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BROKEN PROMISES: THE UNITED STATES, CHINA, AND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

BY

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BROKEN PROMISES: THE UNITED STATES, CHINA, AND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

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ABSTRACT

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This essay outlines United States (U.S.) non-proliferation policy, noting tailored declaration and implementation of that policy for China. It assesses the effectiveness and consistency of U.S. policy towards China. It presents recommendations in the context of ends, ways and means, indicating how the elements of national power can improve the policy track record to positively influence China's proliferation activities over the next generation.

On balance, U.S. efforts to stem the proliferation of nuclear weapons and technology have been very successful. Unfortunately, implementation of U.S. non-proliferation policy in China has been inconsistent and ineffective. Despite limited success in encouraging Chinese adherence to international norms over the years, evidence suggests that the U.S. has failed to stem China's supply of nuclear and missile technology and materials to rogue states.

China continues to proliferate because of its security concerns, its tenuously competitive relationship with the United States, and its economic and political ambitions. The U.S. has tolerated this behavior because it is unwilling to impose real sanctions on China for fear of losing commercial and trade ties. Lack of mutual understanding and effective engagement also contributes to the problem.

The stakes are high. If the U.S. does not effectively enforce its non-proliferation treaties and agreements with China, it could face challenges to its global leadership, the emergence of a regional nuclear arms race in Asia, and diminished national security.
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PREFACE

The end of World War II and the uncertainty it spawned gave rise to grave concerns throughout the free world and posed many challenges for the new and reluctant superpower, the United States (U.S.). Imbalances in political, military, and economic power emerged globally and regionally. The entire world was recovering from the deleterious effects of global war. Regional instability and the advent of the Cold War, waged against the communist monolith, promised protracted global conflict. Most ominous, however, was the emergence of the nuclear age and its endemic bipolar competitiveness.

Since the U.S. dropped two atomic bombs on Japan in 1945, the nations of the world have been sitting on a nuclear time bomb. Russia acquired nuclear weapons capability in 1949, and then Britain (1952), France (1960), the Peoples Republic of China (China, 1964), and Israel (1967-69) developed nuclear capabilities. With the exception of South Africa (1979-80), these were the only nations with nuclear weapons for some time. Since then, India (1974), and Pakistan (1987-1990) have achieved nuclear weapons capability, jeopardizing the balance of power in Southwest and South Asia.

The Arab Oil Embargo of 1973-1974 precipitated not only an energy crisis, but also the proliferation of nuclear technology and materials. Many nations sought to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels, prompting them to turn to nuclear energy to meet their ever-increasing energy needs. Then in 1974 India exploded a "peaceful" nuclear device and triggered fearful reactions around the world, particularly within the U.S. government. India assured the world that its intentions were peaceful, but a nuclear explosion is a nuclear explosion. India had purchased its reactors and nuclear technology from Canada, an ally and close neighbor of the U.S. The U.S. learned the lesson that nuclear technology sought for peaceful purposes could potentially enable other, more militant intentions.

It is well past the time to recognize the common practice of "peaceful" nuclearization as cover for nuclear weaponization. Since China is arguably amongst the worst proliferators of nuclear and missile technology, halting its nuclear exports is a vital U.S. strategic interest. In fact, it is among the most important national security issues facing the U.S., hence, the compelling reason for this research.

Given the U.S.' unprecedented global predominance and China's prospects for economic growth and influence, the U.S. must engage China to ensure Asia's regional stability. Experts are pessimistic about Russia and Japan taking leadership roles in Asia; yet, they are quite optimistic about China's emerging role. At this critical time, China could become a "constructive force" in Asia or become the "spoiler" of Asia's fleeting fortunes. Informed
observers expect China and the U.S. to share important leadership roles, albeit not equal, in shaping Asia in the 21st Century.\textsuperscript{2} In anticipation, China appears to be seeking engagement with the U.S. Consider Chinese President Jiang Zemin’s visit to the United States in 1997, and his sitting for an unprecedented interview with 60 Minutes correspondent Mike Wallace in September 2000 to open a dialogue and promote "mutual respect and friendship" between the two nations.\textsuperscript{3}

The door of opportunity is now open for positive U.S.-Chinese dialogue on a broad range of issues. It is incumbent on the U.S. to take advantage of this opportunity to secure better relations and trade with China, and more importantly, to encourage greater adherence to non-proliferation regimes—and hopefully, to human rights conventions. China, however, is shrewdly resistant to pressure to join and to act within the spirit of the major non-proliferation regimes, preferring a “go slow,” incremental approach. It will not consider greater cooperation on various non-proliferation regimes in isolation, unless the U.S. and the international community address its prestige and its economic and security issues first. The U.S. must respect China and allow it to "save face" because China is led by suspicious and paranoid leaders, and because it is considered a "second strike" nuclear power with unwieldy and outmoded, but immense conventional forces. This “feeling out” process will take time, perhaps decades. Therefore, the U.S. must have a long-term perspective. As China becomes more engaged with the U.S.-led global economy, the hope is that it will transform into a freer, more democratic, and more prosperous society, less inclined to threaten its neighbors and to proliferate nuclear weapons. Such optimism resides in the theory that a flourishing western-style free-market economy encourages democratic government. If the U.S. is unwilling or unable to commit itself to making the most of this historical opportunity, the world must face the dire consequences. \textit{Carpe diem!}
BROKEN PROMISES: THE UNITED STATES, CHINA, AND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

I know there are some who have never seen an arms control agreement they like — because rules can be violated, because perfect verification is impossible, because we can’t always count on others to keep their word. Still, I believe we must work to broaden and strengthen verifiable arms agreements. The alternative is a world with no rules, no verification, and no trust at all.

