US-China Strategic Dialogue, Phase VI

An NPS and Pacific Forum Conference, June 2011

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INTRODUCTION

This report briefly summarizes the format and background of a series of dialogues between the United States and China on nuclear issues before turning to a more focused discussion of the current year's session. It begins addressing general discussions on contemporary policy and prospects for arms control and confidence and security building measures (CSBMs). It then turns to those terminological discussions themselves since they were the centerpieces of the meeting, and insights from those discussions pervade the entire report. Finally, the report concludes with some policy implications.

BACKGROUND

Over the past seven years, there have been two ongoing efforts to engage the Chinese on strategic issues (primarily nuclear and missile defense, but also on strategic conventional strike and outer space) at the "Track II" level. The sixth annual session of one of these parallel efforts, the U.S.-China Strategic Dialogue, was held in Honolulu, Hawaii, June 5-7, 2011. As a Track II conference, it is formally unofficial, but includes a mix of participants from the government, military and academia. The Dialogue is organized by the Naval Postgraduate School and Pacific Forum CSIS and is funded by the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). The parallel series of Track 1.5 meetings have met in Beijing five times since 2004. Rand, IDA, and Pacific Forum CSIS generally collaborate to organize that meeting for DTRA, working with a Chinese co-host, CFISS. This meeting is separate from the Dialogue held in Honolulu, although the two build off each other substantively and involve some of the same participants.

As the leading agency responsible for addressing threats from weapons of mass destruction, DTRA—the sponsor—seeks to enhance American awareness of Chinese nuclear strategies and capabilities, reduce the prospects for proliferation in Asia and beyond, and more broadly to enhance American deterrence in a time of transformation. Pursuant to this, the Dialogue has focused on identifying important misperceptions, misunderstandings, and key divergences in national interests, with a goal of reducing these over the long term.

These meetings have tried to identify misperceptions regarding each side's nuclear strategy and doctrine and to highlight potential areas of cooperation or confidence building measures that might reduce the dangers of such

misperceptions. Beyond that, the conferences aim to deepen American understanding of the way China views nuclear weapons, the domestic debates that shape those views, and the degree to which there is change in strategy, doctrine, and force posture in Beijing. The first five conferences of the series focused on general perceptions of the utility of nuclear weapons, national threat perceptions in strategic affairs, the nature of current nuclear strategy and operational concepts for each side, regional issues pertaining to nuclear weapons, strategic stability, and the relationship of current policy to long-term disarmament goals.

This year the Chinese delegation included nine participants from the military, think tanks, and academia, including two two-star equivalent officers (one retired), and two colonels. It constituted the highest-level delegation ever, as well as the largest PLA delegation at the Hawaii series. In addition to military officers, participants included experts from the PRC government, official think tanks, and universities. On the U.S. side, there were more than twenty participants from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, State Department, STRATCOM, PACOM, National Defense University, think tanks and universities, as well as former senior government officials.

One of the goals of this series of meetings is to create a community of regular participants who develop accumulated learning and hopefully personal trust that might facilitate a more open discussion. Typically, at least half the U.S. attendees have participated in a previous dialogue. On the Chinese side, several participants had previously attended as well.

As will be discussed, this year's meeting featured a remarkable level of openness on the Chinese side, and more interestingly, served as a forum for open debate and disagreement between Chinese participants on a range of topics. The structure of the meeting this year continued the recent practice at both the Beijing and Hawaii meetings of holding breakout sessions aimed to draw out frank and open discussion in small groups. Thus, the two-day meeting began with a plenary session on recent declaratory policy, then moved to breakout sessions discussing relevant terminology. The plenary reconvened on the second day to hear presentations of those discussions and conclude with a traditional panel discussion. The traditional panel discussions consisted of two or three short presentations by Chinese and U.S. participants, followed by discussion and questions from the participants. These sessions were structured so that most of the time was devoted to discussion, in the hope that participants could move beyond formal presentations. The opening session of the meeting featured presentations on current policy, while the final session focused on confidence and security-building

measures (CSBMs) that could help the U.S. and China move forward on strategic and disarmament issues.

OVERALL CHINESE PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETING

This year, there was little recitation of the traditional boilerplate or the "party line" surrounding issues between the United States and China and instead focused on substantive discussion of the topics on the agenda. More importantly, the Chinese participants seemed willing to engage with and even contradict each other in open session. This openness provided insights into the decision-making and deliberative processes on these issues within the PRC. Further, it was evident to many U.S. participants that the informal tone and collegial atmosphere of the meetings have, over the years, encouraged more frank and open participation by the Chinese side.

Minimal Boilerplate

While these meetings have sought to be a forum for frank and open discussions, in previous years Chinese participants stuck to traditional boilerplate statements that often typify U.S.-Chinese interactions. This year however, when these issues were brought up, they were usually done so in a more practical and useful way. For example, despite recognizing the prospect of future arms purchases by Taiwan was the "elephant in the room", this issue did not preclude constructive discussion on other topics. When one Chinese participant did question the U.S motivations for Taiwan arms sales in light of improving cross-straits relations, another Chinese participant responded by summarizing the core elements of U.S. policy. One of the American participants responded that it was useful to see that the Chinese side understands the U.S. rationale, even if they disagreed with some of the logical chains.

Similarly, the Chinese side did not make "no first use" (NFU) a center point of the discussion. When China's NFU pledge did come up, it was only to discuss how policy developments, such as Conventional Prompt Global Strike (CPGS), might affect China's ability to adhere to NFU (more on this below). Furthermore, while it was clear that the Chinese would welcome a NFU pledge on the part of the U.S. (a frequent refrain at past dialogues), Chinese participants made no demands that the US change its declaratory policy and there was only muted criticism of the Nuclear Posture Review on this point.

Other topics of contention seemed absent from this year's Dialogue. While extended deterrence was discussed as a term in the definitional discussion, it was discussed with little rancor. Indeed some participants noted the positive effects of U.S. extended deterrence commitments with regard to regional stability. Also largely absent from this year's dialogue were issues related to reconnaissance and the FY2000 National Defense Authorization Act, which have been raised as obstacles to improved military relations. Although Chinese participants were concerned by recent U.S. force deployments in Asia, there was no discussion of AirSea Battle, which is certainly understood to be an area of concern.

Open Disagreement

Throughout the meeting, Chinese participants showed a willingness to engage in vigorous debates with each other in open session. These debates were often pointed, but always ultimately collegial, sometimes eliciting genuine laughter from the plenary session. Most significantly, they were not debates about party doctrine, but were instead substantive engagement with the issues.

Open debates between Chinese participants occurred throughout the meeting. A small sample of these debates demonstrates the breadth of topics in which Chinese participants were willing to disagree with each other in open session. For example, most Chinese participants questioned the usefulness of some lexicon terms such as "crisis stability" or "arms race", which they viewed as pertaining to the U.S.-Soviet Cold War Relationship. That said, while some on the Chinese side were quite strident that these terms were completely unacceptable, others saw the value in using the terms with certain understandings. A similar parsing of the issues occurred during a discussion of future arms control nations. Some Chinese participants believed that China could not participate in negotiations that included Israel, India, and Pakistan (i.e. P-5/+3), for risk of legitimizing them as nuclear weapon states. Other Chinese participants argued that, considering the potential size of future Indian arsenals (perhaps more than 200 weapons), such negotiations would be necessary. At a different point in the meeting a Chinese participant suggested that the U.S. might someday include China within a regional missile defense system. This idea received a cold welcome from another Chinese participant who argued that such participation would risk antagonizing North Korea.

