“The Day After…” Study: Nuclear Proliferation in the Post-Cold War World

Volume II, Main Report

Marc Dean Millot, Roger Molander, Peter A. Wilson
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"The Day After…" Study: Nuclear Proliferation in the Post-Cold War World

Volume II, Main Report

Marc Dean Millot, Roger Molander, Peter A. Wilson

Prepared for the United States Air Force
This report provides an overview of a series of exercises conducted as part of “The Day After...” project on the implications of nuclear proliferation for U.S. national security policy. The research was conducted in the Strategy, Doctrine and Force Structure Program of RAND’s Project AIR FORCE (PAF) for the Director of Plans, Headquarters, United States Air Force. PAF is a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the U.S. Air Force.

This volume documents the results of four series of exercises. It describes the assumptions, objectives, and approach of “The Day After...” study, including the exercise technique developed as the primary tool of research. It then covers each of the four series of exercises that examined the loss of central control over a nuclear arsenal (“The Day After... in the USSR”), U.S. military intervention against a new nuclear-armed regional adversary (“The Day After... in the Greater Middle East”), nuclear use against a U.S. ally (“The Day After... in Korea”), and nuclear war between two new regional nuclear powers (“The Day After... in South Asia”). For each exercise series, the volume highlights participants’ discussion and debate and, based on the results of each series, identifies alternative approaches to the solution of critical proliferation-related policy problems facing U.S. decisionmakers. A separate Annex to this volume contains the materials used by participants in each of the four exercises. Volume I summarizes the study.

This volume should be of interest to defense planners and students of national strategy. The exercises contained in the Annex were separated from the reports so that they might be used, in combination with Volumes I and II, as classroom materials for college and graduate-level national security studies in the post-Cold War world.
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SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

"The Day After..." project examined the implications of nuclear-weapons proliferation for U.S. national security and military strategy. This report documents the results of four series of policy exercises conducted under the study.

This summary first describes the assumptions, objectives, and approach of "The Day After..." study, including the exercise technique developed as the primary tool of research. It then covers each of the four series of exercises. It highlights the participants' discussion and debate and, based on the results of each exercise series, identifies alternative approaches to proliferation-related policy problems facing U.S. decisionmakers.

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION AFTER THE COLD WAR

The project took as given a steady diffusion of nuclear weapons–related technologies and assumed that the ability to build and deliver such weapons will continue to proliferate. Some growth in the number of actual nuclear powers probably will accompany this increase in the number of states with the potential to build nuclear weapons.

Trends in international relations set in motion by the end of the Cold War have heightened the likelihood that additional countries will develop and deploy nuclear weapons. First, many political restraints on acquiring nuclear arsenals have been weakened. It is likely that the "nuclear weapons option" will be reconsidered by many countries, including former allies of the U.S. and Soviet Union as well as members of the formerly nonaligned world. Second, the end of the Cold War has intensified the disintegration of multiethnic states and increased the possibility for wars to redraw state borders along ethnic lines. From Eastern Europe through Central Asia, "legal" boundaries overlapping the homelands of rival ethnic groups are a source of conflict.

Given these realities, the possibility of nuclear-weapon use by a new nuclear power seems worthy of serious attention. At a minimum, the United States probably will face crises in which a new nuclear power brandishes its weapons. In this context, a critical need exists to reexamine the U.S. approach to the proliferation problem. The new world order might require a new approach and a new strategy. Several reasons for such a review are readily apparent.
First, for most of the past four decades, threats to U.S. security from the spread of nuclear weapons have been of secondary concern to U.S. policymakers, giving way at virtually every juncture to the necessities of containment. Second, current U.S. strategy toward proliferation is not "total" in the sense that containment once was. Our approach to proliferation does not encompass all instruments of national policy—it has only begun to consider the military dimension, including the possibilities of extending nuclear deterrence beyond Europe and Japan, providing negative security assurances to potential adversaries, or preempting nascent arsenals. Third, the current approach does not address all aspects of the proliferation problem. While the U.S. responded to the emerging Soviet nuclear arsenal in part by imposing multilateral export controls on military-related technologies, the principal response was a strategy of mutual deterrence and escalation control, later combined with arms-control measures to reduce the risk and consequences of nuclear war. By contrast, the U.S. answer to the threat of further proliferation has been confined to a policy of nonproliferation; emphasizing efforts to deny, delay, or disrupt potential proliferators' weapons programs. But without heroic measures, that strategy seems no more likely to succeed than did controlling exports to the Soviet Union.

If nonproliferation policies fail, what will the U.S. do? If more than one nuclear power emerges from the former Soviet Union, how will the U.S. limit damage to its national security interests? If Iran or Iraq obtains the bomb, how will the U.S. manage threats to the free flow of oil? How should U.S. defense policy cope under the threat of nuclear use by new nuclear powers? If U.S. forces or allies come under nuclear attack from one of these new powers, how will the U.S. respond? To what extent should the U.S. become involved in nuclear crises or wars between third parties?

"THE DAY AFTER . . ." EXERCISES

The answers to the questions discussed above are far from obvious. The objective of "The Day After . . ." project was to provide military planners with a better understanding of the principal proliferation issues the country will face in the next decade and a sense of the alternative strategies, policies, and options likely to be offered by the national security community—particularly the policy support community in Washington.

Our approach was to involve a large number and wide range of experts in a series of exercises designed to focus debate and discussion on concrete proliferation-related problems. These exercises covered four situations: the problem of the loss of central control over a nuclear arsenal (The Day After . . . in the "USSR"), U.S. military intervention against a new nuclear-armed adversary (The Day After . . . in the Greater Middle East), nuclear use against a U.S. ally (The Day After . . . in Korea), and nuclear war between two new nuclear powers (The Day After . . . in South Asia).

Each exercise was designed to be completed in one three-hour session. Groups of 6 to 12 participants acted as teams of advisors to the President of the United States in a group deliberative process akin to a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) minus the President. Team members were given Situation Reports describing the situation as it might be known to the participants in a real crisis, and Draft Memoranda for the President intended to represent the result of lower level staff work during the crisis. The Situation Reports contained all the information participants could expect to have in a fast-moving crisis. The Draft Memos were intended to be vehicles for discussion, "strawmen" from which the teams were encouraged to depart. Two or three teams played simultaneously in each session and compared
notes at appropriate points in the exercise. A member of the study team monitored the deliberation of each team.

Each exercise began with an examination of the decisions confronting a U.S. President on "the day of" a pivotal change in the nuclear status quo that affects or initiates a major foreign policy crisis (see Figure S.1). As a second pivot point, the exercise turned to "the day after" nuclear use in that crisis and explored a new set of policy choices facing the President and the nation. As a final decision point, the exercise moved to "the day before"—months or years before the envisioned "day of"—and considered policies to minimize the prospects for such scenarios and mitigate their consequences.

Each exercise was repeated several times with different groups of participants to broaden the research team's database. At the end of each exercise series, the discussion and debate of all groups were compared and contrasted to develop a comprehensive roadmap of the alternative strategies, policies, and options covered by the participants.

THE DAY AFTER... IN THE "USSR"

Background

Ethnic and nationalist conflicts unleashed by the Soviet Union's breakup intersect with the problem of proliferation in several respects. The disintegration of the Soviet state has created the great risk of a rapid increase in the number of nuclear powers in a much shorter period than was considered likely during the Cold War. This risk is caused not only by fractionation of the Soviet arsenal itself but also by the possible dispersion of former Soviet nuclear scientists, technologies, materials, and even weapons; by the potential demonstration effect of fractionation on would-be nuclear powers; and by the reaction of "responsible" allies with nuclear potential whose defense policies have not been considered threats to the nonproliferation regime. Thus, the prospect of "high-speed" proliferation precipitated by the demise of the

![Figure S.1—"The Day After..." Exercise Methodology](image-url)
Soviet state has radically transformed the proliferation problem facing the United States.

The Exercise Experience

In STEP ONE: The Day Of... it is the fall of 1993. Participants addressed a rapidly deteriorating political situation between Russia and the "nuclear republics" of Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan in which differences over the fate of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal play a central role. (A complete copy of the exercise materials is contained in the separate Annex to this report.) Central authority in the former Soviet Union has continued to deteriorate. Control over the former Soviet nuclear arsenal is now "shared" between the Russified Soviet military and emerging military establishments in Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Although the non-Russian republics have continued to transfer tactical nuclear weapons to Russia, they have been unwilling to cede control over the strategic nuclear weapons in their countries. In their view, nuclear weapons give them important advantages in negotiations with Russia over a host of political, economic, and security matters. Talks among the four nuclear republics have stalemated, with the status of the nuclear arsenal a major obstacle to agreement. The republics have agreed to one last attempt to resolve their differences and develop some acceptable accord. The assignment to the groups was to develop U.S. policy options toward the interrepublic negotiations.

Figure S.2 is an outline of the policy options distilled from group discussion of Step One. The dark solid lines and boxes indicate majority agreement. Although those who favored central control as the basic theme of U.S. policy and those who instead would emphasize a stable political-military balance in the former Soviet Union both

![Diagram](image-url)
discussed the shared control option, in fact no consensus emerged. In the early exercise sessions, there may have been a tendency toward a return to “Soviet” control. In the middle sessions, more interest was expressed in exploring shared control arrangements. In the final sessions, teams looked more favorably on Russification.

No consensus emerged from our sessions. Although the idea of reasserting Soviet control faded fast and virtually no one believed that the option to extend Western security guarantees to the non-Russian republics was feasible, the three remaining options were presented in every session. Indeed, support was divided evenly among Russification, shared control, and fractionation.

In STEP TWO: The Day After . . ., the interrepublic talks have collapsed after negotiations failed to produce an agreement. After a period of increasing tension between Russia and Ukraine, one or both have attempted to gain control over the nuclear weapons on Ukrainian soil. Participants find themselves convened immediately following Russia’s use of a nuclear weapon against Ukraine. Ukraine is believed to have the capacity to retaliate. Again, the teams are tasked to help the President get perspective on the situation and decide how to respond to the crisis.

Figure S.3 describes the discussion of policy options in Step Two. Participants followed a similar pattern of discussion throughout this exercise series. Some groups decided early on to stay out of the conflict altogether, but most went on to assess a strategy to reestablish deterrence between Russia and Ukraine. Few could come to any solid conclusion on any policy under that strategy, although virtually everyone touched on some variant of the security assurances option. In frustration, many decided to stay out of the conflict altogether. In the end a vocal minority favored stay-

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![Image](image-url)
ing out, while the majority favored attempts to reestablish inter-republic deterrence but could not settle on any one policy or option.

**Alternative Policies Toward the Former Soviet Arsenal**

Since the failed coup of August 1991, the Soviet system of command and control over nuclear forces has disintegrated steadily. Two parallel chains of command have emerged based on (1) the increasingly Russified Soviet military and (2) a national structure built in a halting fashion by each non-Russian republic. Russians have complete control over the weapons based on their territory (including fleet ballistic missile submarines—SSBNs). In the non-Russian republics, control is "shared" between Russian and non-Russian forces. Nevertheless, the situation is sufficiently uncertain that no one should be surprised if one or more of the non-Russian republics control some weapons directly. Until now, the nuclear republics have agreed that eventually only Russia will possess nuclear weapons. But as the loose Confederation of Independent States fails to take root as a successor to the Union, the prospects for a fractionation of the arsenal grow.

In considering its policy toward the former Soviet nuclear arsenal, the United States must choose among three alternatives:

1. Salvaging a central control arrangement based on a **confederation** of the nuclear republics
2. Promoting a **peaceful Russification** of the former Soviet arsenal
3. Supporting its **controlled fractionation**.

The "Day After . . . in the ‘USSR’" exercise suggests that opinion in the Washington policy support community is split among the three alternatives.

**THE DAY AFTER . . . IN THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST**

**Background**

In the next decade, the United States may find itself in military confrontations with new nuclear powers. What does this mean for U.S. defense policy? Virtually every military operation undertaken by the United States during the past 40 years was shadowed by the possibility of nuclear war. American military interventions from Lebanon to Vietnam carried some risk of escalation to nuclear war with the Soviet bloc. Why should the possession of relatively tiny arsenals by a few minor powers make the United States any more concerned about military intervention than it was at the height of the Cold War?

The principal reason for concern is the uncertainty the new states introduce to U.S. deterrence calculations. The cumulative experience of 40 years of superpower nuclear competition gave American leaders and defense planners a relatively high degree of self-assurance in their predictions of Soviet reactions to U.S. initiatives. But there is less confidence in the applicability of deterrence concepts developed during the Cold War to the post–Cold War era. The U.S. intelligence community may not be well-informed about a potential new nuclear power’s leadership structure. The community may not be clear about the actions new aggressors might take that the U.S. plans to deter. The U.S. understanding of potential adversaries’ value structures
may not be developed as it was for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. And if we are not confident in our estimate of a potential adversary's value structure, we may have difficulty convincing it that we hold it at risk. We may not clearly communicate our vital interests to these new adversaries—in words or deeds. In many cases, we may lack the broad base of experience in dealing with these new opponents necessary to give us confidence in our predictions of their probable responses to our statements and actions. A new adversary's approach to calculating ends-means relations may differ from expectations based on our experience with the Soviets.

The Exercise Experience

In STEP ONE: The Day Of . . . , participants addressed a rapidly deteriorating situation in the Persian Gulf, set in 1997. (A complete copy of the exercise materials is contained in the separate Annex.) After defeating Iraq and installing a pro-Iranian government in Baghdad, Iran has begun to pressure and intimidate Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Pursuant to defense agreements, the Gulf states have asked the United States to implement plans to reinforce Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (Operation GREEN HORNET). U.S. intelligence believes Iran is on the verge of deploying nuclear weapons on a small number of mobile intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBM).

Figure S.4 is an outline of the policy options distilled from group discussion of Step One. Few favored a policy of negotiating with Iran over the fate of Southwest Asia and the Persian Gulf. Most participants believed the United States was obligated to meet its regional defense commitments and execute a modified Phase Two of GREEN HORNET, substituting air and sea units for what were considered vulnerable ground forces. There was no consensus on the alert of U.S. nuclear forces.

![Flowchart](image-url)

Figure S.4—"The Day After . . . in the Greater Middle East"—Step One Roadmap
In STEP TWO: The Day After..., participants were convened immediately after an intense air and sea battle in the Gulf and the demonstration of an operational nuclear intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM) over the Iranian desert. Figure S.5 outlines the policy options distilled from the group discussion of Step Two. Participants split evenly between those proposing to contain Iran and those who favored eliminating the Iranian regime. Proponents of containment agreed not to strike the dispersed Iranian IRBM force and decided to send theater high altitude air defense (THAAD) to Israel but split over continuing GREEN HORNET, whether or not to strike Iran’s anti-ship missile sites, and whether to create a robust conventional deterrent or a nuclear tripwire in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Those who favored destroying the Iranian regime split over whether to present Iran with an ultimatum or conduct a surprise attack and whether to take out Iran’s IRBMs with conventional or nuclear weapons. They agreed, however, on deploying THAAD to Saudi Arabia, continuing GREEN HORNET, striking Iran’s anti-ship missile sites, and conducting a massive attack on Iran itself.

Alternative Policies Toward Regional Nuclear Powers

During the Bush administration, a consensus seemed to be emerging within the defense community that America's post-Cold War influence in international security affairs will depend on its ability to manage regional conflict. In general, the emerging strategy held that our objective will be to maintain regional stability using a forward military presence and a strengthening of alliance relationships in regions vital to

Figure S.5—"The Day After... in the Greater Middle East"—Step Two Roadmap
American interests. If necessary, the United States should be prepared to intervene militarily—preferably as part of a coalition, but unilaterally if required—to restore regional security. For this purpose, the United States plans to maintain contingency forces for rapid deployment to threatened regions, reserve forces for large-scale conflicts, and a mobilization base to hedge against the return of a global military threat. The model for U.S. military interventions in the post–Cold War era is the war with Iraq, and the characteristics of Operation DESERT STORM—overwhelming force, decisive victory, minimum casualties, and a quick defeat of the enemy—have become requirements for future operations.

Participants’ reactions to "The Day After... in the Greater Middle East" exercise suggest that the proliferation of small nuclear forces, and particularly mobile IRBMs, poses a serious threat to U.S. security objectives and military operations in regions of vital interest. The acquisition of a small number of nuclear weapons by regional adversaries caused deep divisions among participants on the advisability of deploying substantial numbers of U.S. forces to the theater in crisis. This division made problematic U.S. strategies designed to achieve victory by means of overwhelming military force and called into question the possibilities for a decisive victory, the likelihood of minimal U.S. casualties, and the prospects of a quick war. In addition to perceiving a rising, self-imposed barrier to U.S. nuclear use and the current lack of viable options to counter the IRBM threat, participants suggested that nuclear proliferation threatens a return to limited wars—wars fought under a nuclear shadow cast by the new nuclear adversaries’ arsenals, for limited U.S. objectives, with limited military means. The prospect of such wars raises serious questions about U.S. civil-military relations, the credibility of U.S. security guarantees and alliance unity, and domestic politics.

Thus, American military planners have an interest in the policies adopted by the United States government to address the prospect of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile proliferation. U.S. military planning will be influenced strongly by the policy adopted toward proliferation and the likely success of that policy. If the United States can prevent the emergence of the threat of nuclear-tipped IRBMs in countries likely to threaten the stability in regions of vital interest, the consensus view on future U.S. defense strategy and military planning is feasible. To the extent the United States fails, the strategy and plans are at risk.

The discussion in this exercise implies that the Washington policy support community is interested in three alternative policies toward the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles:

1. Continued adherence to the current two-tiered international system of nuclear haves and have-nots exemplified by the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), with the haves committed to the pursuit of arms control among themselves and the have-nots expected to commit themselves to a policy of nonproliferation

2. Acceptance of the notion that certain states will not be denied the nuclear option and a determination that new members of the expanding club should be integrated into the nuclear order, made stable members of the nuclear balance, and educated into the norms of nuclear competition

3. Pursuit of a strategy working toward the virtual abolition of nuclear weapons, to "make the world safe" for another DESERT STORM.
The "Day After . . . in the Greater Middle East" exercise suggests that opinion in the Washington policy support community is split among the three alternatives. A majority of participants favored continuation of the two-tiered system although most who did had little faith in its long-term viability. A very small group was prepared to embrace the expanding club. A significant group of military officers, in particular representatives from the Air Staff, urged serious consideration of virtual abolition.

THE DAY AFTER . . . IN KOREA

Background

As noted above, the emerging U.S. defense strategy recognizes that, in the post–Cold War era, national security will depend on America's ability to manage regional conflict. Whether threatened by a global superpower or a would-be regional hegemon, access to a stable Europe, Middle East, and Northeast Asia remains a vital U.S. interest. Our objective is to foster security in these regions by retaining a forward U.S. military presence, strengthening our alliance relationships, and maintaining contingency forces for rapid deployment to defend threatened allies. There has been little discussion, however, of the threat a regional nuclear adversary might pose to this strategy; there has been even less discussion of the role U.S. nuclear weapons might play in managing regional stability, except to deemphasize nuclear weapons in our defense posture now that the Soviet threat has disappeared.

The Exercise Experience

In STEP ONE: The Day Of . . . , participants addressed a rapidly deteriorating political situation on the Korean peninsula, set in 1993. (A complete copy of the exercise materials is contained in the Annex to this report.) Intelligence reports indicate that North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs have proceeded to the point where a nuclear-tipped intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM) is about to be deployed. Teams developed an overall perspective on the situation and considered the issues and options to be presented to the President, including whether to execute a plan for the reinforcement of South Korea (Operation IRON SHIELD).

Figure S.6 is a roadmap of the policy options distilled from the group discussion of Step One. The dark solid lines and boxes indicate majority agreements. All saw the problem created by North Korea's imminent deployment of nuclear-armed IREMVs in terms of potential "demonstration" and "domino" effects. A very small group believed withdrawal was the best course of action. Most participants favored some form of U.S. engagement. Those who emphasized the domino effect—the possible spread of nuclear arsenals to South Korea and Japan—favored efforts to "manage" the situation on the peninsula by a policy toward the North combining punishment and reward. Those who feared the world-wide demonstration effect of a U.S. failure to halt the North's nuclear program preferred a policy emphasizing threats and punishment. A majority of both groups preferred a gradual increase of pressure on the North over either an open-ended negotiation or an immediate attack on the North's nuclear and missile facilities. Most participants favored joint military planning with South Korea and proposals to build a strong multilateral coalition.
supporting U.S. policy toward North Korea. The majority also argued for implementing IRON SHIELD, although they split on whether to withhold U.S. ground forces. There was no agreement on proposals to respond to the North's nuclear program by alerting U.S. nuclear forces, but a majority decided against explicit references to extended deterrence in declaratory policy on South Korea, preferring to emphasize a general U.S. commitment to South Korean security.

In STEP TWO: The Day After . . . , participants found themselves convened immediately following North Korea's tactical use of nuclear weapons against Republic of Korea (ROK) forces to assure the success of its invasion of the South. Figure S.7 outlines the policy options distilled from group discussion of Step Two. Participants split evenly between those proposing to conduct a campaign of retribution against North Korea and those favoring restoration of the South Korean border followed by a negotiated end to the war. Those favoring retribution feared the consequences for nuclear nonproliferation and the idea of a taboo against nuclear use if the North did not pay dearly for its transgressions. They agreed to punish the North by attacking nuclear forces and leadership sites but split over whether to destroy North Korea as a society. Those favoring restoration of the border emphasized the defense of Seoul and would target North Korean field forces in and en route to the South. Participants were evenly divided between those who would use nuclear weapons and those who would confine the U.S. to a conventional war. Those favoring retribution would bring overwhelming force to bear, while those seeking a restoration of the border would employ force proportionate to that of the North.
Alternative U.S. Nuclear-Weapons Employment Policies

For the past 40 years, nuclear weapons have been the backbone of U.S. military power. In the context of a global Soviet military threat, U.S. nuclear weapons provided a means of deterring any Soviet aggression by threatening escalation to a devastating nuclear war, reassuring allies of U.S. commitments to guarantee their security, and giving U.S. leaders confidence in their ability to support those commitments by providing an effective counter to what many believed were substantial Soviet advantages in conventional forces. U.S. policy for nuclear weapons was to use them if necessary to defeat aggression and defend allies if other means failed.

In NATO's Cold War heyday, this policy of "flexible response" required the deployment of U.S. theater nuclear weapons on allied soil. It also required arrangements to share release authority to give allies assurances of the U.S. nuclear guarantee and provide U.S. leaders with credible nuclear options between initiating a central nuclear war and letting Europe fall to a Warsaw Pact invasion. Western reliance on this threat of escalation made crisis management more problematic, raised serious concerns in the minds of many Western leaders, and caused deep-seated fears in the American and European publics. With the end of the Cold War, many rightly hoped that the United States could reduce its reliance on the only weapons that really could threaten the future of Western civilization, if not mankind.

It is now clear that the United States is deemphasizing nuclear weapons in its military strategy. The amazing show of power in Operation DESERT STORM has created expectations that conventional weapons can and will replace nuclear forces as a
means of deterring aggression, reassuring allies, and improving the confidence of
American leaders in their ability to protect U.S. interests. In fact, conventional
weapons are taking on many of the options once reserved for theater nuclear forces.
For example, in the war with Iraq, advanced conventional weapons were used to
destroy hardened missile silos, aircraft bunkers, and underground command posts; tar-
ggets that were associated with nuclear attack missions in U.S. planning for conflict
with the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War.

With the demise of the Soviet threat, the policy of flexible response has evolved to
emphasize the "last resort" quality of decisions to use nuclear weapons. The progress
of this trend to de-emphasize nuclear weapons in the future is an important issue
facing U.S. defense planners. A review of discussion from "The Day After . . . in
Korea" suggests that two broad directions for U.S. nuclear weapons employment
policy are worthy of further attention:

1. Continued adherence to flexible response, in which the United States responds
to aggression with the level of force required to terminate a war quickly and on
terms acceptable to the U.S. In the context of potential wars with new regional
nuclear adversaries, the United States would retain the option to use nuclear
weapons first, presumably after U.S. and allied forces failed to halt an attack by
superior conventional forces with conventional means. While the trend in
theater nuclear forces is in the direction of diminished numbers and withdrawal
from allied territory, the policy of flexible response would lead to a retention of
some theater nuclear capability for forward deployment to an ally when
warranted by political-military circumstances.

2. A policy of virtually no use consistent with movement toward the higher-level
national security strategy of "virtual abolition" proposed by participants in the
Greater Middle East exercise. Virtual abolition assumes that the United States
could secure its vital interests by conventional means if its potential adversaries
do not possess nuclear weapons, but that if they do possess nuclear arsenals it
would be impossible or far more difficult for the United States to do so. Because
some potential aggressors now have or may soon acquire nuclear forces, virtual
abolition requires a military strategy that eschews nuclear use in all but the most
serious threats to the United States. Future American military operations would
rely almost entirely on conventional weapons. American security guarantees to
allies and deterrent threats to potential adversaries would be based on
perceptions of our ability and will to repeat Operation DESERT STORM.

The "Day After . . . in Korea" exercise suggests that opinion in the Washington policy
support community is split between the two alternatives. A significant group of mili-
tary officers, joined by many participants with a professional interest in nonprolif-
eration, urged consideration of a virtually no-use nuclear-weapons employment pol-
icy. Many in this group did not favor virtual abolition but believed that U.S. defense
policy should de-emphasize the threat of nuclear use. Other participants were skepti-
cal of the feasibility of virtually no use and doubted that virtual abolition would ben-
efit the United States. They favored a continuation of flexible response.
THE DAY AFTER... IN SOUTH ASIA

Background

Will the use of nuclear weapons in one region of the world increase the chances of additional use by other powers in different regions in different wars? Are the effects of "next use" likely to be so unsettling to international security and even the global ecology that preventing the outbreak of nuclear hostilities and limiting the effects of nuclear war (should it occur) ought to be considered a vital national interest? Is the "nuclear peace" indivisible? If so, does the United States, as the "last superpower"—or merely as a responsible nation, have a duty to prevent the next use of nuclear weapons, by force if necessary, and to put a halt to nuclear conflicts before they escalate?

The Exercise Experience

In STEP ONE: The Day Of..., participants addressed a rapidly deteriorating political situation on the Indian subcontinent, set in 1996. (A complete copy of the exercise materials is contained in the Annex to this report.) Intelligence reports indicate that the countries have developed and deployed small nuclear arsenals, and that any conflict has the potential to escalate into a nuclear war.

Figure S.8 is an outline of the policy options examined by participants in Step One. While a substantial minority of participants opposed direct U.S. involvement in the crisis, arguing that no vital interests were at stake, the majority favored activism. Some in this majority focused on the signal that would be sent to potential proliferators if the U.S. stood aside; others were concerned about intervening before
China and Russia were drawn into the conflict. The majority favored putting the U.S. government into a visible crisis management mode to signal our intense interest in a peaceful resolution of the crisis. They also favored limiting the U.S. military role to a review of what most believed to be a unpromising set of military options. A diplomatic strategy of mediation was seen as the primary, and to many the sole, means of U.S. influence. Most participants favoring activism would pursue it multilaterally, relying on China and Russia to restrain their allies. A minority would emphasize a unilateral approach focusing on the U.S. potential as an honest broker between India and Pakistan. Those favoring a multilateral approach tended to focus on defusing the crisis at hand. Those emphasizing unilateral diplomacy were prepared to pursue creation of a stable mutual nuclear deterrence relationship on the subcontinent.

In STEP TWO: “The Day After . . . in South Asia,” participants were convened immediately following a nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan. Again, the teams are tasked to help the President decide how to respond to the crisis. A majority of participants believed that the U.S. should remain engaged in the crisis but opposed the use of nuclear weapons to stop the Indo-Pakistani nuclear war (see Figure S.9). Otherwise, there was no consensus on U.S. policy. Participants were divided on diplomatic strategy, the need for and nature of a military coalition, and the practicability of conventional military operations.

**Alternative U.S. Policies Toward the Nuclear Peace**

Does the United States have a stake in an “indivisible nuclear peace,” and is it willing to pay the price of enforcing it? A review of discussion from “The Day After . . . in

![Figure S.9—“The Day After . . . in South Asia”—Step Two Roadmap](RAND479-S.9-0002)
South Asia” suggests that the Washington policy community is split between two broad policies toward the U.S. role in maintaining a global taboo against nuclear use.

1. A policy of **nonintervention**, in which the U.S. will respond to nuclear use with military action only if it or its allies comes under nuclear attack

2. A policy of **conditional intervention**, in which the U.S. would move to stop a nuclear war where it had the military capability and political support to “defang” a nuclear aggressor or “quench” a bilateral nuclear conflict.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

“The Day After . . .” study revealed that the policy support community in Washington has yet to articulate the implications of nuclear proliferation for the U.S. defense strategy or the U.S. defense posture. Although proliferation in the abstract is viewed as a threat, specific responses to proliferation-related problems are filtered through the prisms of alliance relations, Western economic stability, or geopolitics. In the Korean and Middle East exercises, participants were willing to respond to nuclear use because traditional vital interests were at issue. In the “former Soviet” exercise and especially the South Asian exercise, the strong tendency was to stand aside, in part because participants could not see what the United States could usefully do, but also because they could not see how to justify military action to the American public, and because many could not justify such action to themselves.

This report does not advocate any specific policies. The study team confines itself to presenting options and analyzing their bases and implications. The team does strongly urge that the U.S. government and the analytic community direct their resources to the study of these options (not to the exclusion of others) to address the issues of proliferation. Furthermore, the sponsors of this study, the long-range planners in the U.S. Air Force, must consider the influence of these alternatives on their plans for future force structures, roles and missions, operational concepts, and weapons systems. These issues are addressed in the companion Summary Report.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABM</td>
<td>Airborne Ballistic Missile</td>
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<td>ACDA</td>
<td>Arms Control and Disarmament Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>AWACS</td>
<td>Airborne Warning and Control System</td>
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<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>Bharatiya Janata Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBG</td>
<td>Carrier Battle Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>CENTO</td>
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<tr>
<td>CINC</td>
<td>Commander in Chief</td>
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<tr>
<td>CINCPAC</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNN</td>
<td>Cable News Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONUS</td>
<td>Continental United States</td>
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<td>CPSU</td>
<td>Communist Party of the Soviet Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSCE</td>
<td>Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTB</td>
<td>Comprehensive Test Ban</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTS</td>
<td>Confederation of Turkistani States</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Defense Intelligence Agency</td>
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<td>DMZ</td>
<td>Demilitarized Zone</td>
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<td>Defense Support Program</td>
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<td>EMP</td>
<td>Electromagnetic Pulse</td>
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<td>FSU</td>
<td>Former Soviet Union</td>
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<td>GCC</td>
<td>Gulf Cooperation Council</td>
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<td>GME</td>
<td>Greater Middle East</td>
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<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
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<td>IAEA</td>
<td>International Atomic Energy Agency</td>
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<td>ICBM</td>
<td>Intercontinental Ballistic Missile</td>
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<td>IRBM</td>
<td>Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>JCS</td>
<td>Joint Chiefs of Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>KGB</td>
<td>Russian secret police</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPS</td>
<td>Maritime Prepositioning Squadron</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
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<tr>
<td>NMCC</td>
<td>National Military Command Center</td>
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<td>NSC</td>
<td>National Security Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPEC</td>
<td>Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPLAN</td>
<td>Operation Plan</td>
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<td>OSD</td>
<td>Office of the Secretary of Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAF</td>
<td>Project AIR FORCE</td>
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<td>ROK</td>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEATO</td>
<td>Southeast Asia Treaty Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLBM</td>
<td>Sea Launched Ballistic Missile</td>
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<td>SOF</td>
<td>Special Operations Forces</td>
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<td>SRBM</td>
<td>Short Range Ballistic Missile</td>
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<td>SSBN</td>
<td>Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarine</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSN</td>
<td>Submarine (Nuclear-Powered)</td>
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<tr>
<td>START</td>
<td>Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWA</td>
<td>Southwest Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>TFW</td>
<td>Tactical Fighter Wing</td>
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<tr>
<td>THAAD</td>
<td>Theater High Altitude Air Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>USCINCEUR</td>
<td>U.S. Commander in Chief, Europe</td>
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<td>USEUCOM</td>
<td>U.S. European Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>USN</td>
<td>United States Navy</td>
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<tr>
<td>USSTRATCOM</td>
<td>U.S. Strategic Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEU</td>
<td>Western European Union</td>
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"The Day After . . ." was a RAND project to examine the implications for U.S. national security and military strategy of the spread of nuclear weapons and related capabilities in the post-Cold War world, with a particular focus on the views of the Washington policy support community. This volume documents the results of four series of policy exercises conducted under the study. Volume I is a summary of the contents of this report and includes the study's principal findings and recommendations. Volume III, the Annex, contains the exercise materials used in the study.