— President Bill Clinton, 16 March 2000, Carnegie International Non-Proliferation Conference

Nuclear proliferation and United States (U.S.) efforts to stop it began in earnest in the late 1960s and early 1970s. With China’s explosion of a nuclear device in 1964, the number of nuclear-weapon powers increased to five. What was then regarded as an inevitable act by the world’s largest totalitarian regime sowed the seeds for nuclear proliferation among other ambitious and resentful rogue states, or states of concern. China’s accession to nuclear weapon status ushered in an era of state-level "keeping up with the Jones’s," bringing into sharp focus the specter of a globe rife with nuclear weapons.

But it was India’s explosion of a "peaceful" nuclear device in 1974 that compelled the U.S. to adopt a tougher stance towards nuclear proliferation. Specifically, the U.S. began to seek international ratification of stricter controls on the spread of nuclear fuel cycle technology and fissile material. On balance, U.S. efforts have been very successful. Unfortunately, U.S. attention to the issue of nuclear non-proliferation has been inconsistent, and, by some measures, ineffective. A case in point is the U.S. non-proliferation policy and its implementation with respect to China. Evidence suggests that, despite some observance of non-proliferation norms over the years, China has continued to proliferate nuclear and missile technology and materials to states of concern, taking advantage of U.S. reluctance to enforce non-proliferation agreements.

ISSUE STATEMENT

This essay will assess the U.S. policy of nuclear non-proliferation with respect to China. It then offers some recommendations for improvement of that policy to keep it effective over the next generation. It addresses several fundamental questions: What are China’s motivations for proliferating nuclear materials and technology? Has U.S. non-proliferation policy been effective during the last quarter century in stemming the export of Chinese nuclear technology, materials, and delivery systems? Is current U.S. policy likely, over the next generation, to deter Chinese assistance to emerging nuclear weapon states, many of which are either hostile to U.S. vital interests or threatening to regional stability? How can U.S. policy be improved?
THE STAKES

Since the advent of the atomic bomb, preventing the spread of nuclear weapons has been a primary U.S. foreign policy goal. The Cold War, waged principally between the Soviet Union and the U.S., focused U.S. strategy clearly on the Soviet threat and encouraged unity of purpose in implementation of the national security strategy. In the wake of the Cold War, nuclear non-proliferation is now more important for several reasons. While East-West tensions have subsided, other new challenges are giving the national command authority greater cause for concern. First, the world is more precarious without the stabilizing elements of the Cold War. Second, religious fundamentalism, nationalism, narco-trafficking, and transnational threats are gaining momentum, and terrorism is the likely means of advancing these interests. The ultimate terrorist tool is the leveraging of nuclear weapons for international blackmail or revenge. Third, the fragmentation of formerly Soviet satellite governments has spawned criminal enterprises that are likely to traffic in nuclear weapons-grade materials and technology in the global black market, with total disregard for non-proliferation accords. Additionally, the virtual disintegration of the Russian government and military, accompanied by widespread economic malaise, portend lax security and inadequate physical control of nuclear weapons and materials. Consequently, U.S. non-proliferation policy is of much greater strategic significance today than it was during the Cold War. Furthermore, nuclear non-proliferation agreements are not autonomous or self-policing. Therefore, maintaining the "powerful norm of nuclear weapons renunciation" will require aggressive enforcement. Vigilance (certification and verification) is essential for any hope of success.

If the U.S. does not effectively enforce its non-proliferation treaties and agreements with China, several undesirable consequences may follow: evisceration of its non-proliferation policy; encouragement of states of concern to develop nuclear weapons; discouragement of previously cooperative non-proliferators; loss of its credibility in Asia and globally; challenges to its leadership; Asian political, military and economic instability; the emergence of a regional nuclear arms race; and diminished national security.

CHINA'S MOTIVATIONS

SECURITY: China's primary motivation for sending nuclear exports to Pakistan is to strengthen its security against India, which China perceives as having hegemonic ambitions in Southern Asia. China and India enjoyed mutual respect and friendly relations in the early 1950s. But since 1962, when China and India fought a war over China's border incursions, China-India relations have been mostly strained. Having gained territory in the Ladakh and Aksai Chin regions, China considers itself the victor in the conflict. Both countries became
optimistic about their future relations after Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing in 1988. But in 1989, India's test of a medium-range missile capable of hitting Chinese targets chilled relations well into the 1990s. India's provision of refuge for the Dalai Lama, who fled from Chinese persecution in Tibet, has further aggravated China-India relations. Chinese overtures to India have appeared disingenuous because of China's simultaneous assistance to India's traditional enemy, Pakistan. India's display of nuclear prowess in May 1998 has increased China's vigilance, and it may inhibit both China's good will and its efforts to stem proliferation. China is likely to continue to "leak" nuclear technology and materials to its ally Pakistan as long as China feels the need to keep India in check.