Chinese participants were also willing to correct mistaken information presented by their colleagues. For example the characterization of the hypersonic HTV-2 as a "space weapon" by one Chinese participant spurred a vigorous discussion in which other Chinese participants took the side of American experts

against erroneous characterizations by their colleague. Shortly thereafter, several Chinese participants discussed how important it is that military officers and civilian scholars play a responsible role as public intellectuals in China by rebutting inflammatory press claims.

Thus, repeatedly the parameters of contemporary Chinese policy were being engaged with in an open-minded fashion in a discussion in plenary session. Such participation was not limited to a single participant; rather, different interpretations about the potential utility of different strategies seemed distributed across the military participants.

Evidence of Internal Chinese Discussions

Several times during the meeting, Chinese participants referred to internal debates within the PRC on a variety of topics, from force posture to conditions for Chinese participation in arms control negotiations. These are important windows into Chinese deliberations and decision-making processes. There was far more discussion of these internal deliberations at this meeting than at any of the previous Track II/1.5 meetings in Hawaii or Beijing. This, coupled with the sub-section above on publicly vented debates, suggest that there is much analytical fomentation on these issues within China today.

Most interestingly, it seems that Hu Jintao's pledge that China would enter into multilateral arms control negotiations "when conditions are right" has motivated real discussion about what those conditions should be. According to a participant from China, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had requested that the PLA come up with a number of nuclear weapons cuts for the United States and Russia that would allow China to enter into negotiations. In this vein, various related ideas were mentioned across the meeting: proportionate cuts in arsenals, declaratory caps, deliberations on what level of U.S.-Russian cuts would allow for Chinese involvement in negotiations, etc.

From the discussion in the plenary session, it is apparent that the implications of advanced conventional weapon development by the United States are being discussed within the PLA. According to a Chinese participant, some PLA officers feel that growing U.S. advanced conventional capabilities were putting or would soon put pressure on China's ability to maintain its policy of No First Use (NFU). Furthermore, some PLA officers are actively questioning why they should stick to NFU if conventional prompt global strike (CPGS) arsenals could eliminate their entire nuclear arsenal. While this continues a debate originally raised (and

deemed settled by political leadership) several years ago, the new emphasis on CPGS is notable.

Chinese participants also alluded to larger debate over regional issues within the PRC security establishment, particularly over whether the "window of opportunity" for China's continued rise within the existing international system was closing. The issue was debated in the lead up to the publication of China's 2010 defense white paper. However, that document expressed the conclusion of that debate—that despite U.S. exercises in the region and the so-called "return to Asia" of U.S. forces, China still found itself within a period of strategic opportunity.

Insights on the Authority of PLA Publications

The Dialogue also shed light on the matter of how official military publications are written, published, and regarded within the PRC system. At one point a U.S. participant commented that the book *The Science of Second Artillery Campaigns* (*SSAC*) (a text published by the Chinese National Defense University press and viewed by many Americans as authoritative; some even view it as a training manual for the PLA Second Artillery) raised questions about the future of the Chinese nuclear arsenal. In response, several Chinese participants spoke very forcefully against the authoritative nature of this volume. One expressed a belief that publication of SSAC was a mistake and that it sent the wrong signals about PRC nuclear strategy. The general principle laid out by the Chinese participants was that any publication authored by an individual or group of individuals was the opinion of the authors alone, and should not be taken too seriously. They indicated that only books authored by departments of NDU were submitted to the kind of review process that would lend them authority. Although they strongly argued that SSAC was not authoritative, many U.S. participants continued to view that the volume, and some of the controversial ideas in it, as relatively authoritative.

CHINESE FORCE STRUCTURE, DOCTRINE, AND REGIONAL BALANCES

Chinese force structure and doctrine were discussed in the context of several of the terms examined in the breakout sessions. In the course of the discussion of "lean and effective," a Chinese participant explicitly stated that the PLA does not want to be explicit about the quantity or quality of Chinese nuclear weapons, and that such ambiguity was central to the viability of China's NFU policy. When a US. participant asked about the definition of "lean and effective" in the context of a growing Chinese arsenal, this participant challenged the assumption that China's

arsenal was increasing in size, saying that such an assumption could be "problematic." While the Chinese were reluctant to accept the characterization of increasing force size, in other panels they used and did not challenge the use of the term "modernization" to characterize changes in force structure. When asked whether the Chinese recognized the dangers of misperception and miscalculation inherent in such ambiguity, one Chinese participant indicated that these issues had been recognized and discussed within the PLA.

When asked what factors influence Chinese force structure, a Chinese participant suggested that United States Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) was a major factor in determining the number of nuclear weapons required for lean and effective deterrence and a secure second strike capability. When an American participant asked whether cuts in the U.S. arsenal influenced Chinese force structure, a Chinese attendee noted that Chinese deterrent had to be multi-directional, and that other regional players, such as India, were also taken into account. The same participant also made it clear that the Indian arsenal does not "drive" Chinese force structure at present. Chinese participants do seem to exhibit an increase in threat perceptions in regards to Indian capabilities. Multiple participants on the Chinese side state that India would have to be included in future arms control negotiations, noting that while today India may have 40-60 warheads, in the future they could have as many as 200.

Chinese participants also discussed the relationship between CPGS and their doctrine more explicitly than in the past. They noted that NFU was predicated on the assumption that a strike on their nuclear assets would be nuclear. Thus, CPGS capabilities, were they developed with a great power rival in mind, would undermine a core tenet of their existing policy. While no one repudiated the NFU policy, as it is politically sacrosanct, there is clearly a view that such a case complicates China's policy. That is, they too recognize the value of strategic ambiguity on some elements on nuclear declaratory policy.

An American participant expressed skepticism in the reliability of a Chinese submarine-based deterrent due to U.S. Navy anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capabilities and the limited range of the JL-2, China's new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM). In response, a Chinese participant stated that the purpose of China's nuclear submarines was to provide a secure second-strike capability, and as such, *the JL-2 should not be seen as the final product of China's SLBM program*. This participant stated that we could expect to see upgrades to the JL-2 as well as more advanced sea-based missiles. This participant also denied the Jin-class and the JL-2

were serving a primarily regional deterrent role, but characterized them as addressing China's global deterrence needs.

Although Americans pushed for engagement on issues surrounding command and control of the nascent ballistic missile-launching nuclear submarine (SSBN) forces, little was forthcoming on that issue. Chinese interlocutors were pushed to explain why they viewed the interaction of missile defense and Chinese land-based missiles to be destabilizing but did not view the forthcoming dynamics between U.S. ASW and the Chinese SSBN force to be destabilizing. The response, of only limited persuasiveness, was that the U.S. ASW capabilities have long existed, whereas the missile defense capabilities were new.

NPR AND CHINESE THREAT PERCEPTIONS

At the beginning of the Dialogue, an American participant highlighted a few salient points about the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) covered in previous meetings. These included points that should be greeted positively by China. The current NPR does not list countries targeted by nuclear weapons, emphasizes the importance of strategic stability with China, and no longer lists dissuasion as one of the goals of nuclear weapons. Chinese participants generally viewed the NPR as positive, and other than a pro-forma mention of the desirability of joint NFU pledges, there were no demands for the U.S. to go further on declaratory policy.

