in 1970 surely had important benefits for the Soviet Union and China because most of the states that might have acquired nuclear weapons during the Cold War—West Germany and Japan in particular, but Sweden, Australia, and others as well—would have targeted their weapons on the Soviet Union and China. The United Kingdom and France, fading powers that they were, probably liked the special status the NPT offered, and, if only for historical reasons, the fact that West Germany would not become a nuclear power. For the United States, the NPT deflected domestic attention away from the war in Vietnam with the hope of détente with the

Soviet Union, its necessary partner in the then promising quest to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.<sup>1</sup>

The United States likely also wanted to avoid having West Germany, in particular, independently nuclear-armed if that meant needlessly provoking the Soviet Union. West Germany and Japan had by the mid-1960s recovered significantly from the Second World War and were seeking normal nation status. Germany was becoming an economic powerhouse, and Japan was not far behind. Nuclear-armed, they certainly would have been seen as more frightening to nations they had so recently occupied during the Second World War. The NPT provided the easy way to avoid a mid-Cold War crisis. There would be no West German or Japanese bomb.

There was also a post-Cold War NPT benefit for the United States.<sup>2</sup> The collapse of the Soviet Union cleared the way for Pax Americana, the brief period of American triumphalism in which the United States became the unelected and uncompensated global sheriff involved in suppressing, by force, if necessary, all sorts of international disputes, civil wars, and criminal behavior. The NPT was a facilitator for this volunteer work because only nations with nuclear weapons stood free from the sheriff's writ. Those without nuclear weapons were at risk of a visit from the law in the form of the American military. The several unhappy experiences of the boldly defined Global War on Terror has lately tempered the United States' interest in being the global sheriff and with it the special benefit to

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1. Thomas Alan Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe: In the Shadow of Vietnam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 206-222; John Dumbrell, "LBJ and the Cold War," in *A Companion to Lyndon B. Johnson* ed. Mitchell B. Lerner (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2012) 431-435; and Francis J. Gavin, "Intelligence, Non-Proliferation, and the Shift in U.S. Policies in the 1960s" (paper presented at the conference "Intelligence and Prediction in an Unpredictable World," Center for International Security and Arms Control, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, June 2003).

2. Francis J. Gavin, "How Dangerous? History and Nuclear Alarmism," in *A Dangerous World? Threat Perception and National Security*, ed. Christopher A. Preble and John Mueller (Washington: CATO Institute, 2014), 20.

the United States of the NPT.<sup>3</sup> It is now the costs of nonproliferation that loom large, most specifically the need to provide a nuclear shield plus conventional defenses for those who have foresworn their own nuclear weapons. And because that shield is potentially dangerous to offer and to trust, it is buttressed by forward deployed conventional defenses that are quite robust to avoid the need to escalate to the use of nuclear weapons if the shield is tested.

### *Paying For Nonproliferation*

The costs of the treaty did not seem great to the existing nuclear powers at the time of its implementation. The NPT did require that they pledge their intent to work toward their own disarmament though with no stated measure of sincerity or progress. Nuclear arms have in fact been reduced—thousands of American and Russian warheads have been taken out of service and dismantled—but this was a result of the wind down of the Cold War and the resulting desire to reap the benefits of reduced defense spending. The treaty also explicitly protected the nuclear weapon states' commercial nuclear opportunities by assuring all nations access to nonmilitary nuclear technologies. It is through this doorway that nuclear materials flow globally and, some fear, proliferators step through claiming their peaceful desire for environmentally friendly nuclear energy and the understandable hope of medical treatment and research.<sup>4</sup>

Beyond the usual Soviet menace, Warsaw Pact members needed no special inducements to sign the NPT. The Soviet Union, after

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3. Dov S. Zakheim, "Abandon Nation Building," *The National Interest* 131 (May/June 2014): 38-45.

4. According to the Leveretts, Iran is just interested in a civilian nuclear power program in getting all those centrifuges on line. See Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett, "What's Really at Stake in the Impasse over Centrifuges-Hillary Mann Leverett on the Iran Nuclear Talks," Going to Tehran, July 25, 2014, available from [goingtotehran.com/whats-really-at-stake-in-the-impasse-over-centrifuges-hillary-mann-leverett-on-the-iran-nuclear-talks](http://goingtotehran.com/whats-really-at-stake-in-the-impasse-over-centrifuges-hillary-mann-leverett-on-the-iran-nuclear-talks).

