

U.S. Nuclear Policies and Forces by 2025

George Perkovich, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C.

This paper discusses eight variables that will significantly influence the evolution of U.S. nuclear policies and forces by 2025. Other variables, of course, operate today and could be considered. Moreover, new variables are likely to emerge between now and then; history is full of surprises. Still, the eight factors suggested here are likely to be especially salient.

Preservation of the Nuclear Taboo

The variable that would most determine the evolution of U.S. nuclear policies and forces by 2025 is whether nuclear weapons have been detonated in anger by this time.

Since 1945, there has been a taboo against using nuclear weapons. If this taboo continues not to be violated by 2025, the United States will have many fewer weapons and those weapons will have even less of a role in U.S. military strategy and political rhetoric. The U.S. would be more like the U.K. or Israel today. Each has fewer nuclear weapons than the U.S. probably would in 2025 – say 200 -- but each in varying degrees puts these weapons in the background rather than the foreground of its politics, diplomacy and national security policies.

On the other hand, if nuclear weapons are used between now and 2025, it's impossible to predict how U.S. nuclear policies and posture would be affected. Much would depend on what caused the nuclear weapon(s) to be detonated and what the effects were.

- Was it an accident?

- Was it a terrorist attack with no evidence that a state supported it?

- Was it a terrorist attack whose source of nuclear material was traced back to a state with suspect motives, and did the suspect state respond (under threat of punishment) in a way that significantly reduced the likelihood of future terrorist attacks?¹

- Was it a defensive use to deter or stop a state from invading another?

- Or, instead, was the first weapon detonated by a state intervening in another or seeking to maintain an occupation of another state or disputed territory?

¹ As a thought experiment, it's interesting to ask what would happen if the nuclear material for the terror weapon had been diverted from France, the United Kingdom or India – states the U.S. would be unlikely to threaten with attack.

- If there was an exchange of nuclear weapons, did either side clearly “win”? That is, after the exchange, was either side in a condition that a third party would consider livable? Or would any reasonable third party conclude that the results of using nuclear weapons were so horrible that even the slight risk of their use became unacceptable, making nuclear deterrence no longer tenable?

- If there was an exchange, did the side that initiated use of nuclear weapons come out ahead in any meaningful way?

Each of us could think of dozens of questions whose answers would suggest that the breaking of the nuclear taboo would result in proliferation and greater reliance on nuclear weapons or, conversely, greater determination to abolish or at least reduce to a minimum nuclear weapons. Specific twists and turns in history are nearly impossible to predict, and it would be foolish of me to predict who would be the first to break the nuclear taboo and in what circumstances. If I tried to be this specific, you would have to bet against whatever I would predict. And I would be a fool to make such a bet. Long-term scenarios cannot be both specific and reliable.

Analyzing the broader thrust of history and the broader currents of nuclear politics, I would say that the most important variables that will affect how many nuclear weapons there will be in the world in 2025, and how tense nuclear relations will be, are the relationships between the U.S. and Russia and the U.S. and China. These three states and how they interact will determine whether nuclear weapons decrease in salience and number.

The Emergence (or not) of U.S., Russian, Chinese Cooperation

The U.S. and Russia admit that they still deploy more nuclear weapons than they need. The rest of the world agrees and expects the obese nuclear-weapon states to shed many more weapons. If the U.S. and Russia fail to revive the nuclear arms reduction process and to make such reductions verifiable and irreversible the global nonproliferation regime will lose much of its current (insufficient) strength. The roles and status of nuclear weapons in the world will not be diminished.

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is another political, psychological and technological indicator of nuclear weapons' salience. Here, U.S.-Chinese relations are key. Failure to bring the CTBT into force, or at least to establish with high confidence that no state will conduct further nuclear tests, intensifies doubts that nuclear arms racing is finished. (This is the indisputable and clear requirement of Article VI of the NPT, regardless of debate that exists about the nature of the nuclear disarmament obligations under the treaty). The U.S. is widely seen as the biggest impediment to the CTBT's entry into force. Yet, China also has not ratified the treaty. India and Pakistan have neither signed nor ratified it. U.S.-Chinese ratification is necessary to have a chance of inducing India and therefore Pakistan to join.