From statements and presentations in the plenary session, Chinese threat perceptions can be described as moderate. China is concerned that the gap between the military capabilities of developed and developing countries is widening in the twenty-first century, and a concern that the role of military power in the region as well as in the world was increasing. Central to these concerns are the worldwide revolution in military affairs (RMA), and the added dimensions of space and cyber as domains for war-fighting, in which the U.S. is perceived as dominant.

According to one Chinese participant familiar with the process, as late as the writing of the 2010 defense white paper, there was a debate within the PRC about the importance of the United States' "return to Asia", and whether that meant that the "window of opportunity" for China in the region is closing. According to the views expressed in Hawaii, it is currently the consensus of PRC experts that the window has not closed, and that China is still within a "period of strategic opportunity," meaning that it should continue to emphasize "peace and development" and "peaceful development."

SPACE AND CONVENTIONAL PROMPT GLOBAL STRIKE

Americans discussed U.S. policies regarding space and research and development on conventional prompt global strike (CPGS). Discussion of CPGS in particular continued throughout the meeting. Generally, U.S. participants emphasized the moderate nature of recent space policy and concerns over counter-asset capability. The Chinese side recognized the moderate nature of U.S. space policy while expressing concerns about weaponization of space. U.S. participants emphasized the niche nature of CPGS capability currently under consideration, but the Chinese side remained concerned that CGPS would threaten their nuclear deterrent and affect their ability to maintain NFU.

Space

An American briefed the plenary session on the 2010 National Space Policy and the National Security Space Strategy (NSSS) of 2011. According to this presentation, these documents refocus U.S. space policy away from the cultivation of military "space power" and onto civil and economic uses. Under this policy, space systems are viewed as "global utilities", and as such the U.S. seeks international cooperation on space systems and will work toward the interoperability of space systems (e.g. GPS).

The general Chinese reaction to these documents was positive, viewing them as "moderate" policy pronouncements. Still, concerns were raised repeatedly about the X-37B and about a few particulars of the emerging policy. The debate between the two sides on arms control and formal diplomatic proposals did not break new ground, although the Chinese did not press traditional proposals (such as the "Preventing an Arms Race in Outer Space" treaty proposal, PAROS) with any particular vehemence.

Chinese participants noted that the response to the document in Chinese circles was moderate, although some on the Chinese side raised the question of whether the NSSS implied that an attack on the space assets of a U.S. ally would be viewed as equivalent to an attack on an ally's territory, and thus invoke collective security agreements. Americans responded that attacks on space systems were viewed as a attacks on a "global utility" and any such attack would certainly be seen as escalatory and that, in general, attacks on space assets would be perceived as strategic attacks.

One Chinese attendee, who viewed current U.S. space policy favorably, wondered whether the Obama administration was interested in proposing a

strategic dialogue on space issues, or would provide leadership on developing codes-of-conduct for space. In response, American participants suggested that the U.S. would prefer to work with the Europeans on this issue rather than take a leadership role itself.

This participant also questioned the relative importance of space issues for this forum compared to other strategic issues such as maritime and cyber concerns. Americans recognized the importance of these issues, but stated that space was seen as an important strategic issue, and that it seemed somewhat "underdeveloped".

One Chinese participant seemed concerned that, despite recent policy documents, U.S. space policy had become offensive and threatening in recent years and that the U.S. military did not, or would not, follow the moderate stance taken by the administration. This participant specifically referred to U.S. Air Force documents from 1998 and the Joint Vision 2020 report as evidence that the role of space operations for the US military has changed from defensive to offensive. Americans attempted to persuade him that these reports were purely planning documents, and that they did not represent the policy of the United States.

The Chinese participant also cited what he viewed as a shift in U.S. research and development from missile defense to space systems as evidence that the U.S. was pursuing a more offensive space policy. The participant specifically mentioned that research programs such as the X-37B and HTV-2 were giving the U.S. the ability to strike any point on the globe in a short period of time. U.S. participants emphasized that these programs were in the technology demonstration phase, and were not fully developed, let alone deployed.

Another Chinese participant raised Chinese concerns over the lack of interest on the part of the United States in negotiating a treaty on the weaponization of space in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), noting that that the lesson of nuclear disarmament should be that it is easier to prevent the development of weapons than to remove them once they are deployed. American participants responded that the Chinese clarifications of their proposals in the CD made it clear that anti-satellite weapons (ASATs) were not to be covered, greatly reducing the contribution of the proposal.

Conventional Prompt Global Strike

The plenary session was also given a detailed presentation of current U.S. programmatic plans regarding Conventional Prompt Global Strike (CPGS). The presentation emphasized aspects of the program that should reassure Chinese participants, making clear that the program is still in its research and development

phase and was far from deployment. Further, the United States is only pursuing CPGS as a niche capability to respond to time-sensitive terrorism and proliferation events. Finally, it was emphasized that the new focus on boost/glide trajectories should be differentiable from ballistic missiles. The implication of all of these is CPGS weapons should not be a substantial concern to Chinese nuclear planners.

Broadly, Chinese participants' concerns over CPGS can be broken down into three categories: the seemingly unnecessary and wasteful nature of the program, continued concerns over differentiability, and concerns over pressure CPGS might put on Chinese NFU.

Many Chinese participants did not see the value of CPGS for the stated niche missions. One Chinese participant stated that it seems like a waste of resources as similar capabilities already exist, especially forward-deployed forces and the rapid response Special Forces. It was noted by the Chinese side that the recent killing of Osama bin Laden demonstrated that the United States could currently carry out the sort of niche missions described without CPGS. Americans made the point that just because one mission did not require a particular weapon system, it does not follow that there aren't other missions that would require it.

Multiple Chinese participants also brought up concerns over the possibility of false alarms by both China and Russia in the event of a CPGS launch, and the difficulty of differentiating nuclear and conventional missiles. U.S. participants reiterated the information presented earlier that CPGS as it is currently being considered would not use ballistic trajectories, and therefore would not risk a false alarm. No Chinese participant acknowledged or engaged on the boost-glide trajectory point.

Many Chinese participants raised concerns that CPGS might put pressure on China's NFU policy. It is significant that it was the Chinese side that brought up this issue, as it indicates a development of Chinese thinking on these issues. Chinese participants noted that their own mostly silo-based missile force would be quite vulnerable to a CPGS attack, and that such a capability would put China in the awkward position of either violating its own NFU pledge, or waiting for its entire nuclear capability to be destroyed. A Chinese participant stated that these issues were discussed internally, and that some PLA officers question the value of sticking to NFU if its first-strike capability is threatened.

The Chinese side brought up broader concerns about how CPGS could affect the overall conventional balance in the region. In the Chinese view, the likelihood of a nuclear strike was currently low, and so any increase in conventional strength by one player in the region would represent a threat to others. Some went as far as to

say that CPGS risked an arms race between the United States and China if the U.S. were to rely on conventional deterrence against China. Any increase in U.S. conventional strike capability would lead to an increase in Chinese force posture to protect its nuclear deterrent. According to one Chinese participant, the resultant action-reaction cycle would constitute an arms race that would be bad for the U.S.-China relationship.

An American participant asked what the U.S. could do to allay Chinese fears that CPGS was being developed to counter Chinese nuclear forces. One participant from China suggested that steps such as a missile notification regime (as described by a U.S. participant) and diplomatic assurance that CPGS would not be used against Chinese nuclear forces would both be welcome, but she did not go into further detail. Despite repeated assurance by the American side that it was extremely premature to worry about CPGS, none of the Chinese participants openly acknowledged or engaged the point that CPGS is still a notional capability that is many years from being deployed.