all, provided them with nuclear deterrence of a sort whether they wanted it or not. They had no option for acquiring nuclear weapons on their own. The Pact nations were the frontier buffer for the Soviet state, a tank's drive from the fearsome North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) enemy, and were treated as such. In contrast, the United States' European NATO allies were fully aware that a big ocean lay between them and their protector. They sought constant reassurance that the United States would not abandon them in the face of nuclear threats. Acquiring nuclear weapons on their own was indeed an option for the allies. Right up to the NPT, various schemes were considered including a NATO nuclear force and the basing of dual-keyed U.S. tactical nuclear weapons around Europe to head this off. As an inducement for Europeans to accept the NPT, the United States—while retaining operational control over the weapons—allowed West Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, and Turkey to modify certain aircraft to be capable of carrying U.S. tactical nuclear weapons based in their countries. Strangely, this practice continues today, though on a reduced scale.<sup>5</sup>

In fact, extended deterrence was not a major issue for the United States during the Cold War.<sup>6</sup> The United States believed that a Soviet-dominated Eurasia, like an Axis Power-dominated Eurasia—the threat of the Second World War—was an intolerable danger to its own viability and required challenge. U.S. forces were forward deployed in Europe because its allies, devastated by the Second World

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5. On the tactical weapons in Europe issue see Barry Blechman and Russell Rumbaugh, "Bombs Away: The Case for Phasing Out U.S. Tactical Nukes in Europe," *Foreign Affairs* 93, No. 4 (July/August 2014): 163-174. The renewal of these weapons is now buttressed with claims that their modernization and continued presence will provide needed reassurance for Europeans made fearful by Russian ventures in the Ukraine, see Ralph Vartabedian and W.J. Hennigan, "US nuclear arsenal in Europe is likely to stay," *Stars and Stripes*, September 21, 2014, available from [www.stripes.com/news/europe/us-nuclear-arsenal-in-europe-is-likely-to-stay-1.304222](http://www.stripes.com/news/europe/us-nuclear-arsenal-in-europe-is-likely-to-stay-1.304222).

6. Extended deterrence hardly merited discussion in Lawrence Freedman's masterful study of nuclear strategy, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 2nd Edition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 290, 424.

War, were unable to provide an effective barrier to potential Soviet expansion into Western Europe. The United States saw the Communist side as having a numerical, conventional warfare advantage and wanted any confrontation to be sobered by the danger of nuclear escalation. Our forces were there as a tripwire to guarantee a challenge at the boundary of NATO or the borders of our Asian allies would, by threatening U.S. forces directly, involve great risk to the United States and possible counter nuclear strikes, or even a preemptive strike by the United States.

The Korean War seemed to American leaders like both the opening round of an all-out war with the Soviet Union and a diversion to take the focus off the main front in Europe. The Korean contest, though soon stalemated, was replaced by another in Vietnam that eventually also involved the United States. Asia during the Cold War featured the opposite of Europe—no direct confrontations of nuclear powers, weak alliance structures, and very intense land wars. But like the case in Europe, the United States freely offered up extended nuclear deterrence guarantees for all who wanted them among its major friends in Asia.<sup>7</sup>

Much has changed since the enactment of the NPT. The United States' allies in Europe and Asia are now among the richest nations in the world. Japan has the world's third- largest economy while the now united Germany has the fourth and is the leading economy in the European Union. The main threats to our security are attacks on American soil by non-state entities, none of which possess nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union has collapsed into a smaller, less important, less powerful Russia. China is now a major American trading partner and growing rapidly, but is mainly focused on the domestic stability impacts of that growth and not on international expansion. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan confirm the difficulty in America acting as the sheriff in distant lands where effective, representative, non-corrupt local governments are unknown and

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7. New Zealand seemingly renounced its extended deterrence, though never explicitly.

seemingly impossible to create.<sup>8</sup> The need for forward deployment of U.S. forces has greatly diminished.

### *Overextended*

Absurdly, extended deterrence remains a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. still promises to exchange Washington for Berlin and San Francisco for Tokyo. And even more absurdly, the nuclear guarantee now extends to former Warsaw Pact states and former Soviet republics that have become NATO members, making their borders the West's frontier. In Asia, North Korea, having withdrawn from the NPT,<sup>9</sup> has acquired nuclear weapons, and China, now more militarily powerful and politically assertive, is pressing claims for islands administered by other nations including our friends.<sup>10</sup> It is now Boston for Riga and Seattle for Seoul that is at risk. The cries for reassurance on the part of allies are more persistent given how implausible the promise is now to provide nuclear deterrence for allies.