Similarly, China, Pakistan and India have been major obstacles to advancing negotiations on a treaty to end production of fissile materials for weapons purposes. These obstacles cannot be moved without U.S. cooperation. China's resistance stems from concerns that it cannot afford to cap the potential size of its nuclear arsenal as long as the U.S. is seeking capabilities to negate or severely limit China's capacity to strike U.S. targets in the event of war. Missile defenses, long-range precision-strike weapons, and other non-nuclear technologies could threaten the Chinese nuclear deterrent. The most obvious Chinese counter-moves would be to increase the size, survivability, and launch-readiness of its nuclear arsenal. A fissile material production ban would limit the first option

without requiring corresponding limits on U.S. capabilities against China. Insofar as a fissile material production ban is high on the list of steps that are politically and materially important to build international support for the nonproliferation regime and to limit the nuclear arms race in South Asia, U.S.-Chinese relations currently block this step.

U.S, Russian, and Chinese cooperation is also needed to end Iran's continued defiance of IAEA and UN Security Council resolutions to suspend nuclear fuel-cycle-related activities can stimulate proliferation and instability in the Middle East and weaken international governance and security. The reliability of the nonproliferation regime, collective security, and prospects of enforcing a hoped-for ban on nuclear weapons will fall into grave doubt if Iran gets away with refusing to comply with international requirements. A minimum condition for inducing Iran to comply is close cooperation among the U.S., Russia and China with Europe in demonstrating costs of noncompliance. Their divergences in the Security Council give Iran confidence that ultimately it can afford to keep producing fissile material and not fully complying with IAEA demands. These divergences, in turn, reflect underlying strategic competition among the three.

Extended nuclear deterrence also makes the U.S. insist that nuclear weapons are vital and central instruments of its national and global security policies. China and Russia are the primary actors against which nuclear deterrence is extended by the U.S. today. To reassure Japan and South Korea that they do not need their own nuclear weapons or to build military forces that would appear offensively threatening to others in the region, the U.S. promises to come to their defense if they are threatened or attacked. And to reassure them that the U.S. could get the job done, and do it quickly enough to be reassuring, the U.S. says it would use nuclear weapons against their adversary if that is what would be required to win quickly.² The same has historically been true in Europe through NATO. Indeed, the U.S. thus far has refused to say it would not use nuclear weapons first, in part to reinforce extended deterrence.

If U.S.-Russian and U.S.-Chinese relationships can be made more reassuring, more clearly defensive, then the pressure could be reduced on extended nuclear deterrence. The salience and number of nuclear weapons in U.S. policy could be reduced. Of course, Russia and China value their nuclear weapons as equalizers of U.S. conventional military power, too, so the overall challenge of stabilizing the security relationships among these countries extends beyond offensive nuclear weapons per se, as discussed below.

Thinking toward 2025, the nuclear future will be affected more by security relationships in Europe than one would have predicted sixteen years ago (the same amount of time from today to 2025).

Here, again, U.S.-Russian relations are key. In 1994, U.S.-Russian strategic nuclear reductions were well underway and presumed to have considerable momentum. The U.S. remained committed to the ABM Treaty even as it conducted research and development on national ballistic missile defense and deployed theater missile defenses. Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan agreed to transfer clear weapons inherited from the Soviet Union to Russia. The Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty had just entered into force and built confidence that major military confrontations would be a thing of Europe's past. Russia's leadership still pledged interest in Western values and sought integration into Western institutions.

² If Japan and or South Korea decided to acquire their own nuclear weapons, for whatever reason, the U.S. would probably feel spared of the need to extend nuclear deterrence over these two friendly countries. This could allow a further reduction in U.S. forces and plans of use. Whether global security would be enhanced or diminished is another question.

Today NATO deploys fewer nuclear weapons in Europe than it did fifteen years ago but the political-psychological weight put on them may be increasing in unintended ways. No knowledgeable person thinks any of the few hundred U.S. nuclear bombs assigned to NATO would actually be used, in part because these weapons would be delivered (presumably against Russia) by airplanes, which would take more time, add more risk of accident or failure, and be less accurate than using missiles. Some U.S. officials, reportedly including then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, urged removing these nuclear weapons from Europe for the sake of security and cost. Others urge removing them to show good faith and earn credit for nuclear disarmament.