China may also be reluctant to cooperate fully with international non-proliferation regimes because it disagrees with U.S. plans for theater missile defense (TMD) and other military assistance to Japan and Taiwan. The mere notion that the U.S. would provide TMD to Taiwan, a rogue Chinese province, is particularly unsettling to the Chinese. China perceives Taipei as a political threat whose example of democracy may embolden those inside China who tire of living under a dictatorial regime. Taipei is at the heart of China's desire to gain complete control of its territories. Taipei symbolizes the essence of the Chinese government's suspicions and paranoia: internal and external threats. Internally the Chinese have much with which to contend: Taipei's quest for independence and foot dragging on talks, Buddhist and Falun Gong religious sects, Islamic insurgency in Xinjiang, demands for human rights, environmental degradation, over-population, unemployment, corruption, insecure bureaucracies, and a nationalistic and hawkish military seeking resources for modernization. Externally the Chinese are suspicious of Western alliances, a united Korea, and their historical competitors: Japan and the U.S. The Chinese believe that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries may eventually include Japan, make overtures to Taipei, and ultimately "squeeze" China into a political corner. Further, a united Korea in conjunction with a powerful Japan might challenge China's economic ascendency and remove its security buffer zone. The Chinese also remember the Korean Conflict, U.S.' "gun boat diplomacy" in the Taiwan Strait during the Korean Conflict and in 1996, the 1954 bilateral defense treaty and decades of military assistance to Taiwan, and more recently, the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia. Additionally, the Chinese perceive the 1999 U.S. intervention into Yugoslavia on behalf of independence-seeking Kosovar Albanians as a dangerous precedent. Thus, China's perception that the U.S. is meddling in its internal affairs vis-à-vis Taipei underscores China's regional insecurity and its belief that the U.S. seeks global hegemony. This insecurity and belief help drive China's nuclear modernization and proliferation.
AMBITION: In the 1960s China openly favored proliferation as a rallying point against imperialism and to counter-balance U.S. and Soviet power. National pride, the desire for dignity and prestige, and regional ambition still motivate China to develop and modernize its nuclear arsenal. Proliferation is an extension of China's ambitious modernization effort. China views proliferation as a means to assert itself and "keep up" with the U.S., despite the restrictions of non-proliferation regimes. Thus, China considers the verification provisions of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) as discriminatory, particularly to militarily weak states such as itself. Regarding nuclear weapons, the U.S. acknowledges the discriminatory nature of the nation-state hierarchy, but it does not intend to disarm anytime soon because of its unprecedented leadership role and the opportunity to maintain global predominance. Nuclear weapons are also needed as a hedge against Russia and China. Thus, nuclear weapons are still an essential part of the U.S. strategy to deter aggression. Consequently, China's non-proliferation officials argue that the U.S. continues to maintain a Cold War posture, because its weapons are offensive in nature and it has rejected the idea of no first use (NFU). Therefore, China will likely continue to proliferate nuclear weapons to redress the overwhelming inequity in nuclear and conventional military power compared to the U.S.

ECONOMIC ASCENDENCY: China is also proliferating nuclear technology and materials to bolster its economy. China is an emergent economic power in Asia. Given the infancy of China's more powerful role in Asia, China has sought hard currency buyers for its products, including nuclear technology and materials. Because of China's "aggressive effort to increase its economic prosperity," it can be expected to prop up its business sectors and keep a float pseudo-government and semi-autonomous commercial entities, seeking to protect them from foreign competition. These enterprises include those trafficking in nuclear and missile technology and materials. China continues to earn hard currency however it can to implement its comprehensive reform plan, to execute major capital projects (e.g., Three Gorges Dam), to achieve open trade with the developed world, to stabilize its currency, and to maintain a high annual growth rate (>8%) necessary to achieve real long-term growth.

On 19 September 2000, after much wrangling and despite impassioned pleas by Cold War Conservatives to the contrary, the U.S. Senate approved normal trade relations with China. The vote was 83 to 15, indicating strong support for commercial, business, and trade ties with the world's largest market. Supporters of the bill hope that the new trade relationship will prompt China to soften and abandon its stance on human rights violations and nuclear proliferation. Without Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with the U.S. and without membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), China would be deprived of first-class
global economic status. If history is any guide, it will take a considerable amount of time for the mutual benefits of PNTR to accrue to either the U.S. or China. In the meantime, and for the foreseeable future, nuclear sales will be considered important contributors to China's economic bottom line.

OTHER MOTIVATIONS: Media articles, political punditry, and statements by prominent U.S. public figures alleging Chinese attempts to influence the 1996 U.S. presidential elections in favor of the Clinton-Gore ticket have angered the Chinese. Since the early 1990s, implied accusations of Chinese nuclear espionage at Los Alamos and other U.S. National Laboratories have left Chinese officials equally infuriated. The U.S. bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Serbia in the Spring 1999 unleashed broad and violent Chinese animosity towards the U.S., resulting in attacks on the U.S. embassy in China and cooled relations that still have not warmed appreciably. Finally, Chinese officials bristle at continuous allegations of human rights violations in China, at references to the Tiananmen Square "Massacre," and at the U.S. congressional legislation it spawned, which demands unequivocal assurances that China is not proliferating nuclear technology.23

UNITED STATES POLICY

Since the dawn of the nuclear age, the U.S. has advocated a nuclear non-proliferation policy designed to impede the spread of nuclear weapons, associated technology, and delivery systems. When the potential devastation is taken into account, the spread of nuclear weapons poses risks to U.S. economic interests, including the free flow of trade and access to natural resources. Accordingly, the U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS, December 1999) asserts that preventing the spread of nuclear weapons is a vital U.S. interest. To achieve its strategic goals, the U.S. is seeking verifiable arms control, arms reductions, and non-proliferation agreements.24