The exercises incorporated nuclear-use scenarios involving (1) the loss of central control over a nuclear arsenal ("The Day After . . . in the 'USSR'"), (2) U.S. military intervention against a new nuclear armed regional adversary ("The Day After . . . in the Greater Middle East"), (3) nuclear use against a U.S. ally ("The Day After . . . in Korea"), and (4) nuclear war between two new regional nuclear powers ("The Day After . . . in South Asia"). More than 220 current and former government officials, military officers, and defense analysts participated in at least one of the exercise series held between October 1991 and July 1992. Many participated in two or more series. Appendix A contains a complete list of people who participated in one or more series.

This chapter is a description of the assumptions, objectives, and approach of "The Day After . . ." study, including the exercise technique developed as the primary tool of research. It also contains a discussion of our effort to assess the views of the Washington policy support community. Chapters Two through Five cover each of the four series of exercises. Each chapter discusses the motivation behind the scenario developed for each series, reports the participants' discussion and debate, identifies and analyzes alternative approaches to the solution of critical proliferation-related policy problems facing U.S. decisionmakers based on the results of each exercise series, and concludes with more general observations on U.S. policy gained from a review of the exercise results. Appendices B through E list the participants in each exercise series.

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION AFTER THE COLD WAR

For this study, we took as given the steady diffusion of nuclear weapons-related technologies and assumed that the ability to build nuclear weapons and modern
means to deliver them will continue to proliferate.\(^1\) As Iraq's nuclear weapons program demonstrates, the information, skills, equipment, and industrial processes for an indigenous Manhattan Project can be obtained from many sources. In addition, nuclear-capable delivery systems, including ballistic and cruise missiles, and even the technologies required to produce such systems, are available from a large and growing group of suppliers beyond the advanced industrial powers of the West. Although expensive, these capabilities are within the grasp of countries with even moderate gross national products (GNPs). Given the pace of technological change and the probable diffusion of weapons-related technologies over the next 10 years, the number of countries able to develop nuclear weapons is likely to grow and the period of time required to develop a bomb will decline.

Some growth in the number of actual nuclear powers probably will accompany this increase in the number of states with the potential to build nuclear weapons. Against this background, an understanding of the motivations of potential proliferators to acquire nuclear arsenals should be of paramount concern to policymakers. Our knowledge of the American, Soviet, Chinese, French, and British decisions to develop and integrate nuclear weapons into their military establishments suggests that perceptions of state sovereignty, survival, and security dominate the calculations of national leaders.\(^2\) Once the potential of nuclear weapons was realized in these coun-

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tries, leaders came to recognize that the possession of nuclear arsenals would place their states on an entirely different plane of international relations. In these cases, it was decided that only nuclear forces could give the state the freedom of action sufficient to pursue its national goals in a world of hostile powers. The possession of nuclear weapons did not eliminate constraints on the possessors’ freedom of action, as the United States learned when it held a nuclear monopoly during the Truman and Eisenhower years. Nevertheless, possession of a nuclear arsenal was believed to place distinct limits on the willingness of other powers to challenge the vital interests of the state, confer on the possessor a certain equality with its nuclear-armed adversaries and allies, and grant a degree of coercive influence over those states without such arsenals.

Trends in international relations set in motion by the end of the Cold War are directly relevant to the prospect that additional countries will develop, deploy, and integrate nuclear weapons into their military establishments and announce their nuclear weapons capability to the world. First, many of the political restraints on the pursuit of nuclear arsenals in existence over the past 40 years have been weakened, even as the opportunities for acquiring such forces have increased dramatically. Probably the “nuclear weapons option” will be reconsidered by the national leaderships of many countries, including former allies of the U.S. and the Soviet Union, as well as members of the nonaligned world. Under the right set of circumstances, they may arrive at the same conclusion as their American, Soviet, British, Chinese, and French counterparts in previous decades.

In the aftermath of the Cold War, the stability of any regional balance of power based on the U.S.-Soviet rivalry must now be considered at risk by local leaders. Former clients of Moscow have lost their principal arms supplier and security guarantor. Washington’s friends and allies also must be concerned about America’s interest in their security problems now that they are no longer “bulwarks” against Soviet expansion. The folding of the Soviet and U.S. security umbrellas has given rise to opportunities to press claims against rivals (long suppressed as the price of alliance with a superpower) as well as the less attractive possibility of an unacceptable peace imposed by a great power condominium. Instead of relying on their former protectors to be sympathetic to their perceptions of regional security problems, former clients may find themselves resisting “solutions” contrary to their own perceived national interests. In such circumstances, independent means of assuring national independence will be sought to replace disintegrating alliance relationships.


The end of the Cold War also appears to intensify a trend toward disintegrating multiethnic states and increasing the possibilities for wars to redraw state borders along ethnic lines. Ethno-religious strife has steadily eroded the viability of a secular Indian state and exacerbated India’s competition with Pakistan. In the West, Canada is in the midst of a slow-motion constitutional crisis that could result in the secession of Quebec. From Eastern Europe through Central Asia, “legal” boundaries that divide highly nationalistic ethnic groups are a worrisome source of conflict. Events in the former Yugoslavia provide a glimpse of one potential future for the most worrisome source of ethnic strife—the disintegrating Soviet Union. Indeed, the former Soviet republics of the Caucasus have experienced bloody ethnic warfare for some months. Of greatest concern is the prospect for conflict between Ukraine and Russia and the longer-term possibilities for conflict between the Christian/Slavic and Islamic/Turkic parts of the former Soviet Union.

Finally, the potential for conflict, civil war, and nuclear proliferation in the post–Cold War world has implications for U.S. allies with considerable nuclear weapons potential, especially Germany and Japan. Although Germany is prohibited from possessing nuclear weapons by treaty and Japan prohibits such arms in its constitution, the strength of these constraints is not unrelated to the continuing credibility of American security assurances in the post-Soviet era. Should the concept of extended deterrence become incredible to leaders in Tokyo or Bonn, the willingness of Japan and Germany to forgo the nuclear option could be undermined substantially.

AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD PROLIFERATION AFTER THE COLD WAR

Given these realities, the possibility of a “proliferation age”—which conceivably might involve actual nuclear weapon use by a new nuclear power—seems worthy of concern and attention. At a minimum, the United States probably will face future crises in which there is the implicit or explicit brandishing of nuclear weapons by a new nuclear power. In this context, there is a need to take a fresh look at our national approach to the proliferation problem. Possibly the new world order will require a new approach and a new strategy. Several reasons for such a review are readily apparent.

First, for most of the past four decades, threats to U.S. security from the spread of nuclear weapons have been of secondary concern to U.S. policymakers. The threat of Soviet expansionism has been the primary problem of U.S. defense and foreign policy. Nonproliferation has been a subsidiary theme, giving way at virtually every juncture to the necessities of containment. After a brief experiment in denial, the United States cooperated with Great Britain in its effort to join the nuclear club, and later assisted in the development of a secure French arsenal, all as part of the alliance against Soviet power. Decisions to ignore the nuclear weapons programs of Israel and Pakistan demonstrate, at least in part, that geopolitical advantage over the Soviet Union outweighed U.S. interests in halting the spread of nuclear arsenals.

The collapse of the Soviet state ends the requirement for a strategy of containment. Could the problem of proliferation replace the Soviet threat as a central theme and principal focus of U.S. defense and foreign policies after the Cold War? Or will it remain subsidiary—to global economic competitiveness, for example, or the pursuit of America’s regional strategic interests?
Second, and because combating proliferation has been subsidiary to the pursuit of containment, current U.S. strategy toward proliferation is not "total" in the sense that containment once was. Our approach to proliferation does not encompass all instruments of national policy. American strategy in this area today is confined essentially to a diplomatic and, to a lesser extent, a trade policy of nonproliferation. National strategy does not, as yet, encompass military planning. The U.S. military has begun to consider the military dimension of nonproliferation. The topics being studied include preemption, extending nuclear deterrence beyond Europe and Japan—or even extending "negative security assurances" to potential adversaries in order to create incentives not to remain nonnuclear weapons states. Under consideration are, for example, promises not to use nuclear weapons against nonnuclear adversaries or not to threaten the survival of a nonnuclear adversary's leaders.

The end of containment offers possibilities to broaden the national strategy toward proliferation. Will the U.S. response to the threat of proliferation evolve into a more coherent national strategy or will it remain essentially a diplomatic policy? How should defense and military planning fit in?

Third, the current approach toward proliferation also is not total in the sense of addressing all aspects of the proliferation problem. While the U.S. responded to the emerging Soviet nuclear arsenal in part with multilateral export controls on military-related technologies, the principal response was the development of a strategy of mutual deterrence and escalation control, later combined with arms control measures to reduce the risk and consequences of nuclear war. Essentially our answer to the threat of further proliferation has been confined to a policy of non-proliferation, emphasizing efforts to deny, delay, or disrupt potential proliferators' nuclear weapons programs. Without heroic measures, however, that strategy seems likely to be no more successful than controls on exports to the Soviet Union.

If nonproliferation policies fail, what will the United States do? If more than one nuclear power emerges from the former Soviet Union, how will the United States limit damage to its national security interests? If Iran or Iraq obtains the bomb, how will the United States manage threats to the free flow of oil? How should U.S. defense policy and military strategy cope with the threat of nuclear use? If U.S. forces or U.S. allies come under nuclear attack from one of these new powers, how will the United States respond? To what extent should the United States become involved in nuclear crises or wars between third parties?

Finally, the lack of an integrated strategy to cope with proliferation is reflected in the organization of the government for national security policy. Today the U.S. government lacks a coherent process for responding to proliferation issues outside the nonproliferation context. Moreover, responsibility for proliferation-related matters is scattered among offices throughout the Defense and State Departments and across the intelligence community. To date, proliferation has lacked the urgency that once impelled the United States government to design a national security establishment to fight communism. Recently the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) have established offices to coordinate proliferation-related issues within their respective bureaucracies. To what extent might concerns about proliferation motivate a reorganization of the national security policy machinery to deal with this new threat?
“THE DAY AFTER...” EXERCISES

The answers to the questions discussed above are far from obvious. The objective of "The Day After..." study was to provide national military planners with a better understanding of the principal proliferation issues that the United States will face in the next decade and a sense of the alternative strategies, policies, and options likely to be offered by the national security community, and particularly by the policy support community in Washington. An appreciation of this context should help inform defense decisions on future force structure, military strategy, and operational doctrine.

The purpose of our research effort was to gain better understanding of how the people in Washington who support the development of defense policy are likely to view the problem of nuclear proliferation in the post–Cold War world. We sought the people who write the position papers for the interagency process, who review administration policy proposals for members of Congress, who cover the defense beat for the major print media, who advise government agencies as policy experts, and who seek to influence the course of policy debate and development from public affairs institutions inside the Beltway. While these individuals do not decide policy, their influence on the first draft and their role in the day-to-day negotiation of policy within the Executive branch, between the Executive branch and Congress, and between the U.S. government and the public make them important to the formulation of policy. In our view, the perceptions of this group are worthy of study at a time when U.S. foreign and defense policy are far from being cast in stone.

To meet our objective, we sought a group of participants broadly representative of the people who directly support the development of U.S. defense policy and who are likely to participate in the future development of policy options to cope with nuclear proliferation and its consequences. Our sample was not random; we purposely sought the people who participated in our exercises. We looked for individuals from all points on the political spectrum. We sought civilians as well as military personnel, people from outside the government as well as those within, and junior as well as senior staffs. We sought participation from appropriate offices in the Joint Staff, the Air and other service staffs, OSD policy staffs, from the State Department and Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) staffs with responsibilities for nonproliferation, and from technical staffs in OSD Acquisition, the Department of Energy (DOE), and the nuclear weapons labs. We also looked for area expertise from the intelligence community, the National Defense University, other academic and public affairs institutions, and the defense consulting community. We asked for defense specialists in the White House, the relevant Congressional committee staffs, as well as the staff of individual members of Congress.

We drew upon both current staffers and those who once served in the government but are now defense consultants. We sought a broad range of views and drew upon defense analysts from the public information institutions such as the International Institute of Strategic Studies, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Natural Resources Defense Council, The Brookings Institution, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Washington Council on Nonproliferation, and the Committee for National Security. In addition we drew upon other participants not easily categorized into particular groups, as well as some foreign officials.

The research team considered a number of alternative methods to discover and explore how the Washington policy support community might approach the problems
of proliferation. One approach considered was to conduct an extensive review of the related literature including nuclear proliferation, strategic relations in the post–Cold War world, and regional security. This approach had the advantage of building on existing opinion and knowledge. The method was rejected, however, because the research team’s purview would be restricted to that small segment of the policy support community that publishes. The team also considered an extensive program of interviews that would allow examination of individuals’ views in some detail. This approach was rejected because it would take far too much time. A survey employing a questionnaire was considered briefly because it would simplify the process of comparing and contrasting views. This means was rejected because the team could not create a random sample of the relevant community; the results expressed in percentages would suggest an accuracy and precision the research team would never claim possible. Too much would depend on the wording of questions; the team would have no opportunity to follow up; and a detailed questionnaire probably would not yield many responses, while a short one would not be very useful.

The research team also examined two-sided gaming, with one group of participants playing the United States and another a new nuclear power. Here alternative situations could be explored while putting participants’ views to the test of a concrete situation as well as the views of other participants. This method was rejected because the individual game experiences might be quite different and would limit the research team’s ability to compare participants’ strategies, policies and options. Gaming would also place heavy demands on the research team acting as game control because running the games would be at least as important as observing the participants.

The selected approach was to involve a large number and wide range of defense experts in a series of case study–type exercises designed to focus debate and discussion on concrete proliferation-related problems. The basic concept was to present groups of participants with hypothetical crises and ask them to develop appropriate policy responses. Reflecting the enormous changes flowing from the political revolutions in East Asia, Europe, and the former Soviet Union between 1989 and 1991; the Persian Gulf War; and the continued military tension in Southern and Eastern Asia, four scenarios developed for the series of exercises were employed as the research team’s primary vehicle of research. While they involved particular countries and regions of concern to U.S. policymakers today, the scenarios were written so as to highlight and explore more general policy problems related to nuclear weapons proliferation.

The scenarios featured the detonation of nuclear weapons by a power other than the United States. “The Day After . . . in the ‘USSR’” was developed to examine policy issues arising from the loss of central control over nuclear forces. It involved a conflict between Russia and the other successor republics over the former Soviet nuclear arsenal. To assess problems of power projection against a regional nuclear adversary, “The Day After . . . in the Greater Middle East” posed a hypothetical U.S. military intervention against a nuclear-armed Iran to protect Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and maintain Western access to Gulf oil. To review extended deterrence as it might apply to regional security relationships in the post–Cold War era, “The Day After . . . in Korea” described a North Korean invasion of South Korea which involved the use of tactical nuclear weapons against South Korean forces. “The Day After . . . in South Asia” covered a nuclear war between India and Pakistan. The objective of this exer-
cise was to explore the possibility of an American interest in a global norm against nuclear use.  

The exercises were designed to be completed in one three-hour session. Groups of 6 to 12 participants (see Appendixes A through E), drawn from across the Washington policy support community (discussed below), acted as teams of advisors to the President of the United States in a group deliberative process akin to a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) minus the President. Team members were given Situation Reports describing events as they might be known to the participants in a real crisis and Draft Memoranda for the President intended to represent the results of lower-level staff support for the NSC meetings. The Situation Reports contained all the information participants should need and could expect to have in a fast moving crisis. The Draft Memos were intended to serve as vehicles for discussion, “strawmen” from which the teams were encouraged to depart. Two or more teams played simultaneously in each session and compared notes at appropriate points in the exercise by presenting brief oral reports to the assembled participants. Team leaders were chosen by the research team, based on their ability to run a discussion efficiently and equitably. The deliberations of each team were closely monitored by a member of the study team. This observer did not participate in the group’s discussion.

Each exercise began with an examination of the decisions confronting a U.S. President on “the day of” a pivotal change in the nuclear status quo that affects or initiates a major foreign policy crisis (see Figure 1.1). As a second pivot point, the exercise turned to “the day after” nuclear use in that crisis and explored a new set of policy choices facing the President and the nation. As a final decision point, the exercise moved to “the day before”—months or years before the envisioned “day of”—and considered the challenge of adopting policies to minimize the prospects for such scenarios and to mitigate their consequences should they occur. Participants’ decisions did not influence the progressing scenario; every team confronted exactly the same situation at each point in the exercise. This reproducibility allowed the research team to focus on observing the participants’ debate and discussion and promoted subsequent comparisons of participants’ behavior.

Each exercise was repeated several times with different groups of participants to broaden the research team’s database. At the end of each exercise series, the discussion and debate of all groups were compared and contrasted to develop a comprehensive roadmap of the alternative strategies, policies, and options covered by the participants in that series. The research team then analyzed this comprehensive picture of exercise results, abstracting and detailing alternative policy options for the major policy issue examined in that exercise, based wholly on the statements of the participants. Then the research team commented on these schools of thought, based

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3This does not constitute the full range of potential scenario topics. With additional resources, we might have examined policy issues arising from: the unconventional delivery of nuclear weapons to the United States by a regional power or terrorist group, the potential conventional defeat of U.S. forward-deployed forces by a regional nuclear power, the interplay of potential or actual chemical and nuclear weapons use in a regional conflict, or a regional nuclear ally’s first use of nuclear weapons in a variety of circumstances. The scenarios chosen for this project were selected on the basis of their implications for U.S. military planning. Given its resources, the study team chose scenarios that it believed covered the most important problems. The study team assessed that the policy issues raised by many of these other cases could be at least touched on in the series of exercises chosen.
on the research team’s own perspective. Thus this report clearly delineates, in the following chapters, what participants’ said in the exercise, the research team’s analysis of those statements, and the team’s observations on these results. Chapters Two through Five follow this pattern precisely.

PARTICIPATION

Whether we achieved a balanced representation of the Washington policy support community is for the reader to decide after reviewing Table 1.1, which displays participation in “The Day After . . .” exercises according to the institutions that comprise the Washington policy support community; examining Appendices A through F, which list the individual participants; and reading the results and analysis documented in this report.

As revealed in the table, a large number of participants were from RAND and the Air Staff. Many of the RAND participants were area specialists invited to participate because of their expertise in the region that was the focus of the particular exercise; others were invited because of their background as government officials. All were invited as individuals advising various elements of the U.S. government on foreign and defense policy matters. In the study team’s view, the participants now resident at RAND do not represent a “RAND” view because they are drawn from across the political spectrum, have a wide variety of backgrounds, expertise, and experiences, and include senior, mid-level, and junior analysts.

The Air Staff group is more problematic. It will come as no surprise to readers that its members had a preference for the use of air power over ground and sea forces, other things being equal. However, many of the participants from the OSD, Joint Staff, other DoD, RAND, public information organizations, and other defense consulting
Table 1.1
Participation in "The Day After..." Exercises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
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<th>Middle East</th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>South Asia</th>
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<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

categories had Army or Navy backgrounds, which we believe fostered a balanced discussion in the individual groups.

Our original intent was to have a level and distribution of participation approximately like that of the Greater Middle East (GME) series. That series consisted of 77 participants, split into 10 teams participating in seven sessions. The "USSR" exercise, which took place after the attempted coup against Gorbachev in August 1991 and ran until February 1992 while the issue of control over the former Soviet arsenal was a "hot topic" in Washington, involved more than three times that number because the response to our invitations far outran our expectations. In that exercise, as well as the Greater Middle East and Korea series, we found that "schools of thought" on major issues generally were defined by the end of the second session or after roughly four teams had played the exercise. After that point, the additional teams in subsequent sessions revealed new arguments for and against, perhaps a better articulation of the schools, and more details on each alternative. For this reason, and as we ran down our budget to play the extended "USSR" series, we chose to run only three sessions of the South Asia series, with 46 participants divided into seven teams.

We cannot and do not claim that our findings have statistical relevance or that the policy alternatives described in this report are the only ones that exist in the Washington policy support community. We do believe that we have uncovered the major schools of thought, that is, the ones that will dominate policy debate in Washington in at least the near future.4

4One external "reality check" on our findings is the large number of "The Day After..." exercises we ran with groups outside the Washington policy support community. The "USSR" exercise was run with more than 180 students of the National War College, a group of more than 25 Air Force national defense fellows in advanced degree programs at universities across North America, and a similar number of graduate students at Georgetown University. It was also run in Germany with a group of German defense officials and analysts, along with American military officials assigned to Europe (and some officials and analysts from Washington). The Greater Middle East exercise was run with the 18 National War College students and also played at NATO Headquarters. The Korean exercise was run with another group of approximately 25 Air Force National Defense Fellows, as well as a separate group of Intelligence analysts and social scien-
HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

The results of this study—the report of participants’ reactions to the scenarios and the description and analysis of policy options based on the study team’s review of those discussions—should be read as indications of the likely scope and nature of an emerging debate within the United States government and the larger national security community concerning the American response to the threat of nuclear proliferation. The results are not predictions of future American policy. In this report, the study team does not advocate any of the proposed options as policies that should be adopted by the U.S. government. While we sought to identify areas of consensus among the participants to gain a sense of majority, plurality, and minority opinions, our primary objective was to identify critical issues and schools of thought. We do not claim to have taken a sufficiently accurate sample of the Washington policy support community to represent the actual distribution of opinion on the issues covered in this report or the percentage that actually adheres to the schools of thought. We believe that we have represented the range of policy alternatives likely to be put forward by various elements of the government with responsibilities directly related to the problems and consequences of nuclear proliferation and by members of the broader national security community in Washington with interests in this area, and the arguments likely to be voiced for or against these options. We certainly believe that the issues raised in this study are worthy of more detailed analysis.

*The South Asian exercise was run with Ukrainian and Kazakh defense officials and analysts in Kiev and Alma-Ata. While detailed notes were not kept on these exercises, we did watch for major differences with the Washington policy support community. Somewhat to our surprise, we found no new schools of thought.*
While we have traditionally focused on deterring a unitary, rational actor applying a relatively knowable calculus of potential costs and gains, our thinking must now encompass potential instabilities within states as well as the potential threat from states or leaders who might perceive they have little to lose in employing weapons of mass destruction.


INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports the results of the first series of exercises, which examined the possibility of conflict between Russia and the other successor republics over control of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal. This exercise series consisted of eight sessions held in Washington, Santa Monica, and Munich between October 1991 and February 1992. More than 125 government officials and defense analysts, including Soviets and Germans as well as Americans, participated. (See Appendix B for a list of participants.) The exercise was also played with USAF National Defense Fellows, Georgetown University graduate students, and 168 military officers at the National Defense University.

This chapter first discusses issues of nuclear proliferation policy that arise from the disintegration of the Soviet state, the problem that motivated the development of this exercise. During the exercises, major policy decisions raised by the advancing scenario were debated by the participants and are reported and summarized next. Based on the participants' discussions, alternative U.S. policies toward the ultimate disposition of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal are described and analyzed. The chapter concludes with more general observations about the implications for American national security policy of the loss of central control over a nuclear arsenal.

SOVIET DISINTEGRATION—A "HIGH SPEED" PROLIFERATION THREAT

The disintegration of the Soviet state has created a great risk of a rapid increase in the number of nuclear powers in much shorter time than considered likely during the Cold War. This risk is a result of four factors:

1. The fractionation of the Soviet arsenal among successor states who have yet to resolve the many contentious issues raised by the collapse of the Soviet state
against the background of a great reawakening of ethnic awareness and competition
2. The possible dispersion of former Soviet nuclear scientists, technologies, materials, and even weapons at a time when their demand is strong and rising
3. The potential "demonstration effect" of fractionation on would-be nuclear powers
4. The possible reaction to these contingencies of "responsible" U.S. allies with nuclear potential whose defense policies have not been considered threats to the nonproliferation regime.

Thus, the prospect of "high speed" proliferation precipitated by the demise of the Soviet state has radically transformed the proliferation problem facing the United States.

The potential for ethnic and nationalist conflict exacerbated or unleashed by the end of the Soviet Union and the Cold War intersects with the problem of proliferation in several respects. The first intersection stems from the fact that at least strategic nuclear weapons are based in four former Soviet republics (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan). Western confidence in "central" control arrangements over these forces has diminished steadily since the failed coup attempt in August 1991 and the disintegration of the Soviet Union into independent republics. Events since then demonstrate the existence of serious political, economic, territorial, and even military tensions among these new states; particularly between Russia and Ukraine, and potentially between the Slavic republics and Kazakhstan. Today, and at least in the near term, the security of some or all of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal is at risk.

Carefully wrought agreements on the status of Soviet nuclear forces worked out by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Minsk and Alma-Ata in December 1991 and since, deferred many important details to future negotiations. In the meantime, the nuclear republics agreed at Alma-Ata "not to be the first to use nuclear weapons"—presumably against each other. Strategic arms control agreements arrived at with the United States during the winter and spring of 1992 committed the republics to consolidate the former Soviet arsenal under the physical control of Russia, remove all nuclear weapons from the territories of the non-Russian republics, and ratification of the Nonproliferation Treaty by Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus as nonnuclear weapons states. Dismantling of strategic nuclear forces in the non-Russian republics has begun and will continue until 1996.

While the Russian republic has assumed formal control over the institutions by which nuclear weapons were physically controlled by the former Soviet Union (the military and the KGB), its grip is tenuous and its apparent preference to dominate the command structure is under challenge from at least some of the other republics. Indeed by administrative and other means, the non-Russian republics maintain some degree of control over the disposition, if not the actual use, of strategic nuclear forces on their territories. Whether the CIS member states can work out command arrangements that maintain the former Soviet arsenal under a unified command structure remains to be seen. If they cannot, then the willingness of Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan to follow through on their promises to rid themselves of
nuclear weapons and join the Nonproliferation Treaty as nonnuclear states may diminish.

A second intersection of ethnic conflict and proliferation results from the distribution of former Soviet facilities directly and indirectly related to nuclear weapons production. Of immediate concern is the possession by Ukraine and Kazakhstan (in addition to Russia) of many of the key facilities that comprise a nuclear weapons production complex. Instead of being faced with the typical decision of a potential proliferator to actively pursue a nuclear weapons program, Ukrainians and Kazakhks must decide if it would be prudent to dismantle facilities they already possess. As a matter of declaratory policy, both republics appear to intend to dismantle. Should political relations with Russia deteriorate or the export of nuclear materials be seen as a viable source of foreign exchange, however, they could still reverse their decisions.

Third, the collapse of the Soviet Union may qualitatively change the opportunities open to states interested in the nuclear weapons option. The availability of nuclear weapons-related expertise, technology, equipment, and materials is bound to increase. Indeed press reports suggest that this increase is already happening. Former members of the Soviet production complex are bound to emigrate and are likely to look for employment in their field. In its January 11, 1992, edition, Jane's Defence Weekly estimates that some 30,000 skilled weapons technologists were involved in the design of Soviet nuclear weapons. As the economies of the former Soviet republics continue to deteriorate, what will become of these experts?

Some of these experts may find lucrative employment in India, Pakistan, North Korea, Libya, or Iraq, and it is not inconceivable that the former Soviet nuclear weapons institutions themselves may "contract out." Former Soviet republics may be unable to stop black market trade in nuclear materials. For reasons of state, some republics may become engaged in such trade. For example, an Islamic Uzbekistan may consider the establishment of a uranium trade with its Moslem neighbors to be in the national interest, both politically and economically. Most of the East European countries have the industrial and technical capacity to pursue serious nuclear programs and acquire militarily viable nuclear arsenals well within a 10-year time frame. If they are rebuffed in their efforts to join NATO and find that CSCE does not meet their security concerns to the East, Czech, Polish, and Hungarian leaders would be imprudent if they did not consider the nuclear option and the use of expertise from their former associates in Soviet industry. In short, a ready international market exists for the Soviet nuclear weapons complex.

Should any of the threats described above be realized, they might raise yet another set of proliferation problems with U.S. allies. During the Cold War, the American "nuclear umbrella" was extended to Germany, Japan, and other allies to deter a world-wide threat from the Soviet Union and, not incidentally, to reduce their incentives to become nuclear powers. Although Germany is prohibited from possessing nuclear weapons by the terms of the Brussels (WEU) Treaty and Japan prohibits such arms in its constitution, these constraints to some extent are self-imposed. American security guarantees, based in part on a willingness to employ U.S. nuclear forces on an ally’s behalf, were a credible substitute for national nuclear arsenals because a strong case could be made that the assurances were in America’s direct interest.

Today there is no global threat to replace the Soviet Union—the remaining and emerging threats are purely regional, arising from instability in Eastern Europe and
Central Asia. Future crises of vital concern to American allies are unlikely to pose threats to the U.S. anywhere near the scale of the old Soviet threat. This geopolitical reality calls into question the willingness of the U.S. to threaten nuclear use against would-be aggressors and undermines the logic of extended deterrence that operated during the Cold War. Should the U.S. guarantee against security threats arising from instability in the former Soviet empire or elsewhere seem incredible, former American “protectorates” may feel compelled to assume greater control over their own defense and security. In these circumstances, Germany and Japan would be bound to reconsider decisions to deny themselves nuclear forces. Thus, the loss of central control over the former Soviet arsenal might lead to a more highly proliferated world in a relatively short period of time and by several different routes.

THE EXERCISE EXPERIENCE: OVERVIEW

In STEP ONE: The Day Of . . . , participants addressed a rapidly deteriorating political situation between Russia and Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan in which differences over the fate of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal play a central role. (The Annex to this report contains a complete copy of the exercise materials.) Teams developed an overall perspective on the situation, considered the issues and options for presentation to the President and, where consensus could be found, recommended decisions for the President to make.

In STEP TWO: The Day After . . . , participants were convened immediately following Russia’s use of nuclear weapons against Ukraine in the context of a crisis over control of the non-Russian nuclear arsenals. Again, the teams were tasked to help the President get perspective on the situation and decide how to respond to the crisis.

In STEP THREE: The Day Before . . . , the exercise moved back in time to before the crisis (i.e., to today). In consideration of the “lessons learned” in the two previous moves, teams sought to reach consensus on appropriate options to be presented to the President for those key nuclear proliferation-related policy issues that should be faced today.