Yet, key NATO states do not want the U.S. to remove these weapons, even if they do not say so out loud. Some Turkish, German and Dutch officials (among others) still see U.S. nuclear weapons on European soil as a way to bind the U.S. to Europe's defense and to deter Russian (and Iranian) ambitions and risk taking. Poland and the Baltic members of NATO have acute concerns about Russian bullying and the depth of NATO states' commitments to defend their interests. Air-deliverable NATO nuclear weapons based on European soil may not be indispensable or particularly credible to reassuring these states that Russia can and will be deterred from threatening their interests, but the eastern-most NATO members do not ignore Russia's retention of thousands of previously "tactical" nuclear weapons. Therefore the broader challenge of strategic reassurance and deterrence from the Atlantic to the Urals remains to be resolved.

This essay is not the place for an in-depth exploration of these particular Trans-Atlantic and NATO-Russian issues, but there is a renewed temptation to strain the credibility of nuclear deterrence while avoiding more costly and politically difficult reckoning with NATO obligations to defend all members, including those on the periphery. NATO offered membership to former-Warsaw Pact countries when Russia was poor, weak, and relatively docile. Perhaps NATO publics and leaders did not imagine things could change and the obligations to sacrifice blood and treasure for new allies actually could be invoked. Such bloodshed still remains highly unlikely, but recent events in Georgia and dependence on Russia's energy supplies, and uncertainty over the evolution of Ukraine and its relations with Russia and NATO, have renewed feelings of insecurity. If NATO members, including those nearest to Russia, try to avoid this reckoning by relying on nuclear weapons to dissuade Russia from bullying or to compel it to change behavior in future crises, they will stretch the credibility of nuclear deterrence and invite trouble. They will also send a signal globally that nuclear weapons remain highly salient and are a currency that should be acquired rather than eschewed. Here again is a domain in which U.S. (and Western) relations with Russia will shape the global future of nuclear weapons.

U.S. strategic relations with China might have an even greater impact on the global salience of nuclear weapons in 2025. The U.S. has not decided and enunciated that it accepts as a fact of modern life that it and China are mutually vulnerable to nuclear attack and deterrence. Some strategists – a minority – believe the U.S. can and should combine advanced conventional capabilities with ballistic missile defenses backed up if necessary by nuclear arms to negate China's nuclear retaliatory capability. They argue that it would be immoral and irresponsible for U.S. leaders to leave the American people (and Taiwan and Japan) vulnerable to Chinese nuclear weapons if there were a possible alternative of negating China's nuclear forces through a combination of offensive and defensive operations.

If the U.S. government and foreign policy establishment do not conclusively decide and communicate that stability and security are better served by formally accepting and managing mutual nuclear

deterrence than by seeking the capability to escape from deterrence, then China should not be expected to join arms control and reduction processes. (Clearly the objective of eliminating all nuclear weapons would be impossible). I discussed earlier how prospects of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and a fissile material production ban are affected by this tension. If the U.S. pursues ballistic missile defenses and other strategic non-nuclear capabilities without having satisfied Chinese security interests in some corresponding way, China probably will buttress its nuclear counter-capabilities as necessary to preserve deterrence. The U.S. national security establishment, especially the nuclear weapons laboratories, will in turn cite China's growing nuclear arsenal to justify halting nuclear force reductions and/or spending to develop new U.S. counter-measures.

The Willingness of Other Nuclear-Armed States To Cooperate

For the purposes of advancing the 2025 scenario, let's assume that the U.S. and Russia and the U.S. and China *do* adopt policies of explicit security reassurances. They cooperate on arms controls, clarifying that missile defenses in whatever form and number do not enable U.S. domination, etc. Under these conditions, many observers and disarmament activists and non-nuclear-weapon state diplomats assume that at least the five recognized nuclear-weapon states would then join in a process of negotiating multilateral reductions. It is often said that if and when the U.S. and Russia get to 1,000 total deployed weapons, China would join, though Chinese officials have not affirmed this assumption.

By 2025 it should be feasible for the U.S. and Russia to have commitments to reduce to 1,000 total weapons and to be along the way to implementing this commitment. Would China join the process then? And what would be reasonable to foresee in a multilateral nuclear reduction process?

Very difficult questions emerge here that have not been analyzed seriously and internationally as they need to be. These difficult questions arise even if there would not be an attempt at the beginning to bring India, Pakistan and Israel into the process (which is discussed below).

