

Preface and Acknowledgments

Nuclear weapons played a central role in the strategic interaction of the two superpowers and their allies during the Cold War. Termination of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union quickly ended that centrality and raised doubts about the relevance and role of nuclear weapons in the new era. With their heyday deemed over, nuclear weapons were expected to play only a minimal security role in a dramatically altered strategic environment. Nuclear proliferation was seen as the gravest security threat; nonproliferation became the primary concern of nuclear policy in Western countries. A concerted effort was made to freeze the Cold War nuclear order and move toward a comprehensive ban on testing. Some hoped that this would lead to ridding the earth of nuclear weapons.

Within a decade, however, nuclear weapons started to command increasing attention. The United States unveiled a sweeping reappraisal of its nuclear policy; Russia began to emphasize nuclear deterrence as the major element to guarantee its sovereignty; and Britain and France reviewed and reiterated their commitment to retain their nuclear forces. In Asia, interest in nuclear weapons was undiminished. A fast ascending China is modernizing its nuclear arsenal; a rising India and a rather unstable Pakistan are now overt nuclear weapon states; Israel is upgrading its substantial nuclear force; North Korea has tested short- and medium-range missiles and carried out a partially successful nuclear test; and Iran is believed to be seeking a nuclear weapon capability. By the turn of the twenty-first century, old and new nuclear weapon states started to explore “new” roles and strategies for their nuclear forces (or those of their allies) to cope with their contemporary security challenges, including the threat of international terrorism posed by transnational nonstate actors. Uncertainty and debate still characterize discussion about the security significance, roles, and implications of nuclear weapons.

This study investigates the roles and strategies for the employment of nuclear weapons and their implications for security and stability in a dramatically altered strategic landscape and a substantially different nuclear environment. Its focus is Asia, which has emerged as a distinct and core world region. With a region dominant security system, fast-growing Asia has the potential to become the central world region in the twenty-first century. The broadly defined Asian security region has six nuclear weapon states (United States, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, and Israel), several nuclear weapon-capable states (Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan), and at least two aspirants (North Korea and Iran). There is also growing interest in Asia in developing nuclear energy to meet the demands of large and rapidly growing economies.

A chief conclusion of the study is that although they are not in the forefront, nuclear weapons continue to be important. They cast a long shadow that informs in fundamental ways the strategic policies of the major powers and their allies with far-reaching consequences for security and stability in the Asian security region. Although strategic defense and the counterforce role may increase in significance, deterrence will continue to be the dominant role and strategy for the employment of nuclear weapons. Deterrence, however, operates largely in a condition of asymmetry and with small nuclear forces. Some view this condition and the increase in the number of non-Western nuclear weapon states as destabilizing. The study argues that although it is possible to envisage destabilizing situations and consequences, thus far nuclear weapons have had a stabilizing effect in the Asian security region. They have contributed to regional stability by assuaging the national security concerns of vulnerable states, strengthening deterrence and the status quo, inducing caution, preventing the outbreak and escalation of major hostilities, and reinforcing the trend in the region that deemphasizes the offensive role of force and increases the salience of defense, deterrence, and assurance. Extended deterrence and assurance continue to be crucial in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons to additional states. The study posits that the Cold War nuclear order is not in sync with present realities and must be substantially adapted or constructed anew with a focus on Asia to address five key issues: sustaining deterrence in a condition of asymmetry and discouraging destabilizing capabilities and strategies; accommodating new nuclear weapon states; preventing the spread of nuclear weapons to additional states; preventing proliferation to nonstate actors; and supporting the peaceful use of nuclear energy with adequate safeguards. These and other findings of the study may be controversial and contested by those who see nuclear weapons as the primary drivers of insecurity and perceive the world through the dangers of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

It is important to subject the different perspectives and findings to rigorous analyses to develop a better understanding of the roles and implications of nuclear weapons. This is crucial as we enter a new strategic environment that is dramati-

cally different from that of the Cold War, and which is likely to further evolve with the rise of Asian powers. In some ways the present period parallels the early phase of the Cold War when strategic analysts were grappling with the new bipolar situation and the advent of nuclear weapons. It is now opportune to undertake work on nuclear weapons as all relevant countries are modernizing and building their strategic arsenals, albeit at a relatively moderate pace, and developing strategies for their employment. Such an exercise is also difficult because of the tendency in the region to secrecy and ambiguity and to downplay the role of nuclear weapons in the interest of other national priorities and political correctness. The difficulty is compounded by the lack of a common discourse across Asian countries and the small number of analysts who can undertake rigorous work on nuclear strategy-related issues. Both situations need to be rectified, although care should be taken not to swing to the other extreme situation in which discussion of nuclear weapons and strategies becomes highly technical, jargon ridden, and the preserve of a group of analysts who live in an isolated strategic and technological world.

Covering fourteen relevant countries and actors in a broadly defined Asian security region that includes the Middle East; involving twenty authors and over forty senior scholars, readers, and reviewers; and spanning three years, the study was a major undertaking. The contributors, senior scholars, and discussants met in two stimulating and productive workshops: first in May 2006 in Washington, D.C. and then in Singapore in November 2006. I also discussed the preliminary findings of the study in seminars at the East-West Center Washington, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in Tufts University, the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University, the Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center at Stanford University, and the East Asian Institute at the University of California, Berkeley. The project was intellectually challenging. And the experience, at least for me, has been humbling and rewarding. I learned a great deal from the project. The contributors and I hope that readers will find the book as useful and stimulating as it has been for us in writing it.

Many people have helped in this endeavor. I would like to express my deep appreciation to the contributors, senior scholars, readers, and reviewers of the manuscript in its various stages. Special thanks are due to the contributors. Their deep knowledge of the nuclear policies and strategies of the respective countries, their willingness to ground inquiry in a common framework, and their willingness to revise their chapters several times have been admirable and important in bringing this project to a successful conclusion. It was a great honor and privilege to have Noble Laureate Thomas Schelling participate fully in all sessions of the first workshop in Washington, D.C. Shlomo Brom, Devin Hagerty, Patrick Morgan, and Yoshihide Soeya participated in both workshops. Victor Cha, Charles Glaser, Avery Goldstein, Admiral Karat Rajagopalan Menon, Andrew Oros, Trita Parsi, Major General Guang Qian Peng, Joseph F. Pilat, Yuan-Kang Wang, and Major

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research position in early 2007 when the East-West Center appointed me as the first Distinguished Senior Fellow. I have also been fortunate over the years to work with a large number of senior and younger scholars, theorists, and regional and country specialists in the United States, Asia, Australia, Canada, and Europe. These interactions and networks have been enormously beneficial in my intellectual journey.

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Washington, D.C.

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