STEP ONE: “THE DAY OF”

Situation Report

It is May 1993. The disintegration of central “Soviet” authority has continued unabated since August 1991. A loose and uncertain confederation of the former Soviet republics has taken its place, with each newly independent republic vying for control of the Union’s resources. While a full range of political, economic, and military issues divides the successor states, control over the former Soviet nuclear arsenal has become the most important. Although the non-Russian republics have agreed to the gradual removal and destruction of tactical weapons, Ukraine and Kazakhstan have proved unwilling to cede control over the nuclear stockpiles in their countries. They are especially unwilling to turn weapons over to Russia, which both suspect of hegemonic aspirations. In addition, both Ukraine and Kazakhstan possess elements of the former Soviet nuclear weapons and delivery vehicle production complexes, which raises questions of their long-term role in regional and international security.
Some U.S. intelligence community reports suggest that Ukraine may be developing an indigenous nuclear weapons capability.

On paper, the confederation commands the former Soviet military, including its nuclear arsenal, through a Council of the Republics. A Soviet President continues to chair the Council, a body whose power and decision-making procedures continue to evolve. In theory, ultimate command authority rests with this committee (see Figure 2.1). The Council includes the heads of state of each republic as well as representatives of the former Soviet defense ministry and general staff. Major decisions affecting all members are supposed to be made by consensus.

The command, control, and communications systems of the former Soviet military taken over by the Union are for the most part in Russian hands. The location of key satellite downlinks and warning radars in several non-Russian republics, however, has caused uncertainty as to how well these systems might work in a crisis. The Washington-Moscow “hotline” appears to be under the control of the former Soviet general staff. Technical and procedural means of nuclear weapons control remain under general staff control. An August 1991 agreement among the republics to put nuclear weapons control issues on hold led to physical control over the nuclear arsenal being distributed between military units of the Union and the republics. Custody of nuclear weapons, delivery vehicles, lower-level command centers, and military bases is “shared” between Union and local military units. The “Russification” of the Union military has given the Russian republic de facto control over nuclear forces within its territory. In the non-Russian republics, republic authorities at least can stop the movement of weapons from their territories. Ukraine and Kazakhstan have resisted efforts by the Russians to increase the size of the Union’s nuclear garrisons in the non-Russian republics.

The republics have been engaged in far-reaching talks in Kiev to settle their mutual problems. In April, the negotiations became stalemated, with the major obstacle to agreement the control over nuclear forces. Russia has demanded that the system be highly centralized with only Russia having a veto over nuclear use. The other republics have strongly resisted this position. They favor a more complex system, with permanent Russian membership and a unanimous vote required for any use.

A second problem has been the Russian claim that it will be “unnecessary” for any of the confederation’s strategic nuclear weapons to be based in the other republics. Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan have indicated a willingness to consider such a move but insist on “very deep” reductions in the confederation’s arsenal (to perhaps 1000 weapons) as a price for this concession.

The scramble for assets in the Kiev negotiations has brought other serious differences of opinion between the republics into the open. Disputes over their respective borders and rights, based on ethnic ties, historic claims, and Soviet law are reaching a state many analysts consider unresolvable through the political process. The Russian position has been particularly worrisome to most of the other republics; for example, at times Russian leaders have suggested that it has “legitimate historical rights” to as much as a third of the territory within Ukraine’s 1991 borders.

The shared custody arrangements at nuclear facilities in the non-Russian republics have become an important element of the non-Russian republics’ posture in the Kiev negotiations for symbolic and practical reasons. High-level officials in these re-
publics have stated openly that this arrangement assures that any border disputes with Russia will be negotiated "between equals" and "decided on merit." Ukrainian and Kazakh leaders also have claimed ownership of the nuclear weapons production facilities on their territory. Some analysts see this move as yet another way to improve the republics' bargaining position. Others believe that Ukraine intends to become a regional nuclear power to counterbalance Russia.

Facing the prospect of complete chaos, the republics have agreed to a final round of negotiations. All sides seem to recognize that although the talks appear hopelessly deadlocked, outright failure at this time would be politically disastrous, and might include an interrepublic war. Nevertheless, rumors abound that the Russians have set a deadline for the end of May, after which they will abandon the negotiations if no agreement has been reached.

**Patterns of Response to the Situation**

Participant teams were asked to identify key diplomatic, economic, and military policy issues facing the U.S. in the former Soviet Union, develop options toward the interrepublic negotiations, and if possible agree on a recommended course of action. They were given a "Draft Memo for the President" as a starting point for discussion. Two issues dominated the teams' discussions:
1. The status of command and control over the former Soviet nuclear arsenal

**Status of Command and Control over the Former Soviet Nuclear Arsenal.** Before they began their assignment, most teams reviewed the situation. Of paramount interest was the status of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal. Discussion revolved around four questions:

1. **Command Authority.** Which individual(s) or what institution(s) have legitimate authority over nuclear forces? Who gives the release order to the forces? To whom or what political authority does the military chain of command report? From whom are they taking orders? The Soviet president? The Russian president? The Council? Do the leaders of the non-Russian republics have independent authority over any forces?

2. **Procedural Control.** What military institutions maintain and oversee the former Soviet technical systems of control? What institutions manage the procedures and regulations by which control is maintained? How do the non-Russian republics' indigenous chains of command relate to those of the confederation?

3. **Physical Custody.** To whom and whose security forces are nuclear weapons entrusted? How do the Russified confederation and non-Russian republic units interact? Does the situation vary by republic? By site?

4. **Weapons Distribution.** Where are the weapons? Have tactical weapons been removed from all but Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus? How can we be sure? What about the nuclear weapons production facilities?

**Central Control or a Stable Political-Military Balance?** Virtually everyone agreed that the primary goal of U.S. policy toward the emerging crisis was to avoid a civil war and prevent nuclear use in the former Soviet Union. But after consensus on this overarching objective, a split emerged. Roughly half the participants maintained that U.S. policy should focus on promoting "central" control of the former Soviet arsenal; the other half argued that establishing a stable political military balance among the republics was more important, even if the result was two or more independent arsenals.

Those favoring the assurance of central control as the immediate policy objective argued that a fractionation of the former Soviet arsenal threatened the viability of the nonproliferation regime. In their view, if any or all of the non-Russian republics emerged as nuclear powers, it would have a powerful demonstration effect on other potential nuclear powers. U.S. acceptance of a Ukrainian or Kazakh nuclear arsenal—justified at least in part on the basis of security requirements vis-à-vis Russia—would tends to legitimize the nuclear option in general.

This group also maintained that new arsenals would exacerbate Eurasian political instabilities and could trigger a nuclear "domino effect." A nuclear-armed Ukraine conceivably could lead to nuclear weapons programs in Eastern Europe or even Germany. A Kazakh bomb could contribute to the nuclearization of the Middle East and undermine the prospects for nuclear stability in South Asia. Moreover, a diffusion of former Soviet nuclear personnel, materials, and technology would significantly increase the black market opportunities for would-be nuclear powers around the world.
Most in the group favoring centralization argued that the U.S. should pressure the non-Russian republics to give up any independent nuclear option and join the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) as nonnuclear weapons states. This group would condition recognition and aid to the non-Russian republics, and their acceptance in the international community, on denuclearization. But questions arose as to what was meant by “central” control, whether it could be achieved without triggering a civil war, what leverage the U.S. could use to achieve such an end state, and whether it was necessarily desirable.

Three central control options were discussed. The first, a return to “Soviet” control, faded from discussion as the series of exercises proceeded through the winter of 1991–1992. Whatever the advantages of that arrangement for U.S.-Soviet strategic stability, as real-world events unfolded in the former Soviet Union after the failed coup of August 1991, the option was increasingly recognized to be an impossibility.

Discussion of a variant of this “Soviet” option also faded quickly. It involved the republics giving the Soviet or Union President executive authority over the arsenal and retaining the former Soviet General Staff’s day-to-day management of the force and an allocation of war powers similar to that of the U.S. President and Congress. The former Soviet President would have been given the authority to repel a sudden attack, but in general the war power would reside with the Council of Republics. As Mr. Gorbachev’s power waned in the real world, this option disappeared from discussion.

Two other central control options were discussed throughout the exercise series—Russification and “shared” control.

Those who favored Russification argued that only one nuclear power should emerge from the former Soviet Union and that Russia was the only “logical” successor to the former Soviet arsenal. They maintained that the Russians had been our real counterparts in the superpower rivalry during the Cold War and that the Russians “had learned the language” of nuclear competition. They had confidence that the Russians understood deterrence in terms we could understand and that Russian expectations concerning such matters as nuclear arms control coincided with our own. In contrast, they feared that the non-Russian republics would not be “responsible” nuclear powers and doubted the rationality (in our terms) of their leaders and/or their ability to manipulate the nuclear threat without precipitating a war.

In addition, some argued that the long-term interests of the U.S. in Eurasia lie with Russia. They saw Russia as one of America’s partners in the maintenance of international security, while they tended to view Ukraine and Kazakhstan with suspicion as potential threats to regional stability. This group sympathized with arguments that Russia could only play the role of security partner if it were not “hamstrung” by requirements to subordinate its military power to some collective or stymied by nuclear rivals on its borders.

While many agreed that Russification might be the most desirable alternative for any number of the reasons discussed above, considerable doubts were expressed as to the feasibility of this policy. In particular, a concern arose that any overt U.S. moves toward Russification would make the non-Russian republics even more reluctant to give up their own nuclear weapons options. In their view, pressuring Ukraine to give up its nuclear forces would be counterproductive. If the Russians were to interpret our support of Russification as a green light to coerce the non-Russian republics into
giving up the weapons on their territories and perhaps move to forcibly take possession, U.S. policy could precipitate the civil war and nuclear use it sought to avoid.

The final option discussed by those favoring central control of the former Soviet arsenal was making some variant of the scenario's "shared" command arrangements work. Proponents of this option asserted that Russification was infeasible (because the non-Russian republics would not give up their principal means of balancing Russia) or not necessarily in the U.S. interest (because a hamstrung Russia might be the answer to fears of a resurgent Russia with aspirations in Eastern Europe). They agreed, however, that a fractionation of the arsenal was too damaging to the non-proliferation regime and U.S. interests. The only way to reconcile these factors and maintain centralized control was to give the Russian and non-Russian republics a say in the disposition and use of the arsenal.

The proposal discussed above to give the Soviet president executive authority in some respects was a halfway house between shared control and a return to the Soviet system. As Mr. Gorbachev's power waned, discussion of shared control options focused on the Council of Republics. The so-called "NATO model" often was discussed as a starting point for more detailed analysis of shared control options. But others pointed out the option's problems. Some doubted that "multi-key" political arrangements were possible and questioned whether the distrustful republics could ever have confidence in any underlying technical control system. Others argued that such schemes were inherently unstable. Still others suggested that the Russians would never agree to arrangements that almost guaranteed a decisionmaking deadlock in crisis.

Those who emphasized the promotion of a stable balance of power among the former Soviet republics argued that if the U.S. were to push for central control it inadvertently could precipitate a civil war. In their view, the non-Russian republics had legitimate security concerns vis-à-vis the Russians that would have to be addressed if we were to have any confidence in whatever denuclearization plans they might agree to—or even get the non-Russian republics to the negotiating table. Isolating Ukraine or Kazakhstan by insisting on denuclearization before recognition, aid, or acceptance in the international community might make them less willing to give up their nuclear option. This group argued that given their indigenous nuclear weapons and delivery systems production capabilities, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan could become nuclear powers even if they agreed to give up their share of the former Soviet nuclear weapons stockpile. But others expressed doubts as to the ability of the U.S. to persuade the Russians to allow independent arsenals or to the stability or desirability of multiparty nuclear deterrence.

Three options were discussed by this group. The first was aimed at addressing the non-Russian republics' feelings of insecurity by offering some form of Western security guarantees in return for their denuclearization. Adherents to this proposal argued that central control schemes were unworkable but that fractionation quickly would get out of control and lead inevitably to civil war. In their view, only western involvement in the security of the non-Russian republics could convince Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus to give up their nuclear options.

The principal difficulty with this option was feasibility. Precisely what guarantees would the Ukrainians, for example, want? How would they be made credible? Who would extend these guarantees? How would the Russians react? Would such ar-
rangements be credible to the non-Russians if Russia were to be one of the guarantors? And above all, would the American public support the extension of any such guarantees, regardless of whether they were unilateral or part of a multilateral scheme?

The second option discussed was “fractionation.” Those who put this option forward maintained that fractionation was the inevitable outcome of the disintegration of the Soviet state. They also argued that Russia might need a counterbalance to assure that it did not become a regional threat. And they asserted that multipolar nuclear deterrence could be made stable. They favored efforts to persuade the Russians to learn to accept the inevitability of fractionation and live with a nuclear-armed Ukraine. But others doubted that fractionation could be achieved peacefully, that the Russians would accept it as inevitable, or that it could be a stable end state.

The third option was the same shared control scheme discussed by those who viewed efforts to bolster central control as the primary objective of U.S. policy in the near term. The same rationales were put forward and the same doubts raised.

**Trends in the Team Discussions**

Figure 2.2 provides an outline of the policy options distilled from the group discussion of Step One. The dark solid lines and boxes indicate majority agreement. Although those who favored central control as the basic theme of U.S. policy and those who instead would emphasize a stable political-military balance in the former Soviet Union (FSU) both discussed the shared control option, in fact no consensus

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**Figure 2.2—“The Day After... in the 'USSR'”—Step One Roadmap**
emerged. In the early exercise sessions, there may have been a tendency toward a return to "Soviet" control. In the middle sessions, there was more interest in exploring shared control arrangements. In the final sessions, teams looked more favorably on Russification.

In our view, events in the former Soviet Union affected the participants. In October, few predicted how rapidly Soviet institutions would collapse; many clung to the belief that the Union was salvageable and Mr. Gorbachev would survive. In November, many hoped that some form of confederation would be viable. By December, the signs of chaos suggested that the window of opportunity for Russification was closing fast.

In fact no consensus emerged from our sessions. Although the idea of reasserting Soviet control faded fast and virtually no one believed the option to extend Western security guarantees to the non-Russian republics was feasible, the three remaining options were put forward in every session. Indeed, overall support was split roughly equally between Russification, shared control, and fractionation.

STEP TWO: "THE DAY AFTER"

Situation Report

In spite of much apprehension and tension, the Kiev negotiations continued through the summer of 1993 with occasional periods of progress but no resolution of the most contentious issues. By mid-August it seemed certain that the negotiations would finally and irreversibly collapse.

Late in August, in response to Chinese military moves toward Mongolia, the Russian government announced a partial mobilization of its forces in the Far East. U.S. intelligence detected these preparations, followed shortly by similar moves in Ukraine and Kazakhstan. In private conversations with western military representatives, Russian officials expressed concern that the Chinese might be in league with Ukrainian and Kazakh "fascists." At roughly the same time, U.S. intelligence assets detected changes in nuclear command arrangements indicating that the Russian republic had assumed control of the nuclear forces within its territory as well as the former Soviet ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) force.

In the early hours of September 10, with a crisis in the Far East growing and a formal Ukrainian withdrawal from the Kiev negotiations expected at any time, Ukrainian and Russified Soviet military units clashed at tactical nuclear weapon sites, the long-range bomber base at Vinnitsa, and two ICBM fields in the Ukraine. There are conflicting reports on who attempted to seize the weapons first. Half the tactical weapons sites fell to the numerically superior Ukrainian forces, but the ICBM sites were still under Russian control. By midday the bomber base at Vinnitsa was in Ukrainian hands. Fighting continued at nuclear sites and facilities across Ukraine for the rest of the day.

Late that night the Russian government sent Ukraine and Kazakhstan the following ultimatum: "Russia cannot accept the appearance on its borders of nuclear-armed states which have shown hostile intent. The Russian government will accept the total independence of Ukraine and Kazakhstan only if both relinquish control over all nuclear weapons on their territory and transition to nonnuclear weapons—state status."
Further, the Russian government demands that the ultimate borders between the three states should be subject to arbitration."

At this point U.S. intelligence reported indications that within 24 hours the Ukrainians would likely complete preparations to equip as many as a half-dozen bombers with nuclear weapons. It also reported that the Russians had moved to seize nuclear weapons sites in Belarus and Kazakhstan. By midday on September 11, the Russians had gained control of all but two sites in Kazakhstan, but as many as 50 tactical nuclear weapons had fallen into Kazakh hands.

At 1500 EST on September 12, the White House received a message from the Russian republic via the hotline announcing that a single nuclear weapon would be detonated "at a very high altitude in the general region of Kiev" at around 2330 Moscow time (1530 EST). The message promised there would be "no direct loss of life" as a consequence of the explosion and that its purpose was to end the crisis that had grown out of the failure of the Kiev negotiations for which the blame rested with certain non-Russian republics. Simultaneously, the Russian republic's ambassador to the United States met with the Secretary of State to explain a long list of grievances with Ukraine and Kazakhstan and request full U.S. support in Russia's efforts to "quench the threat of explosive nuclear proliferation" and restrain China's "imperial ambitions."

An urgent appeal by the U.S. president, calling on Russia to delay the warning shot, went unheeded. At 23:15 Moscow time, an SS-25 launch from the missile complex at Yoshkar Ola was detected by the Defense Support Program (DSP) early warning satellite system. The direction of the flight was plotted as south-southwest toward central Ukraine. At 23:30, a single nuclear weapon detonated 300 kilometers above the surface of the earth about 30 kilometers south of Kiev. The flash was visible throughout Europe and over much of the Middle East. The yield was estimated at roughly 300 kilotons. The telephone and power grids for Kiev and surrounding regions failed from electro-magnetic pulse (EMP) effects.

At midnight Moscow time (1600 EST), the President received a message from the Russian president providing further explanation of the warning shot. The message states that Ukrainian forces had attempted to seize control of confederation nuclear weapons and that Ukraine had been given 48 hours "to allow responsible authorities to assume control of all nuclear forces."

A message from the Ukrainian ambassador to the U.N. and normally reliable sources strongly deny that Ukraine made the first move in this crisis. Reports from these and other sources suggest that Russian forces had attempted to forcibly remove nuclear weapons from Ukrainian storage bunkers as a prelude to demands for territorial concessions—and that it was this action that triggered Ukraine’s reactions.

The U.S. government now believes that the Russian detonation was followed by a direct call from the Russians to the Ukrainian president insisting that the Ukrainians withdraw their forces from all nuclear sites "or face the most serious consequences." The Ukrainian President bluntly replied that he would not be blackmailed by a "new imperialist Russia." Apparently he also hinted at the existence of other nuclear weapons in Ukrainian possession independent of the former Soviet arsenal. This exchange may explain the continued activity at the Vinnitsa air base, where it appears the Ukrainians are preparing to equip SU-24s with nuclear weapons.
Patterns of Response to the Situation

Participant teams were asked to identify key diplomatic, economic and military policy issues facing the U.S. in the nuclear crisis, develop policy options in support of crisis decisionmaking, and if possible agree on a recommended course of action. They were given a “Draft Memo for the President” as a starting point for discussion. The teams discussions covered three issues:

1. A retrospective look at the discussions in Step One
2. How to deal with China
3. Whether to withdraw from the crisis or remain engaged.

Looking Back to Step One. Participants recognized that the nature of The Day After . . . exercise technique gives no effect to the participants’ Step One decisions in Step Two. Nevertheless the first reaction of many teams was that they should have tried harder in Step One. The point was not so much that any particular policy option discussed in Step One was now recognized as superior to the others; it was more a sense that if the U.S. and its allies could come to a consensus on one option the chances that Step Two would ever occur would be diminished significantly.

Dealing with China. Most teams spent very little time discussing China. All agreed that the U.S. ought to try to “call China off,” given the Russians’ “loose trigger finger,” but they found no good options. Some advocated moving U.S. naval and strategic air forces within striking distance of China, but all agreed that this tactic was a bluff. Some were willing, but most participants did not want to risk having their bluff called. Others suggested that a high-ranking U.S. official be sent to Beijing to tell the Chinese they were miscalculating if they thought they could take advantage of Russia’s weakened position. Most, however, were skeptical of this option, arguing that the Chinese had already made that calculation, and it would take more than talk to get them to change their minds. This attitude led to consideration of various sanctions, but few believed these would affect the Chinese before they made their move. In frustration, the teams turned to the Russo-Ukrainian crisis.

Withdrawal or Engagement. The objective of U.S policy was the subject of much debate. A substantial minority started and ended discussion with the proposition that the overriding goal should be to avoid a nuclear attack on the U.S. This group saw Russia’s nuclear use and Ukraine’s likely retaliation as evidence that both leaderships had slipped the bounds of rationality. Given that condition, they argued that any conceivable form of U.S. intervention held too great a risk of dragging the U.S. into the war and inciting one side or the other to attack the U.S. or its allies. In their view, the U.S. could not afford to run the risks of nuclear attack that went along with an activist policy. In the words of one team’s oral report to the participants, this group advocated the U.S. “going into a fatal position.” They urged the U.S. to stay out of the conflict. But questions were raised by many as to whether the U.S. could afford to be aloof from the most serious world crisis since World War II, and whether by standing by as two powers fought a nuclear war the U.S. would not legitimate nuclear use or encourage other nations to solve their problems in a similar fashion, and thus only hasten the day when the U.S. might itself be threatened with nuclear attack.

Based on the questions noted above, a majority of participants were at least willing to examine a U.S. objective to prevent any further nuclear use by Russia or Ukraine.
This group considered a U.S. policy of engagement to reestablish deterrence between Russia and Ukraine, to attempt to restore the rationality of the two sides. Three options were discussed: taking sides with one or the other party to unambiguously tip the military balance and put an end to the problem for decades to come, not taking sides but imposing peace on the antagonists, or mediating between Russia and Ukraine.

The proposal for the U.S. to "take sides" was based on the idea that the crisis could only be solved by deciding whether Ukraine ought to be a nuclear power and backing that decision with U.S. military force if necessary. It was also argued that this option would solve the problem created by disintegration of the Soviet Union "once and for all." But debate quickly developed over whom the U.S. should back. To some it was obvious. Side with Russia, for the same reasons put forward in favor of Russification in Step One. Paradoxically, in several teams individuals asserted that the Russians’ first use showed why the Ukrainians should not be permitted to have a nuclear arsenal. (They appeared to believe that Ukraine had moved first, precipitating the crisis.) Such statements provoked others to argue that the U.S. could hardly side with the first user, and from a moral standpoint perhaps the U.S. ought to side with Ukraine. (Some of these participants believed that Russia had precipitated the crisis; others argued that Russia’s first use was unjustified regardless of who moved first.) But few were willing to oppose the nuclear power that had thousands of warheads pointed at America.

The feasibility of taking sides was also discussed in purely military terms. Everyone agreed that the U.S. had no hope of destroying Russia’s diversified nuclear forces, but an attack on Ukraine’s strategic air and missile fields was considered briefly by some. A conventional strike was ruled out as unlikely to succeed, risking an unacceptable Ukrainian retaliation (even one detonation in the U.S. was unacceptable), causing some to wonder aloud if a capable U.S. ballistic missile defense might make conventional attack options more attractive. But nuclear strikes—however successful—were judged politically unacceptable. Not only could the U.S. not join Russia in nuclear strikes on Ukraine, but any U.S. nuclear use unprovoked by a nuclear attack on the U.S., its forces, or its friends was considered likely to legitimate nuclear use generally and undermine efforts to control proliferation worldwide.

This discussion led many to reconsider a variation of the “security assurances” option of Step One. It was suggested that the U.S. tell the Russians that the U.S. agrees to Russification of the former Soviet arsenal—but not by force of nuclear arms—and ask them to stand down while the U.S. offers the Ukrainians U.S. security guarantees in return for their denuclearization. The option was attractive to many participants, but most questioned its political feasibility. Few believed that an America unwilling to extend unilateral guarantees to Ukraine in the relative peace of Step One would be politically capable of doing so in the midst of a nuclear war. And most doubted that a multilateral guarantee could be fashioned in time and feared that such a guarantee would cause a very nervous Russia to feel surrounded by hostile powers.

Dissatisfaction with the feasibility or desirability of taking sides in the conflict led some to consider a policy whereby the United States would impose a solution to the crisis on both parties. Participants recognized that the viability of a policy to “impose peace” depended on the U.S. having the leverage and will to achieve such an outcome. Discussion revealed that participants were doubtful of either. No one believed that the U.S. was prepared to interpose its forces between those of Ukraine.
and Russia and act as a "peacemaker," even if an interposition were possible. The idea of threatening the next party to use nuclear weapons with U.S. nuclear retaliation was dismissed quickly as a bluff and worse than taking sides, as it would place the U.S. at risk of nuclear strikes from Ukraine and Russia.

The idea of imposing peace also led to discussion of the security assurances option. In this variant, the U.S. would threaten some form of military action unless the fighting stopped but offer U.S. security guarantees to Ukraine in return for Ukraine’s denuclearization. This option was considered to be riskier than the version discussed under "taking sides." Few participants believed the United States had the political will necessary to carry off what most participants believed was a colossal bluff.

The lack of feasible military options caused most participants to focus on a policy based on diplomatic solutions arrived at through mediation. But, again, they had difficulty finding adequate U.S. leverage. Many doubted that political and economic sanctions or promises would have much effect on two powers locked in a life-or-death struggle. The principal option discussed under this policy was to bring the nuclear arsenals under international control to enable the protagonists to have some assurances that their opponents would not brandish nuclear weapons at a later date. But which arsenals? And under whose control? The Ukrainians seemed unlikely to hand over their arsenal unless Russia did the same. The Russians were unlikely to agree, and no one believed that China, the U.S., Great Britain, and France would agree to do so to induce the Russians to follow suit. The institutional basis of control also was problematic. Unilateral control under the U.S. was considered politically unacceptable. Going to the UN Security Council was unlikely because Russia and possibly China could veto any proposal. It was doubted that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), or North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) were equipped to take on the role.

Also some discussion during the early exercise sessions concerned trying to foster confederal control over the arsenal. But as the institutions of central Soviet authority disintegrated in the real world, this alternative disappeared from the agenda.

The debate over a policy of mediation also led to consideration of the security assurances option. In this variant, the U.S. would make no threats to either side. It would only offer, perhaps in conjunction with its NATO allies, to assure Ukrainian security in return for Ukraine's denuclearization. But just as when the option was discussed under "taking sides" and "imposing peace," considerable doubts were expressed about feasibility, and in particular about the willingness of U.S. allies to join in the extension of security guarantees.

**Trends in the Team Discussions**

Participants followed a similar pattern of discussion throughout this exercise series (see Figure 2.3). Some groups would decide early to stay out of the conflict altogether, but most went on to assess a strategy to reestablish a deterrence relationship between Russia and Ukraine. Few could reach a solid conclusion on any policy under that strategy, although virtually everyone touched on some variant of the security assurances option. In frustration, many decided to stay out of the conflict altogether.
In the end a vocal minority favored staying out, whereas the majority favored attempts to reestablish inter-republic deterrence but could not settle on any one policy or option.

STEP THREE: "THE DAY BEFORE"

Relations with the Non-Russian Republics

Perhaps the most important and certainly the most widely held lesson participants took away from the exercise was that to have leverage over non-Russian republics such as Ukraine, the U.S. first needed to establish relationships with them. Participants were concerned that the Cold War had led U.S. policymakers and experts to focus on the Soviet politics of Moscow, to the neglect of the regions. As the Soviet Union disappeared, the United States found itself with few experts on the politics of the Central Asian republics, Ukraine, or even Russia. In the exercise, America's lack of working relationships with Kazakhstan and Ukraine led to a sense of unease among the participants. They had no confidence in their understanding of how the Ukrainians or Kazakhs thought about the future of the former Soviet Union or even how power was distributed within the individual republics. Also they did not believe that the U.S. would have more than a very narrow set of contacts in the republics' governments. Consequently, participants found it difficult to assess the benefits, costs, and risks of alternative strategies and policies. Looking to today, participants believed it is vitally important for the U.S. to establish a broad range of ties with the non-Russian republics.
Moreover, participants felt that it is important to act immediately to ease the worst difficulties of the transitions from Soviet society to new forms of government. Food aid was the topmost priority. The republics' new leaders would have difficulties in trying to figure out the post-Soviet Union even if the economy and food distribution system worked well. It was argued that if people in Moscow and major cities across the former Soviet Union were to go hungry for too long, the possibilities for political violence in and between the republics would quickly become unmanageable.

The Rationality of Non-Russian Nuclear Arsenals

While many participants went into the exercise assuming that Russia was the only appropriate successor to the former Soviet nuclear arsenal, doubted that the non-Russian republics would desire arsenals of their own, and believed that the non-Russian republics could be persuaded to give up the nuclear arsenals on their soil in return for western recognition and aid, most left the exercise believing that powerful incentives existed for the non-Russian republics to hold onto the weapons.

Nuclear weapons are a status symbol. The former Soviet Union consisted of 14 republics—few can name them all, but many Westerners now recognize the existence of Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus. Custody of the weapons gives the republics influence in their negotiations with Russia over the fate of the Union's property as well as in their interactions with the outside world. Finally, nuclear weapons help guarantee the non-Russian republics' security, providing a certain guarantee of protection against possible Russian coercion. This perception probably will be enhanced to the extent that Ukraine, Kazakhstan, or Belarus sense that outside powers are tending to side with Russia on issues vital to the non-Russian republics' security. Giving the weapons up, without an adequate security substitute, leaves the non-Russian republics more subject to Russian pressures. Keeping the weapons assures them a place at the table.

Political Stability and the Stability of Nuclear Command

No matter what arrangements for command and control of the former Soviet arsenal they preferred, participants believed the stability of that arrangement would depend on political stability among the republics. In the near term, transitions from the current process of disintegration of the Soviet Union and its nuclear command structure to the various preferred end states require comity among the republics. And if a stable command scheme can be achieved, its longevity depends on a continuation of that comity.

But having agreed that political stability was a precondition of command stability, participants did not come to a consensus on the preferred outcome. They were split roughly evenly among making some confederal command arrangement work, pursuing a peaceful Russification of the former Soviet nuclear force, or controlling the fractionation of the force. Few participants thought fractionation ideal. Those who favored controlled fractionation believed that multiple nuclear powers were the inevitable result of Soviet disintegration and that working to control the process was preferable to chaos. Those who favored confederation feared fractionation but believed that Russification was undesirable or not feasible. The advocates of Russification also feared fractionation, but they maintained that a confederal scheme was inherently unstable.
Increasing U.S. Influence over the Outcome

**Western Solidarity.** Participants were frustrated not only by the minimal relationships between the U.S. and the non-Russian republics but also by their lack of diplomatic, economic, and military options. As noted above, they favored increased economic and political ties with Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus, but they also put a premium on Western unity in relations with these states. Participants were adamant in their belief that whatever position the West takes toward the status of the former Soviet arsenal, it should adopt a united front. If the West is not united on this issue, participants feared that the former Soviet republics would play the Western powers against one another, increasing the risks of an undesirable outcome or even war.

**United States Involvement in Inter-Republic Negotiations.** Most participants believed it important for the United States to become involved in efforts to stabilize command and control of the former Soviet arsenal. But unlike Step One, at this point in the exercise participants were willing to explore both a policy that conditioned U.S. aid, recognition, and acceptance in the international community on the non-Russian republics' denuclearization and one in which the U.S. would offer security assurances to achieve that end.

**Beyond START.** Participants believed that an American unwillingness to move to very deep reductions would be followed by a Russian intransigence. Also they believed that a deadlock at relatively high numbers would be seized by the non-Russian nuclear republics as a justification for refusing to denuclearize. On this basis, many argued that deep reductions to the U.S. arsenal, conditioned on deep reductions to the former Soviet arsenal, would tend to deny the non-Russian republics' arguments for retaining any sizable arsenal themselves and might convince them to denuclearize altogether.