- Have American and Russian strategists actually thought about going below 1,000 nuclear weapons? How much of a numerical advantage does each state think it needs over the rest? (Many Americans, for example, assert that the United States should have as many nuclear weapons as everyone beyond Russia combined.) How do they think about triangular deterrence requirements: United States–Russia–China? Does Russia think it needs nuclear deterrence against not only the United States and China, but also the UK and France? Pakistan? How about China: it thinks it needs deterrence against the United States, Russia, and India, but is that all?

- Some American strategists who've thought or opined about the subject worry that reductions to mid-to low-hundreds could invite China to race up to parity. Is it reasonable to think that any multilateral negotiations would have to provide assurance against this, and should that be recommended? Would China insist on parity at its numbers? And would India accept disparity with China in a formal agreement? As discussed further below, would Pakistan accept a ceiling on nuclear forces lower than India's? If not, how could India's needs to deter China and Pakistan be reconciled with likely Chinese insistence on disparity and Pakistani insistence on parity?

- What conditions would China, France, and the UK put on entering or completing multilateral negotiations? Would they, for example, bring in conventional military considerations? Doctrinal issues? Transparency requirements that France urges but that China finds unpalatable?

- Beyond the five recognized nuclear-weapon states, wouldn't India and Pakistan, at least, have to be involved, given the connections between China and South Asia? How could this be squared with the refusal of some key states to include India, Pakistan, and Israel into official discussions of nuclear arms control and disarmament because they are not recognized as nuclear-weapon states under the NPT?

- Would the anomalous position of North Korea continue to be addressed through the Six-Party process? Would North Korea's ongoing possession of a small number of nuclear weapons be reasonable cause to block the others from making reductions to low numbers?

- If multilateral discussions were focused on "nuclear weapons," Israel presumably would not participate, given that it does not acknowledge possessing them. Could this problem be finessed if a forum were convened of states that possess unsafeguarded fissile materials, with the purpose of negotiating steps to bring materials and facilities under safeguards incrementally? This is essentially what a fissile material production cutoff would do, and it does not require declaring possession of nuclear weapons.

- U.S. and some UK (and Russian?) analysts worry that low numbers (a few hundred) could invite nuclear use that would not be attempted when high numbers exist. Such assumptions have not been modeled and tested through international discussion. Shouldn't this be done?

- Why would deterrence be weakened at low numbers? What sorts of scenarios would be presumed, and how justified would they be? Are deterrence and stability more sensitive to numbers or to the survivability of forces? How would ballistic missile defenses affect such calculations?

- Couldn't confidence-building measures and arms control ameliorate concerns about instability? What would the elements be? (Limitations or multilateral cooperation on ballistic missile defense would probably be important here.)

- The United States would be very sensitive to erosion of extended deterrence commitments, especially viz Japan and South Korea (as would Tokyo, Seoul, and perhaps others). Presumably these states would be consulted thoroughly along the way, and the robustness of conventional deterrence would have to be assured. How should this be addressed?

It is impossible to know in advance how these questions could or would be answered. Again, much would depend on whether nuclear weapons had been detonated along the way. If they had not, and leaders of all these countries were gathering in 2025, to consider, for example, a significant departure in proportionalities between U.S. and Russian arsenals on one hand, and say, China's on the other, I believe many people would say "don't do it. Don't change." If nuclear weapons had not been used between 2009 and 2025, and the U.S. and Russia had more than twice as many nuclear weapons as any potential nuclear adversary, I think many people, not only in the U.S. and Russia, would wonder how the situation would be improved by moving toward parity with others? Could parity at lower numbers unsettle or at least add instability to a "system" that had managed to avoid the use of nuclear weapons for 75 years? On the other hand, can movement to a nuclear-weapon free world, or even a world where no one possesses more than a few hundred nuclear weapons, be achieved on a basis of disparities among nuclear arsenals?

In any case, none of today's nuclear-armed states (and those depending on them for security guarantees) would commit to major proportional reductions in their arsenals without well-vetted studies by their national defense establishments. And because the envisioned process would be multilateral, and therefore would involve complex calculations of deterrence equations involving changing sets of multiple actors, international analysis and debate would be necessary. If governments don't begin to commission their relevant defense research institutions to begin such studies now, it is difficult to imagine that multilateral negotiations on reductions would begin by, say, 2015.