CONFIDENCE AND SECURITY BUILDING MEASURES

In the final session of the Dialogue, Ambassador Linton Brooks proposed a series of possible confidence and security building measures (CSBMs) that could be instituted between the United States and China. These were of course personal, not vetted, nor cast as official proposals. The complete paper is appended to this report. These CSBMs included, but were not limited to, an exchange of missile defense data, launch notification for CPGS tests, the non-reciprocal sharing of U.S. New-START declarations with China, early discussions of future verification protocols, cooperation on nuclear material security, and military-to-military exchanges between STRACOM and the PLA Second Artillery.

Chinese participants expressed interest in some of these CSBMs and elaborated on others. Some of the participants responded positively to the proposal of Chinese observation of American BMD systems, raising the possibility of Chinese participation in a U.S.-led regional missile defense system. (As noted above, this was not a unanimous view on the Chinese side, as some participants believed this would send a negative signal to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

The Chinese side expressed some interest in joint nuclear materials security programs with the U.S., and noted that a combination of Chinese political influence and U.S. technological expertise could be useful in promoting nuclear material

security in Pakistan. However, they noted that the existence of the U.S.-India nuclear deal would represent a political impediment in this area.

The Chinese side also expressed limited interest in military-to-military exchanges between STRATCOM and the PLA Second Artillery. While they acknowledged the value of such exchanges at an operational or technical level, they stated that they there would first have to be some senior-level exchanges between STRATCOM and the Second Artillery before more operational and technical exchanges could be acceptable.

On the Chinese side, one of the participants raised the possibility of Chinese observers being present in the next round of U.S.-Russia nuclear negotiations or inspections, so that Chinese experts could get the requisite experience with negotiations prior to engaging in arms control negotiations themselves. (Variants of this proposal have been made at the last 3 meetings of these Track II and 1.5 meetings.) American participants responded that under the current negotiations, the U.S. does not have the right to bring in observers. However, other possibilities might be considered: briefing Chinese officials on such negotiations or having Chinese observers at dummy inspections.

CHINESE PERCEPTIONS OF NEW-START AND CONDITIONS FOR CHINESE PARTICIPATION IN NEGOTIATIONS

There was a more positive view of prospects for Chinese engagement in global discussions on nuclear issues and arms control in particular than in any of the previous six years of such meetings. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize this progress moves from a very, very low base.

Several Chinese participants noted that the PRC government positively viewed New-START and continued U.S.-Russian engagement on disarmament. The Chinese side stated that it was largely due to New-START that the 2010 defense white paper noted improvements in the climate for arms control. Some noted that these developments are also beginning to give China "a sense of urgency" about when to enter the multilateral process. *It was stated that Hu Jintao's pledge at the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit that China would enter into multilateral negotiations "when conditions are right" is largely driving interagency dialogue on this topic within China.* Furthermore, the Chinese side noted that the PLA had been asked by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to consider what level the United States and Russia would have to come down to for China to be willing to engage in negotiations. One

participant on the Chinese side stated a personal opinion that China should make a list of conditions, including but not limited to the size of U.S. and Russian arsenals, and make those conditions public to demonstrate that China is responsible and wants to eliminate nuclear weapons. Another noted that an additional way for China to encourage further cuts and demonstrate its responsibility as a nuclear nation would be to declare a ceiling for the number of deployed warheads and adopt a declaratory policy similar to that of the U.K. or France.

The Chinese side noted that there was discussion within China regarding the potential for future "proportional cuts" through a wide-reaching arms control process (e.g., all major nuclear powers cut by 10 percent, although no specific numbers were discussed at the meeting.)

Despite these positive views, it was clear that some traditional impediments to Chinese participation in arms control remain. Chinese participants believed that at least 1-2 more rounds of U.S-Russian agreements, as well as a reduction to some undefined number of warheads on each side were necessary before the Chinese side could join multilateral negotiations. Chinese participants continue to recognize and note that the New-START counting rules are highly restrictive (China would have zero weapons by those provisions). One expert on the Chinese side noted that there were several large issues that would need to be dealt with in future bilateral U.S.-Russian negotiations, including missile defense and tactical weapons. Another noted that the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council (P-5) would have to come to some sort of consensus regarding the status of India, Pakistan, and Israel prior to multi-lateral negotiations. There was some disagreement among the Chinese participants about the implications of P-5+3 negotiations, and while China does not wish to recognize these states as nuclear weapon states, no meaningful negotiations can proceed without them.

Additionally, there was a concern expressed regarding the use of "national technical means" (NTMs) for arms control verification. This point was explored a bit. Chinese participants expressed the concern that NTMs would put China at a disadvantage. As the discussion developed, however, there seemed to be recognition that NTMs could be acceptable to China if explicitly sanctioned in a formal treaty. This will be worth probing in future engagements.

STRATEGIC LEXICON

Building on the success of breakout sessions in previous meetings, the participants were divided into three groups for the afternoon session of the first day. Each of these sessions was assigned three terms to discuss. These terms were drawn from policy documents and analytical writings from both sides, and developed in close consultation with several U.S. government offices. Prior to the meeting, each term was assigned to a Chinese and an American participant, who wrote a short 1-2 page definition from the perspective of their country. These discussions were not aimed at developing consensus definitions, but to deepen understandings of how participants from each side understand key strategic terms.

The afternoon breakout sessions consisted of presentations from the American and Chinese participants, followed by discussion. The next morning the Chinese and U.S. chairs then summarized the breakout group discussions from PowerPoint presentations to the plenary session. This afforded an opportunity for all participants to discuss and clarify their opinions on and definitions of the terms. The terms and breakout group chairs are included in the agenda and discussed in turn immediately below.

Arms Control Negotiations

In breakout sessions, the term "arms control negotiations" produced a wide-ranging discussion of the appropriate conditions for Chinese participation in multilateral or bilateral arms control negotiations. A Chinese participant stated that China does not require absolute parity with the U.S. and Russia on nuclear weapons, but that there would have to be reductions on the part of both Russia and the U.S. before China was willing to participate in negotiations. For that reason, this participant did not foresee arms control negotiations between China and the U.S. in the near term, except perhaps negotiations in the United Nations Conference on Disarmament on a treaty preventing the weaponization of space.

American participants in the breakout session noted that for China to eventually participate in negotiations, it would be necessary for it to increase the level of transparency on nuclear issues. The Chinese side made it clear that there were significant cultural and psychological barriers to transparency on force structure, but that there was a greater possibility for transparency on strategic intentions. They noted that Chinese leaders were unlikely to make declarations about quantitative intentions but might be willing to discuss them in a less public forum, such as during higher-level strategic dialogues.

Arms Race

In a broad sense, both sides understood what is meant by an "arms race," in that arms races involve a rapid build-up of military capabilities, and that this build-up is part of an action-reaction cycle between two countries. Chinese and American participants diverged slightly when it came to the nature of how and why countries engage in arms races. The Chinese participants seemed to define arms races narrowly, and emphasized adversarial motivations. In the Chinese formulation, arms races are motivated by a quest for supremacy between two relatively symmetric forces. In this sense, an arms race is a choice or strategy pursued by one or both countries. This contrasts with the views of the American participants who emphasized the reactive nature of arms races, in that the major motivation for arms races is the need to respond to perceived changes in the balance of power, but not necessarily a quest for supremacy. These two views are not mutually exclusive, but it is useful for both sides to understand where the other places emphasis when making public declarations about arms races.