In order to never have to contemplate such a deal, the United States provides its allies with conventional defenses. We guard Eastern Europe from a Russia still fuming about its lost empire and East Asia from the growing power of China. Our allies are fully capable of affording their own defenses, but provide neither sufficient conventional defenses nor their own nuclear shield. Worse, our allies tempt our fate by being cavalier about their relations with their status-sensitive, nuclear-armed neighbors. The European Union plays footsie with Ukraine, once Russia's breadbasket and home still to many

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8. The futility is evident in James A. Russell, *Innovation, Transformation and War: Counter-insurgency Operations in Anbar and Ninewa Provinces, Iraq, 2005-2006* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

9. A. Wes Mitchell and Jan Havranek, "Atlanticism in Retreat" *The American Interest* 9, no. 2 (November/December 2013): 41-57, available from <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2013/10/10/atlanticism-in-retreat/>.

10. "Banyan: Force Majeure," *The Economist*, May 24, 2014, 38.

Russians while Japan and others have their coast guards sail dangerously close to Chinese vessels in jockeying over rocky outcrops.

Extended deterrence is no longer nuclear deterrence at a distance, but rather a conventional defense of our allies' borders. We do not see our forward deployed forces as a tripwire for nuclear escalation as they were viewed during the Cold War. Instead, they are intended to have the capability of winning the conventional fight so as to either deter it from occurring or keep it from escalating to the nuclear level. The means for gaining conventional warfare dominance has been the precision revolution, which is the development of systems that can precisely detect, target, and destroy opposing forces—in great numbers if necessary—with little or no collateral damage, most particularly no civilian casualties.<sup>11</sup> Nuclear weapons were essentially compensation for the inability of conventional bombing, even conducted on a massive scale, to destroy enemy capabilities because of its inaccuracies. Close was good enough with nuclear weapons. Now precision weapons are in essence the way to avoid the massive and indiscriminate destruction of nuclear weapons. They represent warfare coming full circle. First small bombs, then bigger and bigger bombs until their destructive capability is so enormous the target cannot be missed, and now back to small bombs, but ones so precise that the target is certain to be destroyed.

But weapons technology diffuses, nuclear or conventional. The sensors, guidance, networks, and missile systems that lie at the heart of the precision weapons revolution are spreading to potential opponents across the globe.<sup>12</sup> The cost of protecting towns bordering

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11. For a history of precision see Paul E. Gillespie, *Weapons of Choice: The Development of Precision Guided Munitions* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2006).

12. Lynn E. Davis, Michael J. McNerney, James Chow, Thomas Hamilton, Sarah Harting, and Daniel Byman, "Armed and Dangerous? UAVs and US Security," (RAND Corporation RR 449, 2014), available from [rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR400/RR449/RAND\\_RR449.pdf](http://rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR400/RR449/RAND_RR449.pdf); and Lt. Gen. David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret), "A New Era for Command and Control of Aerospace Operations," *Air & Space Power Journal* (July-August, 2014): 5-15, available from

Russia or islands near China is extraordinarily high and is certain to increase as their militaries modernize, acquiring more and more precision weapons. Trying to be the dominant conventional military at the border of big power opponents, but thousands of miles from our own shores is a formula for creating a huge military and ultimate bankruptcy. Our best policy, as it was in the world wars, is to put great distance between enemy forces and our own forces until enemy forces are heavily eroded, preferably through contact with our allies or other opponents. Such a policy today would encourage allies to both stiffen their conventional forces and acquire nuclear weapons. One comes with the other.

The so-called pivot to Asia is to provide reassurance to our Asia allies who worry about our ability to meet the challenge of a rising China.<sup>13</sup> They fear that we will abandon them as we are pushed aside in the Western Pacific by the increasing might of an ever richer China, one that has a long memory about its supposed humiliations at the hand of colonizers and empire builders, including Japan and the United States. They wonder whether or not we will fulfill pledges to save them from Chinese intimidation, including increased Chinese efforts to assert claims over waters known to be rich in fishing, and likely oil as well. All of this is taking place within the first island chain, the half ring of island nations that border China on its coastal frontier and that could help block its access to the open seas and thus the global resources needed for its continuing economic growth.<sup>14</sup>

The Asian pivot has so far brought with it only modest troop deployments and the repositioning of minor air and naval assets. Marines

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<http://www.au.af.mil/au/afri/aspj/digital/pdf/articles/2014-Jul-Aug/SLP-Deptula.pdf>.

13. "Jittery Neighbors: Asian fears of China's rise," *The Economist*, July 19, 2014, 10, available from [www.economist.com/news/asia/21607869-worries-about-chinas-ascent-jittery-neighbours](http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21607869-worries-about-chinas-ascent-jittery-neighbours).