The China-India-Pakistan Triangle and Its Intersection With the Global Nuclear Order

India, and therefore Pakistan, will influence whether and under what terms China would enter multilateral nuclear arms control and confidence-building processes. Indeed, much of the global nuclear dynamic can be understood in terms of two strategic triangles. One involves the U.S., Russia and China as described above. The second involves China, India and Pakistan. China is a point in both triangles, which in effect links the two, and therefore implicates the U.S. and Russia in the nuclear calculations of India and Pakistan. In other words, the process of controlling and eventually eliminating nuclear arsenals must be global because of the ways in which the U.S.-Russia-China triangle influences the China-India-Pakistan one, with knock-on effects in Iran, Israel, North Korea, etc. India and Pakistan are more central in this challenge than is often appreciated.

China is reticent to discuss India as a strategic concern or an important factor in determining China's "requirements" for nuclear weapons and delivery systems. Yet China deploys scores of nuclear nuclear-armed missiles against Indian targets. In deciding whether and how to limit growth, let alone to reduce its nuclear arsenal, China would need to know the limits of India's nuclear arsenal (and possible ballistic missile defenses). India in turn would need to factor Pakistan's present and future nuclear capabilities in determining its own requirements. India's calibrations include both China and Pakistan. Beijing, New Delhi and Islamabad have not come close to readying themselves even to discuss these issues officially. Again, China's interest would also depend on its relationships with the U.S. and Russia. In this sense, reconciling U.S., Russian and Chinese relations is necessary before India and Pakistan could realistically be brought into a multilateral nuclear arms control process, but the five original nuclear-weapon states would naturally want to understand early on whether and how India and Pakistan would be willing to join. Prospects of U.S.-Russian reductions below 1,000 nuclear weapons probably depend on how this set of questions would be answered.

Balancing Conventional Military Power

Of course, U.S. non-nuclear-capabilities and overall political relations will affect Russia's willingness to reduce to 1,000 total weapons, and China's willingness to stop building up its arsenal. Partly because of the nuclear taboo, the U.S. will continue to try to develop non-nuclear means to be able to destroy targets to which military planners now assign nuclear weapons. Interest in putting conventional warheads on sea-launched ballistic missiles is an example of this process which some U.S. strategic planners seeking funding to pursue.

Yet, unless overall political-strategic relations change, Russian and Chinese strategists will assess that the U.S. seeks to be able to use non-nuclear capabilities to degrade their nuclear forces and command and control sufficiently to reduce the credibility of their nuclear deterrents. This is a very

remote possibility against Russia, and U.S. officials fundamentally recognize there is no escape from mutual vulnerability/deterrence with Russia. But regarding China, the U.S. has not settled on and enunciated acceptance of mutual vulnerability, as noted above. If the U.S. government and foreign policy establishment do not conclusively decide and communicate that stability and security are better served by formally accepting and managing mutual nuclear deterrence than by seeking escalation dominance, then China should not be expected to join arms control and reduction processes.

The implications of advanced conventional capabilities can be put another way. One can imagine scenarios where conventional capabilities substitute for nuclear weapons and thus enable deep reductions and eventual elimination of all nuclear arsenals. But for this conversion to occur, there would need to be more symmetry in the evolution and distribution of new conventional capabilities. There would need to be a framework of conventional arms control and confidence building arrangements. Beyond establishing terms for quantitative force balancing, conventional arms control in modern conditions would have to address qualitative issues that affect balance-of-power calculations. Yet the world has no experience of negotiating limits of the complexity that would be required for U.S. qualitative advantages to be taken into account. Moreover, nothing in the past twenty years indicates that the U.S. would be willing to negotiate the sorts of limitations on the development and deployment of its advanced conventional capabilities, including missile defenses, that China would seek before it would agree to limit and reduce its nuclear capabilities.

To be sure, the same could have been said in the NATO-Soviet/Russian context a few years before the CFE Treaty. That treaty indicates positive possibilities, but its apparent demise due to changed political dynamics in and around Russia is also a cautionary lesson. In this sense, reviving the overall NATO-Russian relationship, including conventional arms control and confidence-building is necessary to create conditions for significantly lowering the number and salience of nuclear weapons in Eurasia and beyond.)