For example, this difference in emphasis accounts for Chinese participants' reluctance to describe the dynamic between the U.S. and China, or regionally in Southeast Asia, as an "arms race", because in their understanding, this would imply an actively hostile or adversarial relationship. The American participants, on the other hand, noted that in their view an arms race dynamic could exist outside of an openly adversarial relationship. At least one Chinese participant seemed willing to admit that when countries modernize their nuclear or conventional forces, this could lead to a *de facto* arms race whether or not either side acknowledged it.

Crisis Stability

The American and Chinese participants approached the term "Crisis Stability" in very different ways. This term, along with "Strategic Stability" and "Mutual Deterrent or Dual Deterrent," were viewed by the Chinese participants as legacies of the U.S.-Soviet Cold War relationship, and thus inappropriate for contemporary Sino-American relations. In the U.S. formulation, the term "crisis stability" needed to be approached analytically, with an emphasis on the numerical size and capabilities of each side. The Chinese side saw the term much more broadly and believed that any discussion of crisis had to include a political dimension. In this vein, the Chinese participants took issue with the American use of the term as applying only to nuclear crises. In their view, crisis stability should have a larger political dimension and should not just refer to which side has an incentive to launch a first strike during a crisis. Some on the Chinese side believed that the term

could never be relevant to China because as long as China maintains NFU, it will never engage in a first strike.

Some on the Chinese side believed that the term forced the U.S. and China into an unnecessarily adversarial relationship. An American participant pushed back against this view, arguing that planning for the worst-case scenario does not lead to that scenario. That is, discussions of "crisis stability" no more force countries into an adversarial position than planning to put out a house fire forces you to set your house on fire. Others on the Chinese side recognized the danger of nuclear crises, and suggested that the term might be useful, as long as some clarification was given to the Chinese side when the term was used. The discussion on this term was very closely related to that of "strategic stability".

Extended and Tailored Deterrence

The breakout session yielded a more nuanced discussion of "extended and tailored deterrence" than in previous years. According to Chinese participants, prior to the release of the NPR, the term "extended deterrence" caused "uncoordinated" concern among Chinese participants in some of the formal and informal engagement with the United States on these issues. Following those meetings, including the Beijing and Hawaii Dialogues, and subsequent to the release of the NPR, the Chinese side had met internally and sought to develop a more balanced approach to the term. The first distinction that the Chinese sought was between nuclear and conventional extended deterrence. The Chinese side also recognized that U.S. extended deterrence could provide positive and negative effects in the region. In their view, U.S. nuclear extended deterrence restrained Japan and South Korea from pursuing nuclear arsenals, while U.S. conventional extended deterrence might embolden those same allies in a conventional conflict. In general, the Chinese side viewed extended deterrence as positive when it applied to their regional allies, but were much more concerned about it in the context of Taiwan.

The Chinese also reiterated a point regarding the incompatibility of any extended deterrence commitments on their part with their existing NFU.

Lean and Effective

In the breakout session, American participants sought to draw out from the Chinese side whether or not "lean and effective" implied some sort of formula, and if so what variables were considered in that formula. Chinese participants described "lean and effective" primarily as an analytic tool that guides China's nuclear force building. The term was seen to capture not just quantitative warhead arsenal

decisions, but also training, doctrine, command and control, and logistics support. The "lean" side of the term refers to the size of the nuclear force, while "effective" refers to safety, reliability, and the qualitative effectiveness of weapons. In the course of discussing this term both sides raised issues of transparency and ambiguity. The Chinese side made it clear that the particular variables used to determine the "lean" side of the equation should remain ambiguous, while making it clear that China possesses a nuclear force capable of retaliation. The "effectiveness" side of the equation was not intended to be ambiguous in the least.

While there were few specifics, it was clear that "lean" was intended to signal a very limited arsenal. A few times Chinese participants would refer to the ability to hit a "handful" or a "few" cities as being sufficient for this criterion.

Mutual Deterrent or Dual Deterrent

The American participants in the breakout session considered the terms "mutual" and "dual" deterrence to be synonyms, describing a situation in which two sides have the capability to deter each other from action. According to the Chinese participants, these two terms are used in Chinese with very different meanings. While they agreed that the meaning of "mutual deterrent" was the same as the American usage, they used the term "dual deterrent" much the way Western theorists use the term "pivotal deterrence", meaning one power maintaining the capability to deter two separate powers from engaging in a behavior. Therefore to the Chinese, only the term "mutual deterrent" was valuable in the U.S.-China context. The Chinese side believed that there currently existed a mutual deterrent relationship between China and the United States, and that such a relationship did not require symmetry of nuclear forces. One Chinese participant indicated that such a relationship was desirable as long as it was "passive", that is deterrence through capability, not intent. The Chinese side seemed to prefer the term "mutual deterrent" to "strategic stability", but reluctantly seemed to recognize that this term, like "mutual vulnerability" would not be politically acceptable in the United States.

Nuclear Threat

The term "nuclear threat" was included since the Chinese defense White Paper, among other documents, uses specific language regarding the steps China will take when it finds itself under a condition of "nuclear threat." The Chinese and American participants understood the term "nuclear threat" very differently. The American side focused on a Cold War analytical theory in which threat is a product

of capability and intent, while the Chinese understood nuclear threats as incorporating political and diplomatic dimensions as well as capabilities.

The Chinese participants put forth a hierarchy of nuclear threats that they are concerned about. Their first concern was with the threat of nuclear coercion on the part of the United States, the second was the threat of CPGS and missile defense degrading China's deterrent, and finally there was the threat of asymmetry on the effectiveness of the Chinese deterrent. In the breakout session a U.S. participant prompted a discussion on how parties might distinguish between a genuine nuclear threat and an instance of "saber rattling" or an attempt to "show resolve". The Chinese side seemed to understand that there was a risk of inadvertent escalation if signals were miscommunicated. *Interestingly, in a few different comments Chinese participants emphasized the role of public pronouncements and in particular news reports (television and print) as key sources for sending nuclear signals*.

Strategic Stability

"Strategic stability" was again a term that was initially viewed quite differently by the Chinese and American participants in the breakout session because the Chinese saw it as an outdated Cold War term. The American discussant presented a definition in which strategic stability could be broken down into crisis stability and first-strike stability on the one hand and arms-race stability on the other. The U.S. participant made the point that while first-strike stability was indeed more important to the U.S.-Russian context, there were other potential nuclear crises that were valid between any nuclear-armed nations. Additionally, the American discussant suggested that significant arms-race instability might exist between the U.S. and China.

In the breakout session, a Chinese participant explained that, for Chinese theorists, any discussion of "strategic" could not be limited to the nuclear realm. For them, "strategic" encompasses a much larger realm that includes conventional weapons, diplomacy, and economics. The Chinese made the point that for China, strategic stability could not be a function of only force posture but required both mutual vulnerability and political assurances. While there was not agreement on the part of all Chinese participants, some eventually recognized the value of the term "strategic stability" as a euphemism for "mutual vulnerability", recognizing that it was as close to an admission of mutual vulnerability as would ever be politically possible in the United States.

Verification

Chinese participants expressed an increasing understanding and endorsement of the utility of verification. Experience with verification regimes instituted under the Chemical Weapons Convention and the provisional Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization have made verification more acceptable to the Chinese in general. The Chinese acknowledge a gap of knowledge among Chinese experts on the particulars of verification, saying that while there are scientists who follow these issues quite closely, most of the experts participating in the Dialogue are not familiar with the technical aspects of verification. One point of divergence between the U.S. and Chinese participants was on the use of National Technical Means (NTMs) as a verification tool. The Chinese could only accept the use of NTMs if that use was strictly laid out in the language of an agreement, and even under those conditions, they would probably not be acceptable politically. The Chinese preference would be for verification regimes to be carried out strictly on a multilateral basis and not by individual countries.