President Clinton has acknowledged the widespread skepticism regarding effective non-proliferation. He knows compliance in non-proliferation may not be perfect. But he believes the U.S. has no other choice but to continue to seek multilateral agreements to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and technology. At the Non-Proliferation Conference in 2000, Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson reinforced the President's theme: "[Our policy] is the dismantling of weapons, the securing of materials used to build arms, the diminishing of nuclear peril around the world, and the allying of former foes in friendships for the ages." To realize this vision, Secretary Richardson recommends diplomatic initiatives, provision of economic aid, support of social development, promotion of technical dialogues, emphasis on regional interdependence, and pursuit of energy cooperation.25
United States policy also includes the military element of power. The NSS provides for counter-proliferation action similar to Israel's June 1981 bombing and destruction of Iraq's French-built Osiraq nuclear reactor facility near Baghdad to thwart Iraq's nuclear ambitions. However, the negative consequences of such action would be ominous for the U.S., making this use of the military element of power an unlikely last resort. Short of preemptive military strikes and other active military enforcement, the U.S. seeks to deter nuclear expansion through the existence of its own formidable nuclear arsenal and through the credible deterrent embodied in sizeable, projectable, and forward-deployed conventional forces.

GENERAL POLICY ASSESSMENT

The U.S. has succeeded in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons to many countries that have either the desire, the capability, or both to develop them: Argentina, Belarus, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Japan, Kazakhstan, Romania, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, and Ukraine. The U.S. has skillfully arranged security alliances with many of these countries to win their compliance. With others, economic, developmental, and regional considerations have made the difference. Selected nations, realizing they could not afford the expense of developing and maintaining a nuclear arsenal, have abandoned their ambitions for nuclear weaponization. In the cases of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine, the U.S. has successfully brokered the disarming of formerly de facto nuclear states. South Africa is unique in that it was a full-fledged nuclear weapons aspirant that did an "about face," dismantled its existing nuclear warheads, and joined the non-proliferation mainstream.

These successes notwithstanding, it is no surprise that several countries appear oblivious to U.S. efforts to constrain their nuclear ambitions. After all, possession of nuclear weapons can transform a country into a "superpower" in a way that matters. In any case, the number of non-proliferation policy failures presents a challenge to global peace and prosperity. These include Algeria, India, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Pakistan, Libya, and Syria. For most of these states, U.S. goals are too casual (low expectations). United States coping strategies such as economic sanctions and counter-proliferation through economic isolation, stepped-up monitoring, and military deterrence have failed to halt proliferation in these problematic states. Because in the past Russia and China have enabled some of our policy "failures," they too should be added to the list themselves. Few can dispute that China's technology transfers to Pakistan enabled the dueling demonstrations of nuclear weapons capability in May 1998.
U.S. POLICY WITH RESPECT TO CHINA

United States policy calls for "comprehensive engagement" with China. Peter Tarnoff, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, asserts that

The long-term objective of [U.S.] policy is to enhance the security and prosperity of the American people by encouraging China's integration into the world community, thereby fostering China's adherence to internationally-recognized norms and standards of behavior. . . . On non-proliferation, we have made clear our determination to fully implement our laws and to respond forcefully to irresponsible behavior. At the same time, we have obtained important new public Chinese commitments through active consultations. [Italics added]

In other words, the U.S. seeks to reduce South and East Asian regional threats and improve Chinese non-proliferation compliance through deterrent economic measures and better, more constructive U.S.-China relations.

United States National Security Advisor Samuel (Sandy) R. Berger has stressed that the United States "will not shrink from the fight against weapons of mass destruction." Mr. Berger outlined more specific U.S. non-proliferation and arms control policy at the 1999 Carnegie International Non-proliferation Conference. He summarized it as "strengthening the non-proliferation regime, addressing regional threats, and bolstering defenses." While all general U.S. policies outlined earlier apply to China as well, Mr. Berger cited U.S. policy specifically with respect to Chinese non-proliferation: "A second set of priorities focuses on the most pressing regional proliferation challenges, [which include] working with China on common non-proliferation goals. We will continue to express our hope that [China] will join the MTCR."

CHINA POLICY ASSESSMENT

On balance, the U.S. policy of engaging China has been effective. Nevertheless, China is sowing the seeds of future insecurity with its continued violations of non-proliferation regimes. China continues to proliferate nuclear technology and material to bolster its security in the context of its tenuous relationship with the United States. Further, China is selling nuclear technology to sustain its dramatic economic growth. The U.S. has tolerated this behavior because it is unwilling to impose real sanctions on China for fear of losing commercial and trade ties. Moreover, U.S. policy implementation has failed to address China's primary motivations for proliferating—insecurity and potential conflict with India and Taiwan. Some observers view U.S. failure to engage a proud China on arms control as either too casual (that is, perceiving China to be far from a genuine nuclear threat to the U.S.), disrespectful (that is, misreading China's ambitions to become a peer competitor), or capriciously indifferent (that is, not expecting China
to observe global standards). And the U.S. proposal to deploy a national missile defense system and TMD in Taiwan has compounded this detachment, further alienating China.