**U.S. Military Capabilities.** Although most participants felt that the U.S. pursuit of military options would not solve the crisis in this scenario, many believed that improved theater-based anti-ballistic missile systems, space-based defenses, and high-confidence conventional counterforce capabilities would have given U.S. leaders additional maneuvering room, particularly if they became involved in efforts to stop the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. Because the United States had no adequate means of defending itself or its allies against missile attacks and no confidence in "kicking out" even the relatively small Ukrainian arsenal unless nuclear weapons were employed, no participants were prepared to intervene militarily and few were prepared to threaten intervention. Had these capabilities been present, most participants may not have proposed a military option or a threat, but many would have felt more confident about becoming engaged in diplomatic efforts to halt the conflict.

Understanding Nuclear Command Arrangements

Participants were extremely frustrated in their lack of a common vocabulary and conceptual framework for their discussion of command arrangements. They recognized that details matter but lacked terms that quickly conveyed their characterization of those details to other participants in their group discussions. They urged that further study be made of nuclear command and control arrangements in light of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and recognized a need to improve their own knowledge of the subject.
ALTERNATIVE U.S. POLICIES TOWARD THE FORMER SOVIET NUCLEAR ARSENAL

Since at least the failed coup of August 1991, the Soviet system of command and control over nuclear forces has disintegrated steadily. Two parallel chains of command are emerging: the first based on the increasingly Russified Soviet military; the second a national structure built in a halting fashion by each non-Russian republic. Russians have complete control over the weapons based on their territory (including SSBNs). In the non-Russian republics, control is "shared" between Russian and non-Russian forces. At a minimum it appears that Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus can veto the movement of nuclear weapons from their territories. Nevertheless in this sufficiently uncertain situation, no one should be surprised if one or more of the non-Russian republics control some weapons directly. Up to now, the nuclear republics have agreed that eventually only Russia will possess nuclear weapons. But as the loose Confederation of Independent States fails to take root as a successor to the Union, the prospects for a fractionation of the arsenal grow.

Thus in considering its policy toward the future of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal, the United States must choose among three alternatives: salvaging a central control arrangement based on a confederation of the nuclear republics, promoting a peaceful Russification of the former Soviet arsenal, or supporting its controlled fractionation. The results of "The Day After . . ." in the "USSR" exercise series suggest that opinion in the Washington policy support community is split among the three alternatives. A review of the teams' deliberations reveals that the choice among the three depends on assumptions about the relative feasibility and desirability of the potential outcomes, judgments about what the United States might be required to do to help achieve a given outcome, and assessments of the risks for the United States in pursuing a policy toward that end.

Confederation

Assumptions. Pursuit of a policy of confederal control over the former Soviet nuclear arsenal assumes the feasibility of arresting the ongoing process of disintegration of the Commonwealth of Independent States, at least insofar as nuclear weaponry is concerned, and of creating arrangements for the shared command and control of the arsenal that are politically stable and technically reliable. It further assumes that a fractionation of the arsenal would not be in the best interests of the United States because of the potential for conflict among the republics and the negative influence that several new and possibly "legitimate" nuclear powers would have on the non-proliferation regime. And it assumes that a peaceful Russification of the force is not feasible because the other republics will not give up their weapons without a fight and/or not desirable because Russia has aggressive expansionist tendencies that might be held in check if former Soviet nuclear forces were not under exclusively Russian control.

Requirements. If confederation is more than just a declaratory policy preference, the United States is required to take actions that improve the prospects for such an outcome. First, particularly in the face of growing skepticism among all the republics that any common policies or government institutions are viable or worthwhile and the deterioration of inter-republic political, economic, and military relations, the United States would have to intervene to persuade each republic that confederal
control of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal is preferable to a process of dissolution of custody and control that could plausibly result in nuclear war. Second, the United States would be obliged to assist in the development of a viable confederal command arrangement, particularly at the technical level. Recognizing that the stability of any future technical command system presupposes political arrangements that accommodate the needs of all nuclear republics, each republic (but especially the non-Russian republics) will require assurances that subsequent technical arrangements fairly represent whatever political accommodation the republics could agree to. Understandably, the non-Russian republics might be unwilling to accept the Russians' word, but they probably could not make this assessment independently. To demonstrate the viability of confederation, the United States might have to convince the republics that technical means of control could be devised that would enforce political agreements to share decisionmaking on nuclear readiness and use.

**Risks.** Pursuit of confederation carries two significant risks: antagonizing Russia and increasing the prospects for fractionation. A confederal control arrangement would restrain Russia's freedom of action. Political deadlock among the republics on nuclear weapons readiness or use could gridlock the command system and deprive Russia of important military options in crises not related to the non-Russian republics. And with one of its hands tied behind its back, Russia might be less of a player on the world stage. A U.S. policy favoring confederal control over the former Soviet arsenal might well be seen in Russia as an unfriendly effort to keep Russia down and deny what Russians might consider to be their legitimate status as a great power.

Pushing confederation also leaves the possibility open that some nuclear weapons could remain in the non-Russian republics. Indeed, some republics might establish such an outcome as a precondition of confederation. Keeping that possibility open while the republics negotiate a shared control arrangement could legitimate independent arsenals if talks fail.

**Russification**

**Assumptions.** Above all else, a policy of peaceful Russification assumes the feasibility of convincing the non-Russian republics to forswear nuclear weapons and to live up to those agreements.

Peaceful Russification also assumes that a confederation is unlikely to hold and that fractionation is not in the U.S. interest. It might also be based on at least one of the following propositions concerning Russia: that Russia is the only "legitimate," "natural," or "logical" successor state to the political and military heritage of the Soviet state and to what are now recognized as the former superpower's responsibilities for the maintenance of a stable nuclear balance; that Russian and American security interests will coincide, in which case a Russia unfettered by local military "rivals" would be to our advantage; or that the Russians are a known quantity insofar as nuclear diplomacy and deterrence are concerned because Russians dominated the old Soviet national security establishment, whereas the non-Russian republics are unpredictable and, therefore, suspect.

**Requirements.** Some combination of threats and blandishments will be necessary to convince the non-Russian republics to give up the nuclear weapons in their custody and agree to remain nonnuclear states. It may be sufficient to link aid and efforts to
help the non-Russian republics become part of the western world to their denuclearization. But if the reasons that the non-Russian republics are holding onto the former Soviet arsenal go beyond some perceived need to have bargaining leverage with the West, such linkage will be insufficient. Thus the United States will have to continue to address these concerns and desires at least until the non-Russian republics are completely denuclearized. If Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan are motivated to retain nuclear forces because of security concerns vis-à-vis Russia or a desire to realize national aspirations to great power status, then the U.S. will be compelled to address those fears and hopes directly if peaceful Russification is to be a serious option. The United States may have to extend some form of security guarantees to the non-Russian republics that fear Russian coercion, for example, to Ukraine. If the non-Russian republics’ aspirations are aggressive, as some fear of Kazakhstan, then U.S. policy may need to tilt strongly toward a policy of compelled denuclearization, if possible.

**Risks.** Russification favors Russia over the non-Russian republics. Non-Russians will perceive such a policy as an American judgment that their republics are in some way less deserving than Russia, that they cannot be trusted as much as the Russians, that their governments are less stable than Russia’s, that they are less sophisticated or technically competent, that their security interests are less legitimate, or that they are somehow morally inferior. It should be quite understandable if leaders in the non-Russian republics come to mistrust the U.S. and doubt our intentions. They could turn elsewhere for international support of their national security concerns. Relations with such “pariahs” as Iran and North Korea, with each other, or with nuclear and weapons suppliers of questionable ethics such as China could dominate the non-Russian republics’ foreign relations. In short, the policy of Russification runs the risk of antagonizing the non-Russian republics, isolating them from the West, and creating in their leaderships a sense of vulnerability that will only cause them to tighten their grip on the nuclear weapons in their possession, consider ways to acquire more, and drive them into relationships with the very powers that most threaten the nonproliferation regime.

**Controlled Fractionation**

**Assumptions.** First and foremost, a policy supporting the controlled fractionation of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal presumes that Russia will not interfere if the non-Russian republics decide to hold onto the nuclear weapons now in their possession or to use elements of the old Soviet nuclear weapons production base on their territory to create new arsenals. To favor a policy of controlled fractionation also requires some assumption that a stable balance of nuclear power can be created and maintained among perhaps several republics. It also assumes that the effects of as many as three “new” nuclear powers (Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus, assuming Russia is the de facto successor to the Soviet seat in the nuclear “club”) can be contained. Certainly international recognition and legitimation of three new nuclear powers would undermine whatever credibility today’s rigid two-tiered nonproliferation regime may have and reinforce the claims of other states with nuclear aspirations. Also the development of several new centers of nuclear weapons expertise would expand the supply of technology, skills, materials, and equipment available to potential proliferators. Assumptions that the “demonstration effect” of new nuclear states can be muted and the expansion of suppliers regulated, or alternatively a sense that non-
proliferation is a doomed cause, must underlie any policy favoring a peaceful devolution of control over the former Soviet arsenal to several states.

Along with these assumptions about the feasibility of controlled fractionation come others about its desirability. To support fractionation is to assume that a confederal control scheme cannot hold and that Russification is either not feasible or not in the best interests of the United States. Also it should be assumed that shared control arrangements will disintegrate, leading to a scramble for control by the republics—i.e., uncontrolled fractionation and very possibly nuclear war—or that it is to the U.S. advantage that a potentially hostile Russia be balanced by strong powers in the region.

**Requirements.** A peaceful fractionation of the former Soviet arsenal, a stable inter-republic nuclear balance, and containment of the effects of fractionation on proliferation elsewhere probably could not be accomplished without American involvement. Convincing Russia to allow one or more new nuclear neighbors would be a formidable task. Russian security concerns and the demands of multiparty nuclear stability would seem to require the creation of a new security regime in the former Soviet Union. Given the growing mistrust among the republics, the creation of such a regime probably would require the engagement of outside parties and the extension of certain security guarantees and commitments. Without direct involvement and active leadership by the United States, it is difficult to see how talks about a new security regime could begin or how this new security regime could succeed.

An equally daunting task would be to assure that the new nuclear powers would be “responsible” members of the nuclear club. In addition to learning how to be no less responsible custodians of nuclear weaponry than the United States and Soviet Union during the Cold War (and perhaps even a bit more responsible than the superpowers were in the early phases of that conflict), the new nuclear powers also would be expected not to assist potential proliferators. A logical first step would be to convince the republics to join the Nonproliferation Treaty as nuclear weapons states.

**Risks.** Controlling fire is still playing with fire. In favoring a policy of controlled fractionation, the United States may well incite deep antagonisms in Russia. A Russia literally surrounded by a nuclear-armed Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, China, and United States is bound to suffer feelings of insecurity and even paranoia in spite of its substantial (and survivable) nuclear arsenal. If Russia believes that Russification or even a nuclear confederation led by Russia is possible, a United States favoring fractionation is not likely to be viewed as a friend and may be seen as an enemy. In short, a policy perhaps designed as a hedge against Russian aggression may become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Because controlled fractionation must allow independent nuclear powers to emerge before negotiations over a stable security regime for the former Soviet Union come to fruition, the policy runs the risk that talks will fail or never take place before truly independent nuclear centers emerge in the non-Russian republics. In Moscow, Kiev, Minsk, or Alma-Ata, hope in a tolerable outcome may—at any time—yield to a temptation to wrest control of the nuclear weapons in one or more non-Russian republics “before it’s too late.” The result could be an uncontrolled fraction or a nuclear war. Even if a controlled fractionation could be achieved peacefully, the stability of a multipolar nuclear balance in the former Soviet Union might prove internally fragile or vulnerable to crises elsewhere in Eurasia. To the extent that the nuclear balance in the former Soviet Union is based on security guarantees from nu-
clear powers like the United States, China, Britain, and France, a nuclear crisis in the former Soviet Union could threaten the world.

Finally the new nuclear powers might not meet our expectations of "responsible" behavior. They could become a source of inspiration and supply for prospective proliferators. Also they might not wield the instrument of nuclear statecraft as subtly and precisely as the United States and Soviet Union in the latter phases of the Cold War; they may behave more like the superpowers during the early stages. As a result, they may start a nuclear war.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Choosing a Policy on the Former Soviet Arsenal

The above discussion outlines the assumptions on which a decision to pursue any one of the above alternatives will be based. An informed decision among the above alternatives should be based on more than mere assumption. Testing the validity of each assumption should be an important ongoing activity within the U.S. government. But even with the best intelligence, an assessment of the validity of any assumption is likely to come down to a matter of political judgment—it cannot be known with certainty.

Given the political turmoil between and within the republics, no U.S. administration would be wise to treat the Russification of Soviet nuclear forces as a forgone conclusion. The politics of the former Soviet Union are highly dynamic and likely to remain so. Although Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan have agreed to dismantle their strategic forces and send the warheads to Russia, leaving only Russia with a nuclear arsenal, the process to achieve that end will take several years. Even if the non-Russian republics do dismantle and transfer the nuclear forces on their soil, they retain considerable portions of the former Soviet nuclear complex and could choose to become nuclear weapons states at a future date. In this regard, U.S. policymakers might have more cause for concern that former Soviet nuclear weapons specialists will remain in Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Ukraine than that they will immigrate to Iran, Iraq, or North Korea. For these reasons, it would be dangerous for the United States to rely so heavily on any one alternative that it denies the possibility of the others. Policy planners and policymakers constantly must reassess the validity of their assumptions and be prepared to pursue alternative policies.

Peaceful Russification, confederal control, and controlled fractionation share two requirements: an activist American diplomacy and the creation of a stable security structure for the former Soviet Union. Peaceful Russification requires that the non-Russians’ fears of Russian hegemony be assuaged without causing Russia to feel encircled and threatened. A stable system of confederal control presupposes a high degree of trust among the republics, which probably cannot be formed without a strong and stable intermediary. Controlled fractionation demands some degree of military equilibrium among the nuclear republics and a means of integrating the new nuclear powers into international arms control regimes. Given the antagonisms among the former Soviet republics and the fact that the stability of the former Soviet Union is affected by and affects other members of the international community, none of these relatively favorable security structures is likely to arise absent American leadership.
Command and Control of the Former Soviet Arsenal

Vital American interests are at stake in the future of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal. A fractionation of the arsenal will create strong pressures for further proliferation across Eurasia. Even without fractionation, the disintegration of the Soviet Union threatens a hemorrhage of former Soviet nuclear scientists, engineers and weapons specialists, materials, technology, equipment, and even weapons into a world full of countries with nuclear aspirations. But an independent nuclear-armed Ukraine, Kazakhstan, or Belarus would tend to legitimize those desires. Also it might lead to a sort of chain reaction of proliferation. Wedged between a nuclear-armed Ukraine and Belarus and a NATO unwilling to extend security guarantees east, Central European countries would have to consider nuclear deterrents of their own. A Germany looking east toward a nuclearizing Central Europe and watching Americans debate a military withdrawal from Europe and the future of the extended deterrence commitments to allies after the Cold War might feel obliged to reconsider its nuclear options. To the south of the former Soviet Union, Kazakhstan could prove to be the source of an Islamic bomb, helping Iran or some other revisionist state in the region to develop its own nuclear forces. To date these scenarios have been the stuff of science fiction, but a fractionation of the Soviet arsenal would bring them frighteningly closer to reality.

Unfortunately, the trend toward fractionation initiated by the failed coup of August 1991 has not yet been arrested. Some semblance of central control or at least shared control still exists and there is tentative agreement that Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus will give up their nuclear weapons by the end of the START reductions period. The idea of interim confederal control of the nuclear arsenal inherent in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) now seems to be a facade. The Russians appear to see it as a path to peaceful Russification but fear that the other three republics might get off that path. For now the non-Russian republics have agreed to forgo nuclear arsenals, but as time passes they have provided ever stronger hints that they desire tangible security assurances in return. They have also suggested that any move by Russia contrary to their security interests could lead to a reversal of their de-nuclearization decisions.

Opportunities for the West, for the United States, to influence this process have diminished with time. It now seems obvious that the United States government favors a peaceful Russification of the former Soviet arsenal. For now, American leaders have persuaded their counterparts in the non-Russian nuclear republics to give up their arsenals eventually, but considerable unease exists about the timetable and the possibility that one or more of the republics will change their minds. Above all, the United States and its allies have not made significant progress toward addressing the non-Russian republics' security concerns. Instead of trusting the United States, the non-Russian republics have expressed some sentiment that Washington has tried to coerce them into accepting Russian military superiority and regional hegemony. Consequently, the possibilities for peaceful Russification or a shared control arrangement acceptable to Russia and the non-Russian republics are in jeopardy as antagonisms between the two deepen and U.S. relations with the non-Russian republics deteriorate. Uncontrolled fractionation remains a distinct possibility.

Is there still time for a peaceful and enduring resolution of the crisis? Perhaps. But much more activism may be required on the part of the U.S. and other West European nations. An offer of further deep reductions to the United States nuclear
arsenal may be necessary to preempt arguments from non-Russian republics justifying sizable arsenals of their own because the Russians argue they need a large arsenal to match that of the United States. But while deep reductions might bring the U.S. and Russian arsenals down to 1000 to 2000 warheads and the non-Russian arsenals down to 100 weapons or less, if security concerns are the non-Russians' prime rationale for nuclear forces, the United States may have to offer a viable substitute. Thus the United States will have to consider how the West might help to create stable security arrangements in the former Soviet Union and particularly to extend credible security assurances to the region.

**The Loss of Central Control**

The potential loss of central control constitutes a new and threatening dimension of the proliferation problem. In effect, domestic political disintegration can turn one nuclear power into many unstable centers of independent and possibly rival nuclear command authority. Since India joined the nuclear club in 1974, only three states have come close—Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea. But in the years following the failed coup, the disintegrating Soviet Union may divide into four new nuclear powers, for a net increase of three new members to the club. The Soviet Union was not the only nuclear power of questionable stability. The Tiananmen Square massacre of 1990 revealed divisions within the Chinese Communist Party leadership and Peoples Liberation Army with implications for the viability of central nuclear control in any future leadership struggle. Also the nuclear weapons potential or programs of India, South Africa, Pakistan, and North Korea may be vulnerable to domestic power struggles or societal disintegration.

Our experience with the dissolution of the Soviet state has shown that the "break-up" process can be highly dynamic. It demonstrates that the stability of nuclear command and control depends on domestic political factors as well as the better studied action-reaction phenomena between rival command systems.

Political stability precedes command stability. Command structures are built on some political assumptions, including an assumption that under all but the most stressful of nuclear war situations a disciplined and loyal military can distinguish—and will only respond to—a duly authorized command from leaders they have been trained to recognize as legitimate. To assure that no adversary could have confidence that a surprise nuclear attack would decapitate the leadership or interrupt communications from the leadership to the forces, nuclear command systems are practiced in the process of a rapid devolution of authority far down the chain of command, in some cases to those in direct control of the forces.

Assuming the domestic political stability of their regime, leaders are willing to put such a procedure on standby for these extreme crisis conditions. The arrangement is considered necessary for a stable nuclear balance vis-à-vis a nuclear adversary. Indeed, the risk that any nuclear attack might lead to an uncontrolled nuclear war is considered by many analysts to be a powerful deterrent. As the Soviet experience demonstrates, however, control systems designed to assure retaliation can be vulnerable to political disintegration at the center. The political process of rebuilding centers of nuclear command authority is dynamic and fragile and, lacking a fully disciplined unitary chain of military command, possibly prone to serious error.
Given the collapse of a central government, rival or potentially rival authorities, be they regional governments seeking independence or political factions seeking to take over the state, have powerful motivations to acquire control of nuclear weapons. Control over nuclear weapons is symbolic of control over the state in general. It demonstrates sovereignty. Control of nuclear weapons garners prestige and recognition—many Americans recognize the names Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan; few know the names of the former Soviet Union's nonnuclear republics. Control of nuclear weapons gives a new government bargaining leverage over its rivals, its allies, and third parties. Nuclear weapons also provide a definite measure of security—particularly if your rival has them.

The hypotheses discussed in this section demand further examination and analysis, but it would be dangerous to ignore them. Nuclear weapons are too devastating to allow ourselves the luxury of denial. Given a loss of central control over nuclear weapons caused by a collapse of political authority at the center, time would seem to favor a fractionated arsenal. The longer the military goes without a political authority they collectively recognize as legitimate, the more susceptible individual commanders and officers may become to the threats and blandishments of the various candidates competing for their loyalty. Once that process begins, it may prove difficult to halt, let alone reverse. In future crises of control over nuclear weaponry, a premium is placed on a timely engagement by the United States to influence the outcome in ways acceptable to vital U.S. interests. In turn, a real premium is placed on knowledge of and relationships with these potential successors. For if we have not already established relationships with potential successors, the United States may find—as it is finding today in Ukraine and Kazakhstan—that influence is hard to come by.
Regional conflicts will increasingly be complicated by increases in both conventional and unconventional capabilities in the third world. During the Gulf War we faced an adversary armed with chemical and biological weapons. Although Saddam Hussein did not use these weapons, we may not be so lucky the next time. We remain concerned that a small number of nations including Iran and North Korea are working to develop nuclear or unconventional weapons. As we learned from our experience with Iraq, it can be extremely difficult to know how far such efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction will have progressed.

The threat is not limited just to weapons of mass destruction. The global diffusion of military and dual-use technologies will enable a growing number of countries to field highly capable weapons systems such as ballistic missiles, stealthy cruise missiles, integrated air defenses, modern command and control systems, and even space-based assets. As a result our regional adversaries may be armed with capabilities that in the past were limited only to the superpowers.

...[W]e must be prepared to face adversaries on their own terms, possibly involving the use of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic or cruise missiles. We may need to be able to fight earlier than we did this time [against Iraq]. If the use of weapons of mass destruction is threatened, we may need to win even more quickly and decisively and we would still want to retain the advantages necessary to keep our losses as low as possible.

—Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney
House Armed Services Committee
January 31, 1992

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports the results of the second series of exercises. “The Day After... in the Greater Middle East” exercise examined the possibility of a future U.S. military intervention against a nuclear-armed Iran to protect Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and to maintain Western access to Gulf oil. More than 70 government officials and defense analysts participated in seven sessions of the exercise held in Washington and Santa Monica in March and April 1992. (See Appendix C for a list of participants.) The exercise was also played with 168 students at the National Defense University and groups of graduate students at Georgetown and Johns Hopkins Universities.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the strategic challenge posed by new, regional nuclear powers that may threaten U.S. interests in international security—the problem that motivated the development of this exercise. Next, the debates among participants over major policy decisions raised by the advancing scenario during the
exercise series are reported and summarized. Based on the participants’ discussions, alternative U.S. policies toward nuclear proliferation are described and analyzed. The chapter concludes with some general observations about American defense planning in a more highly proliferated world.

REGIONAL NUCLEAR ADVERSARIES: A POTENTIAL THREAT TO U.S. VITAL INTERESTS

In the next decade, the United States may well find itself in military confrontations with new nuclear powers. What does this mean for U.S. defense policy? Virtually every military operation undertaken by the United States during the last 40 years was under some shadow of a possible nuclear war. American military interventions from Lebanon to Vietnam carried some risk of escalation to nuclear war with the Soviet bloc. Why should the possession of relatively tiny arsenals by a few minor powers make the United States any more concerned about military intervention than it was at the height of the Cold War?

Perhaps the most important reason is that during the Cold War the risk of nuclear war emanated not from the leadership of the country against which the U.S. was intervening but from the Soviet Union. A review of that period does leave the impression that American decisionmakers believed that the area between the two superpowers’ homelands afforded both a strategic depth that allowed each the luxury of fighting limited conventional wars without threatening truly vital interests and thereby avoiding the risk of nuclear escalation. Outside of Europe, the possibility that the Soviet Union would use nuclear weapons to assure the success of aggression against American forces or U.S. allies generally was deemed to be quite remote.

It was considered far more plausible that the Soviet Union, or more likely China, would use nuclear weapons to save a Communist ally facing imminent defeat. Arguably, in the two major U.S. military interventions of the Cold War era, Korea and Vietnam, Soviet vital interests were never at stake. Indeed it might be argued that the Soviet Union had an interest in prolonging U.S. conventional military operations in those regions to sap America’s strength and divert attention from Europe and elsewhere. Nevertheless, the possibility of direct conflict with China or the Soviet Union and the risk of escalation to nuclear warfare strongly influenced the wartime policy of American leaders and placed real constraints on the effectiveness of U.S. military operations in those theaters. Fighting under those constraints also caused a considerable frustration within the United States military and the domestic body politic. It led many to doubt the efficacy of U.S. military intervention, unless the political leaders would agree to employ overwhelming force, a conviction undoubtedly reinforced by our success in a war against an Iraq shorn of its superpower protector.

The statement made by Secretary Cheney, quoted above, reflects the Defense Department’s sense that the threat posed by Iraq in 1990, and consequently the war to liberate Kuwait, may not be prototypes for the future. Although a future U.S. military intervention along the periphery of the former Soviet bloc no longer risks nuclear war with the Soviet Union, it could very well place the United States at odds with one of several potential new nuclear adversaries. Should the new nuclear power have ambitions contrary to our own interests, confrontation, crisis, and even war are possible. These countries would have good reason not to view American actions on the same terms we attributed to the Soviets during the Cold War. For example, a nuclear-armed Iran or North Korea might view any American military operation on its
borders—let alone against it—to be a direct threat to national survival. And their nuclear capabilities could make a repeat of DESERT STORM much more problematic. Similarly, a U.S. intervention on behalf of a threatened Baltic republic would raise the risk of confrontation with a nuclear-armed Russia. Planning for the possibility of crises and wars with these new nuclear powers will be a major problem of U.S. defense policy in the decades ahead.

It is probably fair to say that most American defense analysts subscribe to the proposition that by its own strategy of nuclear deterrence, the United States successfully contained the potential aggression of a Soviet superpower armed with tens of thousands of nuclear warheads. With this show of confidence in our deterrent capability, is there any reason to fear a few new nuclear powers with arsenals probably no larger than a dozen weapons?

A useful starting point for considering the influence of nuclear proliferation on U.S. defense policy in the decade ahead is to contrast our sense of the Soviet Union by 1991 with our likely appreciation of potential new nuclear powers. Any deterrent strategy is based on some estimate of how the party to be deterred thinks. Who is being deterred? From doing what? What does he value that we might hold at risk if he threatens our vital interests? Does he have good reason to believe we can destroy what he holds dear or otherwise deny him his strategic aims? How does he calculate ends-means relationships? Does he know what we consider to be our vital interests? Does he believe our threats to protect our vital interests? Is his behavior predictable?

By 1991, U.S. leaders had confidence in their ability to answer these questions with regard to the Soviet Union—to characterize “the Soviet threat.” Our strategy of deterrence was aimed at the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). We were deterring them from invading and occupying our allies in Europe and Japan and from conducting nuclear attacks on the United States. We learned that above all the CPSU leadership valued control over a society able to further the party’s basic aims. We spent billions of dollars to convince Soviet leaders that we had the capacity to destroy their conventional military machine, their economy, their precious party, including the party leaders themselves, and much of their nuclear forces. To point out our vital interests to the Soviet leadership, we spent still more billions on the deployment of U.S. forces overseas. To demonstrate our determination to defend those interests against all forms of aggression, we spent even more and spilled no small amount of American blood.

Four decades of Cold War crises gave American policymakers confidence in both their understanding of the Soviet approach to international politics and the continuity of that approach. In a series of superpower crises from Berlin in 1948 to the October War in 1973, American leaders discovered and honed the techniques of brinksmanship and crisis management against the Soviet Union. They learned how to manipulate the threat of apocalypse, visited on Soviet territory, to achieve important U.S. national security objectives. None of this accumulated knowledge came easily; it was the gradual result of hard-won victories, mistakes, and near-disasters as our policy toward the Soviet Union evolved. It was the product of lessons learned through trial and error more than analysis. Nevertheless by the end of the Cold War, American leaders had good reason to believe that the approach developed to deal with Soviet expansionism during eight administrations was sound policy.

The cumulative experience of 40 years of superpower nuclear competition gave American leaders and defense planners a relatively high degree of self-assurance in their predictions of Soviet reactions to U.S. initiatives. But there is and ought to be
far less confidence in the applicability of deterrence concepts developed during the Cold War to the post–Cold War era. The principal reason for concern is the uncertainty the new states introduce to our own deterrence calculations. The U.S. intelligence community may not be well-informed of a potential new nuclear power’s leadership structure. We may not be clear about the actions of new aggressors that we plan to deter. Our sense of the value structures may not be as developed as it was for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. If we are not confident in our estimate of the value structures of potential adversaries, we may have difficulty convincing them that we hold these at risk. We may not clearly communicate to these new adversaries our vital interests—in words or deeds. In many cases, we may lack the broad base of experience in dealing with these new opponents necessary to give us confidence in our predictions of their probable responses to our statements and actions. A new adversary’s approach to calculating ends-means relations may differ from that of the Soviets, based on our experience. Unlike during the Cold War, we may have to deter the aggressive actions of more than one nuclear power and be concerned that messages and signals sent to one potential adversary will be misconstrued by another.

Moreover, few Americans familiar with the history of Cold War crises are eager to repeat the experiment in competitive nuclear risk-taking. To name just one high point of the competition, considerable scholarship on the Cuban missile crisis has revealed how close American and Soviet leaders came to taking steps that could have led to the destruction of their societies. A miscalculation by one or the other—an important message that might not have been sent, a different player in a critical role, or a small difference in any one of countless other factors—might have led to a nuclear war. The painful realization of our own relative lack of maturity in handling the nuclear weapon as an instrument of statecraft during much of the Cold War can only cause sensitive observers to shudder at the thought of rerunning such a crisis with a new and relatively unknown partner—even if, or especially if, it is a situation where it is not us, but our allies, who will be at risk from nuclear attack. Considering that a future nuclear crisis probably will be our opponent’s first, and that every aspect of his participation will be an improvisation, the fear is well-founded. Multiply that fear by as many new nuclear powers as are likely to threaten U.S. interests and allies over the next decade, and it becomes obvious that one such crisis could easily result in a nuclear war. An appreciation of these uncertainties and risks undoubtedly will influence U.S. military intervention against a new nuclear adversary.

THE EXERCISE EXPERIENCE: OVERVIEW

In STEP ONE: The Day Of . . . , participants addressed a rapidly deteriorating situation in the Persian Gulf, set in 1997. (The Annex to this report contains a complete copy of the exercise materials.) In this scenario, Iran has begun to pressure and intimidate Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, after defeating Iraq and installing a pro-Iranian government in Baghdad. Pursuant to defense agreements, the Gulf states have asked the United States to implement plans to reinforce Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. U.S. intelligence believes Iran is on the verge of deploying nuclear weapons on a small number of advanced intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBM). Teams developed an overall perspective on the situation, considered issues and options for presentation to the President, and, where consensus could be reached, recommended decisions for the President to make.
In STEP TWO: The Day After . . ., participants convened immediately after an intense air and sea battle in the Gulf and Tehran’s demonstration of an operational IRBM, culminating in a nuclear detonation over the Iranian desert. Again the teams were tasked to help the President get a perspective on the situation and decide how to respond to the crisis.

In STEP THREE: The Day Before . . ., the exercise moved back in time to before the crisis (i.e., to the present day). In consideration of the “lessons learned” in the two previous moves, teams sought to reach a consensus on appropriate options to be presented to the President concerning nuclear proliferation–related policy issues that should be faced today.

STEP ONE: “THE DAY OF”

Situation Report

It is the late summer of 1997.

Iranian power and influence rose dramatically following Iran’s 1996 victory in the brief but violent second Iran-Iraq war, a war in which the Iranian military revealed surprising competence in the use of advanced weapon systems and tactics. Iran now dominates a weak central government in Baghdad, which has already granted virtual autonomy to the Kurds in the north and the Shiites in the South. Four Iranian “liberation divisions” remain in southern Iraq near Basra.