Take-Aways from the Lexicon Breakout Sessions

The breakout sessions continue to be an effective means of encouraging frank and open discussion between participants. They provide a useful opportunity for both sides to gain an understanding of how the other side uses and understands these terms. Furthermore, there was an increased willingness on the part of the Chinese participants to use the terms as points of reference, even if there was a disagreement over their precise definitions.

It is clear from the discussion that the primary differences between American and Chinese approaches to many of these terms is that for the American side, these terms are set analytical tools, with very specific definitions. For the Chinese, these terms have much broader meanings, often emphasizing political and diplomatic dimensions. For example, the Chinese preferred to discuss crises in regards to behavior and management as opposed to force structure, and they preferred to view the term "strategic" more broadly than just referring to nuclear weapons.

Additionally, there was a general concern by Chinese participants that many of the terms reflected a cold-war mentality that they felt was not applicable to the current relationship. "Strategic stability" was sometimes discussed in this regard, and certainly arms race and crisis stability were as well. On the latter, it is likely that alternate formulations would be best to use going forward.

These differences aside, there were many terms that both sides could agree on at least in the general sense. The term "lean and effective" was well understood

by both sides to be a nuclear force building strategy used in internal debates in China. "Extended and tailored deterrence" was well understood by both sides and led to a nuanced and productive conversation. The term "mutual deterrence" was viewed quite favorably by the Chinese participants, while "strategic stability" was viewed less favorably, although it was accepted that this term was probably as close to "mutual vulnerability" as could be politically acceptable in the United States. Finally, both sides had similar views on "verification," although the Chinese participants had problems with accepting NTMs as a legitimate component of verification.

CONCLUSIONS AND LOOKING FORWARD

This year's Dialogue continued the tradition of openness that has been developing over the last few meetings. It is apparent that these meetings continue to be relevant for both sides. Moreover, this year's focus on terminology proved successful, as both sides gained a deeper understanding of each other's usage and an evolving willingness on the part of Chinese participants to use these terms as points of reference in a larger discussion.

A remarkable development at this year's meeting was a willingness on the part of Chinese participants to engage in multiple internal debates on substantive issues in the plenary session. This trend, combined with minimal boilerplate on traditional issues provided a significant opportunity to engage on a much deeper level.

Several points from the discussion would seem to merit further consideration for the United States. These are elaborated upon below.

Chinese Views on U.S. Policy

A more clear, albeit nuanced, approach to understanding U.S. extended deterrence is emerging in the PRC. The Chinese make distinctions between the possibility of extended deterrence for Taiwan, which they find troubling, and extended deterrence for Japan and South Korea, which they see as having some restraining effect on proliferation. Chinese participants also have begun to more uniformly acknowledge the positive role that extended deterrence can play for regional stability, even in the nuclear realm.

The Chinese were briefed on U.S. research and development into CPGS. The presentation emphasized that CPGS was being pursued in a manner that would be differentiable from a nuclear strike (i.e., boost/glide as opposed to ballistic

trajectory), was far away from deployment, and that it was being considered as a niche capability. The Chinese participants remained skeptical that the U.S. would invest so much in what they saw as a redundant capability and expressed concern that it could become a threat to their secure second-strike capability.

The Chinese were also briefed on the National Space Policy and NSSS. In general they saw these as positive steps, although several questioned the purpose of the X-37B and some continued to believe that the United States Air Force is pursuing space dominance. American participants signaled that an attack on space assets would most likely be considered a strategic attack.

Chinese Force Structure, Posture, and Strategy

The Chinese side is resistant to characterizing China's nuclear forces as "increasing", although they seem very comfortable with the term "modernizing". The Chinese cited factors such as U.S. missile defense, survivability against advanced conventional weapons, and pressure from regional nuclear powers such as India as factors affecting force modernization.

NFU was not dwelt upon in this meeting, although in the context of discussions of CPGS, it was noted that within the PLA, U.S. pursuit of advanced conventional weapons has led some officers to question the value of an NFU policy.
The term "lean and effective" was determined to be an analytical tool used internally within the PLA to determine nuclear force building. "Lean" refers to quantity, while "effective" refers to quality, safety, and reliability. The Chinese believe that it is important to keep the variables that go into determining "lean-ness" ambiguous.

The costs and benefits of ambiguity and transparency were raised in a number of contexts. The Chinese side indicated that there would continue to be significant cultural and psychological barriers to transparency in the future on issues such as force structure and numbers. Despite a lack of movement on transparency, many participants acknowledged the risks inherent in ambiguity, and that these risks included misperception and miscommunication that could be dangerous in a crisis.

The Chinese indicated that JL-2 is not the final product of the Chinese SLBM program, and longer-range versions, as well as more advanced SLBMs should be expected in the future.

Chinese Views on Arms Control

New-START is viewed favorably in the PRC, and new language on arms control in the 2010 defense white paper was meant to convey that view. There is a

sense within the PRC that New-START puts pressure on China to eventually join into multilateral negotiations, and to that end internal discussions have begun about what conditions need to be met before they can participate.

A shift has occurred in recent years within the PRC in regards to verification. Exposure to verification protocols within the CWC and CTBT context has made Chinese officials much more comfortable with verification in general, although there remain concerns about National Technical Means. In the Chinese view, NTMs can have no legitimacy unless they are explicitly laid out in a treaty, and given current technology levels, China feels disadvantaged by the use of NTMs. While the level of comfort with verification in general is higher than in the past, outside the scientific community very few arms control experts have a firm understanding of verification procedures and technology. Therefore, briefings on verification at future Dialogues or in other fora may make participants more comfortable with the idea of NTMs and other verification methods.

Potential CSBMs

There are likely CSBMs that would be reassuring to China that are palatable for the United States both in the realm of missile defense and CPGS. On the former, having some technical exchanges and potentially observer involvement were discussed. In the latter, declaratory policy and possible pre-notification were viewed positively.

Interest was expressed in cooperating on nuclear materials security and protections, especially in Pakistan. It was suggested that a combination of Chinese political clout and U.S. technical expertise could be useful in that field.

There was limited interest in military to military exchanges between the PLA Second Artillery and STRATCOM. The Chinese side emphasized that high level exchanges would have to be a prerequisite for technical and operational exchanges. Several participants expressed interest in the idea of some deeper engagement in the process of U.S.-Russia negotiations. There may be some utility in considering at least peripheral engagement of the Chinese as such negotiations develop (e.g., having Chinese observers at verification inspections or dummy inspections.)

APPENDICES

Agenda

SIXTH U.S.-CHINA STRATEGIC DIALOGUE
"Developing a Common Strategic Lexicon"

June 5-7, 2011
Hilton Hawaiian Village - Honolulu, Hawaii

AGENDA

Sunday, June 5, 2011

6:30pm Reception and Dinner – *on HHV property*

Monday, June 6, 2011

8:30am Continental Breakfast

9:00-10:00am ***Welcome and Introductions***

10:00am-12:00pm ***Discuss Strategic Environment and Recent Declaratory Policy***

NPR, BMDR, Space Policy Review, and CPGS issues
Security perceptions, White Paper, reactions to the documents above

Chair: Twomey
Discussion: Bunn, Moltz, and Yao

12:00-1:30pm Lunch – *Palace Lounge*

1:30-5:00 ***A few definitions: breakout sessions***

The participants will be divided into three breakout sessions. Each group will discuss a different set of three terms, building on previously circulated written documents on these terms by each side.