SUCCESSES: The U.S. has been successful in getting China to participate in many non-proliferation and arms control agreements and in persuading China to take actions in the spirit of non-proliferation regimes. For example, China joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in January 1984 and then pledged to apply IAEA standards on its nuclear exports. In January 1989, China participated in the convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (PPNM). In 1992, China joined the NPT and pledged to uphold the original 1987 MTCR guidelines. In July 1996, China ceased nuclear testing and announced a moratorium on further nuclear testing. China was instrumental in gaining North Korean acceptance of the Agreed Framework (1994). Between 1995 and 1997, China suspended plans to give Iran two 300 megawatt Qinshan-type nuclear power reactors and suspended plans to construct a uranium conversion facility for them. Additionally, in October 1997 China officially joined the Zangger Committee. In 1997, China agreed to halt further nuclear cooperation with Iran and pledged during Defense Secretary Cohen's visit not to provide Iran with cruise missiles or related technology. The Chinese white paper, China's National Defense (July 1998) demonstrates China's recognition of the importance of nuclear transparency. Finally, as of 1998, China has pledged to stop producing fissile material.

FAILURES: While China has been a signatory to the major non-proliferation agreements and has made some progress in cooperating with multilateral coalitions dedicated to non-proliferation, its participation is conspicuously absent from certain important regimes. Likewise, China's nuclear technology export policies continue to threaten world peace and reflect stagnant U.S.-China relations.

The following concerns are summarized from the most recent international non-proliferation conference report: China is not a member of other multi-lateral export control regimes, such as the MTCR, the Australia Group, the Wassenaar Group, and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). China has not ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT, 1996) (nor have the U.S. and Russia), nor did China approve indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995. United States dual-use exports intended for peaceful uses have been diverted to military-related facilities under the noses of presumably lethargic Chinese officials. Additionally, China has not adopted explicit export control measures for missile and dual-use technologies. Finally, China has had difficulty establishing and enforcing export controls it has adopted for nuclear weapons.
Conservatives in the U.S. consider China's many assurances of cooperation on non-proliferation to be little more than fig leaves covering a body of Chinese violations, covert and overt. It can be argued that China practices a policy of exceptionalism and selectivity in adhering to non-proliferation regimes. Simultaneously, China cooperates, proliferates, and deflects criticism.\textsuperscript{40} In response, the U.S. has imposed sanctions three times against China for missile-related exports. In each case, the sanctions were slight financial blows of a perfunctory nature.\textsuperscript{41} The U.S. State Department has publicly acknowledged that Chinese assurances have become meaningless.\textsuperscript{42} Only recently, a U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee report charged that "the People's Republic of China consistently fails to adhere to its non-proliferation commitments . . . Beijing merely mouths promises as a means of evading sanctions." The report adds further that the Clinton administration has been lax in enforcing non-proliferation agreements and "has shown nothing but consistent disregard for [the U.S.' own] non-proliferation laws." The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has subsequently tried unsuccessfully to amend the recent legislation that granted China permanent normal trade relations (PNTR), calling for sanctions against China for selling nuclear-related technology to states of concern and for violating IAEA safeguard provisions.\textsuperscript{43}

\textbf{Trade Versus Security:} Inconsistency between U.S. declared policy and its execution is to blame for the U.S.' mixed record in nuclear non-proliferation. Critics of the Clinton administration have called for action because talks with China have generally been lengthy and inconclusive.\textsuperscript{44} But China has "broken the code" for dealing with the U.S. That is, it spreads nuclear technology in return for hard currency and depends on U.S. commercial interests to bail it out when pressured by the U.S. government to comply with non-proliferation agreements. In short, the U.S. has put Chinese trade concerns and business ties above national and regional security and the containment of nuclear weapons.

Seeking improved trade relations, the U.S. has turned a blind eye to China's nuclear proliferation. Since 1985, when China made non-proliferation pledges to the Reagan administration, it has provided un-safeguarded help to Algeria, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan. Since 1992, such Chinese assistance applicable to nuclear weapons clearly violates the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). United States failure to "discipline" China over nuclear proliferation, while applying tough sanctions for intellectual property violations (software and audio and videotapes) sends the wrong message on our priorities—we are more vigilant regarding trade and property rights than we are regarding national security.

Unsurprisingly, China continues to export hardware and technology to un-safeguarded nuclear plants.\textsuperscript{45} China has continued to covertly assist Iran and North Korean with their missile
programs. Other than public rhetoric and delaying PNTR, the U.S. has done little in the wake of China's export of 5000 centrifuge magnets to the Pakistani Kahuta enrichment plant in May 1996. Informed observers find China's professions of ignorance about such technology transfers insulting. Such disregard indicates how lightly the Chinese take U.S. threats of sanctions under the auspices of the NPT, which they joined in 1992. China's behavior is particularly egregious in view of Pakistan's refusal to accept safeguards that prohibit any NPT signatory from exporting technology to it. Under U.S. proliferation law, international missile-related sales that violate the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) require the U.S. to impose sanctions against China. Given its documented violations of the MTCR, it is astonishing that China's behavior has been tolerated. But in addition to lax enforcement, U.S. failure to enforce non-proliferation policy has only heightened China's security concerns regarding India, and vice versa. Therefore, China's clandestine proliferation to Pakistan, while disturbing, is predictable. It can be expected to continue until the U.S. helps allay China's security concerns.

**Arms Control:** Lack of U.S.-China bilateral arms control agreements exacerbates the difficulties of non-proliferation dialogue. U.S.-China relations, while lacking the enmity and conflict of U.S.-Russian nuclear arms dialogue, have failed to address bilateral arms control, instead focusing exclusively on nuclear non-proliferation. This oversight is indicative of the immaturity of U.S.-China dialogue, as well as U.S. reluctance to engage the Chinese as it has the Russians. The Chinese may perceive this reluctance as another example of U.S. arrogance and global hegemonic behavior. In fact, China wants U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals dramatically reduced before it engages in any nuclear arms reduction talks (IAW START II).