Aided by a compliant Iraq, Iran has become increasingly aggressive on OPEC pricing and production policy. (Since the early 1990s, the price of oil has remained stable at $22–$25 per barrel in FY92 dollars.) The prospect of increased oil prices is troubling throughout the industrialized world, not the least in the United States, where the soft price in oil has led to an increase in oil imports—to 55 percent of U.S. consumption in 1996.

Iran’s political-military clout has been enhanced further by its close military-industrial ties to China and Pakistan. Both have rendered extensive assistance in the development of a Persian military-industrial infrastructure including major roles in the construction of production facilities for the tactical ballistic and cruise missile systems used extensively in the 1996 Iran-Iraq war. A supersonic anti-ship version of the cruise missile is now extensively deployed along Iran’s coast. Recently Iran completed a successful series of flight tests of a new 2500-km range IRBM that is clearly derivative of the Chinese CSS-X and may be identical to the new Pakistani “Haf III” IRBM. The new missile probably will be deployed on mobile launchers operating from bases in eastern Iran.

Iran’s ambition to acquire a nuclear arsenal is now widely acknowledged, although the Iranians continue to maintain that their rapidly growing nuclear infrastructure is for “nuclear energy alone.” The program has benefitted immeasurably from nuclear training, expertise, and equipment acquired from China and Pakistan. A wide divergence of views exists as to whether the Iranians might already have produced some nuclear warheads. Controversial intelligence reports suggest that an Iranian-designed nuclear warhead destined for their new IRBM may have been tested at China’s Lop Nor facility in the fall of 1996. (In response to these reports, Israeli Defense Ministry officials have indicated privately that their policy remains that they “will not be the first nation to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East”—but
that as long as it is “within their power” they will not allow anyone else to do so either.)

In response to Iran’s growing power, the U.S. concluded a new military agreement with the Arab states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1996. The associated U.S. military contingency plan includes the prepositioning of equipment for one Army heavy division in Saudi Arabia, one air-mobile division in Kuwait, one Maritime Prepositioned Squadron (MPS) at Bahrain, and similar arrangements to support two tactical air wings in Saudi Arabia and one in the UAE. Table 3.1 summarizes the major components of the plan, code-named Operation GREEN HORNET.

On September 13, 1997, OPEC oil ministers met in an emergency session in Caracas to review production and pricing policy. The oil price “hawks” in Iran were demanding a major cutback in OPEC production with a goal of driving the price to $40 per barrel—arguing that their security and economic needs required greater oil revenues. After three days of tense discussions, the Caracas meeting ended in failure and disarray.

On September 19, U.S. intelligence detected the forward movement of two Iranian mechanized divisions from Basra toward the Kuwait border. Iran announced that its Foreign Minister was flying to Riyadh with an “urgent proposal” that same day. On

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.1</th>
<th>Operation GREEN HORNET</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phase One</strong> (Deterrence Phase)</td>
<td><strong>Phase Two</strong> (Initial Defense)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>Deploy two battalions of Patriot/ERINT</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Place elements of the three Phase Two divisions on higher alert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>Move one Carrier Battle Group (CBG) to the Red Sea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>Deploy one Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) with additional intelligence and control aircraft</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marines</td>
<td>Deploy one Marine Prepositioned Squadron (MPS) from Indian Ocean, offload in-theater MPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Place associated CONUS-based brigades on alert</td>
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September 20, the U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia reported the contents of that proposal:

1. Saudi Arabia should immediately cut oil production from eight to six million barrels a day.
2. Kuwait and the remaining GCC states should cut their production by 15 percent.
3. The GCC states should annul their military agreements with the U.S. and declare "neutrality" or nonalignment.
4. Saudi Arabia should embrace "complete political and religious freedom" and drop restrictions on the numbers of Shiites attending the Haj in Mecca.

On September 21, U.S. intelligence detected the movement of two additional Iranian infantry divisions in Iraq to positions just west of the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. Three Iranian armored divisions based near Dezful in southwestern Iran were reported being assembled on heavy transporters. Four large pontoon bridges were reported already established across the Shatt al Arab. Kuwait ordered full mobilization of its two armored brigades, one mechanized and one motorized, and all of its reserves. Saudi Arabia took similar actions with both the Royal Army and National Guard (equivalent to four heavy divisions). Within 24 hours, Kuwait had deployed the bulk of its forces to defense positions west and north of Kuwait City with armored cavalry squadrons further north in the Rumaila oil fields.

At about 0300 local time on September 23, a Kuwaiti cavalry patrol encountered an Iranian long-range reconnaissance team west of the Rumaila fields. During the ensuing firefight, Iranian artillery units fired several barrages into Kuwait. Within the hour, additional artillery and tank duels broke out all along the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. The scattered fighting ended several hours later, but the U.S. ambassador in Kuwait reported that the exchanges had left the Kuwaiti royal family fearful of an imminent invasion. At 1100 local time, the commanding general of U.S. forces in Bahrain received a formal alert message from the GCC High Command requesting implementation of GREEN HORNET.

Later in the afternoon local time on the 23rd, Pakistan successfully test-fired what appeared at first to be two of its "Haf III" ballistic missiles. All telemetry on the missiles was encrypted. U.S. intelligence collection aircraft operating from Diego Garcia detected the deployment of exoatmospheric penetration aids during both tests. In both cases, the single reentry vehicle executed an unprecedented high-acceleration endoatmospheric "dogleg" maneuver. Later analysis left uncertain whether the missile was a new version of the Haf III or the new Iranian IRBM.

Patterns of Response to the Situation

Participant teams were asked to identify key diplomatic, economic, and military policy issues facing the U.S. in this Persian Gulf crisis, to develop options to respond to the Gulf states' request to implement GREEN HORNET, and if possible to agree on a recommended course of action. They were given a "Draft Memo for the President" as a starting point for discussion. Four issues dominated the teams' discussions:

1. Defining the policy problem and recommending whether or not to execute GREEN HORNET
2. How deeply the U.S. ought to commit its forces to the region
3. The mix of air, sea, and ground forces to be moved to the theater
4. Alert measures for U.S. nuclear forces.

**Defining the Problem and Recommending Policy.** Participants agreed that by virtue of its military and political position in the Gulf, and what many participants assumed to be its virtual status as a nuclear weapons state, Iran had become a major regional power. To the vast majority of participants, Iran’s actions constituted a blatant attempt to gain hegemony in the region and threaten America’s vital interests in free access to Gulf oil and a stable international economy. In their view, the President had no choice but to reinforce the Gulf with American forces. If the United States were to back away from its commitment to defend the Gulf—or even to appear to back away, it would not only jeopardize the general credibility of American security guarantees, it would cede dominance in the Gulf to Iran. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states would begin immediately to accommodate themselves to Iran’s position. Moreover, nuclear proliferation by other would-be aggressors would be encouraged to the extent that they believed that the United States failed to implement GREEN HORNET because it feared Iran’s nuclear capability.

To a very small minority, Iran’s position demanded that the United States “sit down” with Iran and negotiate security arrangements for the Gulf region. In their view, the U.S. could not maintain the large and lengthy commitment of military forces in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states required to contain Iran—the U.S. public would not support it; the U.S. treasury could not afford it; a coalition of Western powers could not be maintained to sustain it; and the conservative regimes of the Gulf would not accept it. This group believed that the United States and the Gulf states also were not prepared to go to war with Iran for control of the Gulf, particularly when the war might involve nuclear attacks on American forces or the Gulf states’ cities. If the U.S. were to embark on a course of action it was not prepared to carry through, the resulting harm to American credibility elsewhere in the world would be far worse than if the United States never committed itself. Because the United States and its regional allies were not prepared for war or a permanent standoff, this group argued that negotiations leading to accommodation were preferable to a bluff. They opposed the execution of GREEN HORNET. The majority was not for war or containment but argued that without U.S. military power to back up its diplomatic positions neither Iran nor the Gulf states would consider the U.S. to be a serious negotiating partner.

**How Large a Commitment of Forces?** Those who favored executing GREEN HORNET were divided on the extent to which the United States should commit itself. Some only favored going ahead with Phase One of the plan. They argued that deploying some naval and air forces to the region and alerting some ground forces for possible movement later should be sufficient to demonstrate to Iran that the United States considered its interests to be at stake. This group believed that diplomacy should be given time to work and was concerned about initiating an escalation of U.S. and Iranian troop movements to the region.

Others argued that under the circumstances, Phase One alone demonstrated a lack of U.S. resolve in the region. Instead of inducing the Iranians to drop their demands, the small American military reaction would cause them to press their demands still harder in the belief that the U.S. was bluffing. Those who questioned executing only Phase One also were concerned that the small force would not be sufficient to stop or
slow an Iranian invasion of Kuwait or Saudi Arabia and believed that such an attack
was quite likely, if not imminent.

The majority of participants favored executing up to Phase Two of GREEN HORNET.
They believed that with limited support from European allies and the Gulf states the
U.S. force was sufficient to defend Kuwait and Saudi Arabia but not large enough to
pose an offensive threat to Iran itself. With a stable military balance on the ground,
this group was prepared to negotiate an end to the crisis and a return to the status
quo.

Those who favored executing the entire plan maintained that putting an offensive
option in the theater would constitute the strongest possible demonstration of re-
solve, strengthen the credibility of U.S. security guarantees, and give the U.S. maxi-
mum bargaining leverage with Iran. Moreover, they were not convinced that Phase
Two was sufficient for the defense of the region. Many in this group also believed
that war was imminent and were less concerned about precipitating some sort of es-
calation than they were about being caught without adequate forces.

GREEN HORNET Force Mix. Most participants who favored executing some or all of
GREEN HORNET nevertheless were quite uneasy about deploying sizeable U.S.
ground forces to the theater. In brief, they feared placing those forces under the
threat of nuclear attack. A general sense that the fate of U.S. ground forces in the
theater was in Iran’s hands permeated debate in the teams. Many participants noted
that the forces deployed to the Gulf constituted the bulk of U.S. power projection
forces and expressed concern that if they were lost in a nuclear attack, the U.S. would
be gravely weakened. A substantial majority of participants favored changing the
mix of ground, air, and naval forces in whatever phase of GREEN HORNET they
would execute. Vulnerable ground forces would be withheld and replaced with air
and naval assets to restore combat power.

Participants who favored reducing the U.S. ground force presence argued that air
and naval assets could be brought to the region more quickly and thus offered a way
to speed up our show of resolve. Air and naval forces also could be withdrawn more
easily than ground forces, should that be required. Some argued that the U.S. public
and Congress would be more likely to support the introduction of air and naval
forces. Some also felt that air power alone could defeat an Iranian attack. All felt,
however, that air and naval forces were less vulnerable to nuclear attack.

Those who wanted to execute whatever phase of GREEN HORNET they favored “as
is” argued that the plan was a known quantity to the Gulf states. United States
ground forces were “expected.” In their view, our regional allies would consider our
refusal to place ground forces in harm’s way a sign that our commitment was wa-
vering. In this case, the Gulf states’ resolve to stand up to Iran would be weakened
and Iran’s resolve to push the United States out of the Gulf would be redoubled.

This position was bolstered by a series of other arguments. Some suggested that
there was not enough time to alter GREEN HORNET and that changing a complex
mobilization and deployment plan “on the fly” risked disaster. Others maintained
that air power alone could not win the war and that American ground forces were es-
cential to successful military operations in the region.

Finally, it was argued that U.S. ground forces were not at risk. Some maintained that
Iran did not have “the bomb,” and that even if it did it could not have more than a
handful. Many argued that Iran would be deterred from using nuclear weapons
against U.S. forces because they would fear nuclear retaliation. Others argued that the damage the United States could inflict on Iran with conventional weapons should be enough to deter a nuclear attack on U.S. forces in the theater.

**Alerting U.S. Nuclear Forces.** Participants favoring negotiations with Iran opposed any alert of U.S. nuclear forces. Those who favored the execution of at least some portion of GREEN HORNET reached no consensus on nuclear alerts. They split roughly evenly among four options.

The first option rejected any alert of U.S. nuclear forces. Those who adhered to this position maintained that since the Iranians had not made nuclear weapons an element of the crisis, there was no need for the United States to do so. Placing nuclear forces in the theater—on the ground or at sea—would lead to allied and Congressional reactions that might constrain the President’s freedom of action without adding military capability or enhancing deterrence. Iran was considered to be well aware that the United States is a nuclear power. The mere existence of the American nuclear arsenal was thought to be a sufficient deterrent to Iranian aggression. If needed later in the crisis, strategic bomber forces could be placed on alert within hours—ready to carry out any mission that might be assigned to nuclear forces in the theater. Many in this group also believed that conventional air power in the theater would be sufficient to carry out any mission to which nuclear forces might be assigned—to include stopping an invasion of Kuwait.

Of those who argued for some alert of nuclear forces, some questioned whether the United States would be able to react quickly enough when circumstances demanded nuclear use if nuclear forces were not already on alert. Others doubted the promises made by the advocates of conventional air power. Others believed that the crisis was nuclear, given the state of Iran’s nuclear program, and that some form of a U.S. nuclear response was required. Finally, this group opposed a decision not to alert any nuclear forces because they believed it would signal an American lack of resolve and encourage Iranian aggression.

The second option involved the alert of nuclear-capable strategic bomber forces and a return of nuclear weapons to carriers bound for the region. The objective was to send the strongest possible signal of American resolve, constrained only by an assumption that the Gulf states would not accept nuclear weapons on their soil and a belief that it would be difficult to assure the safety, security, and survivability of nuclear weapons deployed quickly to the field. Those who favored this option feared an imminent attack on Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. A strong signal of the U.S. willingness to use nuclear weapons to halt an Iranian advance was considered necessary to offset the lack of an adequate conventional defense. Many questioned the political feasibility of this option, doubting that it would be politically acceptable to Congress or the allies.

The third option put forward was simply to return nuclear weapons to the carriers. Those favoring this option felt that giving the U.S. theater commander direct control over nuclear forces in the theater would bolster the credibility of deterrence and send a message that the U.S. intended to defend Kuwait and Saudi Arabia by whatever means necessary. They were concerned that an alert of U.S. strategic nuclear forces could cause the Russians or the Chinese to alert their forces, expanding the crisis and complicating the problems facing the United States. Many questioned the political feasibility of this option, doubting that it would be politically acceptable to Congress or the allies.
Alerting only the bomber force was the fourth option. Proponents maintained that a subtle reminder of American nuclear capability was required to enhance deterrence without escalating the crisis. A bomber force alert could meet these conditions because strategic bombers can perform both nuclear and conventional missions. To Iran, the alert would be a reminder of U.S. nuclear capabilities. To the American public, the Congress, the Russians, the Chinese, and our allies, the alert could be presented as a part of prudent preparations for a conventional defense of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Some felt this option was inadequate because it would not send a clear signal of our intent to defend a vulnerable Kuwait with nuclear weapons if necessary. Others doubted the domestic political acceptability of this option. They believed that the public would consider it to be a "nuclear alert" no matter how the administration presented it to the media.

**Trends in the Team Discussions**

Figure 3.1 is an outline of the policy options distilled from group discussion of Step One during the exercise series. The dark solid line and boxes represent the majority tendency. Few favored only negotiating with Iran over the fate of Southwest Asia and the Persian Gulf. Most participants believed the United States was obligated to meet its regional defense commitments and execute a modified Phase Two of Operation GREEN HORNET, increasing air and sea forces to compensate for a limitation on ground force deployments. There was no consensus on the alert of U.S. nuclear forces.

![Figure 3.1 — "The Day After . . . in the Greater Middle East"—Step One Roadmap](image)
STEP TWO: "THE DAY AFTER"

Situation Report

By the start of October, GREEN HORNET Phase Two was nearly completed. Phase Three of GREEN HORNET, including the deployment to the region of U.S. forces in Germany, is scheduled to begin October 28. Congress provisionally approved the Phase Three deployment but with an accompanying resolution "reaffirming its unique power to declare war." By October 7, U.S. intelligence had identified nine Iranian divisions (three armored, three mechanized, and three motorized) and four Iraqi divisions (two armored and two mechanized) arrayed north and west of Kuwait (see Figure 3.2). Night artillery duels between Kuwaiti and Iranian forces had become common along the Kuwait-Iraqi border.

After a heated internal debate and in response to growing concerns that the new Iranian IRBM would soon be deployed, the U.S. also decided to airlift one of two operational Theater High Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) battalions able to counter IRBMs to Dhahran. The second battalion was held in reserve for future contingencies. Basically, the argument was between those who believed the second battalion should be held back for deployment to Israel (to restrain the Israelis from offensive operations against Iran) and those who wanted it deployed to Saudi Arabia immediately (to protect U.S. forces).

Throughout this period Iranian diplomats reiterated their September 20 demands. Ongoing backchannel discussions with Iran revealed little if any willingness to com-

![Figure 3.2—Theater Military Situation](image-url)
promise. On October 15, Iran declared a full military mobilization and announced the formation of a joint Iranian-Iraqi military command. The next day a massive civil defense evacuation exercise was conducted in Teheran, Tabriz, and Qom. On the 16th, U.S. intelligence confirmed that Iran had built an estimated 35 to 40 of what is believed to be a new mobile IRBM.

By October 18, in response to the President's request for military options to destroy the suspected Iranian nuclear and IRBM capability, the Chairman of the JCS had approved planning for three options. The first involved a barrage of the suspected IRBM deployment area with nuclear-armed SLBMs; the second, nuclear air strikes against identified IRBM locations using B-2s and F-117s; the third, a large conventionally-armed air operation.

At midnight local time on the 24th, Kuwaiti missile gunboats detected a fleet of Iranian warships passing near Bushiyan Island apparently headed for the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr. When all three Kuwaiti warships were subjected to heavy electronic jamming, the Kuwaiti flagship called in air support. When additional F-16s arrived a short time later, they were met by Iranian Mig-29s and F-8s. An air battle involving more than 40 aircraft spread out over the northern Persian Gulf.

At 0330 on October 25, the Aegis cruiser USS Princeton (CG-59) and the frigate USS Samuel B. Roberts (FFG-58), both on patrol off Failaka Island, detected four supersonic cruise missiles launched from the Iranian coast. Three of the missiles were shot down, but the fourth hit and exploded the forward missile magazine of the Roberts. At 0455, the Roberts sank with most of the crew escaping in lifeboats. Two hours later, Iranian coastal defense missiles attacked two Omani missile boats escorting an ultralarge tanker. They sank one missile boat and left the tanker adrift and on fire.

At 0400 EST, the Indian Ocean DSP satellite detected the launch of an Iranian ballistic missile on a depressed trajectory toward the south from a site near Mashad. Twelve minutes later a nuclear detonation estimated in the 100 kt range occurred high over the desert east of Bandar Abbas in southern Iran. The IRBM appeared virtually identical to that recently tested from Pakistan.

By about 1400 local time (0600 EST), Iranian ambassadors had handed the prime ministers of all the GCC member states and the U.S. Secretary of State identical notes calling for:

1. A freeze in place of all forces on both sides
2. A halt to further deployments
3. An immediate summit at a neutral site to discuss a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

At 0725 EST the Israeli Ambassador privately informed the U.S. Secretary of State that, "if necessary," Israel would attack the Iranian missile force on its own. Intelligence reports indicate that Israeli nuclear-capable air and missile units have gone to full alert.

New intelligence shows that as many as 40 of the new Iranian IRBMs may be deployed on mobile launchers in an isolated and relatively unpopulated area in northeastern Iran near Mashad (see Figure 3.3). These reports also suggest an in-
creased alert level for all Iranian missile forces, including full dispersal of all mobile IRBMs from all known garrisons.

In his most recent threat assessment, received at 0700 EST, USCINCENT stated that he "cannot assure a successful conventional defense of Saudi Arabia in the event of an Iranian nuclear first strike." He pointed out that he was awaiting the Phase Three deployments of GREEN HORNET and that his entire operation was dependent on the continued viability of vulnerable area targets such as ports of debarkation, assembly areas, and air bases. He passed on his view that the single THAAD battalion in Saudi Arabia did not constitute the kind of "shield" he needed. On this basis the theater commander has requested:

1. Immediate airlift of the second THAAD battalion to Saudi Arabia
2. Authority to destroy antiship missile sites on Iran's coast
3. Immediate airlift and transfer of nuclear weapons to one Carrier Battle Group (CBG) to provide an in-theater deterrent

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) chairman reports that the most recent update of the October 18th military options paper suggests that a nuclear SLBM barrage of the suspected deployment area should result in the immediate destruction of 90 to 95 percent (all but two or three) of the Iranian IRBMs, a residual force that THAAD could probably defeat. The best estimate of prompt fatalities from this attack is about 10,000 to 15,000. The nuclear-armed air strike option probably could destroy 75 to 80 percent (all but 8 to 10) of the deployed missiles within about six hours (with no more

Figure 3.3—Iranian Ballistic Missile and Nuclear Facilities
than 2000 to 3000 fatalities). The conventional air attack option would destroy roughly the same fraction (75 to 80 percent) of IRBMs within about six days (with minimal civilian casualties).

Patterns of Response to the Situation

Participant teams were asked to identify key diplomatic, economic, and military policy issues facing the U.S. in the escalating crisis, consider how to respond to Iran's nuclear "demonstration shot," develop policy options in support of crisis decision-making, and if possible agree on recommended action. A "Draft Memo for the President" provided a strawman decisionmaking document and a starting point for discussion. Team discussions covered seven major issues:

1. U.S. war aims
2. Attacks on the Iranian IRBM force, including
3. Whether to use conventional or nuclear weapons
4. Deployment of THAAD
5. Continuation of GREEN HORNET Phase Three
6. Attacks on Iran's antiship missile sites in the Gulf

War Aims. Participants split roughly evenly between an effort to contain Iran and immediate destruction of the Iranian regime. Those advocating containment argued that a U.S. offensive against Iran was likely to precipitate nuclear strikes on our regional allies' urban areas as well as against U.S. forces. They believed that a U.S. attempt to eliminate Iran's IRBM force would fail. In their view, a preemptive attack employing nuclear or conventional weapons would leave Iran with the ability to destroy several cities. Ballistic missile defenses in the region were not likely to intercept every Iranian missile fired after the U.S. first strike. They maintained that the U.S. Congress, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states would oppose any proposal to preempt, just as they would oppose plans to invade Iraq and press on to Iran.

Proponents of containment argued that the U.S. had, or would soon have, sufficient forces in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to withstand a conventional attack by Iran and its allies. Iran would be deterred from incorporating nuclear strikes into its theater attack plan by the mere existence of the U.S. nuclear arsenal. The U.S. Congress as well as America's regional allies would prefer a long stalemate to a potentially nuclear war with Iran or capitulating to Iran's demands. No one favoring containment was sure that America's experience with the Soviet Union in Europe could be transferrable to the present situation, but all thought an attempt was the most prudent course of action.

Participants favoring an effort to eliminate the Iranian regime were convinced that Iran would continue to employ nuclear threats against Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states. This group doubted that our regional allies or the U.S. Congress would support the sustained investment of men, money and political capital necessary to a successful containment policy. In their view, the U.S. experience in Europe was unique and not repeatable in Southwest Asia. The U.S. choice was to act immediately to permanently remove Iran as a threat to regional stability or accept Iran's dominance over the Gulf.
To this group, Iran's use of a nuclear weapon in this escalating crisis demonstrated the ruthless and uncontrolled nature of Iran's leadership and provided the U.S. with a strong justification for eliminating Iran's nuclear arsenal as well as the Iranian regime. Some proponents of this policy believed that a combination of nuclear and conventional strikes on Iran's leadership, communications, missiles, and theater ballistic missile defense could bring the risk of Iranian retaliation down to acceptable levels. Other proponents were not as confident but were unwilling to accept Iranian hegemony in the Gulf. All agreed that Iran's leaders were the source of regional instability, that removing the leadership from power was the only way to solve the problem, and that they could only be removed by force.

Those who argued for destruction of the Iranian regime were also motivated by the belief that a strategy of containment would demonstrate the political value of nuclear weapons to potential proliferators. If Iran succeeded in forcing the U.S. into a defensive position in the Gulf, other states might see nuclear weapons as a fast and effective way of equalizing the balance of power in other regions of importance to U.S. national security. The world had to be shown that the possession of nuclear weapons and especially the threat to use them would only bring disaster. Iran had to be made an example for other states considering the nuclear option.

**Attacking Iran's IRBMs.** As noted above, those who would try to contain Iran opposed a strike on the IRBM force. Participants advocating destruction of the Iranian regime favored a strike. However, they split on whether to strike as soon as possible and without warning or to present Iran with an ultimatum demanding a withdrawal of forces from the Kuwaiti border and dismantlement of Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities. Those in favor of an immediate attack were motivated by a fear that Iran would strike first and a judgment that if Iran went first Kuwait and Saudi Arabia would fall to an Iranian invasion. They argued that the passage of time would make it more difficult to destroy Iran's mobile IRBMs and opposed an ultimatum for the same reason.

Participants arguing for an ultimatum maintained that surprise attacks are not in the American character. They assumed Iran would not comply with American demands but believed such demands were necessary for domestic and international support for a subsequent attack on Iran. They also felt that with time, U.S. knowledge of the Iranian IRBM force would improve, increasing the chances of a successful first strike.

**Nuclear Versus Conventional Strikes.** Participants favoring attacks on Iran's IRBM force were divided on whether to use nuclear weapons. Roughly half believed that the best chance for a successful attack lay with a nuclear barrage of mobile IRBM deployment areas using submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). Because Iran had no adequate ballistic missile early warning system, such a barrage offered the best prospects of achieving tactical surprise. They expected that U.S. ballistic missile defenses deployed to the region then would contend with the smallest possible Iranian retaliation, increasing the chances that the United States and its regional allies might emerge from the war unscathed by Iranian nuclear weapons. This group opposed conventional strikes because they would take too long to destroy Iran's IRBMs and risked a large retaliatory strike.

Participants advocating conventional attacks maintained that a combination of special forces, intelligence gathering, air strikes with precision munitions, psychological operations, and ballistic missile defenses could decapitate the Iranian command structure, destroy the mobile IRBM force within a matter of days, paralyze IRBM operations, persuade IRBM field commanders not to use their forces, and counter the
ragged retaliation. This group was motivated by a desire to “send a message” to potential future proliferators that the United States could defeat nuclear threats without resort to nuclear use itself. In their view, the use of nuclear weapons to counter nuclear proliferation at best would send a mixed signal to potential proliferators. A successful conventional attack, on the other hand, would prove that in the post-Cold War world nuclear forces are not the ultimate weapon and eliminate any potential proliferator’s hopes that the U.S. would be self-deterred from conducting counterforce attacks because it could only resort to nuclear weapons to do so. Advocates of conventional strikes were prepared to go with the SLBM barrage option if Iran conducted nuclear attacks on U.S. forces or allies but believed that the message a victory by conventional means would send to the world was important enough that the U.S. should be willing to run the risk of an Iranian first strike or a large scale nuclear retaliation on America’s regional allies or U.S. forces in the theater.

Deployment of THAAD. Participants were evenly divided on deployment of the one remaining THAAD battalion to Saudi Arabia or Israel. Participants favoring deployment to Israel saw Israeli military action as a serious threat to their strategy of containment. Because this group considered Iran to be deterred from nuclear attacks on U.S. forces in the region, they believed THAAD was not necessary in Saudi Arabia. The Iranians also might be deterred from attacks on Israel. The Israelis did not appear to believe this assumption, and an Israeli first strike on Iran’s IRBMs would precipitate a nuclear war in the Middle East. Proponents of sending THAAD to Israel maintained that it offered the best means of addressing Israeli fears. This group was willing to run the risk of an Iranian nuclear attack on U.S. forces in the region to increase the chances of keeping Israel out of the crisis.

Those who would deploy THAAD to Saudi Arabia wanted to increase the odds of a successful ballistic missile defense against Iran’s retaliation to the U.S. attack on Iran’s IRBMs. They also wanted Israel to stay out of the conflict—because an imperfect Israeli first strike might ruin the chances for a successful U.S. attack—but felt that the U.S. could convince Israel to “stand aside.” This group was against initiating an attack on Iran without giving U.S. forces in the field every possible protection.

Continuing GREEN HORNET. Participants who proposed to destroy the Iranian regime favored continuing GREEN HORNET. Phase Three forces were considered necessary to follow up the air campaign with a ground offensive against Iran. Moreover the U.S. could not permit Iran to demonstrate to potential proliferators that a few nuclear-tipped IRBMs could “trump” five divisions.

Participants who favored a policy of containment were split evenly between cancelling and proceeding with Phase Three. Those who advocated “staying put” considered the forces in place to constitute an adequate conventional defense. They opposed “adding more nuclear hostages” and argued that it was “time for negotiation not escalation.” Those who proposed to implement Phase Three as planned were not convinced that U.S. forces in the theater constituted an adequate defense. They also believed that the cancellation of Phase Three would be interpreted as a sign of weakness by both Iran and America’s regional allies and cede the initiative to Iran. Like those who advocated removal of the Iranian regime, this group believed that halting Phase Three would send the wrong signal to potential proliferators.

Attacking Iran’s Antiship Missile Sites. Participants who favored destroying the Iranian regime would also strike Iran’s antiship missile sites as part of a large-scale air assault on Iran. The attack would be held to assure the safe passage of ships
carrying oil out of the Gulf and bringing supplies and heavy equipment from the United States for Phase Three of GREEN HORNET.

Proponents of containment who opposed continuing GREEN HORNET also opposed strikes on the antiship missiles sites. They believed that a U.S. attack on the Iranian mainland reduced the prospects for a negotiated outcome and might well produce a nuclear response. The Iranians might feel compelled to respond militarily to a U.S. attack. Alternatively, they might misjudge it to be the leading edge of a strike on their IRBM force, resulting in what they would think was a launch under attack. In either case, a U.S. attack would escalate rather than stabilize an explosive situation.

Proponents of containment who would continue GREEN HORNET were divided between those who would attack the antiship missile sites and those who would warn Iran that the sites would be destroyed if they were ever used again. Those who would warn Iran argued that a U.S. attack would precipitate an Iranian response and hurt the chances for a negotiated outcome but believed that the U.S. needed unimpeded access through the Gulf. They hoped that the earlier use of the antiship missiles would be seen as a "mistake" by Iran's leaders and that U.S. restraint would be taken as a sign of serious intent to negotiate a settlement, even as the continued flow of Phase Three forces was interpreted as a sign of America's will to defend vital interests.

Those who would continue GREEN HORNET and destroy the sites were unwilling to give the Iranians another opportunity to destroy shipping in the Gulf at a time and place of their choosing. They were also convinced that allowing Iran to sink a U.S. naval vessel without punishment was not the right way to begin negotiations and would set the wrong precedent for future U.S.-Iranian crises. This group did not believe that Iran would respond with nuclear weapons to a U.S. strike against targets along Iran's coast. They felt that Iran would be deterred from such strikes by U.S. nuclear capabilities and would be able to tell that the U.S. strike did not put Iran's nuclear capability at risk.

Near- to Mid-Term Plans. Participants who proposed to destroy the Iranian regime would prepare for an invasion of Iran. They envisioned conventional or nuclear strikes on Iran's nuclear weapons capabilities and leadership within 48 hours; immediately to be followed by a massive air campaign against Iranian forces threatening Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and Iranian communications, air defenses, war supporting industry, and logistics. When Phase Three forces arrived, ground forces would move on Iran and continue their assault until Iran surrendered and a new government was installed. Many participants questioned the willingness of the Congress, the Gulf states, other U.S. allies, and the international community to support the defeat and occupation of Iran.