Group A (Chairs: Yao, Wirtz)
1. lean and effective
2. extended and tailored deterrence
3. crisis stability

Group B (Chairs: Yang, Moltz)
4. nuclear threat
5. strategic stability
6. arms control negotiations

Group C (Chairs: Hong, Glosny)
7. mutual deterrent or dual deterrent
8. verification
9. arms race

[Break for 15 minutes during the breakout groups]

6:00pm Reception and Dinner – *on HHV property*

Tuesday, June 7, 2011

8:30am	Continental Breakfast
9:00-10:15am	***Reports from breakout session***
Chairs:	Yao, Twomey, Yang, Moltz, Hong, Glosny
10:15-10:30am	Break
10:30am-11:45am	***Continued discussion of terms***
12:00-1:20pm	Lunch – *Palace Lounge*
1:30-3:00pm	***Looking to the future: Post-New Start world & potential CSBMs***
Chair:	Cossa
Presenters:	Brooks and Hong Yuan
3:00-4:00pm	***Lessons Learned, Way Forward, and Closing remarks***
6:15pm	Dinner in Waikiki

Participant List

China

Mr. Duan Zhanyuan
Foreign Affairs Office
Ministry of National Defense

Sr. Col. Fan Gaoyue
Academy of Military Sciences

Mr. Hong Yuan
Secretary General
Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Lt. Col. Lu Yin
Institute of Strategic Studies
National Defense University

Dr. Wu Chunsi
Shanghai Institute of International Studies

Mr. Wu Reqing
Tsinghua University

Rear Admiral (ret.) Yang Yi
National Defense University

Major General Yao Yunzhu
Academy of Military Science

Prof. Zhu Feng
School of International Studies
Peking University

U.S. Participants

Ambassador (Ret) Linton Brooks
Senior Advisor
Center for Strategic & Int'l Studies

Dr. Elaine Bunn
Institute for National Strategic Studies
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Mr. Ralph Cossa
President
Pacific Forum CSIS

Dr. Lew Dunn
Senior Vice President
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Mr. Michael Glosny
National Security Affairs
Naval Postgraduate School

Mr. Brad Glosserman
Executive Director
Pacific Forum CSIS

Dr. Eric Heginbotham
RAND Corporation

Prof. James Clay Moltz
National Security Affairs
Naval Postgraduate School

Prof. Christopher Twomey
National Security Affairs
Naval Postgraduate School

Dr. Dean Wilkening
Center for International Security and Cooperation
Stanford University

Prof. James J. Wirtz
Dean, School of International Graduate Studies
Naval Postgraduate School

U.S. Paper on CSBMs, by Amb. Linton Brooks

Looking to the future: The post-New Start world and potential Sino-U.S. confidence building measures

Ambassador Linton F. Brooks

Sixth U.S.-China Strategic Dialogue
U.S. – China Strategic Nuclear Dynamics
Honolulu Hawaii, June 5-7, 2011

Introduction

This paper discusses possible confidence building measures between the United States and the People's Republic of China in the aftermath of the ratification and entry into force of the New START Treaty. New START has set the parameters of the U.S. - Russian strategic relationship for the next several years. With predictability in the U.S. - Russian relationship established, it is appropriate to look at providing similar predictability in the Sino-American relationship. Doing so would be a contribution to strategic stability. Confidence building measures offer one tool.

The post-New START world

New START entered into force on February 5, 2011. Over the next seven years, the United States and the Russian Federation will reduce their strategic forces to no more than 700 deployed launchers[1] containing no more than 1550 warheads with another 100 launchers in reserve.

It is clear that the U.S. Administration initially considered New START primarily as an initial step toward deeper reductions. The Nuclear Posture Review Report says that "Following ratification and entry into force of New START, the Administration will pursue a follow-on agreement with Russia that binds both countries to further reductions in all nuclear weapons….These follow-on reductions should…[address] all the nuclear weapons of the two countries, not just deployed strategic nuclear weapons."[2] This makes it clear that—in the U.S. view—the two sides should negotiate a future treaty that is bilateral, involves more cuts, and covers all warheads. Unfortunately, a new treaty is unlikely to be possible for several years. Indeed, Russia may not yet have decided whether it is interested in additional limitations. Their experts are generally dismissive of abolition and they perceive a greater need for nuclear weapons than does the United States. Thus, they lack the motivation for deeper cuts. The current treaty will fit their immediate force

[1] ICBM launchers, Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile launchers, and heavy bombers all count against this limit.
[2] U.S. Department of Defense, *Nuclear Posture Review Report,* April 2010, page 30.

structure plans and provide a cap on U.S. forces. What will they gain from new negotiations?

Even if the Russians are interested, future talks may founder on the issue of ballistic missile defense. The U.S. Senate will almost certainly reject any limits on ballistic missile defense, yet the Russians are obsessed with the issue. The current U. S. approach is to seek some form of cooperative ballistic missile defense and thereby take the issue off the table. So far this isn't working. If it doesn't, there won't be a next step.

Even if new negotiations can get around the impasse on ballistic missile defense, other issues remain. The United States is particularly concerned with so-called non-strategic or tactical weapons, where Russia has a huge imbalance. While those weapons don't threaten the United States directly, they do threaten U.S. allies. The debate on New START ratification made it clear that the Senate expects the next treaty to constrain such weapons.[3] Dealing with tactical weapons raises difficult issues both because of the political importance those weapons have to NATO and because of the difficulty of verifying any limits on them.

The Russians are also concerned with what they call U.S. conventional strategic capabilities, by which they mean at least Prompt Global Strike and perhaps precision conventional cruise missiles. The United States has not yet identified an acceptable approach to this issue. Thus, the next talks will take a long time, even if they happen. Because Russia will be unwilling to have no arms control regime in place after New START expires, negotiations are likely eventually. But there will be no formal negotiations before 2012 and there will be no new agreement—and relatively little progress—until well after the 2012 election. Because of the complexity, the next step will take several years to negotiate. It is therefore a good time to look for other opportunities for engagement to improve strategic stability.

The nature of confidence building measures

Formal arms control negotiations between China and the United States are premature. Yet there are issues between the two governments that raise suspicion and thus reduce stability. The two sides need something more than discussions but less than formal treaties. Confidence building measures can fill the gap.

As used in this paper, confidence building measures are steps designed to deepen understanding and reduce mistrust. Unlike formal arms control, they do not seek to limit nuclear or other forces. Unlike discussions and seminars, they involve

[3] Senate Resolution of Ratification section (a) (12) (A). This general condition, considered binding on the President, required the President to certify that the United States will seek…not later than one year after the entry into force of the New START Treaty, negotiations with the Russian Federation on an agreement to address the disparity between the non-strategic (tactical) nuclear weapons stockpiles of the Russian Federation and of the United States….

actions, not simply rhetoric. Because it is governments that must be reassured, confidence building measures imply government action involving both military and civilian officials. Within this broad description, however, confidence building measures can take many forms.

The concept of confidence building applies in many areas, including maritime operations, military exercises and space operations. For purposes of this paper, however, discussion will be limited to confidence building measures in the strategic area, including nuclear security, offensive nuclear forces, ballistic missile defense and conventional weapons that can operate at strategic ranges.