14. James R. Holmes, "Defend the First Island Chain," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 140, No. 4 (April 2014): 32-37; and Milan Vego, "Chinese Shipping Could Be Risky Business," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (April 2014): 38-43.

will be rotating through a training facility in Australia. American forces will have increased access to bases in the Philippines. Additional forces are being assigned to Guam. But the real challenge lies in operating within the first island chain, which is subject to China's ever increasing anti-access/area-denial capabilities—accurate cruise and tactical ballistic missiles, sophisticated mines, integrated air defense systems—that greatly threaten any serious attempts to protect allies from Chinese moves to assert territorial claims.<sup>15</sup>

Meeting the Chinese anti-access/area-denial challenge has become an obsession with elements of the American military, particularly the Air Force and the Navy, which are eager for new missions to champion after their relative fade post-9/11 when we fought less technologically sophisticated enemies. It is possible to imagine the combination of advanced intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, long-range conventional strike weapons, stealthy aircraft, submarines, anti-radiation missiles, agile missile defenses, and robust command and control systems that U.S. forces could mount that would permit survivable military operations close to the Chinese shore.<sup>16</sup> Doctrine for such capabilities is being devised under the rubric “air-sea battle” as are alternatives such as blockades and other submarine centric efforts.<sup>17</sup> Supportive weapons system developments are underway. No estimate has been released, but the cost of meeting the Chinese anti-access/area-denial challenge will

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15. Lyle Goldstein and Shannon Knight, “Wired for Sound in the ‘Near Sea,’” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (April 2014): 56-61; Andrew S. Erickson and Michael S. Chace, “China Goes Ballistic,” *The National Interest* No. 131 (May/June 2014): 58-64; and Jacqueline Newmyer Deal, “Red Alert,” *The National Interest* (May/June 2014): 85-96.

16. Harry Foster, “The Joint Stealth Task Force: An Operational Concept for Air-Sea Battle,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 72 (1st Quarter 2014): 47-53.

17. Commander David Forman, USN, “The First Rule of Air-Sea Battle,” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (April, 2014): 26-31; and Colonel Robert C. Boyles, “Air-Sea Battle Disclaimers and “Kill-Chains” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 140, No. 1 (January 2014): 46-51.

surely be hundreds of billions of dollars.<sup>18</sup>

Russia's grab of Crimea highlights a related challenge, defending Eastern Europe.<sup>19</sup> Of course, Russia is not the Soviet Union in terms of its inherent military power. Its population is smaller, its industrial focus less martial, and its military equipment less expeditionary, modern, and ready. Nevertheless, at its frontier, Russia is a formidable force, fully capable of defeating any opposition from its neighbors. Russian air defenses are cutting edge, and Russia possesses significant armor and special operations forces. Nuclear-armed and seeking to reclaim regional dominance, Russia is quite intimidating close up and happy to remind its neighbors that it is not to be trifled with by them.<sup>20</sup> We too must be careful about Russia if only because we need Russian assistance in many parts of the globe.<sup>21</sup>

Extended deterrence makes these military problems—the containment of potentially expansionary nations—not the burden of allies in their regions, but America's.<sup>22</sup> Free riding allies, wealthy though

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18. The Marines are trying hard to get their share. See Colin Clark, "Marines Won't Take the Beaches Head-On anymore; Find the Gaps," *Breaking Defense*, June 26, 2014, available from [breakingdefense.com/2014/06/marines-wont-take-the-beaches-head-on-any-more-find-the-gaps/](http://breakingdefense.com/2014/06/marines-wont-take-the-beaches-head-on-any-more-find-the-gaps/).

19. Secretary General Anders Rasmussen and General Philip Breedlove, "A NATO for a Dangerous World" *Wall Street Journal*, August 18, 2014, available from [www.wsj.com/articles/anders-fogh-rasmussen-and-philip-m-breedlove-a-nato-for-a-dangerous-world-1408317653](http://www.wsj.com/articles/anders-fogh-rasmussen-and-philip-m-breedlove-a-nato-for-a-dangerous-world-1408317653).

20. Alexei Anishchuk, "Don't mess with nuclear Russia, Putin says," *Reuters*, August 29, 2014, available from [news.yahoo.com/putin-says-russia-ready-respond-aggression-123956691.html](http://news.yahoo.com/putin-says-russia-ready-respond-aggression-123956691.html); and Tony Osborne, "Facing Threats: Ukrainian crisis has prompted NATO to beef up defenses, but at what cost?" *Aviation Week & Space Technology* 176, No. 32 (September 15, 2014): 31.