Those participants who would follow a policy of containment favored proposing a cease-fire in place to be followed by negotiations as quickly as possible. Advocates of containment differed on the U.S. military presence required to support the policy. Those who believed that the forces in place constituted either the means of a successful conventional defense or a credible nuclear tripwire were prepared to begin negotiations immediately. Those who felt a tripwire would not be credible and doubted that the U.S. had sufficient forces in place believed in delaying any formalization of the stalemate pending the completion of GREEN HORNET Phase Three.
Trends in the Team Discussions

Figure 3.4 provides an outline of the policy options distilled from group discussion of Step Two. Participants split evenly between those proposing to contain Iran and those who favored eliminating the Iranian regime. Proponents of containment agreed on not striking the Iranian IRBM force and sending THAAD to Israel but split over continuing GREEN HORNET, whether or not to strike Iran’s antiship missile sites, and whether to create a robust conventional deterrent or a nuclear tripwire in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Those who favored destroying the Iranian regime split over whether to present Iran with an ultimatum or conduct a surprise attack and whether to take out Iran’s IRBMs with conventional or nuclear weapons but agreed on deploying THAAD to Saudi Arabia, continuing GREEN HORNET, striking Iran’s antiship missile sites, and conducting a massive attack on Iran itself.

STEP THREE: “THE DAY BEFORE”

Recognition That New Nuclear Powers May Hamper U.S. Military Intervention in Areas of Vital Interest

Participants agreed that while the existence of nuclear weapons was a net advantage to the United States during the Cold War, the disadvantages weighed more heavily on Americans in the post–Cold War era. America’s possession of nuclear weapons counterbalanced what Western leaders perceived to be the Soviet Union’s conventional superiority, deterring the invasion or intimidation of Europe. Participants were concerned that potential proliferators could apply this experience to their own security situations and use nuclear weapons to deter American military intervention. Many would agree with the participant who said nuclear weapons were fine when we were deterring the Soviet Union but not when we are the ones being deterred.

Replaying the war with Iraq but assuming Iraq possessed nuclear IRBMs, participants debated whether the U.S. would have committed itself to a buildup dependent on a few airfields and ports; whether King Fahd would have allowed U.S. troops into Saudi Arabia; whether the United States would have demanded Iraq’s immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait; whether the United Nations Security Council would have backed the United States with tough resolutions; whether Syria and Egypt or even Britain, France, or other Western countries would have joined the coalition; whether the coalition would have tried to destroy the Iraqi high command, or separate the leaders from their forces; whether the U.S. would have tried to hunt down Iraq’s ballistic missile forces; and whether coalition leaders would have agreed to pursue the Republican Guard into Iraq. Participants agreed that military planning would have occurred under severe political constraints as to both the means and ends of the war. Many doubted that DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM would have been possible in the form that did take place.

Regardless of the positions they took in Steps One and Two, participants agreed that the prospect of regional adversaries possessing small arsenals of mobile IRBMs armed with nuclear weapons poses a serious challenge to U.S. national security planning. Such arsenals were considered to devalue the deterrent power of U.S. military capabilities, undermine the credibility of security assurances to U.S. allies, and affect the regional balance of power in ways inimical to U.S. interests. A few nuclear-tipped IRBMs could make future American leaders wary about the deployment of
sizable forces to the theater, particularly ground forces. Participants feared that regional adversaries might be emboldened to employ their nuclear power against U.S. allies for coercive purposes, perhaps with some subtlety as the background of ongoing regional diplomacy. In a war of nerves with a new nuclear adversary, the sense was that the threat posed by a small number of nuclear-armed IRBMs might negate a U.S. threat to deploy five to ten divisions.

Participants clearly preferred means of countering regional adversaries that would allow U.S. forces to stand off well beyond the range of nuclear threats but recognized that such options might leave regional allies feeling exposed. Once a regional adversary deployed a nuclear force, regional allies might well anticipate more assertive adversaries and more qualified American security guarantees and choose to hedge their bets by deferring to the new nuclear power on matters of some importance to the United States. The importance of reassuring U.S. allies was widely appreciated.

Participants were not confident that American nuclear capabilities could counterbalance the threat to regional adversaries posed by new nuclear powers. They found it hard to contemplate the deployment of U.S. nuclear forces to the territory of a regional ally. They doubted an ally would want U.S. nuclear forces or that the U.S. public or Congress would allow it. There was much discussion of a growing "nuclear taboo" in the United States, which prevented the effective peacetime deployment of nuclear weapons to deter adversaries or reassure allies by using declaratory policy. Because of this taboo, it became difficult to contemplate nuclear use in war, even after nuclear use by an adversary. Considerable hopes were expressed and claims made that DESERT STORM proved U.S. conventional weapons could effectively
supplant U.S. nuclear weapons as means of deterrence, reassurance, and defense. Participants were split on whether this case was true or even possible, but all agreed that the U.S. should try.


Few participants were interested in U.S. declarations of no first use, negative security assurances, or extended nuclear deterrence to particular friends or allies as part of a strategy to cope with new nuclear adversaries. Most were interested in statements “strong” on our abhorrence of nuclear weapons and our intent to defend our allies and interests “but vague” on precisely how the U.S. would respond to nuclear use or conventional attacks on our allies or interests. Participants wanted to retain maximum flexibility and saw any statement of how we would or would not react to particular situations as contrary to that objective.

Perception That Strengthening the Nonproliferation Regime Will Not Be Sufficient to Prevent Proliferation

All participants favored strengthening the nuclear nonproliferation regime and even expanding the concept of nonproliferation to cover ballistic missile technologies. All favored highly intrusive challenge inspections of suspected nuclear and missile facilities, and virtually everyone would agree to include the United States in a global inspections regime that incorporated such practices. But virtually no one placed much faith in the chances for success of the nonproliferation regime. The sources of nuclear and missile technology were widely assumed to be too diverse and the incentives to acquire nuclear weapons too powerful for the U.S. to hope to hold back the tide. Few believed the United States and its allies could muster the political will necessary to make the nonproliferation regime effective in actually halting proliferation. Even those participants with career interests in the field were cautious in assessing the nonproliferation regime’s prospects for success. Many participants were struck by the fact that the regime’s “few problem cases” were the very countries most likely to threaten U.S. interests in the years ahead.

Concern That the U.S. Does Not Have a Policy to Cope with Proliferation

The sense that proliferation is inevitable was accompanied by a widespread sentiment that U.S. defense and foreign policies do not address a world of new and potentially hostile nuclear powers. Three broad alternatives for such a world were discussed. First, the United States could withdraw from self-imposed responsibilities to maintain regional security. In the context of the exercise scenario, some participants would say: “Maybe Saudi Arabia isn’t so important to us after all. Perhaps cheaper oil isn’t worth the risk of nuclear war in the Gulf.” “Let Europe or Japan protect their oil. We don’t depend on it.” Although this position was distinctly in the minority, its opponents were hard-pressed to defend the alternatives—containment or war.

No one favored a policy of war, but some saw it as inevitable if some of our commitments were not reduced. Sooner or later, U.S. vital interests would be threatened by a regional nuclear aggressor; neither the new nuclear power nor the U.S. would back down; and by accident, miscalculation, or deliberate decision a devastating war would result. The United States would be forced to choose between accepting local
defeat, destroying the new nuclear arsenal and imposing an unconditional surrender on its regime, or accepting an armed truce. No one argued for a policy of preventive war to deprive hostile potential proliferators of their nuclear weapons option and prevent this sobering future.

Most participants reluctantly conceded that efforts to contain the would-be regional nuclear hegemons defined the more likely future of U.S. policy, even though it promised the establishment of costly "Cold War" style relationships with new regional nuclear adversaries and limited wars fought under the shadow of nuclear destruction. In the near term, participants thought of the shadow in terms of the possible annihilation of allies and adversaries. In the longer run, they thought it could encompass the risk of nuclear attack on the United States. On the whole, participants were pessimistic about the future.

Interest in a Nonproliferation Policy Based on "Virtual Abolition"

To a significant number of military participants and particularly members of the Air Staff, the exercise produced a sense that current U.S. nonproliferation policy based on the Nonproliferation Treaty is doomed to failure because the "two-tiered" regime of nuclear "haves" and "have-nots" lacks legitimacy, a belief that nuclear weapons on balance no longer serve U.S. national security interests, and an assessment that American conventional military capabilities are and will continue to be vastly superior to those of any conceivable adversary. This sense crystallized into calls for consideration of a radical approach to nonproliferation policy, "virtual abolition." Advocates of this position argued that if the major nuclear powers could agree to eliminate all but that small number of nuclear weapons required to deter nuclear attacks on their homelands (and maintain elements of a nuclear weapons production capability—a "virtual nuclear arsenal"—to guard against breakout), they could establish an international nonproliferation norm with substantial legitimacy. Virtual denuclearization by the major nuclear powers would tend to delegitimize the efforts of other states to pursue nuclear weapons and legitimate efforts by the United States and the "former" major nuclear powers to resort to assertive means to halt proliferation. Establishing a "no nuclear" norm would legitimate the highly intrusive challenge inspections necessary to assure compliance with nonproliferation and provide warning of potential breakouts from the regime. The warning gained by intrusive inspections would give the international community time to respond with a graduated series of economic and political sanctions and provide an opportunity to build international consensus for military operations by the former major nuclear partners against nascent nuclear arsenals, should that step become necessary. Participants favoring a serious exploration of this approach recognized many practical problems in the way of success but believed that if virtual abolition looked feasible, it would be advantageous to the U.S. to lead the way toward such a global condition.1 Most participants, however, were highly skeptical of the feasibility of

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1Although radical, this concept is not without precedent as a matter of American foreign and defense policy and international politics. On January 13, 1995, the United States, Russia, France, Great Britain, and China, along with more than 100 other nations, signed a treaty to take effect in 1995 that will ban chemical weapons and weapons production facilities completely. The agreement includes an inspections regime allowing spot inspections of the "virtual" chemical weapons arsenal, i.e., chemical plants and other sites suspected of weapons production. Iraq, North Korea, and a number of Middle East states refused to join the treaty, but an international "no chemical" norm has been established with the support of the world's major powers. The success of this new "regime" will have important implications for assessments of the viability of a virtual abolition approach to nuclear proliferation and will provide a concrete basis for comparison with the two-tiered approach on which the Nonproliferation Treaty is based.
virtual abolition and not at all sure that such an end state would be advantageous to the United States.

Interest in Advanced Weapons Systems

Despite the reluctance of many participants to deploy ground forces in the scenario, few participants argued that the Base Force should be changed to reflect a greater reliance on air and sea power. Most focused on capabilities they would emphasize in future forces: more fast lift, to bring overwhelming force to bear far more quickly; better intelligence on the location of mobile missile targets, to improve the chances of a decisive attack; conventional counterforce capabilities, to destroy enemy nuclear forces and C3 with confidence without resort to nuclear weapons; and highly effective theater missile defenses, to protect forces as they build up in the theater and to provide allies with some sense of protection. These capabilities were seen as crucial to future interventions against nuclear-armed adversaries. Participants believed that the willingness of U.S. leaders to risk significant U.S. forces on behalf of regional security and of allies to rely on American security guarantees was related directly to the combined effectiveness of these conventional military capabilities. There was little discussion of the currently planned military capabilities participants were prepared to do without to have the desired capabilities.

Interest in a Serious National Energy Policy

Whether or not they believed that American or Western dependence on Middle East oil forced the United States to confront Iran with military force in the scenario, many participants believed that a serious national energy policy to diversify sources and types of energy supplies and minimize our need for energy would give the President more flexibility in a crisis. Many participants maintained that West European and Japanese dependence on Middle East oil and our interest in stable economic relations with Europe and Japan influenced their decision to confront Iran more than U.S. reliance. Thus they argued that a collective energy program was required but saw a serious U.S. program as a necessary first step. Both groups agreed that limiting dependence on Persian Gulf petroleum in particular would make us less vulnerable to Middle East instabilities but recognized that it might also make us less willing to challenge new nuclear adversaries in the region on behalf of our local allies. Thus our energy independence might encourage our allies to defend themselves with nuclear weapons of their own or conform themselves to the policy preferences of new nuclear powers.

ALTERNATIVE U.S. POLICIES TOWARD PROLIFERATION

At least during the Bush administration, a consensus seemed to be emerging that America's role in international security affairs after the Cold War would depend on its ability to manage regional conflict. In general, the objective is to maintain regional stability by using a forward military presence and strengthening alliance relationships in regions vital to American interests and especially to ensure against the emergence of a local hegemon. If necessary, the United States is prepared to intervene militarily—preferably as part of a coalition but unilaterally if required—to restore regional security. For this purpose, the United States will maintain contingency forces for rapid deployment to threatened regions, reserve forces for large-scale conflicts, and a mobilization base to hedge against the return of a global mili-
tary threat. The model for U.S. military interventions in the post–Cold War era is the war with Iraq, and the characteristics of Operation DESERT STORM—overwhelming force, decisive victory, minimum casualties, and a quick defeat of the enemy—have become political requirements for future operations.

In the wake of DESERT STORM, the capacity of the United States to bring overwhelming conventional force to bear in those regions of the world traditionally considered vital to U.S. interests—Western Europe, Northeast Asia, the Persian Gulf, and the Western Hemisphere—is undisputed. No nation in the world appears able to match the size and sophistication of U.S. air, ground, and naval forces. U.S. control of the world’s oceans is unchallenged; no country appears likely to be capable of denying the U.S. air superiority, and U.S. air and ground forces appear dominant against a similarly armed foe. American leaders have some reason to be confident that no adversary likely to emerge in the next decade has much chance of defeating the United States in a conventional war.

With this rising confidence in the efficacy of its conventional military power felt by American military and civilian defense officials has come a willingness, perhaps even an eagerness, to devalue and rely less on nuclear weapons. Because conventional weapons are now widely seen as able to carry out virtually any military mission once assigned to nuclear forces, institutional support for nuclear weaponry has begun to decline in the defense community—particularly the military. Combined with a well-deserved public and Congressional fear of nuclear war and a certain phobia about nuclear industrial processes, a series of decisions and actions has occurred that constitute a rising and self-imposed barrier to nuclear weapons programs, declaratory policy on the role of nuclear forces in national security strategy, and planning for the employment of nuclear forces in war.

Under the START agreement, the U.S. will have cut its strategic nuclear arsenal to approximately 3500 warheads. It will also have eliminated nuclear weapons from the U.S. Army; removed nuclear weapons from the U.S. Navy’s surface fleet and attack submarines, to be placed in cold storage; and limited the nonstrategic nuclear component of the U.S. Air Force to a small force in Europe committed to NATO. Aside from USCINCEUR, no combatant commander will have direct command of theater nuclear forces. Aside from forces dedicated to USEUCOM, the remaining U.S. nuclear forces will be concentrated in a single U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM), the successor to the epitome of a “nuclear command,” SAC. No new nuclear weapons will have been produced for some time, and much of the Department of Energy’s nuclear weapons production complex will have been shut down. It would be fair to say that the United States military establishment is in the midst of structural denuclearization.

Even as the United States, bolstered by the incredible success of conventional munitions in the war with Iraq, reduces its reliance on nuclear weapons, other nations are moving in the opposite direction. Asked about lessons learned from watching the Gulf War, the Chief of Staff of India’s armed forces is reputed to have said that future adversaries should not go to war against the United States without nuclear weapons.2 Not to suggest that India is planning to attack the United States, it is worth noting that India is proceeding with some haste to produce and deploy an intermediate-

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range ballistic missile capable of nuclear weapons delivery. And India is hardly alone in its pursuit of a nuclear arsenal. Iraq was and may still be intent on developing and deploying a long-range nuclear force. North Korea and Iran have pursued both nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs.

Participants’ reactions to “The Day After . . . in the Greater Middle East” exercise suggest that the proliferation of small nuclear forces, and particularly mobile IRBMs, poses a serious threat to U.S. security objectives and military operations in regions of vital interest. The acquisition of a small number of nuclear weapons by regional adversaries caused deep divisions among participants on the advisability of deploying substantial numbers of U.S. forces to the theater in crisis. This made problematic U.S. strategies designed to achieve victory by an overwhelming military force and called into question the possibilities for a decisive victory, the likelihood of minimum U.S. casualties, and the prospects of a quick war. Combined with their perceptions of a rising, self-imposed barrier to U.S. nuclear use and the current lack of viable military options to counter the IRBM threat, participants’ behavior suggests that nuclear proliferation threatens a return to limited wars. The prospect of such wars raises serious questions about U.S. civil-military relations, the credibility of U.S. security guarantees and alliance unity, and domestic politics.

Thus military planners have an interest in the policies adopted by the United States government to address the prospect of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile proliferation. U.S. military planning will be strongly influenced by the policy adopted toward proliferation and the likely success of that policy. If the United States can prevent the emergence of a nuclear-tipped IRBM threat in countries likely to threaten stability in regions of vital interest, the emerging consensus on future U.S. defense strategy and military planning is feasible. To the extent that the United States fails, the strategy and plans are at risk.

Three broad alternative U.S. policies toward the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles seem possible:

1. Continued adherence to the current two-tiered international system of nuclear haves and have-nots, with the haves committed to the pursuit of arms control among themselves and the have-nots expected to commit themselves to a policy of nonproliferation

2. Acceptance of the notion that certain states will not be denied the nuclear option and a determination that new members of an expanding club should be integrated into the nuclear order, made stable members of the nuclear balance, and educated into the norms of nuclear competition

3. Pursuit of a strategy working toward the virtual abolition of nuclear weapons to "make the world safe" for a repeat of DESERT STORM.

The “Day After . . . in the Greater Middle East” exercise suggests that opinion in the Washington policy support community is split among the three alternatives. A majority of participants favored continuation of the two-tiered system although most had little faith in its long-term viability. A very small group was prepared to embrace the ever expanding club. A significant group of military officers urged consideration of virtual abolition. As in the previous chapter, our analysis of the teams’ deliberations reveals that their choice among the three alternatives is based on: assumptions about the relative feasibility and desirability of the potential outcomes, judgments about what the United States might be required to do to help achieve a given out-
come, and assessments of the risks the United States would run in pursuing a policy toward that end.

Two-Tiered

Assumptions. The feasibility of the two-tiered strategy rests on two principal assumptions. First, that potential proliferators can be convinced to forgo the nuclear weapons option because the political and economic costs are too high and/or they are not necessary to assure national security, even though the current "legitimate" nuclear powers have no intention to denuclearize and other states have undeclared actual or virtual nuclear arsenals. Second, that potential proliferators can be denied access to the myriad potential sources of supply for nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs.

The desirability of the two-tiered strategy is based on the conclusion that nuclear weapons continue to operate to the net advantage of the U.S. Although it has decreasing military value, a large arsenal is symbolic of America's superpower status. Like the proverbial 500-pound gorilla, a nuclear-armed United States need never remind its neighbors of that power for it to have its intended effect. This assumption rules out virtual abolition. On the other hand, an expanding club is not considered desirable because multiple, interlocking regional nuclear balances are assumed to be highly unstable.

Requirements. An effective two-tiered system requires a far stricter export control regime than now exists to prevent the acquisition of materials, expertise, technology, and equipment critical to nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs; some rollback of the proliferation that has occurred to date; and effective means of inspection and enforcement to support both policies. It should be unnecessary to go into any detail about the political difficulties that would have to be surmounted in these areas.

An effective two-tiered system also requires a serious effort to address the security concerns of allies, friends, potential friends, and potential adversaries. Friends and allies must be reassured of the American commitment to their security. Increasingly, the United States hopes to rely on the conventional capabilities proven in DESERT STORM to provide that assurance. However, the fact that the United States might conceivably win a conventional war on their territory may prove to be no more comforting to an ally facing a regional adversary than it did to West Europeans facing the Warsaw Pact. Despite the confidence of Americans in the military effectiveness of U.S. conventional weaponry, allies and friends facing serious conventional, let alone nuclear, threats from regional adversaries may consider anything less than an extension of nuclear deterrence to be an inadequate substitute for a national nuclear weapons program.

But positive assurances to allies will not be sufficient to assure nonproliferation. Potential regional adversaries constitute a far greater proliferation threat than regional allies. They may require credible negative security assurances—self-enforcing promises that if they and their allies refrain from the acquisition of nuclear arsenals, the United States will not use nuclear weapons against them in war. Even stronger negative assurances may be demanded—that the United States would not attempt to eliminate their regime in a conventional war or would not demand unconditional surrender.
It is likely to prove difficult to devise credible positive and negative assurances that do not deprive the United States of the advantages of nuclear weapons, the basis of the desirability of the two-tiered policy. Resolving the inconsistency between allies’ demands for extended nuclear deterrence and potential adversaries’ demands for negative security assurances will be equally daunting. At the same time, military planners cannot assume that a nonproliferation strategy would be successful; they must plan to fight against adversaries with small but growing nuclear arsenals. But the political requirements of the two-tiered nonproliferation policy create a set of constraints that hamper planners trying to develop effective hedging strategies.

A viable two-tiered regime demands the expenditure of enormous political and economic capital by American leaders. It will cost American jobs, strain alliance relations, and produce severe tensions with important states, like China, who are not friends or allies. In some cases, it may require a willingness to forcibly prevent the emergence of a new nuclear power. Freezing the status of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs around the world, let alone reversing the several programs of countries denying any intention of acquiring nuclear weapons, would require that nonproliferation assume the priority in American foreign and defense policy of containment at the most intense stages of the Cold War.

Risks. The principal risk of the two-tiered strategy is a breakdown of the international nuclear status quo. Despite our best efforts and the expenditure of considerable political influence and economic resources, the two-tiered system could fail catastrophically. Several states with interests opposed to the United States or its allies are on the verge of a nuclear weapons capability. Several friends or potential allies have small arsenals and may be prepared to go public. Each potential proliferator is surrounded by states with their own potential or actual programs. Each nation’s program justifies the other’s. Each program’s advance spurs the others on, causing a rising tide of nuclear weapons potential.

If one state “goes nuclear,” the others may quickly follow suit in a sort of nuclear “domino effect.” In that case, in its haste to halt or even reverse the tide of proliferation (while jealously protecting its own right to large nuclear forces), the United States may have failed to take advantage of opportunities to minimize the instabilities caused by the emergence of a new nuclear power. U.S. efforts to assure that a new nuclear power’s weapons are secure from unauthorized use, that military commanders feel themselves under no pressure to use nuclear forces early in a crisis for fear of loosing them to an enemy attack, and that political leaders come to appreciate the limits and risks of nuclear brinksmanship—efforts incompatible with a strategy of nonproliferation—would not be pursued, and so the breakdown of the regime might soon be followed by a catastrophic nuclear war.

Selective Enforcement of the Two-Tiered System. A theoretical variant of the two-tiered policy is selective enforcement of the nonproliferation regime, applying its strictures only to those states the United States deems unfriendly and/or irresponsible. As a practical matter, this policy is the equivalent of the expanding nuclear club discussed next. Since the United States does not monopolize the sources of supply for nuclear or ballistic missile programs or the sources of influence over potential proliferators, selective enforcement assumes that others will enforce a strict nonproliferation policy while we encourage its violation. A U.S. decision that a state to its liking should be permitted nuclear weapons is more likely to cause another power with influence and nuclear wherewithal to permit its friend to follow suit. Some ob-
servers would characterize this decision as indicative of the actual status of U.S. nonproliferation policy in the not too distant past.

**Expanding Club**

**Assumptions.** A policy to encourage “responsible” proliferation (i.e., nuclear arsenals under tight central control; consisting of safe, secure weapons; supported by reliable tactical warning and communications; commanded by people with an appreciation of American notions of deterrence theory and crisis management) assumes that while some degree of proliferation is a foregone conclusion, new nuclear powers can be integrated into a stable nuclear balance. This alternative assumes that the existing nuclear powers will not give up their weapons, that potential proliferators will decide the incentives to acquire nuclear weapons far outweigh the potential costs, and that the world community cannot or will not muster the political will necessary for an adequate nonproliferation regime. To some observers it also assumes that the United States can maintain its military influence and freedom of action in this proliferated world. (To others it implies that the United States will be constrained in these areas.)

The policy also presumes that new nuclear powers can be persuaded to adopt American norms concerning appropriate conduct by nuclear powers. It assumes that the logic of nuclear deterrence transcends the ideology of such diverse regimes as the dictatorship of Kim Il Song in Korea, Islamic clerics in Iran, and Libya’s Qadaffi. And it assumes that the risk of a nuclear power losing its Western-defined rationality because of internal collapse (as in the former Soviet Union) or the coming to power of a madman is small.

Commitment to policies supporting the expanding club also is based on some notions of desirability. It assumes that nuclear weapons remain a net benefit to American national security in a highly proliferated world, that stable nuclear deterrence moderates local rivalries, and that the possession of appropriate nuclear arsenals by U.S. allies helps limit U.S. liability for regional security without seriously diminishing American influence.

**Requirements.** While the strategy does not suggest that potential proliferators should be encouraged to go nuclear, it does imply that at some point efforts should be made to “socialize” the new nuclear power into the norms of the nuclear competition. The creation and maintenance of stable multiparty deterrence in a highly proliferated world demands much of the United States unless one is confident that stability is the inevitable product of nuclear proliferation and that the risk of nuclear conflict during the transition to that peaceful end state is quite low. If one believes the risk of nuclear war attaching to nuclear proliferation is manageable but nevertheless high, a U.S. strategy accepting the inevitability of the expanding nuclear club must be accompanied by programs to integrate the new nuclear powers into the global nuclear balance. These programs include transfers of technology to assure reliable command and control (including expertise on permissive action links and communications systems), safe weapons (nuclear safety engineering), and minimizing the risks of crisis instability (tactical warning sensors, means of reducing vulnerability). The strategy also requires a serious effort to educate new nuclear decision-makers and their staffs on deterrence theory, crisis management, arms control, and the history of nuclear competition—to foster “responsible” decisionmaking by the leaders of new nuclear powers, to teach them the “rules of the road.” Also American leadership is required to build and extend global and regional nuclear arms control
arrangements that provide a stable framework for interaction among the worlds’ nuclear powers.

An expanded club means that some future U.S. military operations will be fought as limited wars under a mutual threat of nuclear use. To the extent that American political leaders remain interested in preserving some nuclear ethics, even in war, to influence the perceptions of other nuclear states that nuclear use is “beyond the pale” and thus help assure a stable global nuclear competition after the war ends, military planners may find themselves operating under tight and even bizarre constraints (including, for example, political decisions to respond to nuclear attacks on U.S. forces with conventional attacks related directly to the theater campaign, rather than authorizing nuclear retaliation). Furthermore, our peacetime policy of assisting new nuclear powers by encouraging survivability would make it far more difficult to destroy those forces in war.

Risks. A strategy based on the assumption that an expanding club is inevitable risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. The promise of American aid to assure a safe, secure arsenal after a state has achieved some level of nuclear capability is an incentive to go nuclear. Whether it is an adequate incentive may be debatable; however, as more powers acquire nuclear weapons and obtain American assistance, the pressures for other states to follow suit will grow more intense. The objective of a stable regional nuclear balance actually may require us to support some proliferation to assure that an ally, friend, or neutral can counterbalance a new nuclear adversary. Thus U.S. policy could increase the pace of nuclear proliferation. Moreover, new nuclear powers with secure arsenals and stable command and control arrangements may deter military intervention in regions of vital interest to the United States.

Virtual Abolition

Assumptions. This strategy assumes that the root cause of a failed nonproliferation regime is the inherent illegitimacy of the current two-tiered system. The logic of this approach suggests that if the nuclear haves would give up all or, more realistically, all but a handful of the weapons in their huge arsenals, the number of have-nots hoping to become haves would decline. Then the remaining “wannabes” could be isolated and dealt with—perhaps forcefully—by former major nuclear powers on behalf of the world community. Virtually “no nukes” would become a global norm, applicable to all states, reflected in the institutionalization of a highly intrusive international challenge inspections regime. Information from these inspections would provide strategic warning of illegal nuclear weapons programs, giving the international community time to build a consensus for diplomatic and economic sanctions and, if necessary, military actions against the outlawed facilities. The acceptance of these assumptions is a formidable challenge to most observers.

The feasibility of this option also rests to some extent on the notion that potential proliferators can be convinced that the nuclear option is unnecessary to assure national security. Although the policy’s success relies more on the former major nuclear powers’ incentive not to allow proliferation and hence to retain their dominant conventional military advantages, the strategy also assumes that potential proliferators can be convinced that conventional defense and collective security are preferable means of national security.

The desirability of virtual abolition depends on the assumption that a two-tiered nonproliferation strategy will fail and that an ever-expanding nuclear club possesses
an unacceptably high risk of nuclear war. It also assumes that in a highly proliferated world the disadvantages to the United States arising from the possession of nuclear weapons by other nations outweigh the advantages of possessing them itself. In essence, it assumes that the United States can secure its vital interests by conventional means if its potential adversaries do not possess nuclear weapons. If they do possess nuclear arsenals, however, it would be impossible or far more difficult and costly for the United States to do so.

Requirements. A strategy of virtual abolition requires that American leaders be prepared to stop relying on nuclear weapons for any political purpose other than to deter a nuclear attack on the United States itself or any military task other than the destruction of urban areas. Nuclear weapons truly would become weapons of last resort. They would not be used, for example, to deter nuclear attacks against allies or to defeat superior conventional forces. So long as the virtual abolition regime was intact, future American military operations would rely entirely on conventional weapons. American security guarantees to allies and deterrent threats to potential adversaries would depend on perceptions of our ability and will to repeat Operation DESERT STORM.

Virtual abolition also demands maintenance of a credible “virtual arsenal”—plans and industrial facilities that, if required, could produce a larger nuclear arsenal in a relatively short time. This type of capability would be designed to deter and hedge against a breakout from the new regime by former and potential nuclear powers.

The strategy also would require us to convince the other major nuclear powers—Russia (assuming Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan denuclearize per START), China, France, and the United Kingdom—that virtual abolition is in their best interest and to enlist their assistance in compelling the denuclearization of Israel, Pakistan, and India, and perhaps others such as North Korea. In this regard, the United States probably would have to take some unilateral first steps. These could include announcing virtual abolition as a policy goal, carrying out a comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons tests, perhaps permitting challenge inspections of U.S. sites chosen by international inspection teams, and possibly announcing a timetable for U.S. denuclearization conditioned on agreement by the other major nuclear powers to follow suit.

New or strengthened international institutions would be necessary to maintain the inspections regime, identify violators, institute diplomatic and economic sanctions, and authorize military action. The United States would have to play a leading role in developing these mechanisms.

Risks. Two risks accompany the virtual abolition strategy. First, the United States might find itself in a position where it could not defend its vital interests without nuclear weapons and hence would back down, or lose a war; or in a position where it could win a conventional war only at great cost in American lives. Second, if virtual abolition left a virtual nuclear arsenal in place, the strategy would be vulnerable to breakout by countries with nuclear energy programs, including the present major nuclear powers and some other highly industrialized states. While international support could be expected for strikes on the nascent nuclear arsenal of a state like North Korea and U.S. military planners could be relatively confident in the success and limited duration of a military operation designed to destroy it, neither condition is likely to hold if China or Russia were to take steps toward nuclear rearmament.
CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The Self-Inflicted Devaluation of the U.S. Nuclear Arsenal

A combination of military, political, and moral trends has reduced the value of U.S. nuclear weapons in the perception of many American military planners. Judging from the results of this exercise, many military participants would agree with an assertion that the war with Iraq conclusively demonstrated the superiority of U.S. conventional capabilities over those of any potential adversary for the foreseeable future. They would also agree with the proposition that U.S. conventional munitions can destroy virtually any target that can be located. Many cannot conceive of circumstances in the next decade in which the United States might resort to nuclear weapons to counter superior conventional forces in the way that NATO contemplated first use against a Warsaw Pact invasion of Europe. Also they cannot conceive of many types of targets that could only (or even best) be destroyed by nuclear weapons; for example, many believe that deeply buried bunkers might be disabled by highly accurate advanced conventional munitions. Compared to military attitudes during the Cold War, it would seem fair to say that military planners have devalued the military utility of U.S. nuclear weapons relative to advanced conventional munitions.