**Missile Defense:** China's efforts to build up its nuclear arsenal and improve its missile technology could evoke responses in kind from India and states in East Asia to deter China. Over the next generation, the Pacific Rim could become a hotbed of nuclear weaponization and missile development. The U.S. considers the provision of TMD under its security umbrella as a way to trump China's nuclear and conventional missile capabilities.

The Chinese see little reason to adhere completely to non-proliferation regimes while the U.S. advocates national and theater missile defense programs. The Chinese believe the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM, 1972) promotes international security, which is undermined by U.S. plans to deploy a National Missile Defense (NMD) in the 2006-2007 timeframe. In fact, Chinese officials have hinted in recent years that deployment of NMD may lead China to increase its nuclear arsenal. Nevertheless, U.S. NMD policy must be viewed in the context of
Chinese ambitions to improve their strategic nuclear missiles and warheads to reach targets in North America.53

The NMD program has, of course, received mixed reviews among U.S. officials. Secretary of Defense William Cohen has supported plans to continue the development of the NMD program. President Clinton has supported this program until recently (September 2000), when, despite Secretary Cohen's advice, he decided to postpone until the next administration a decision to deploy the NMD system. NMD testing and development will continue, but construction of a radar facility needed for system deployment has been delayed. Congressional opponents claim that President Clinton postponed the decision to placate Russia and China. The postponement is expected to have a positive impact on U.S.-China relations and, by extension, to enhance progress on nuclear technology and missile proliferation and arms control dialogue. In the meantime, Congressional conservatives are clamoring for nuclear testing. They believe the NMD program will sustain U.S. global supremacy, chasten China, and prevent nightmarish scenarios of nuclear blackmail by states of concern such as North Korea, Iraq or Iran. The U.S. Senate's refusal to ratify the CTBT is indicative of regressive conservative "saber rattling" on U.S. nuclear weapons development. It portends the scrapping of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Russia and the reduction of the U.S.' leadership role in nuclear non-proliferation.54

On the other hand, given the gains in nuclear non-proliferation and the unwritten ultimate goal of de-nuclearization, detractors of NMD are mystified by the mere consideration of national missile defense. Daniel Plesch, a Director of British-American Security Information Council (BASIC), a security and defense issues research group, asserts that "With increased focus on creating a national missile defense system, the U.S. is no longer a reliable leader in the area of international legal controls on nuclear and other armaments. Its actions reinforce a steadily strengthening view against relying on mutual nuclear deterrence in national strategy."55 More troubling is the message this perceived lack of leadership sends to China and the weakening effect it could have on non-proliferation regimes and nuclear weapon-free zones.56 It is hard to predict what, if any impact the NMD policy battle will have on Pakistan and India, who are considering a moratorium on nuclear tests.57 But the effect is not likely to be positive. In sum, U.S. flirtation with the idea of another Star Wars-like missile defense program provides Beijing and states of concern political cover for their proliferation activities. Further, it undermines U.S. credibility and leadership on non-proliferation issues.
RECOMMENDATIONS

ENDS: The United States strategic goal is to impede the spread of nuclear weapons, technology, and missile delivery systems from China to states of concern. Additionally, U.S. interests are best served by the emergence of a strong, stable, open, and prosperous China.50

WAYS AND MEANS: The recommendations that follow support these ends. Recommendations are systematically presented in the context of ends, ways and means and elements of national power (all in Italics). While the recommendations call for exploiting U.S. strengths, they are constructive. In general they do not call for exploiting China’s weaknesses and vulnerabilities. They focus at the level of national (or grand) strategy.

General: The U.S. should retain the policy of comprehensive engagement with China to further integrate a freer, more prosperous China into the international community and to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and related material and technology to states of concern. The U.S., however, should redouble its efforts to implement the policy consistent with its declarations, something that has been lacking in U.S. policy implementation. Comprehensive engagement requires consistent and focused engagement and enforcement, which are the keys to successful policy. Engagement means the U.S. should continue to develop a dialogue with China’s government and Chinese non-proliferation professionals. In doing so, U.S. officials should avoid "mirror imaging" when engaging the Chinese.56 Instead, the U.S. should attempt to better understand Chinese culture, values, and objectives, including the Chinese commitment to and timetable for reforms. Only such a critically informed environment will provide for truly comprehensive engagement and for the realization of real progress on the goal of ending Chinese nuclear proliferation.

The U.S. must avoid the appearance or fact of being a "paper tiger" on nuclear non-proliferation. Enforcement means the U.S. must exercise the political will to discipline China informationally, politically, and hence economically in a global context, through multilateral and transnational economic and political institutions. The U.S. must do as President Ronald Reagan once said of nuclear arms control, quoting an old Russian proverb, "Trust, but verify."