21. Dimitri K. Simes, "Reawakening an Empire," *The National Interest* No. 132 (July/August 2014): 5-15.

22. See for example Chris Jennewein, "Top Admiral: Resource Competition, China's Rise Threaten Pacific," *Times of San Diego*, August 19, 2014, available from [timesofsandiego.com/military/2014/08/19/top-admiral-resource-competition-](http://timesofsandiego.com/military/2014/08/19/top-admiral-resource-competition-)

they may be, make little effort to protect themselves. Their defense budgets and militaries continue to decline. NATO's two percent budgetary goal, the percentage of gross domestic product to be devoted to defense, goes unmet.<sup>23</sup> Asian air and naval forces are slow to modernize. Their contributions to offset the costs of stationing U.S. forces forward nowhere near cover the true expenses--the training, equipping, and rotating of combat ready units. Worse, they tempt our fate by pushing at the edge. The European Union entices Ukraine to pull away from Russian influence while the ships of our Asian allies maneuver against Chinese ships near disputed islands. The question always is: What will we do to help them? The obligations are hardly ever reciprocal to any extent.

It is not just America's military that is at risk, but the American economy also. Acquired through the underfunding of past wars and the inefficiencies of a patchwork social safety net, the national debt has reached the 18 trillion dollar mark. It is certain to increase due to rising health care costs and the retirement of the generation that was born after the Second World War. Interest on the debt is projected soon to exceed our current inflated defense expenditures.<sup>24</sup> Because we invest so heavily in providing what is essentially free security to others, we lack the fine roads, the high-speed trains, and shiny airports of our European and Asian allies. Protecting the borders of these allies from the threat of intrusion by their militarily-capable neighbors, as extended deterrence policy requires us to do, is a financial burden that prevents those investments and a trimming of the national debt. Neglected infrastructure and a mounting

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[\*chinas-rise-threaten-pacific\*](#).

23. For NATO data see Naftali Bendavid, "Ukraine Simmers as Putin Digs In," *Wall Street Journal*, August 30/31, 2014, 1.

24. For number by 2020, see Douglas W. Elmendorf, Director, Congressional Budget Office, "Shifting Priorities in the Federal Budget," (presentation at Cornell University, September 11, 2014); note also, Wendy Edelberg, "CBO's Projection of Federal Interest Payments," *CBO Blog*, September 3, 2014, available from [www.cbo.gov/publication/45684](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/45684).

debt are significant threats to America's future prosperity.<sup>25</sup>

### *More Wars to Fight and Lies to Tell*

The NPT has stopped neither wars nor, and more to its intended purpose, the spread of nuclear weapons. There are now nine nuclear powers instead of five as India, Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea have joined the club, though not formally. Nations fearing for their survival against powerful enemies think about acquiring nuclear weapons. With the NPT, their efforts have to be clandestine and determined, but for relatively rich and technologically sophisticated nations, it is a path that can be taken. India faces a nuclear-armed China allied with its rival Pakistan. Israel is surrounded by hostile Muslim nations increasingly swayed by jihadist ideology. Pakistan has the bigger, more powerful India to worry about. And North Korea fears the United States.

Nuclear-armed nations are often at war, but not with each other. Nuclear weapons sober regional tensions by giving great caution to aggressive actions. The dangers of escalation restrain the inclination to use even low levels of military force in disputes with nuclear-armed opponents. War is full of surprises, which makes it too dangerous for nuclear powers to fight one another. One miscalculation about likely opponent reactions could be one too many in any encounter.

Ironically, nuclear nonproliferation efforts can be both confrontational and violent. Although not under the NPT banner, Israel bombed nuclear reactor sites in Iraq in 1981 and Syria in 2007 to prevent the acquisition of nuclear weapons by hostile nations. The United States invaded Iraq in 2003 claiming the enforcement of United Nations resolutions banning Iraqi possession of weapons of mass destruction. And today both Iran and North Korea labor under severe trade sanctions because of their development, and in

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25. Stephen D. King, *When The Money Runs Out: The End of Western Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013).

North Korea's case acquisition, of nuclear weapons. Iran lives on the brink of war because Israel and the United States have said that neither will tolerate Iran becoming a nuclear weapons power.<sup>26</sup> If negotiations and sanctions fail to persuade Iran to limit its ambitions and accept intrusive inspections, attacks on Iran seem likely, and as Iran has pledged retaliation, an expanded war as well.<sup>27</sup>

The hard treatment is only for some. Israel, India, and Pakistan never signed the NPT. Because Israel's nuclear weapon status is unacknowledged, it is not subject to much discussion or any penalty. India and Pakistan did incur the wrath of the United States in the form of some unwelcomed sanctions and undelivered aid, but these penalties were lifted when their cooperation was needed in other matters. North Korea is an NPT signatory who renounced the treaty, but the animosity against it predates any North Korean interest in nuclear weapons.