What are the concerns of the two sides?

Obviously, the very concept of confidence building implies that there are issues where reassurance is needed. For China, these have to do with whether the United States accepts the existence of its strategic deterrent and does not seek to counter it. Chinese experts usually refer to this as accepting mutual vulnerability. The current U. S. administration appears to have accepted the view that mutual vulnerability with China, like mutual vulnerability with Russia, is not a policy choice to be accepted or rejected, but an objective reality to be acknowledged and managed. It has, however been unwilling to state this clearly and U.S. statements (see attachment 1) have not been enough to assuage Chinese concerns. In particular, China fears that U.S. ballistic missile defense, though designed against North Korea and Iran, will invalidate their deterrent. These defenses are technically incapable of threatening the Chinese nuclear deterrent, but some Chinese may fear this initial deployment is a precursor to a more comprehensive system of defense. Chinese experts also fear that U.S. long range conventional Prompt Global Strike threatens their deterrent.

China also has an interest in understanding how the United States and the Russian Federation are implementing New START. Looking farther into the future, there may come a time when the United States and Russia have reduced their forces to the point that China (and others) may join in the negotiations at which point China will need to understand how arms reductions treaties have functioned in the past.

For the United States, the major area of concern is uncertainty about the future direction of China's nuclear programs. China has made its broad policy clear; it "consistently upholds the policy of no first use of nuclear weapons, adheres to a self-defensive nuclear strategy, and will never enter into a nuclear arms race with any other country.[4]" American experts, however, read documents such as the 2004 volume *The Science of Second Artillery Campaigns*[5] as going beyond an approach of

[4] *China's National Defense in 2010,* Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, March 2011, Beijing. Section II (accessed on line at http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2011-03/31/content_1835499.htm

[5] A document circulating among U.S. China experts, presumed to be authoritative, although not formally acknowledged by China.

minimum deterrence.[6] Americans also are unclear as to the role of the new Chinese ballistic missile submarine. While moving strategic capability to sea is generally thought to improve survivability, Chinese *Jin*-class submarines equipped with the 7200-kilometer JL-2 missile will need to operate in the open ocean (where they may prove vulnerable) to range targets in the continental United States.[7] This suggests a possible regional role that U.S. experts don't understand but fear could undermine the security of U.S. allies.

The United States is also interested in ensuring that the security of nuclear weapons and fissile material is improved worldwide. The United States has, therefore, an interest in understanding the Chinese approach to material security and to using Chinese access and expertise to help ensure that other states, including, for example states like Pakistan, maintain high nuclear security standards.

One area where the two sides have similar concerns is the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. While China and the United States have both signed this document, neither has ratified it. Both have an interest in ensuring that legitimate activities at the U.S. test site in Nevada and the Chinese test site at Lop Nor are carried out in a manner that is consistent with the treaty.

Specific proposals

To deal with these concerns, the United States and China might consider the following confidence building measures:[8]

Missile Defense. To help China understand the U.S. national ballistic missile defense system, government technical experts from both China and the United States (including from the U.S. Missile Defense Agency) should conduct a multi-day joint technical analysis of the U.S. program and its capabilities against Chinese systems.[9] Separately, the two sides should conduct a Joint Threat Analysis of the North Korean missile threat, similar to that recently completed b the United States and the Russian Federation.

Prompt Global Strike. The two sides should develop a set of procedures for notification of China of future launches of Prompt Global Strike systems. These procedures should be used during future development launches, but should ultimately be available for operational launches. Once the preliminary procedures

[6] For additional details see Brad Roberts, "Strategic Deterrence Beyond Taiwan," in Roy Kamphausen (ed), *PLA Missions Other Than Taiwan,* (Carlisle, Pa: U.S. Army War College, 2009

[7] Targets in Alaska would be in range from protected bastions near China. CRS Report RL33153: *China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities-Background and Issues for Congress*, April 22, 2011, p. 23.

[8] It is important to note that these ideas are preliminary and have **not** been reviewed or endorsed by either the U.S. or the Chinese governments.

[9] This suggestion is based on a proposal by Academician Hu Side during the fifth round of the U.S.-China Strategic Dialogue, held in Beijing, Nov 8-9, 2010.

have been developed, they should be exercised through a joint U.S. – China tabletop exercise involving military staffs of both countries.[10]

Verification of strategic arms reductions. The United States and the Russian Federation should share with China the data they exchange under New START. Chinese experts and the U.S. Defense Reduction Agency should conduct a seminar on how inspections can be conducted without compromising sensitive material. Chinese experts should then be included in a mock inspection in the United States after which China should host a similar inspection. The object would be to begin preparation for future arms control efforts.

Nuclear operations and strategy. As part of the military-to-military exchanges between the United States Strategic Command and China's Second Artillery Corps, military experts should discuss current technical issues of a military-operational nature. This should include a seminar on the 2004 document *The Science of Second Artillery Campaigns* and on the implementation of the U.S. nuclear posture review. A separate seminar, with participation of experts from the U.S. submarine force and the People's Liberation Army (Navy) should consider issues associated with ballistic missile submarines. For China, this might include the role of the *Jin*-class submarine; for the United States, it should include discussion of the roles of those *Ohio*-class submarines converted to cruise missile carriers.

Nuclear materials security. Consistent with the importance they attached to the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit, China and the United States should resurrect the idea of regular exchanges between the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration and appropriate Chinese military and security entities on a variety of topics, including the security of military materials in both countries.[11] The purpose would be to increase confidence in each country of security of materials in the other and to jointly consider how to encourage best security practices by the national security organizations of other states. The programs conducted through the Center of Excellence on Nuclear Security the two sides agreed to establish in January 2011 for security of civil materials might serve as a model.

Nuclear test sites. The two sides should conduct reciprocal visits to one another's nuclear test sites to understand experiments that might legally be conducted at those sites following entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Summary

U.S. perceptions of the nuclear threat have changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War. For decades, "nuclear threat" was a synonym for "threat from

[10] Based on M. Elaine Bunn and Vincent A. Manzo, "Conventional Prompt Global Strike: Strategic Asset or Unusable Liability?," National Defense University, *Strategic Forum,* February 2011

[11] These discussions were proposed several years ago, but the two sides were unable to agree on a formula for characterizing discussions held in the 1990s. The easiest and most appropriate resolution would be to ignore the past and focus on future interactions.

the Soviet Union." Nuclear terrorism and threats from third states played a very limited role in U.S. thinking. In the post Cold-War world, and especially in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001, U.S. threat perception has been reversed. Most Americans now perceive that the greatest nuclear threat they face is nuclear terrorism. Indeed, some of the concern over North Korea and Iran is because of their potential to facilitate and support such terrorism.

At the same time, the United States sees the benefits of regulating the nuclear relationship with the Russian Federation. New START serves this function and is likely to be the basis for the U.S. – Russian relationship for at least several years. This period provides an opportunity to establish a set of confidence building measures between the governments of the United States and the People's Republic of China. Such measures will lead to predictability, which is a key component of stability. Like all successful political-military interactions, successful implementation of confidence building measures will also benefit the overall Sino-U.S. relationship.

This paper has set forth a preliminary list of possible confidence building measures. The two countries should use the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue to discuss which are the most promising and then commission appropriate groups to discuss how those measures might be implemented. While the strategic nuclear relationship between the United States and China will always reflect the overall political relationship, confidence building measures can provide predictability and stability and thus improve that relationship.