China, as a member of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, is a major power. Therefore, the alternatives of threatening to use military force against and/or to contain China in support of non-proliferation objectives are counterproductive, impractical, and contrary to encouraging a freer and more prosperous China. Further, such aggressive options do not advance U.S. non-proliferation goals. Therefore, military force and containment should be avoided if possible. The U.S. can call upon a host of other military, economic, and political ways and means.
Political: The U.S. must meet its security commitments to Taiwan without alienating China. It must continue to assuage Chinese security and sovereignty concerns through diplomacy by not recognizing Taiwan as an independent nation, while reaffirming our cooperative security arrangements with it. This will enhance both Taiwan’s and China’s perceptions and reality of security, and help reduce China’s motivation to proliferate. This strategy must be buttressed with public policy statements that solidify our friendship with all Chinese. Comprehensive dialogue is essential for guarding against the festering of sinister perceptions. For example, the U.S. should continue the modest scientific exchange between U.S. and Chinese national laboratories and nuclear technologists, and between our non-governmental organizations and policy research institutions.

The U.S. should leverage international organizations to improve China’s prestige and to gain international support for its reforms commensurate with its cooperation with non-proliferation regimes and treaties. America’s unprecedented standing provides it overwhelming power to ratify, and thus to legitimize agreements. China desires the referent power and influence it can gain through cooperation with the U.S., but the U.S. cannot court China in a vacuum. The U.S. should seek to reinforce its cooperative security agreements with the major players in South and East Asia to enhance the perceptions and reality of security, obviating the need for China’s proliferation to Pakistan. Given its mixed record of cooperation, continuous diplomatic pressure must be applied to China both unilaterally and through transnational organizations to ensure China meets its responsibilities to the non-proliferation regimes and treaties. Finally, the U.S. should leverage its informational and political power to persuade the Chinese people to choose democracy because, as the theory goes, "democracies do not go to war with other democracies."^60

Economic: The U.S. must move quickly to make permanent normal trade relations with China a reality to lessen China’s need to traffic in nuclear and missile technology, a practice which currently provides much needed hard currency. The annual approvals of trade relations were perfunctory and irritating to the Chinese. PNTR will pave the way for China’s entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), which in turn will further integrate China into the economic mainstream of the global market and speed domestic reforms, increasing China’s stake in cooperating. PNTR will also improve China’s economic prospects and give it access to international banking organizations, loan capital, and to the world’s most sizeable trading partner. But trade policies should approach parity incrementally because of the asymmetric size and efficiency of the economies involved. The U.S. can also provide China access to its strong and dominant bond market. Additionally, the U.S. should encourage its commercial banking
institutions to share financial expertise and provide economic and legal education to improve China's fiscal policy and strengthen and reform its fragile banking institutions. The U.S. should share nuclear technology, hardware and material slowly and commensurate with China's non-proliferation compliance. The U.S. should demand certification of China's export controls, but such demands must be broached carefully, since China is sensitive to its status as a world power. For either constructive or punitive purposes, the U.S. should use its formidable economic influence in multilateral, transnational sanctioning bodies to moderate Chinese behavior. Only amid a general and deep economic crisis should debt forgiveness be considered. Similarly, the freezing of monetary assets, seizure of real property, and embargoes should be reserved for only those unlikely conditions when a state of grave hostility exists between the U.S. and China.

Military: Shaping and responding are the two centerpieces of U.S. military strategy.\textsuperscript{61} The U.S.' forward-deployed conventional forces, force projection assets, and visible blue water Navy must continue to deploy in Asia to guarantee security, to provide the backdrop for genuine engagement, and to present a formidable deterrent. To allay Chinese security concerns, the U.S. should limit the deployment of TMD to East Asian states and abandon NMD deployment. The U.S. should consider maritime TMD for Asia. Extensive Taiwan-based TMD would be particularly counterproductive since China considers Taiwan a rogue province, and U.S. security assistance to Taiwan only serves to aggravate China's nationalism and paranoia. NMD deployment is too divisive and of dubious utility. The U.S. should alter its cooperative security agreements to be inclusive of China. However, separate cooperative security agreements with South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan should remain in force over the next generation, when Chinese security, prosperity, and compliance are expected to improve. The U.S. should withhold strategic nuclear expertise, satellite and missile technology, and dual-use technology until Chinese compliance with non-proliferation regimes is confirmed. The U.S. should continue to engage in comprehensive signal intelligence (SIGINT), selected human intelligence (HUMINT), and close monitoring of Chinese immigrants as long as China retains a formidable nuclear weapons capability. Military-to-military contact short of joint exercises with China will increase positive U.S.-China engagement, assuage fears and suspicion, and increase mutual understanding between the military establishments. Finally, engaging the Chinese on arms control is paramount. Therefore, despite China's charges of discrimination and hypocrisy, the U.S. should retain its nuclear deterrent through 2020, but not indefinitely. The U.S. must be willing to decommission a sizeable portion of its arsenal to lend credibility to the notion that someday, in the distant future, it will eliminate all nuclear weapons.
CONCLUSIONS

Evidence indicates that China's compliance with nuclear non-proliferation regimes has been less than desired. The U.S. is partly to blame because it has neglected its security for the benefits of commerce and trade. In the hierarchy of a nation's interests, consideration of national and regional security reign supreme. Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, technology, and delivery systems should have primacy over trade concerns and business ties. But security and commerce are inextricably bound to one another, particularly in an era of increasingly globalized interaction and interdependence. Therefore, security and economic imperatives must be pursued concurrently to achieve an effective synergy. The optimum policy recognizes this symbiosis and requires long-term, consistent but flexible implementation of the national security strategy. The required policy is comprehensive engagement.
ENDNOTES

1 The existence of Israel's nuclear weapons capability is widely accepted as fact, but it has never been confirmed nor officially proclaimed by Israel.