The NPT creates two kinds of sovereignty: that possessed by states permitted to have nuclear weapons, the original five, and that possessed by all others, which are not permitted weapons. The embarrassing arrogance of it all is compensated by the treaty promise of the permitted nuclear powers to work toward nuclear disarmament. In an era of increased interest in equality, the pledge seems inadequate at best. How can there be nearly 200 sovereign nations and only five virtuous enough to be allowed to have the bomb? Thus, there is a growing interest in the so-called zero option, the claim expressed by various heads of state, including U.S. President Barack Obama, that the goal for the permitted nuclear powers is the elimination of all nuclear weapons.<sup>28</sup> Given that the knowl-

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26. Matthew Kroening, *A Time To Attack* (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2014).

27. Stopping the Iranian program is quite difficult. See Norman Friedman, "Learning to Love the (Iranian) Bomb," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (January 2014): 90-91.

28. But see John Mueller, "Think Again: Nuclear Weapons," *Foreign Policy*, December 19, 2009, available from [foreignpolicy.com/2009/12/18/think-again-](http://foreignpolicy.com/2009/12/18/think-again-)

edge needed to build nuclear weapons cannot be destroyed, and given the trust needed in the owner of the last weapon to be destroyed when all others have none, it is a goal likely never to be met and seems disingenuous in its offering. Anyone concerned about the likelihood of zero happening should be reassured to learn that all the weapon-possessing nations are in the process of upgrading their weapons and/or the platforms needed for the delivery of their weapons.<sup>29</sup> And one may wonder how Israel or North Korea will be persuaded to take the zero pledge.

### *Pro-Proliferation*

With the treaty abandoned, not many nations will seek to acquire nuclear weapons. Most do not live in a tough neighborhood, have the technological base needed to carry out the task, wish to devote the resources to the cause, or welcome the responsibility of protecting them from accident, theft, and/or preemptive attack from worried neighbors. Ukraine may well regret giving up the Soviet weapons based on its territory to Russia, but the invasion risk and dollar cost of moving to acquire them afresh may be too much. Some in Libya probably regret giving up their program, as having retained it the Qaddafis would still be in power. The Libya of today is in no condition to revive it.

The lesson is that if you face a serious threat from a nuclear power on your own and have sufficient resources, you best go nuclear

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[\*nuclear-weapons/\*](#).

29. The bill is not small. The United States plans to spend \$263.8 billion over through 2024 and Congress' watchdog, the Government Accountability Office thinks that number is an under estimate. Government Accountability Office, "Nuclear Weapons: Ten-Year Budget Estimates for Modernization Omit Key Efforts, and Assumptions and Limitations Are Not Fully Transparent" GAO-14-373, June 2014; and William J. Broad and David E. Sanger, "U.S. Ramping Up Major Renewal in Nuclear Arms," *New York Times*, September 22, 2014, 1.

quickly and quietly.<sup>30</sup> Canada likely would not because it receives free extended deterrence in perpetuity by virtue of sharing a continent with the United States. Without the United States providing the nuclear umbrella, however, Germany and Japan likely will go nuclear. Their now largely self-imposed and budgetary convenient exemption from any serious military obligations, including their own defense, will surely evaporate without extended deterrence. South Korea and Australia would also likely acquire nuclear weapons. South Korea has twice the population of the North and 25 times its wealth, but still claims it is not ready to manage its own defense against the nuclear-armed but impoverished North. It prefers the United States carry that burden. And Australia, living well in a region of populous and expanding nations, will recognize how far it actually is from the United States.

The fear, of course, is that without the NPT barrier, not just friendly nations in Europe or Asia but also hostile, unstable, and/or terrorist-supporting regimes in the Middle East will go nuclear. A nuclear weapon in their hands is more frightening than a nuclear weapon in Russian and Chinese hands. How long will a nuclear-armed Saudi Arabia survive as a kingdom? Wouldn't Iran give some to Hezbollah or Qatar and a couple to Hamas?

Deterrence and forensics work.<sup>31</sup> Nations that threaten the United States will discover that they face a most formidable and tenacious opponent. Post-NPT nuclear weapons will remain difficult to obtain, costly to protect, and very, very risky to gift, lend, or trade. The extreme caution that applies to attacks on nuclear powers applies also to those who would hand nuclear weapons to their terrorist enemies as the links are sure to be revealed. Often the terrorists are as much a threat to others as they are to the United States. The

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30. Norman Friedman, "Keeping Putin in Check," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 140, No. 5 (May, 2014): 162-163.

31. The clearest on this is, as always, John Mueller. See his "Nuclear Alarmism: Proliferation and Terrorism," in *A Dangerous World? Threat Perception and U.S. National Security*, 25-39.

weapon that they steal from you may be used against you, so there is strong incentive to protect nuclear weapons from theft and against handing them to others.