At the same time, apparently there is a reluctance at the political level to rely on nuclear weapons as “flagship” instruments of U.S. national security policy. Many policymakers consider nuclear weapons to be something of an evil, necessary during the Cold War, but increasingly unhelpful today. American expressions of reliance on nuclear weapons to defend allies, to redress disparities in conventional forces, or even to deter nuclear attacks contradict the thrust of our nonproliferation policies. The rationales stated for our nuclear arsenal lend legitimacy to the arguments of potential proliferators, like North Korea, Iran, Israel, or even Ukraine. Regardless of the actual extent of our reliance on nuclear weapons for deterrence, defense, and alliance relations, currently it is considered better to leave these things unsaid.

Because an expanding nuclear club has been considered highly disadvantageous to American interests and because U.S. policymakers recognize the need to lead by example, the thrust of official American policy toward nuclear weapons after the Cold War has been to devalue their political utility by a wide range of nuclear disarmament measures. These measures include the withdrawal of nonstrategic nuclear weapons from Navy and Army units, deep cuts in U.S. strategic forces, serious contemplation of a comprehensive nuclear test ban, taking U.S. strategic nuclear forces off alert, support for NATO’s nuclear doctrine of “last resort,” cancelling major NATO and U.S. nuclear exercises, ending nuclear weapons production and shifting toward cleanup of the nuclear weapons complex, and decommissioning the Strategic Air Command. U.S. military planners are not immune to this political trend: they must operate within its constraints, and many are inclined to accept it as politically sound.

Finally, the military and civilian communities share a moral revulsion toward nuclear weapons. U.S. and Soviet records of the Cold War, kept secret because of national security, now reveal how close the superpowers came to killing millions of innocent civilians in the Cuban missile crisis and other nuclear confrontations. In the war with Iraq, the U.S. military proved extraordinarily adept at destroying strategic targets in urban areas with extremely modest civilian casualties. It is unsurprising that military planners would prefer not to use nuclear weapons when they are not
needed to achieve their military objective, for they are driven by the same moral values as the rest of American society.

The source of these military, political, and moral trends toward denuclearization lies in perceptions of the not too distant past. Whether these "lessons learned" from the Cold War are appropriate to a post–Cold War world where nuclear proliferation is a major threat remains to be seen. But the lessons appear likely to dominate thinking about U.S. security strategy and military planning in the years ahead.

The Value of Nuclear Weapons to Regional Adversaries

While the war with Iraq seems to have reinforced a self-imposed taboo against nuclear weapons in the United States, potential American adversaries may be moving in precisely the opposite direction. If American military planners have concluded that they do not need nuclear weapons to win any plausible future conventional war, powers concerned with the possibility of a military confrontation with the United States may believe that they cannot afford to forgo the nuclear option. Mobile ballistic missiles were the only weapons system that survived America's withering conventional air campaign against Iraq. Approximately 80 missile launches drew literally thousands of American sorties, roughly 10 percent of the total, without a single confirmed kill of a mobile missile launcher. Despite its important political role in helping keep Israel out of the war, the effectiveness of the Patriot antimissile system is debatable and apparently was less than initially claimed.

Military planners working for America's next regional adversary are likely to arrive at five key findings when they analyze the war with Iraq:

1. America's exercise of overwhelming air power was a decisive factor in the war
2. The U.S. air campaign depended on a few major airfields and the ground campaign on a few ports
3. Because the United States did not fear Iraqi attacks on those air bases, operations could be optimized for the delivery of munitions to Iraq
4. U.S. terminal defenses were not highly effective in intercepting Iraqi Scuds
5. U.S. air and other operations were highly unsuccessful in destroying mobile missile launchers.

A reasonable conclusion for these planners would be that ballistic missiles armed with nuclear weapons would be quite useful to deter and restrict—or even defeat—this type of U.S. military intervention. A nuclear-tipped IRBM could blunt America's conventional air power by forcing the conduct of air operations from bases beyond missile range. A U.S. air campaign could not be fought from a few bases in the theater close to the targets of interest. Ground forces could not be brought to vulnerable ports while an adversary possessed the ability to destroy them in a matter of minutes. Air operations could not be optimized for the delivery of munitions to targets; great resources would be spent finding and killing mobile missiles and supporting dispersed and/or distant air fields. The diversion of U.S. air resources would put more pressure on U.S. ground forces to win the war, but commanders would be reluctant to bring those forces into the theater. In short, the introduction of nuclear-tipped IRBMs undermines the dominant U.S. strategy for military intervention—the DESERT STORM paradigm.
In “The Day After . . . in the Greater Middle East” scenario, a fear that the Iranians may have learned just these lessons made the teams reluctant to place sizable American ground forces in the theater. Given the state of many potential adversaries’ nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, U.S. military planners would be remiss if they did not seriously address this threat to United States defense strategy.

**Taking a Hard Look at Virtual Abolition**

The military has a stake in the success of United States policy toward proliferation. Along with most of the participants in this study, military planners seem to have little confidence in the success of the current two-tiered nonproliferation regime. Most, along with most participants, also believe that a highly proliferated world would be highly unstable. These judgments and their recognition of both the self-imposed devaluation of the U.S. nuclear arsenal and the threat posed by nuclear weapons to the type of military operation epitomized by Operation DESERT STORM led many military participants to propose the serious consideration of virtual abolition. Intuition tells many that U.S. military operations would have a greater chance of success if neither the United States nor its adversary possessed nuclear weapons, but all recognize that a virtual abolition policy would be diplomatically challenging and carry considerable risks. What these participants seek is a comparison of the costs, benefits, and risks of virtual abolition, which is intellectual terra incognita, with the better-understood two-tiered and expanding club options. Such a study would examine the feasibility of virtual abolition and various approaches to that end, the potential influence on nonproliferation of virtual denuclearization by the major powers, the impact of ending U.S. reliance on nuclear weapons in a variety of potential future wars, enforcement regimes, and the possibilities of breakout.

Possibly the military, political, and moral trends against nuclear weapons are so strong in the United States that something like a unilateral version of virtual abolition may already be in train. For this reason, a study of the formal option is well advised—either to stop a process with potentially dangerous consequences for U.S. national security or to identify the international conditions under which such a U.S. policy might be feasible. As a minimum the mental exercise of eliminating, or virtually eliminating, nuclear weapons from the U.S. military arsenal and thinking through the attendant military and political consequences may help us better understand the role nuclear weapons should play in our future security strategy.

**The Need for High-Confidence, Nonnuclear, Damage-Limiting Capabilities Against Small but Growing Nuclear Arsenals**

Whatever strategy toward proliferation is adopted, if the United States is unwilling to give up its ability to project power around the world, it will have to invest heavily in highly capable conventional counterforce, missile defenses, and survivability measures to support military intervention in regional crises. Such capabilities are a necessary hedge against a failure of the current two-tiered nonproliferation regime to prevent a future U.S. adversary from acquiring nuclear weapons. Should the United States move toward the acceptance of an expanding nuclear club, America’s possession of a high-confidence, nonnuclear, damage-limiting capability would be an important element of a defense strategy to deter regional aggression and support escalation control in war. For virtual abolition, highly capable conventional
counterforce and missile defense capabilities would provide both a disincentive to and insurance against a small potential nuclear power’s breakout from the regime.

An important issue in the design of this damage-limiting capability is the size and characteristics of the likely nuclear threat. “The Day After . . . in the Greater Middle East” exercise posited a force of some 40 IRBMs with penetration aids, potentially armed with nuclear weapons. Military planners should have some concern as to whether this type of a small but sophisticated first-generation arsenal is a threat for the mid- to late 1990s or the decade beyond. This possibility has a real effect on future force planning because the sooner such a threat is likely to arrive, the less relevant are existing programs to counter Iraqi Scud-type missiles.
As I look around the world at places where U.S. forces are deployed, where we could conceivably be at war in the next 24 hours, North Korea is it.

—Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney
Sydney, Australia
May 1, 1992

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the third series of exercises conducted under the study. "The Day After . . . in Korea" examined the U.S. response to a North Korean invasion of South Korea that involved the tactical use of nuclear weapons against South Korean forces. More than 75 government officials and defense analysts participated in seven sessions of the exercise held in Washington and Santa Monica in May 1992. (See Appendix D for a list of participants.) The exercise was also run with approximately 25 Air Force National Defense Fellows enrolled in advanced degree programs at universities across North America, at a meeting of their group in Washington. Another group of approximately 30 RAND analysts, psychologists, political scientists, and CIA analysts participated in an exercise in Santa Monica held in March 1993.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the subject that motivated the design of this exercise, the problem of extended deterrence in the "proliferation age." Next, the debates among participants over major policy decisions raised by the advancing scenario during the exercise series are reported and summarized. Then, based on these discussions, the chapter identifies and analyzes alternative approaches toward U.S. nuclear weapons employment policy after the Cold War. The chapter concludes with some general observations about security guarantees to U.S. allies in a more highly proliferated world.

EXTENDED DETERRENCE IN THE PROLIFERATION AGE

Throughout the Cold War the United States extended its nuclear deterrent to key allies and friends. For the United States it was a matter of calculated self-interest. Faced with a global foe harboring expansionist aims, the U.S. sought to defend its own vital interests by containing Soviet power as far forward as possible. To America’s friends and allies, it was a matter of necessity. None could remain outside the Soviet orbit without American military aid.
The bargain was simple: in return for an allied commitment to collective security arrangements under American leadership, the U.S. offered to share the frontline states’ risk of war with the Soviet Union. American security guarantees were made real by military arrangements that linked potential battlegrounds in Europe and Asia to American intercontinental nuclear forces in the continental United States and at sea. The North Atlantic, Central, and Southeast Asia Treaty Organizations (CENTO and SEATO are now defunct), and bilateral security treaties with Korea, Japan, and Canada codified this military aspect of the containment strategy. Substantial U.S. naval, ground, and air forces were forward-based in Western Europe, Japan, and Korea and placed along traditional invasion routes. American men and prestige would be engaged immediately in any serious conflict on allied soil.

But allied conventional forces might prove unable to defeat a Soviet invasion (and in the aftermath of World War II, many allies were not interested in fighting another devastating conventional war), so U.S. nuclear forces were deployed on allied soil or dedicated to allied defense and placed under shared command arrangements to demonstrate an intention to defend allied territory with whatever means might prove necessary. Some of these theater-based forces could reach the Soviet Union itself. The U.S. and its allies (and presumably the Soviets) recognized that U.S. nuclear strikes on the Soviet Union might bring a Soviet nuclear attack on the United States. Thus, the invasion of an ally might escalate quickly to intercontinental nuclear war. By this logic, American survival was “coupled” to allied independence.

In much of the world dominated by these and similar military arrangements, a strong undercurrent of local and regional rivalries existed that was motivated by concerns quite independent of the U.S.-Soviet competition. As the Cold War progressed, some of these contests were resolved—or the superpowers withdrew. Much of Southeast Asia fell to North Vietnam and then out of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry. Castro’s efforts in Latin America largely failed. East and West gradually withdrew from the conflict in Southern Africa. Although conflict continued in these regions, it was relatively independent of superpower influence.

In those parts of the world of vital interest to the United States and the Soviet Union, however, superpower ties created a sort of regional equilibrium. Neither superpower was willing to risk its own survival for the sake of a decisive victory over the other. Their client states were unwilling or unable—and certainly not allowed—to exploit their superpower relationships to the point where they might threaten the destruction of their regional adversary and the balance of regional power. The superpowers sometimes had difficulty managing headstrong clients or calculating the extent to which they could exploit the regional weaknesses of each other, and their clients sometimes went to war. But when the Soviet empire began to collapse in the late 1980s, the superpowers had achieved a degree of stability in Europe, at least in the Arab-Israeli dimension of the Middle East balance, and on the Korean peninsula. By extending security guarantees to its regional ally against the opposing superpower and its regional proxy, each superpower could set some bounds on its client’s actions; the result was a measure of peace in the region.

In many cases the superpowers’ peace appears to have been the regional rivals’ armed truce. Today the stability of any regional balance of power once based on the U.S.-Soviet rivalry is at risk. Former clients of Moscow have lost their principal arms supplier and security guarantor. They are either free to embroil themselves in new disputes, as in the case of Eastern Europe, or are being left to fend for themselves as in Cuba and North Korea. Given the decline of their counterweight to American
influence, it should not be surprising that former Soviet clients such as Iraq and North Korea have embarked on nuclear weapons programs. Also states that never belonged or that withdrew from the bloc system, like Pakistan, India, and Iran, may see nuclear power as a means of exercising regional influence now that the military presence of the superpowers is in decline. Washington’s friends and allies also must be concerned about America’s interest in their security problems now that they are no longer “bulwarks” against Soviet expansion. Indeed rather than being able to rely on the United States to be somewhat sympathetic to their formulations of regional security problems, America’s regional friends and allies may find themselves resisting American “solutions” that they consider contrary to the national interest. The Likud government of Israel appeared to feel this way.

As noted in the previous chapter, the emerging U.S. defense strategy recognizes that in the post-Cold War era national security will depend on America’s ability to manage regional conflict. Whether threatened by a global superpower or a would-be regional hegemon, access to a stable Europe, Middle East, and Northeast Asia remains a vital U.S. interest. In general, our objective is to foster security in these regions by maintaining a forward U.S. military presence and strengthening our alliance relationships. If necessary, the United States is prepared to intervene militarily to restore regional security and will maintain contingency forces for rapid deployment to support this mission. To many strategists and military planners, the model for U.S. military interventions in the post-Cold War era is the war with Iraq, and the characteristics of Operation DESERT STORM—overwhelming force, decisive victory, minimum casualties, and a quick defeat of the enemy—have become requirements for future operations. However, there has been little discussion of the role U.S. nuclear weapons might play in the strategy, except to underline their deemphasis now that the Soviet threat has disappeared.

America’s allies appear to face two types of overt military threats in the post-Cold War era. First, invasion and defeat by conventional forces, either following a surprise attack or because even after the ally has been warned, the region adversary’s forces prove superior. Second, and perhaps the most serious potential new threat, is the possibility of nuclear, chemical, or biological attack by a regional adversary during a conventional war. In both cases, regional allies are likely to continue to look to the United States for protection.

Although the possibility of conventional or nuclear attack by a regional adversary will still constitute a matter of vital concern to American allies, it is unlikely to pose a threat equivalent to that of a Soviet or Soviet-sponsored invasion during the Cold War. This reality inevitably calls into question the willingness of the U.S. to threaten nuclear use on an ally’s behalf. Should the U.S. guarantee against new security threats seem incredible, former American “protectorates” may feel compelled to assume greater control over their own defense and security. A national nuclear weapons program may be seen as part of the solution to their security dilemma.

The potential proliferation of small nuclear forces, particularly mobile ICBM’s, poses a serious threat to U.S. security objectives and military operations in regions of vital interest. In “The Day After . . . in the Greater Middle East,” the acquisition of a small number of nuclear weapons by a regional adversary caused deep divisions among participants on the advisability of deploying substantial numbers of U.S. forces to the theater in crisis. Thus U.S. strategies designed to achieve victory by overwhelming military force became problematic and called into question the possibilities for a decisive victory, the likelihood of minimum U.S. casualties, and the prospects of a quick
war. Combined with their perceptions of a rising, self-imposed barrier to U.S. nuclear use and the current lack of viable military options to counter the IRBM threat, the participants' behavior suggested that nuclear proliferation threatens a return to limited wars—wars fought under a nuclear shadow cast by the new nuclear adversaries' arsenals, for limited U.S. objectives, with limited military means. The prospect of such wars raises serious questions about the credibility of extended deterrence and the future of alliance relations.

THE EXERCISE EXPERIENCE: OVERVIEW

In STEP ONE: The Day Of . . ., participants addressed a rapidly deteriorating political situation on the Korean peninsula, set in 1993. (The Annex to this report contains a complete copy of the exercise materials.) In the scenario, U.S. intelligence reports indicate that North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs have proceeded to the point where nuclear-tipped intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) are about to be deployed. Teams developed an overall perspective on the situation, considered issues and options for presentation to the President, and where consensus could be found, recommended decisions for the President to take.

In STEP TWO: The Day After . . ., participants were convened immediately following North Korea's tactical use of nuclear weapons against Republic of Korea forces to assure the success of its invasion of the South. Again the teams were tasked to help the President get a perspective on the situation and decide how to respond to the crisis.

In STEP THREE: The Day Before . . ., the exercise moved back in time to before the crisis (i.e., to the present day). In consideration of the "lessons learned" in the two previous moves, teams sought to reach consensus on options to be presented to the President for those key nuclear proliferation-related policy issues that should be faced today.

STEP ONE: "THE DAY OF"

Situation Report

It is the early spring of 1993. Following a year marked by frustrating and still unsuccessful negotiations on an inspection regime for a "nuclear weapon-free" Korea, formal political relations between North and South had taken a turn downward during the early months of 1993. Important domestic changes were clearly underway in both countries.

South Korea. In the national elections of October 1992, the ruling party narrowly defeated an invigorated opposition that had skillfully exploited clear signs of an imminent economic downturn and frustration over the lack of progress toward "reunification." The latter issue was championed by a well-organized and growing "Pan-Korean Students' Movement." This movement among young South Koreans, which included well-publicized "exchanges" with leaders of several North Korean university and youth groups, also called for a phasing out of U.S. military presence on the peninsula in the name of "pan-Korean" security and independence. During the election debate some leaders among the students and the more nationalist elements of the reunification movement lauded North Korea's impressive nuclear and missile programs as a testimony to Korean "world-class scientific competence" and "an undeniable security asset" for a reunified Korea.
Toward the end of 1992, after a particularly frustrating session in the nuclear negotiations, some elements in the South Korean defense community began pushing hard for the government to position itself “more formally” to launch a crash nuclear weapons deployment program—arguing that if the talks with the North dragged on much longer some kind of rapidly deployable “strategic nuclear arsenal” would become “an imperative.” Sensitive intelligence reports from DIA sources indicated that key scientists “informally” had begun taking stock of the extent of the existing South Korean “virtual” nuclear arsenal and were beginning to do “the necessary planning calculations” for a crash weapons-building program based on a plutonium bomb.

North Korea. Although most of the details were not discernible, in early 1993 North Korea appeared to be in the early phases of the long-anticipated struggle for succession. The impact on decisionmaking was seen in places like the nuclear negotiations where the North Korean position essentially had not changed in months. Kim Il Sung, now 81, had fallen gravely and apparently terminally ill in late December. His son, Kim Jong Il, over the last few months had assumed most of his father’s political functions, but as yet no formal transfer of power had occurred.

Progress on the transfer of executive power in North Korea apparently was being blocked by a political quarrel between two factions within North Korea’s political and military elite. One, portrayed by its detractors as the “Mailed Fist,” favored charting an independent North Korean course (including immediately abandoning the Korean nuclear negotiations)—a path generally viewed as heading toward military confrontation with the South. The second faction, self-labeled the “New Nationalists,” argued that the only viable alternative for North Korea was accelerated radical economic reform and negotiating a pan-Korean Confederation leading toward reunification. Kim Jong Il’s position on this debate was unclear.

Both factions in the North gave strong support to their country’s nuclear program. The hard-line “Mailed Fist” faction saw it in a “flagship” military role—a guarantee of independence; the “New Nationalists” saw it as a source of leverage in the negotiations on reunification and as the means to make a unified Korea a “powerful and independent nation.” Both groups agreed that South Korea’s growing conventional superiority made nuclear weaponry essential to North Korean security in the short term.

North Korea has continued to ship Scud Cs to Iran and also has provided substantial assistance to the development of an indigenous Iranian ballistic missile production capacity. In return Iran has bankrolled joint development of a 3000-kilometer range IRBM, recently labeled the INKSS-1 by U.S. intelligence. Five successful flight tests of the missile have taken place since late 1992, including one from a new Iranian launch facility. The missile appears to be modeled after the Chinese CSS-2, which has sparked considerable controversy as to the extent of Chinese involvement in this program.

In addition to the acknowledged (now IAEA-inspected) nuclear facilities at Yongbyon and the missile production facilities near Pyongyang, the intelligence community believes that the North Koreans have modest-sized but highly capable underground nuclear warhead and missile production facilities (including for the new IRBM) at a set of well-defended mountain sites.

At this point, some U.S. intelligence analysts believe that North Korea probably has a handful of operational nuclear-armed Scud C missiles (600-km range)—even though as yet no evidence exists in known Scud C deployment areas of special nuclear
weapons handling and storage equipment. Others believe that the North’s small (and apparently nearly complete) initial stockpile of nuclear warheads is destined for a new IRBM.

The Nuclear Negotiations. North Korea’s refusal to accept unlimited challenge inspection procedures remains the barrier to completion of a bilateral nuclear agreement. The North Koreans insist that levels of intrusiveness that go beyond existing IAEA practices reflect a plot by the United States to maintain political hegemony over Korea and all of Asia. This line of argument has been accorded a certain degree of understanding in a number of recent editorials in South Korean media known to favor reunification.

A U.S. intelligence finding in early 1993 concluded that North Korea probably would continue to attempt to buy time in the negotiations to build up a stockpile of weapons-grade material at its covert facilities. That finding also reported evidence of growing concern within the South that a reunified Korea might be required to follow an inspections regime that no other nation had yet been held to—effectively closing a military option that perhaps should be left open given the potential instability of China and Russia, deteriorating economic relations with the U.S., and the possibility of a resurgent Japan.

Japan. The prospect of a nuclear-armed and united Korea has generated considerable consternation about Japan’s security future among Japanese elites—especially against a background of continued difficulties with the United States, particularly over trade. While some Japanese increasingly favor a new collective security structure based on the United Nations or an “Asian CSCE,” a growing sentiment among moderates and conservatives is that Japan should chart a more independent course on the world stage.

China. With the strong reaffirmation of “radical perestroika but no glasnost” at the November 1992 Party Congress, the transition to a post-Deng Chinese leadership accelerated. The new Chinese leadership has continued to articulate a foreign policy based on “opposition to global hegemony by any power or alliance.” Central to this approach has been a vigorous arms development and export program focused on the greater Middle East and including the Islamic nations of the former Soviet Union.

The Chinese approach to the negotiations between North and South Korea has been a study in ambiguity. The official Chinese line has been to support the North Korea position that any agreement should occur “without prejudice to the sovereign rights of both Korean governments.” At the same time, some concern has been expressed about the prospect of a united Korea without real termination of the North Korean nuclear weapons program. U.S. intelligence reports an intense debate within the Chinese military as to whether a “unified and nuclear armed” Korea would be a new and troublesome threat or a potential contribution to stability in East Asia.

The Conventional Military Situation in Northeast Asia. Between the two Koreas, the conventional military balance increasingly seems to favor the South. Expansion of the high-technology sectors of South Korea’s military industry had led to a plan for accelerated modernization of the South Korean armed forces, especially the air force and navy. The army was already greatly benefiting from the serial production of modern armored fighting vehicles and artillery.

Meanwhile, North Korea, very strapped for hard currency, had been unable to buy advanced weapons from Russia or China. Many military observers believe that South
Korea will gain an unambiguously decisive conventional edge by the end of the decade—a perception that has assured widespread support in the North for its nuclear weapons program.

In January 1993, the withdrawal of U.S. ground forces from South Korea resumed. By the end of February only two brigades of the 2nd Infantry Division remained in Korea, and all U.S. units had been withdrawn from their positions along the DMZ north of Seoul. The USAF retained a single composite air wing at Taegu. Given the recent creation of a Korean-dominated joint military command (and polls showing little U.S. domestic support for remaining in Korea), widespread expectations were that all U.S. ground forces would be out of Korea by 1994, regardless of progress in the Korean “nuclear negotiations.”

In Japan, the U.S. continued to maintain two composite air wings, one on Honshu and the other on Okinawa. Two Marine brigades and a Marine air wing also remained on Okinawa. The Carrier Battle Group (CBG) Independence remained home ported at Yokosuka. A Marine Maritime Prepositioning Squadron (MPS) remained on Guam along with another composite air wing (a mix of F-111s and B-52s), and substantial naval support facilities, primarily from the Philippines.

Reflecting these new realities, CINCPAC has drawn up a new contingency plan for the defense of South Korea—code-named IRON SHIELD. The plan is summarized in Table 4.1.

**The Crisis.** In mid-March, the U.S. intelligence community identified two North Korean facilities in the Taedong River valley northeast of Pyongyang as probable operational sites for the INKSS-1. At each site nine vertical silos were identified in various stages of construction; two silos at each site appeared to be finished. Within days, two new missile facilities apparently intended for mobile INKSS-1 launchers were detected under construction near the Yalu River. At about this time, a combination of human and technical sources confirmed and located a single remote and

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<th>Table 4.1</th>
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<td><strong>Major Elements of Operation IRON SHIELD</strong></td>
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<table>
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<th>Forces</th>
<th>Phase 1 (&lt;10 days)</th>
<th>Phase 2 (&lt;30 days)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bomber Wings</td>
<td>Two B-52 squadrons to Guam</td>
<td>Two more B-52 squadrons to Guam from CONUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactical Fighter Wings (TFWs)</td>
<td>Two TFWs to Korea; one TFW to Japan</td>
<td>One more TFW to Korea; two more TFWs to Japan from CONUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrier Battle Groups (CBGs)</td>
<td>Independence CBG sails from Japan</td>
<td>Two CBGs from U.S. to Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Units</td>
<td>2nd Division to defensive position; airlift two PATRIOT battalions from CONUS to Korea</td>
<td>Airlift two light divisions from Hawaii/Washington state to Korea; airlift three PATRIOT battalions from CONUS to Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Prepositioning Squadrions (MPSs)</td>
<td>Move MPS to Pusan from Guam; airlift personnel from Okinawa to Korea</td>
<td>MPS from Diego Garcia; airlift personnel from CONUS; sail marine brigade from West Coast</td>
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heavily defended production facility for the INKSS-1. Also aside from those being used for testing, all existing INKSS-1 missiles were being stored at that location.

On March 26, 1993, a sixth launch of the Iranian/North Korean IRBM was detected by DSP. The character of the telemetry on the test combined with the identification of the IRBM sites stimulated a debate within the technical intelligence community as to whether the INKSS-1 might be made operational after only six tests. The consensus was that North Korea could deploy four to six operational silo-based IRBMs in two months, another 10 to 12 in four months, and begin to field mobile IRBMs within six months.

In response to a Presidential request for an examination of available military options, the Joint Staff has approved the development of three counterforce options against the North Korean nuclear and missile programs. The first involves a conventional strike on known INKSS-1 deployment and production sites. It is estimated that two days of round-the-clock air strikes by the B-52s wings that would be available on Guam after Phase 1 of IRON SHIELD would destroy all known INKSS-1 facilities. A nuclear attack with these same objectives is estimated to be achievable with a single sortie from the B-52 force on Guam (once nuclear weapons were deployed to Guam) or a strike by Minuteman III ICBMs. Estimated prompt and long-term casualties from such nuclear attacks range as high as 100,000 North Koreans.

A heavy conventional attack on all known North Korean missile sites including all Scud sites is estimated to require six to eight days of sorties with considerable uncertainty as to the accuracy of any post-attack damage assessment. A nuclear attack on North Korean missile sites and facilities was not examined in the light of prohibitive collateral civilian fatalities.

On March 28, the South Korean ambassador, at a private lunch with the U.S. Secretary of State, revealed that new intelligence information available to the South had led to the conclusion that a handful of INKSS-1 missiles equipped with nuclear warheads would be deployed in “virtually invulnerable” mountain sites in “the very near future.” He stated that the South Korean government was now strongly inclined to cancel the next negotiating session with North Korea scheduled for April 10.

In an off-the-record aside, the ambassador expressed great anger that South Korea and the United States had been “taken for a ride” in the Korean negotiations. He noted that the South Korean High Command would soon ask to send a delegation to the United States to conduct joint military planning for possible action against the North Korean nuclear and missile program “before it was too late.” He added that if this request was refused, the South Korean government may find itself compelled “to do the best it can” on its own in attempting to thwart the North Korean program.

On March 30 the U.S. Ambassador to Japan sent a lengthy memorandum of conversation (memcon) to the Secretary of State on the state of mind in Tokyo. The central theme was the widespread perception that the deteriorating Korean situation was the test case for the future of the U.S.-Japanese Security Treaty. Further, he highlighted the comments made by a senior advisor to the prime minister that “a unified and nuclear armed Korea would transform East Asia.”

Patterns of Response to the Situation

Participant teams were asked to identify key defense and military policy issues facing the U.S. in this Korean crisis and if possible agree on recommended action. They
were given a “Draft Memo for the President” as a starting point for discussion. Seven issues dominated the teams’ deliberations:

1. Overall U.S. strategy and policy toward the North’s imminent nuclear arsenal

2. Whether to announce a timetable for U.S. action if the North failed to denuclearize

3. Whether to enter into joint military planning with the South for a possible attack on North Korean nuclear and missile facilities

4. Whether to seek multilateral backing from the international community or undertake unilateral action

5. Implementation of IRON SHIELD

6. Alert of U.S. nuclear forces

7. Declaratory policy on extended deterrence on the Korean peninsula.

**Overall U.S. Strategy and Policy.** Few participants considered the North Korean nuclear program to be “irrational.” A small group of participants considered the program a poor choice and, therefore, irrational from an objective standpoint because it would only increase North Korea’s isolation from the world community. Most participants considered the program to be rational at least in the North Koreans’ subjective perception. Two arguments were put forward. In the first, the North Korean nuclear program was a response to the hostility directed at it by the West’s policies of commercial and diplomatic isolation. In this view, North Korea saw the world as hostile to its survival. Nuclear weapons were a substitute for the North’s lack of either a dependable protector or the size and wealth necessary to assure an adequate national defense over the long term. The second argument was that North Korea was developing its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile technology to earn foreign exchange and break out of its Western-imposed isolation by becoming an important source of weapons and technology to other pariahs—such as Iran.

Participants voiced three concerns that the imminent deployment of nuclear weapons by North Korea might trigger rapid and widespread proliferation. The first concern was the nuclear “domino effect.” Participants feared that South Korea would quickly follow suit to establish nuclear parity with the North, transforming security relations in northeast Asia. This stance, in turn, would lead Japan to become a nuclear power, which would transform the global security environment. The second concern was the “demonstration effect”; i.e., that if North Korea could “get away with it,” other potential proliferators would be emboldened to deploy arsenals of their own. A third concern was that North Korea would become an international supplier of nuclear weapons technology to other potential U.S. adversaries.

These concerns motivated three alternative strategic responses. A small but vocal minority maintained that the situation was not within the United States’ power to control and that the Korean peninsula meant very little to the United States. They argued that the United States should speed up its military withdrawal from South Korea and leave any solution to Japan, China, and Russia, whose vital interests were at stake. Those who opposed this position argued that a nuclear-armed Japan was a plausible Japanese solution that would not be in the U.S. interest. Another plausible outcome was a war in Northeast Asia, which might involve China and Russia as well as Japan and which could escalate in some now unforeseeable way to affect the United States directly. A third argument against withdrawal was that an accelerated
U.S. withdrawal after the introduction of nuclear weapons by North Korea would destroy the credibility of extended deterrence, encouraging regional adversaries of U.S. allies to follow the North Koreans’ example and force America’s regional allies to develop nuclear arsenals of their own.