8 Banerjee.

9 Ibid.


13 Ibid., 259.

14 Ibid., 260.

15 Jones and McDonough. China formally condemned the NPT in 1968.

17 Paul Mann, "China's record Better, Clintonites Contend," *Aviation Week and Space Technology* 147, 5: 46. Full-text at ProQuest. While China has not signed the MTCR, it has agreed to abide by it. China has also recently considered developing her own export controls and laws to parallel the requirements of the MTCR. See James Mann, "U.S. Takes New Tack On China Arms Exports," *Los Angeles Times* (5 October, 2000) 1.

18 Robert G. Joseph, "Nuclear Deterrence and Regional Proliferators," *The Washington Quarterly* 20, 3 (Summer 1997): 172. Mr. Joseph is the Director of the Center for Counterproliferation Research at the National Defense University. He is also a member of the U.S. Army War College faculty.

19 Schlesinger, 105.


22 Public domain.


24 William J. Clinton, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, December 1999), 7. The NSS specifies the following nuclear non-proliferation policy imperatives: Pursuit of verifiable arms control and non-proliferation agreements; Provision of security necessary to strengthen and insure cooperative relationships; Redirection of resources to safer, more productive endeavors; Reaffirmation of previous U.S.-Russian strategic arms reduction talks (START I and Russian ratification of START II; START III agreement to improve the transparency of inventories and destruction of existing nuclear warheads; Reaffirmation the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and propose an amendment to authorize possible deployment of the National Missile Defense (NMD); Realization of U.S. Senate advice and consent for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to constrain nuclear weapons development and prevent explosions; Promotion of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); Stronger controls over weapons-usable fissile material through the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program; Reinforcement of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime by strengthening the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system; Limited access to sensitive technical information and equipment; Implementation of coping strategies (counter-proliferation; e.g., military force in Iraq); and Development of defensive capabilities to protect the U.S. and our allies from weapons of mass destruction (WMD).


27 Zachary S. Davis and Mitchell B. Reiss, "Nuclear Nonproliferation: Where Has the United States Won — and Why?" in Prevailing in a Well-Armed World: Devising Competitive Strategies Against Weapons Proliferation, ed. Henry D. Sokolski (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, March 2000), 90. Iraq is the only example of U.S. counter-proliferation. Even this instance of use of military force was precipitated by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and not nuclear weaponization.

28 Davis and Reiss, 81.

29 Clinton, 8-9. De-nuclearization of the Newly Independent States (NIS) was officially effected with the NPT, the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR), and the Expanded Threat Reduction Initiative (ETRI), 1999.

30 In the Spring of 1998, during a period of heightened border tensions, India conducted a nuclear explosion as part of developmental testing. Pakistan followed suit with a test explosion of its own. Prevailing news reports and commentaries consider these explosions to be more acts of intimidation rather than developmental exercises. Both Pakistani and Indian nuclear weaponization are in a nascent stage of development.


33 Ibid.


36 Jones and McDonough, Appendix F. "The Non-Proliferation Treaty Exporters Committee," a.k.a. the Zangger Committee, after its Swiss former chairman, was set up in the early 1970s to establish guidelines for the export control provisions of Article III (2) of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Zangger Committee adopted a set of guidelines and a "trigger list of
export items whose sale would be permitted only to recipients willing to accept IAEA safeguards."

37 Berger.


39 Leventhal and Greenberg. The NSG members have committed to a set of Guidelines incorporating such important non-proliferation standards as full-scope IAEA safeguards as a condition of supply, physical protection against unauthorized use of transferred equipment and materials and restraint in the transfer of sensitive facilities, technology and weapons usable material. It is U.S. policy to seek universal adherence to the NSG Guidelines.


43 Gertz. The Thompson-Torricelli amendment to the Permanent Normal Trade relations (PNTR) Bill makes PNTR contingent upon certifications and verification, and calls for financial sanctions for violations.

44 Leventhal and Horner.

45 Un-safeguarded plants are those that are closed to international inspections and audits, or "safeguards."


47 Jones and McDonough.

48 Andrew Scobell, Interview at Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 16 October, 2000. A case may be made that the Chinese government has had difficulty reigning in its vast array of competing bureaucratic entities and actors. The question is "How committed is the Chinese government to controlling its military and its state enterprises?" See also Leventhal and Horner. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns has claimed that Chinese lack of awareness about the ring magnet sale to Pakistan "strains credulity."

49 Leventhal and Greenberg.

50 ________, Conference Report, Monterey, California, 6-9 November 1997.

51 Paul Mann, 46.

52 ________, Conference Report, Monterey, California, 6-9 November 1997.
53 Waldron, 274. Chinese author Wang Xiaodong is quoted as saying "We must strengthen our nuclear capability... We need much more weapons of mass destruction which can reach cities in North America."


56 ________, "In Test Ban Vote, Washington's Role as Moral Leader Takes a Hit," International Herald Tribune (Neuilly-sur-Seine, France) by the New York Times News Service, 15 October 1999, News section, p. 8. Check also conference report, International conference in Vienna, Austria, available from <http://clw.org/pub/clw/coalition/kvl100899.htm> Internet. Conference participants lamented that three of the world's nuclear capable nations, including the United States, have not ratified the CTBT, giving 15 other nations "less incentive to ratify" as well. United States partisan politics (conservative intransigence) is cited as the primary reason.

57 Jones and McDonough.

58 Peter Tarnoff.

59 "mirroring imaging" - The belief that prior assumptions and prejudices have been validated by apparently receptive Chinese counterparts.


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