### *Obstacles to Relinquishing the Burden*

The biggest obstacle to getting beyond the NPT is the fear of terrorists using a stolen or otherwise nefariously obtained a nuclear weapon to blackmail or destroy civilization. Many a blockbuster novel, movie, and television program has this theme as its plot.<sup>32</sup> We have learned to live with Russians and Chinese, even those who are threatening, but not terrorists. Terrorists, we believe, have no bounds. We all are taught the destructive power of nuclear weapons. Just think what terrorists will do with them. There is an industry that stokes these fears, aided by reports of dropped or inadequately guarded weapons. If there were 15 or 20 nuclear-armed nations instead of 5 or 10, the opportunities for disaster would surely increase.

Given that the United States has the most extensive experience with nuclear weapon accidents and safeguards, we should widely share that knowledge.<sup>33</sup> Every new nuclear power upon the revelation of its new status should be offered a package of our hard-won ideas for safely maintaining, handling, and guarding nuclear weapons and any relevant training that it might require. A somewhat similar initiative helped protect Russian nuclear weapons in the period of semi-chaos that occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Not all new nuclear powers would trust the friendly act, but all would recognize the importance others place on their custodial skills.

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32. A recent favorite is Michael Weiss, *The Bomb on the Rock: A Tale of Two Sons* (self-published, 2013).

33. Gregory D. Koblentz, "Command and Combust: America's Secret History of Atomic Accidents," review of *Command and Control: Nuclear Weapons, the Damascus Accident, and the Illusion of Safety* by Eric Schlosser, *Foreign Affairs* 93, No. 1 (January/February, 2014): 167-172.

The American military is another obstacle to giving up the NPT. The American military adheres to a doctrine of forward deployment that is largely supported by the conventional warfare requirements of an extended deterrence foreign policy. Its command structure is based on joint regionally-focused commands that manage deployed forces and that take as their mission the tempering of regional conflicts via partnerships and direct action to avoid the risks of escalation. Much of its force levels are justified on the basis of regional conventional deterrence. Without other nations to protect at their boundaries, the United States would have a much smaller military.

The NPT has a civilian domestic lobby as well--the network of anti-nuclear weapons foundations, public interest groups, university programs, and proliferation monitoring agencies. The normal political divisions do not apply to nonproliferation advocates. They are on the left, right, and center. They are heard inside government and out. They are establishmentarian and radical. And they have the public forum to themselves. There is no counter lobby that advocates the spread of nuclear weapons. There are no marches in the United States for the proliferation of nuclear weapons.<sup>34</sup>

Although all the components of the nonproliferation lobby could not possibly agree on this formulation of their advocacy, nonproliferation is an advocacy for American hegemony in the Western world defined to include our Asian allies. The United States provides extended deterrence for all. It is the grand protector. Britain and France are extras, at best an afterthought. Because the United States takes the nuclear risk, it assumes to be the manager of global security, guarding the borders of all. The U.S. Navy tells us that it is the global force for good. The U.S. Air Forces boasts that it has global reach. And the U.S. Army is stationed in Europe, the Middle

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34. But there have been some voices of reason. Note, Kenneth N. Waltz, "Why Iran Should Get the Bomb: Nuclear Balancing Would Mean Stability," *Foreign Affairs* 91, No. 4 (July/August, 2012): 2-5.

East, Japan, and Korea, about as global as an army can get.<sup>35</sup>

### *Learning to Let Others Love the Bomb*

The NPT was made for the Cold War world in which there were two clearly defined sides and a possibility that every conflict could potentially lead to a nuclear exchange between them. It was right then to seek to limit the number of nuclear weapons states to avoid alliance complications. Some conflicts, however, existed independently of the Cold War. It is not that they were unaffected by the Cold War or did not have an effect of their own on it, but rather that they would have existed whether there was a Cold War or not. The Arab-Israeli conflict is one. The tension between India and Pakistan is another. It is not surprising that participants in these conflicts refused to sign the NPT and were the first to defy the intent of the treaty. When your survival is at stake, nuclear weapons have a special appeal.<sup>36</sup>

North Korea broke with the nonproliferation regime after the Cold War was over when its main protectors, China and Russia, no longer cared much about its fate. Also, its main antagonist, the United States, was at the time very much distracted by the two wars in which it was fighting elsewhere in the world. North Korea's motives for seeking nuclear weapons may have been mixed, but the announcement that it developed such a weapon no doubt gave it a lot of attention, some protection, and a bit of self-respect.