Proliferation

In positing scenarios for the evolution of U.S. nuclear forces and policies by 2025 it would be tempting to say that if proliferation occurs, the U.S. would not agree to reduce its nuclear forces to "low numbers," for example below 1,000. Yet this is not necessarily the case. The occurrence of proliferation, or the acute threat of it, is a major impediment to abolishing all nuclear weapons, but it need not impede much more significant reductions. Historically, proliferation has occurred rather slowly and if it occurs again, say in Iran and then one or more of its neighbors, the process is likely to take more than a decade. Also, it would take many years for a proliferator to build more than a small number of deliverable nuclear weapon systems. Even in the midst of reductions to the low hundreds of nuclear weapons, the U.S. could maintain massive numerical and operational advantages over any nuclear upstart.

This is not to say that proliferation, beginning with Iran's possible acquisition of nuclear weapons, would not put a political-psychological break on U.S. interest in reducing the salience and size of its nuclear arsenal. The issue is not whether the U.S. with an arsenal of one thousand (or even several hundred) nuclear weapons could deter and/or defeat one or more Middle Eastern countries newly possessing nuclear weapons. Rather, if such proliferation occurred, especially beginning in an Iran that has gotten away with breaking out of the nonproliferation system, the U.S. would lose whatever confidence it has in international regimes and their enforcement. A growing sense of nuclear

anarchy would prevail which would make further reductions in the size and salience of the U.S. arsenal politically counter-intuitive.

Costs

Cost is another variable that might affect U.S. (and other states') nuclear policies up to 2025. The U.S. now spends approximately \$52 billion annually on nuclear security, including nuclear weapons, delivery systems, command and control, intelligence, counter-proliferation, cooperative threat reduction and so on.³ The U.S. has been putting off major decisions about whether and how to replace its increasingly obsolescent nuclear weapons infrastructure. Replacement will be enormously expensive. Cost will be affected by scale: the size of the planned-for arsenal affects how many replacement weapons need to be built per year, which in turn affects the scale of needed new infrastructure. If the fiscal situation in the next few years is dire, as seems likely, then Congress will be reluctant to invest in renovating the nuclear weapon production complex and more inclined to lower requirements.

The Bigger Strategic Picture

The broader global environment in 2025 would also affect U.S. nuclear policy. Will this be a period in which international security is threatened most immediately and visibly by failing states that produce terroristic or criminal networks which they are unable or unwilling to control, putting a heavy financial, political and security burden on leaders of the developed world? If so, how useful would nuclear weapons be as instruments for compelling or, more likely necessary, assisting failing states to reform and purge themselves of such networks? After all, historically, nuclear weapons do not work to compel other states or non-state actors to change their behavior.

Will 2025 be a time in which the effects of climate change pose enormous material challenges of paying for and implementing adaptation strategies and assisting populations ill-equipped to respond? Will nuclear energy be distributed much more widely than it is today (not self-evident despite the hype about global nuclear expansion)? If so, under what conditions and by whom would uranium enrichment and plutonium separation be conducted? The answers to these questions will both affect and be affected by the salience of nuclear weapons globally and the strength of the nonproliferation regime.

Taking the foregoing variables into consideration, and recognizing the impossibility of predicting how each will evolve and which unforeseen circumstances will emerge, I would guess that by 2025 the nuclear taboo will continue to hold. Because the nuclear taboo will have held, in 2025 there will be a general norm against first use of these weapons. The U.S., Russia and China have no interest in warfare that could escalate to nuclear use and they will muster the leadership necessary to reassure each other of this. In turn, they will increase cooperation to block proliferation and strengthen the nonproliferation regime. Yet, the global nuclear environment will remain unsettled because the U.S. and Russia will not be able to resolve with the other nuclear-armed states how to formalize the terms of disparity among them. That is, U.S. and Russian arsenals will remain significantly larger than the others, and multilateral arms control including India and Pakistan will not yet produce results, even if India and Pakistan probably will stabilize their deterrent relationship. The disproportionate size of

³ Stephen I. Schwartz and Deepti Choubey, Nuclear Security Spending: Assessing Costs, Examining Priorities, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January 2009.

U.S. and Russian arsenals will dissuade others from building up rapidly and extensively, because others will know that Washington and Moscow could maintain their relative advantages. The U.S. will have accepted some limitations on the scale of national ballistic missile defenses, as an incentive for strategic cooperation with Russia and China.

January 2009