Since the end of the Cold War neither Russia, as the successor state to the Soviet Union, nor the United States believes that it is in mor-

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35. For a very useful discussion of the role of the military and others in hyping our threats see Benjamin H. Friedman, "Alarums and Excursions: Explaining Threat Inflation in U.S. Foreign Policy," in *A Dangerous World? Threat Perception and U.S. National Security*, 281-304.

36. For an analysis of the motives for acquiring and strategies for use of nuclear weapons in crises see Vipin Narang, *Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era: Regional Powers and International Conflict* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

tal danger from an unexpected strike from the other. Their nuclear forces stand on constant alert, and there is a concern by both to maintain a survivable second-strike capability, but their respective societal lives no longer hang solely on a nuclear thread. There are many disputes between them, but none comes close to raising nuclear alarms. As the strains on alert forces indicate, service in nuclear forces for the major powers is a backwater of boredom and career hibernation.

In contrast, the United States' Cold War friends have a number of contentious issues with Russia and China. None of these issues yet rise to the level of mortal danger, but the relations of American allies with both countries are definitely more frayed and volatile than those of the United States. American forces' presence near China or in Eastern Europe is for the reassurance of allies and not for the United States' own security. Similarly, South Korea and Japan want the United States to maintain its bases in their countries to protect them from their often hostile and always unpredictable North Korean neighbor. It is the North Korean bomb that worries them.<sup>37</sup>

No other nuclear power offers allies extended deterrence—not Russia, not France, not the United Kingdom, not Israel, and not India. The Chinese bomb protects China alone. Similarly, the Pakistani and the North Korean bombs guard only one country, their own. Nuclear deterrence, at its core, is a self-help program and never a charitable one.<sup>38</sup>

America's offer of extended deterrence is thus a very strange policy, sustainable only by a willingness to be involved deeply in the

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37. Gerard Baker and Alastair Gale, "South Korean President Warns on Nuclear Domino Effect," *Wall Street Journal*, May 29, 2014, available from [www.wsj.com/articles/south-korea-president-park-geun-hye-warns-on-nuclear-domino-effect-1401377403](http://www.wsj.com/articles/south-korea-president-park-geun-hye-warns-on-nuclear-domino-effect-1401377403).

38. Richard K. Betts, "Universal Deterrence or Conceptual Collapse? Liberal Pessimism and Utopian Realism," in *The Coming Crisis: Nuclear Proliferation, U.S. Interests, and World Order*, ed. Victor A. Utgoff (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 65.

security of distant nations, many of which have no obligation or capacity to reciprocate in any meaningful way.<sup>39</sup> No wonder American allies constantly seek reassurance of our interest in their defense.<sup>40</sup> It is to them surely an unbelievable policy both because of the risks it imposes on us and because of the huge subsidy it provides them in the form of the forward deployment of well-trained and equipped U.S. conventional forces.

It is also an unaffordable and outdated policy. Without the menace of the Soviet Union, the United States is militarily secure. Our Cold War allies are rich and can well afford their own defenses. We have no need to station significant forces in Europe or Asia. Instead, we have problems at home to tend to including mounting deficits, crumbling infrastructure, and too many young people who lack the skills to compete effectively with their global peers. These problems will likely be difficult to manage, but they require the resources that are now devoted to providing the frontier defenses of friends who prefer not to have to build and maintain their own nuclear weapons or even dress up in uniforms.

The bad habits of our allies are largely of our own making, but are buttressed by the nuclear nonproliferation regime.<sup>41</sup> The American military leans far forward quite willingly on the claim that local conflicts must be managed in order to prevent their potential escalation. The NPT makes our friends permanently vulnerable to nuclear co-

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39. Thomas M. Nichols, *No Use: Nuclear Weapons and US National Security* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

40. Doug Bandow, "Is Poland's Alliance with America 'Worthless?'" *The National Interest*, June 25, 2014, available from [nationalinterest.org/feature/poland%E2%80%99s-alliance-america-worthless-10748](http://nationalinterest.org/feature/poland%E2%80%99s-alliance-america-worthless-10748).

41. Senior American officials past and present continue to claim to worry about whether America's allies will maintain their confidence in our commitment to their security. See the discussion of the recent National Defense Panel, the reviewing body of the Quadrennial Defense Report in, Evan Moore, "Why America Still Needs Nukes," *Real Clear Defense*, August 12, 2014, available from [realcleardefense.com/articles/2014/08/12/why\\_america\\_still\\_needs\\_nukes\\_107359.html](http://realcleardefense.com/articles/2014/08/12/why_america_still_needs_nukes_107359.html).

ercion and subtly shifts the burdens of their security too much onto the United States. It is the ultimate exemption from adult responsibility. Instead of trying to enforce the treaty the United States ought to be trying to get rid of it. Nuclear nonproliferation deceives no one but the American taxpayer.