Participants whose priority was the stability of northeast Asia and the potential “domino effect” proposed that this situation should not be made into a crisis. They argued that the United States should treat the potential deployment of nuclear weapons by North Korea as another in a series of events or trends in the politics of the peninsula. It was important to reassure South Korea and Japan of the credibility of U.S. security guarantees and to show the North that a high diplomatic and economic price would be the consequence of its transgressions if it chose deployment. This group was opposed to attacks on the North’s nascent arsenal because no unambiguous basis existed for such forceful action; an attack might fail, precipitating war and possibly nuclear war; and even a successful attack would set back the prospect of peace on the peninsula for many years. They proposed to “manage” the situation by means short of war.

Discussion of this alternative raised several issues. Some believed that the idea of managing a North Korea bent on going nuclear was a dangerous illusion. Others suggested that there was no time to “wait and see” if diplomatic or economic tools would take effect—the North was only weeks away from having a useable nuclear arsenal. Still others maintained that if the United States allowed the North to go nuclear, it would not risk attacking the North later for fear of nuclear retaliation against Tokyo or Seoul. This situation would spur other would-be proliferators to cross the nuclear threshold.

The third strategy was to make an example of North Korea—to “draw the line here.” Participants favoring this approach argued that the imminent deployment of nuclear weapons by the North was a watershed event in the history of U.S. nonproliferation policy. If the U.S. allowed it in North Korea, it would have no way to halt proliferation elsewhere in the world. A brief window of opportunity existed to stop deployment. If the United States did not try with every means at its disposal to reverse the North’s program, it might as well abandon its policy of nonproliferation. Discussion of this option led to expressions of considerable doubt that the United States was prepared either to make support for its position on North Korea the litmus test of its foreign relations with other countries or to act on its own to forcibly remove the North’s nuclear and missile capabilities.

Those who favored “managing the situation” split with those who would “draw the line here” over the best approach to persuade the North to desist from its course of action. The latter group focused exclusively on means of forcing the North to give up its weapons program and would consider no “sweeteners.” Proponents of this position argued the need to emphasize that nuclear weapons programs were “beyond the pale” of acceptable behavior in the international community. To them, positive inducements (such as aid packages) to forgo the nuclear option at this late stage would be seen as a reward for the North’s persistent effort to develop nuclear weapons. They were unwilling to encourage similar “blackmail” by other states. Some participants questioned the feasibility of this policy, doubting that the international community would support this “hardline” approach.

The first group proposed a “carrot-and-stick” policy. In their view a policy to persuade the North Korean leadership to give up its nuclear weapons had to address Korea’s fears and needs as well as those of the U.S. They maintained that a mix of
positive and negative inducements held the best prospects of success. This group argued that threatening the North Koreans to give up their nuclear program would only serve to confirm their perceived need. This group felt that “buying out” the North Korean program was cheaper than containing or going to war with a nuclear North Korea and argued that (real world) U.S. relations with Ukraine and Kazakhstan over the former Soviet nuclear arsenal had already established the precedent for such "buyouts."

**A Timetable for U.S. Action?** Participants divided over whether to set a timetable for action if the North refused to denuclearize. A minority of those who favored the "manage/carrot-and-stick" policy suggested that the United States should not set deadlines. They argued that it would be inconsistent with the overall policy to precipitate a crisis by setting a specific date for the end of the North’s nuclear program. With this approach the U.S. would be deprived of its flexibility to arrive at a peaceful solution with a paranoid North. Opponents argued that a failure to establish some deadline would send the North a clear signal that the United States would not forcibly oppose deployment. This development would be encouraging to other proliferators and cause U.S. allies to wonder about the extent of American security guarantees.

A minority from the "draw-the-line/no sweeteners" school of thought favored going ahead immediately with a conventionally-armed preemptive strike on the North’s nuclear and/or missile facilities. This group believed that the North was bent on deployment and would use whatever time it could obtain through negotiations to improve the survivability of their force. Proponents of this position believed that the time for a successful attack would pass quickly; thus, the U.S. did not have time to wait for successful negotiations. Any warning that the North had of U.S. intentions would put the success of the attack at risk. This minority favored a conventional attack because it would be inconsistent for the U.S. to use nuclear weapons in the name of nuclear nonproliferation.

Those who opposed this option doubted that preemption would work and feared nuclear retaliation against South Korea or Japan. They also doubted that the U.S. public, the Congress, or U.S. allies would support a "surprise attack" on North Korea, particularly if the evidence about North Korean intentions was ambiguous—as it surely would be if the U.S. "prevented" deployment from ever taking place. Some also argued that U.S. strikes on facilities designed to create a nuclear weapons "option" might cause states that see advantages in keeping the option open but unrealized to deploy nuclear forces rather than remain vulnerable to preemption.

The majority of participants favored a "graduated response" involving diplomatic sanctions, followed by economic embargo and then military action, only after clear North Korean intransigence or obfuscation. The North needed unequivocal signs of what the United States expected them to do and how serious the United States was about eliminating their nuclear capabilities. Those favoring this policy first would demand intrusive challenge inspections to prove the extent of North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and then establish a timetable for dismantlement. Participants from the carrot-and-stick school favoring graduated response joined others favoring no sweeteners in believing that the U.S. could not allow the North to deploy nuclear weapons and, if necessary, would have to remove them by force. Both groups also felt that the United States would have to build support for a forceful course of action and could only do so by first exhausting all other means.
Discussion of the graduated response led to such questions as whether the United States could afford to wait for coalition support while the North deployed, whether U.S. intelligence on the nuclear/missile target base in North Korea would deteriorate or improve with time, and whether the U.S. actually would act when the deadline passed. All agreed that a bluff called by the North Koreans would be devastating to the credibility of extended deterrence.

Joint Military Planning with South Korea. Most participants favored joint military planning with South Korea for a variety of reasons. Perhaps the most prevalent was a desire to keep the South Koreans under U.S. influence and control. For example, participants pushing conventional preemption did not want the South to “botch the job” by unilateral action. Participants who favored “no deadlines” and some of those favoring a graduated response did not want the South to precipitate a war with the North that would certainly involve the United States. More general motivations for joint planning included a perceived need to reassure the South of U.S. security commitments, the idea that the U.S. should not hide plans from the ally whose territory would be at risk in any conflict, the U.S. President’s need to share the responsibility for a risky course of action with another politician, the possibility that South Korean forces might be required, and the idea that a threat to “unleash” the South might give the U.S. leverage in negotiations with the North. But some participants wondered if the South would constrain U.S. military planning unduly, foreclosing militarily attractive options that might otherwise be pursued. Others feared that signs of U.S. collusion with the South might precipitate a paranoid North to attack the South.

A small minority who favored a policy of graduated response were opposed to joint military planning. They thought it might encourage the South to push the North too hard or that it would constrain U.S. military planning. This group would reassure the South by diplomacy. In the debate over joint military planning, some participants doubted that the U.S. could afford to act without direct assistance from South Korea and argued that such assistance would only be forthcoming with joint planning. Others questioned whether it was prudent or even moral for the United States to consider undertaking military action against the North without the South’s approval.

Multilateralism Versus Unilateralism. Participants favoring “no deadlines” joined with those favoring a “graduated response” to form a substantial majority for a multilateral approach to the crisis. This group believed that a broad base of international support would be required if plans to denuclearize the North—either by diplomacy or force—were to succeed. Proponents of multilateralism also argued that even if the U.S. managed to denuclearize the North by the unilateral use of force, a precedent for unilateral action by the strong to protect vital national or international interests would be established that might threaten long-term U.S. interests in cooperative global security arrangements. They maintained that the prospects of obtaining international support for action against the North Korean pariah were so good that American leaders would be foolish to pursue unilateral action. Others wondered whether a multilateral approach would constrain U.S. military planners unduly. They asked what the United States would do if it requested and was refused international support for a preemptive strike on the North.

The minority pushing for conventional preemption urged unilateral action. They believed no time was available to gain international support and argued that the United States would have to act even without it. They feared that the international community would balk at support for a preemptive attack on North Korea’s military
facilities because the North’s intention to deploy nuclear forces could not be proved conclusively beforehand. They also feared that the U.S. plan would be leaked, warning the North and harming the chances of success. They also believed that while few nations would openly support the U.S., and some might even condemn it, all would silently applaud a successful strike. Other participants doubted that important nations in the region with a great deal at stake, including Japan, China, and Russia, would appreciate a unilateral U.S. decision to undertake a mission that placed them all at some risk from North Korean retaliation, while the U.S. would remain safe regardless of the outcome of its strike. Such an act might be considered irresponsible by America’s peers.

Implementation of IRON SHIELD. A majority of participants favored implementing IRON SHIELD. Most of those who would manage the evolving situation in Korea maintained that implementation of the plan would be appropriate to the increased risk of conflict on the peninsula when the North deployed nuclear forces. The U.S. action could be explained as a prudent countermeasure rather than a crisis reaction, and serve as both a carrot and a stick in negotiations with the North. As long as the North was nuclearized the troops would stay; if the North denuclearized the troops would leave. A minority of those who favored the strategy of managing argued that the U.S. public would not support IRON SHIELD unless the situation in Korea were portrayed as a crisis (which was counter to the objective of the strategy) and believed that a return of forces to Korea would precipitate a crisis with the North.

A majority of those who would draw the line on proliferation with North Korea also favored implementing IRON SHIELD to demonstrate to both North and South Korea the U.S. intention to reverse North Korea’s nuclear program. Many in this group were convinced that war with the North was extremely likely and when that time came wanted to bring maximum force to bear in the theater.

A minority of participants opposed implementing IRON SHIELD. Those favoring the manage strategy saw no signs of any increased threat of an invasion of South Korea by the North and believed that implementation of the plan would escalate the situation into a crisis. Debate over these propositions led some participants to ask those favoring the manage strategy whether the U.S. could manage the crisis very well without using some military instrument.

Those favoring the draw-the-line strategy who nevertheless opposed implementing IRON SHIELD did so because they believed the U.S. should preempt the North’s nuclear program. They argued that implementation of the plan would warn the North of possible hostilities. Thus the North probably would take precautions with their nuclear forces that would limit the chances of a successful U.S. strike. On the other hand, this group had great confidence in the success of their preemptive strike, believed that U.S. forces would arrive well after the attack was over, and doubted that the North Koreans would invade the South after they were shorn of their nuclear arsenal. Others questioned this approach and wondered if the U.S. and South Korean forces in place could stop a conventional attack by the North.

Participants who favored implementing IRON SHIELD were divided between those who would execute the plan unchanged and those who would only deploy air forces. Those who would execute “as is” argued that anything less would undermine extended deterrence. The South Koreans, and very likely the North Koreans as well, would “expect” to see the U.S. ground forces associated with IRON SHIELD. If they did not, both our ally and our adversary might question our will in the crisis. This group also argued that U.S. ground forces were not at risk of nuclear attack from the
North because the North would be deterred by overwhelming U.S. nuclear superiority. Also they maintained that U.S. ground forces would be needed if the North invaded.

Participants opposed to implementation “as is” wondered whether the credibility of extended deterrence depended on the execution of a particular operation plan (OPLAN). They were concerned that U.S. ground forces would be at risk of nuclear attack. They also doubted that the U.S. ground forces were needed in the theater to either protect South Korea or punish the North. This group favored execution of only the air portions of IRON SHIELD. They argued that only air power could punish the North, while air power also could substitute for ground forces in defense of the South. Ground forces would only become nuclear hostages to the North.

Alert of U.S. Nuclear Forces. Participants split roughly evenly among four options on whether the U.S. should respond in kind to North Korea’s imminent deployment of nuclear forces. One group proposed to reintroduce U.S. nuclear weapons to South Korea as a proportionate and reciprocal response. They pointed out that U.S. nuclear forces had been withdrawn from the peninsula on the assumption that the North would remain a nonnuclear state. With that assumption about to be proven false, the U.S. was under no obligation to North Korea to keep South Korean territory denuclearized. Perhaps, however, the U.S. was under an obligation to return nuclear forces to protect the South. They also argued that placing nuclear weapons on the ground in the Korean theater contributed to deterrence. In their view the North would be less inclined to invade the South—or conduct nuclear attacks on South Korea or U.S. troops present or arriving in the area—knowing that the U.S. military commander had direct control of nuclear forces and that the South Korean president would have a say over their use. Given the U.S. military’s extensive experience in handling nuclear weapons in South Korea and the likelihood that elements of the nuclear storage infrastructure were likely to remain intact, this group argued that no serious problem should occur in assuring the safety and security of nuclear weapons deployed to the South.

Opponents of this position maintained that the U.S. reintroduction would “justify” North Korea’s introduction. Thus the U.S. would be robbed of the moral high ground on nonproliferation and the reintroduction could harm efforts to build an international consensus against the North’s program and for a policy of graduated response. They also doubted whether the U.S. public, Congress, Japan, and even South Korea would accept a U.S. decision to place nuclear weapons back in Korea. Trends in the opinion of these actors toward nuclear weapons were believed to be so negative as to be virtually insurmountable.

A second group favored returning nuclear weapons to surface fleet and attack submarines deployed in the vicinity of Korea. They maintained that this action would meet many of the objectives of those who would return nuclear forces to South Korea itself, with fewer drawbacks. The deployment would be reciprocal and proportionate to North Korea’s decision to deploy nuclear forces. North Koreans would believe that nuclear weapons in the fleet were under the theater commander’s control, deterring an attack on South Korea. The weapons would be safe and secure on U.S. naval vessels. The deployment could be kept at a relatively low profile because South Korean agreement would not be required. Also CNN cameras would not be attracted to air or army facilities on the ground in South Korea. If circumstances changed, the President could withdraw the weapons without asking the South or attracting much attention to the associated operations.
Those opposed to this deployment maintained that no U.S. decision to reintroduce nuclear weapons to any region of the world or any element of the U.S. armed forces could be low profile. The media would find out somehow (by leak, by local media’s observation of military activities at U.S. bases across the country, etc.) and make it headline news. Others pointed out that it would be difficult to have both secrecy and deterrence; the North Koreans would need to be told and shown that the U.S. was putting nuclear weapons in the fleet. The North could not find out for itself as the Soviets could with their sophisticated intelligence gathering systems during the Cold War. American efforts to show the North Koreans that the U.S. was not bluffing would involve neutral information gatherers (like CNN), which would obviously compromise secrecy.

Others, who did not necessarily oppose the return of nuclear weapons to South Korea or the fleet, doubted its feasibility. The U.S. Army is getting out of the nuclear war business. The Pacific Command will not have nuclear forces ready on board ship, save the SSBNs operated for the Strategic Command. The Navy is preparing proposals to permanently withdraw nuclear forces from all surface ships and attack submarines. The doubters contended that as early as 1993 it might be operationally impractical to redeploy nuclear forces to the region quickly.

The third option was to place U.S. bomber forces on alert. Proponents of this position believed that some U.S. military response with nuclear overtones was required by the North’s imminent deployment of nuclear weapons. They did not believe an in-theater nuclear deterrent was necessary, arguing that deterrence followed from the mere possession of nuclear weapons by the United States. Many of this group went further, arguing that the North Koreans would be deterred by demonstrations of America’s overwhelming conventional strength. The strategic bomber force could carry out either nuclear or conventional missions—so the North Koreans would have to consider that U.S. nuclear power was becoming directly engaged in problems on the Korean peninsula even while the United States plausibly and perhaps truthfully could deny any intention to escalate the situation into a nuclear crisis.

Those who argued for a return of forces to the theater suggested that a nuclear presence was necessary for extended deterrence, particularly to reassure the South Koreans. This group maintained that the South would expect tangible signs of the U.S. commitment that could only be satisfied by U.S. nuclear forces in the theater. Others who opposed a bomber alert suggested that the U.S. public and Congress would question a bomber alert because of its nuclear dimension and would not find the administration’s denial plausible.

The fourth option considered was to institute no alert of nuclear or dual-capable forces. Some in this group argued that deterrence of any offensive military action by North Korea exists because of the mere existence of the U.S. nuclear arsenal; others said it exists because of America’s overwhelming conventional superiority. They saw no need to “rattle the nuclear saber.” The situation was not yet a nuclear crisis, and they opposed U.S. action that would escalate it to that level. Others, who favored a conventional preemption of the North’s nuclear program, argued against an alert that would give the North Koreans a reason to fear an attack, robbing the U.S. of the advantage of surprise. Still others argued that any nuclear alert would shift the focus of international debate from the North’s clear violation of a no-nuclear norm to the thornier matter of why the U.S. could have nuclear weapons but not North Korea.

Those who favored a U.S. nuclear response in some form maintained that a failure to act would constitute a green light to the North, showing that the U.S. had no inten-
tion of stopping the North’s missile program. They argued that the objective of the U.S. should be to stop IRBM deployment. If the U.S. did intend to halt the deployment, failing to react by referencing the U.S. nuclear capability in some way could mislead the North into thinking otherwise and inadvertently lead to a potentially nuclear war.

Declaratory Policy on Extended Deterrence. Participants were divided on how to explain U.S. security relations with South Korea in official policy statements. A minority argued for explicitly affirming extended deterrence. They maintained that the credibility of American security guarantees around the world was at stake. In light of the nuclear threat from the North, South Korea would expect the U.S. to underpin extended nuclear deterrence. Other American allies would view this situation as a test case of U.S. intentions in the post–Cold War era. If the U.S. cast any doubt on the quality or coverage of its nuclear umbrella, U.S. allies might well seek security in their own nuclear programs.

The majority favored avoiding discussion of extended deterrence and preferred statements referencing the general U.S. commitment to South Korean security. They sought to avoid discussions about U.S. nuclear weapons, and because “extended deterrence” has “nuclear” overtones, they wanted to avoid using the phrase. They doubted that “nuclear” was a necessary component of extended deterrence. In their view, explicit reference to U.S. nuclear forces was not necessary to deter North Korean leaders, who were perfectly aware of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, from threatening the South. Similarly, they believed that the South Koreans had no need for explicit reassurance of U.S. nuclear guarantees.

Many who favored avoiding the word nuclear also believed that U.S. conventional capabilities could substitute for nuclear forces in providing extended deterrence to U.S. allies. The minority, who believed that U.S. allies perceive nuclear deterrence to be qualitatively superior to any conventional substitute, maintained that Korea would view an offer of conventional deterrence as a downgrading of America’s security guarantee.

Trends in the Team Discussions

Figure 4.1 is an outline of the policy options distilled from the group discussion of Step One. The dark solid lines and boxes indicate majority agreements. All participants saw the problem created by North Korea’s imminent deployment of nuclear-armed IRBMs in terms of potential demonstration or domino effects. A very small group believed withdrawal was the best action. Most participants favored some form of U.S. engagement. Those who emphasized the domino effect of nuclear proliferation in northeast Asia favored efforts to manage the situation on the peninsula by a policy toward the North combining punishment and reward. Those who feared the worldwide demonstration effect of the North’s nuclear program preferred a policy emphasizing threats and punishment. A majority of both groups preferred a gradual increase of pressure on the North over either an open-ended negotiation or an immediate attack on the North’s nuclear and missile facilities. Most participants favored joint military planning with South Korea and proposals to build a strong multilateral coalition supporting U.S. policy toward North Korea. The majority also argued for implementing IRON SHIELD, although they split on whether to withhold U.S. ground forces. No agreement was reached on proposals to respond to the
North’s nuclear program by alerting U.S. nuclear forces, but a majority decided against explicit references to extended deterrence in declaratory policy on South Korea, preferring to emphasize a general U.S. commitment to South Korean security.

STEP TWO: “THE DAY AFTER”

Situation Report

On April 1, 1993, while the U.S. National Security Council (NSC) debated how to handle the deteriorating situation in Korea, Kim II Sung died. The North Korean armed forces immediately went on heightened alert. On April 7, many heads of state, including the President of South Korea, attended a massive funeral in Pyongyang. The city was clearly tense and heavily guarded by military and security forces. Later that day, the U.S. Ambassador to South Korea reported that a meeting between the South Korean President and Kim Jong Il had been totally unproductive and that Kim seemed “nervous and preoccupied.” Rumors were rife in Tokyo that a serious split had developed in North Korea over Kim Jong Il’s ascension to the status of “great leader.”

On April 9, the chief of staff of the North Korean Air Force, a known leader of the New Nationalist faction, unexpectedly appeared on national television and announced that Kim Jong Il would head a new collective government. Pictures of the new leadership, all noted reformers, were also broadcast. Resignations of the previous minister of defense, chief of staff, and the civilian heads of communications, industry, and agriculture were also announced. Within hours the Japanese and several European
embassies reported large scale movements of armored vehicles and extensive fighting throughout the center of Pyongyang. Reports suggested that members of the reform government had attempted to place Kim Jong Il under arrest but that the plot had been interrupted by security forces loyal to the new leader's father.

At 1100 local time, Kim Jong Il appeared on television and broadcast an appeal for national unity, claiming that a plot by South Korea and the United States to destroy the nation and overthrow the works of socialism had been thwarted. Then scenes showed several members of the "reform" cabinet garroted by wire from an unidentified ceiling. (The body of the air force chief of staff was not shown, and diplomatic sources later expressed the view that he was at large and had escaped the city.) Kim ended the speech with a diatribe against the "fascist regime of the south."

At 1200 local time, U.S. and South Korean intelligence picked up clear evidence that several corps of the North Korean Army were crashing out of garrison and heading south toward traditional attack positions. Most ominous was the redeployment of all the North Korea armored units north of Seoul. While the possibility remained that these forces were to be engaged in the struggle for power in the North, the National Intelligence Officer for Northeast Asia argued that the events showed all the signs of a "standing start" attack on the South. At 1300, the President of South Korea emerged from an emergency meeting of the South Korean cabinet and announced a full mobilization of ROK military forces. The U.S. Ambassador in his analysis of the statement by Kim Jong Il noted a reference to "the cherished goal" of the reunification of Korea and expressed the view that the South might attack north if the North Korea military split continued.

In the late afternoon, U.S. reconnaissance aircraft detected the massing of North Korean armored units north of the traditional invasion routes to Seoul. Adding confusion to the military picture in the North was continued evidence of fighting in Pyongyang and Wonson, and around several air bases along the Yalu River. At an NSC meeting late on the 9th, the President made the decision to implement IRON SHIELD. On April 10, CINCPAC was granted authority to conduct a counter-surprise defense—code-named STEEL SWORD. The plan relied on the massive use of air power to counter a North Korean attack.

At 0330 local time on April 11, the second Korean War began as two orbiting AWACS aircraft detected 200 aircraft rising from five main airfields in the North. At 0340, the Pacific Ocean DSP detected the near simultaneous launch of 80 Scud missiles toward South Korea. At 0400, the NMCC received a flash report that the U.S. Command Post at Osan and several other South Korean bases were under commando attack. Heavy local fighting involving North Korean special operations forces (SOF) units also was reported throughout the Seoul suburbs around key military facilities. All along the DMZ there were massive artillery barrages and extensive attacks by short-range tactical ballistic missiles (FROG-7 type) and long-range multiple rocket launchers. There were no reports of the use of chemical weapons.

At 0530 local time, CINCPAC sent a message to the NMCC requesting authorization to conduct unrestricted air and naval operations around and over North Korea with an initial 20-kilometer no-attack zone south of the Yalu River. USAF Korea reported that the initial wave of attacking North Korean aircraft had suffered 40 percent loss rates and had caused only "moderate" damage. The continuing Scud bombardment was reported as more worrisome, with the count now up to 229 launches with 55 intercepted and 165 detected impacts. It was reported that 75 U.S. personnel were killed.
At 0600 local time, North Korean forces launched a multi-corps attack through the Uijongbu corridor toward Seoul. In the first hour, reports from the South Koreans indicated that the main line of defense just south of the DMZ was holding. The two brigades of the U.S. 2nd Division had moved overnight into an "operational reserve" position 10 kilometers north of Seoul. As South Korea's only armored corps of two armored and two mechanized divisions were moving to counterattack positions another 15–30 kilometers north of the 2nd Division, the U.S. division commander sent a request to "lean further forward" with the South Korean mechanized forces. At 0700 local time, CINCPAC denied that request, although a U.S. commitment to provide heavy air support to the anticipated South Korean counterattack was approved.

At 0655 local time as part of STEEL SWORD, the U.S. commenced launching conventionally armed Tomahawk cruise missiles against key North Korean targets from surface warships with the Independence and two Los Angeles class SSNs in the Yellow Sea.

At 0800, the U.S. Ambassador to Japan, after waiting two hours, received a formal note from the Prime Minister that "authorized offensive and defensive air operations from the territory of Japan." In a following mecon, the U.S. Ambassador noted that the vote within the Japanese cabinet to restrict U.S. air operations to defensive measures failed by only one vote.

At 0900 local time, Kim Jong Il announced on television and radio that "the liberation of Korea was under way." He also claimed that the United States was using cruise missiles armed with chemical weapons to "destroy the Korean people." Seen on television by the Japanese embassy in Pyongyang and rebroadcast by an INMARSAT terminal, Kim appeared verging on hysteria when he concluded that North Korea had "the means to launch an annihilating blow against the southern fascists." Further, he claimed that "neither Japan nor the Americans were invulnerable to counterblows."

At 0915 local time, DSP detected the fifth Scud missile volley from sites concentrated northeast of Pyongyang. Eleven minutes later, the U.S. AWACS in orbit over Seoul suffered an EMP surge as two nuclear weapons (yields estimates at 60 to 30 kilotons based on DSP data) detonated over the South Korean armored corps assembly area in the Uijongbu corridor. Three minutes later, four more nuclear detonations of similar yield occurred: one over the South Korean main air base at Ch'unch'on and the others over the Uijongbu assembly area. (See Figure 4.2.) In all cases it appeared that the height of burst was such that the nuclear fireball did not touch the ground.

At 0955, the South Korean High Command relayed fragmentary reports that their forces were being subjected to heavy chemical artillery barrages. At 1019 local time, the U.S. Command Post Korea received an initial damage assessment from the 2nd Division forward command post reporting at least 20 killed and 400 total casualties—most with retinal damage. The report indicated evidence of panic in the South Korean ranks, with the main road passing through the 2nd Division's field positions jammed with support and some armored fighting vehicles.

At 1130, the NMCC received a military assessment from CINC U.S. Forces Korea. Reconnaissance assets had detected two major breakthroughs by North Korean forces with COMINT indicating panic and chaos in the South Korean ranks. The
CINC recommended that the 2nd Division be instructed to stand and fight just north of Seoul because the North Koreans could be in the South Korean capital within 24 hours.

At 1140, the U.S. Ambassador to Korea forwarded a formal message from the South Korean government demanding an immediate and full retaliation against North Korea.

At 1215 local time, the U.S. Ambassador to Japan was called into a meeting with the Japanese cabinet with the Emperor in attendance. During the meeting the Emperor spoke forcefully of the need for “American restraint” in the response to “the criminal acts of a desperate Kim Jong Il.”

**Patterns of Response to the Situation**

Participant teams were asked to identify key policy issues facing the U.S. in the escalating crisis, consider how to respond to North Korea’s nuclear attack on South Korean forces, develop policy options in support of crisis decisionmaking, and if possible agree on recommended action. Team members were given a “Draft Memo for the President” as a starting point for discussion. Team discussions covered five major issues:

1. U.S. war aims
2. Military objectives
3. Target categories
4. Nuclear versus conventional retaliation

5. Whether to use overwhelming or proportionate force.

**U.S. War Aims.** Participants were evenly divided between those whose primary objective was to exact retribution from the North and those who would try to restore the South Korean border and then negotiate an end to the conflict. The group favoring retribution argued that the credibility of nonproliferation and the idea of a nuclear taboo were at issue. The U.S. had to make an example of North Korea, or other aggressors would take the North’s lead and deploy their own arsenals. In their view, the U.S. could utterly destroy North Korea without upsetting international alliance relations or risking a wider war because of the North’s pariah status. This group suggested that North Korea was not rational in any sense that American leaders understood and thus could not be expected to practice intrawar deterrence or escalation control. In their view the North should be eliminated like any mad dog.

In discussing this option, other participants doubted that the U.S. and its allies were prepared for all-out regional nuclear war as implied by a retribution strategy. Even if the U.S. would not use nuclear weapons to punish, a nuclear-armed North Korea facing extermination would have no incentive for restraint. Others wondered what it meant to punish a country for breaking the nuclear taboo. Would we apply that punishment to an Israel that used weapons first in self defense? In preemptive self-defense? Would we apply it to an India that attacked Pakistan? A Russia that attacked Ukraine? Those who sought a better definition of a retribution policy doubted the U.S. could develop a workable generalized policy.

The group that maintained U.S. war aims should be limited to restoring the border between North and South Korea argued that the credibility of extended deterrence was at stake. In their view, South Koreans would be less interested in punishing the North than in saving their country from occupation or nuclear annihilation. The United States had to show its security partners around the world that its primary goal was to protect its allies without destroying their countries in the process. If it did not demonstrate this intention convincingly, other allies would distance themselves from U.S. defense arrangements and seek their own independent means of security, probably through their own nuclear weapons programs. Those who advocated restoring the border maintained that North Korea’s ability to destroy Seoul and Tokyo neutralized the ability of the U.S. to destroy the North by nuclear or conventional means. This group could not guarantee that the North would follow suit if the U.S. acted with restraint, but it was certain that unrestrained U.S. attacks on the North would virtually guarantee continued nuclear use by North Korea. They pointed to the fact that the North had confined its nuclear attacks to military targets and avoided U.S. forces as evidence that the North was prepared to practice some restraint in its military campaign. This group believed that the U.S. could push the North out of the South without triggering a massive nuclear response but could not threaten the survival of the North Korean regime. Although many in this group would feel no remorse if they could wipe out North Korea’s leaders and unify the peninsula under the government in the south, they believed that circumstances placed the U.S. in a position where limited war directed toward a negotiated settlement was the only realistic option.

**Military Objectives.** Participants discussed three potential military objectives for a Korean campaign. Proponents of the retribution strategy were divided between an air campaign to punish North Korea and a more comprehensive campaign to occupy the country and reunify Korea. Those favoring punishment believed that the North
must be made to pay for its actions but were unwilling to commit U.S. ground forces to a long war with the prospect of high casualties. Perhaps the South Koreans would be prepared to invade and occupy the North, but this group felt that a U.S. air campaign could be devastating enough to show the world the folly of nuclear use.

Some participants suggested that a punishment policy would leave the North intact, mad, and preparing to fight another day. Some worried that a massive air campaign would trigger a nuclear response against targets in South Korea and Japan. Others doubted that South Korea or Japan would support a U.S. proposal to bomb the North into submission while U.S. ground forces were withheld from the theater, leaving U.S. allies to bear the brunt of any retaliation. Still others doubted that the international community would support a U.S. plan that might prolong and widen the war. Still others argued that while the U.S. bombed the North, Seoul would fall. Thus the South would be out of the war.

The participants who proposed to occupy the North saw it as the ultimate in retribution. Future governments and societies contemplating nuclear use would have to consider the “Korean precedent”—the end of national independence and war crimes trials for members of the regime. Advocates of this position believed that unification under the government of the South was the solution to the problem of North Korea. To meet this objective, U.S. ground forces as well as air power would be needed.

Some critics of this position argued that the unconditional end of North Korea was a policy likely to bring out the most irrational of responses from Pongyang. Regimes with no hope of survival after surrender will grasp at extreme policies. Massive nuclear retaliation—a sort of North Korean version of Israel’s supposed “Sampson option”—would have to be expected. These critics could see no way South Korea or Japan possibly could support a U.S. policy along these lines.

Others opposed plans to occupy the North because they did not believe the South could defeat the North without massive use of U.S. ground forces, and they were unwilling to commit the U.S. to a major ground war on the Asian continent.

Those participants whose primary objective would be to restore the border were unanimous in supporting plans to defend Seoul. They argued that the U.S. could not defeat or destroy the North without risking Seoul or Tokyo, while “bombing the North back to the Stone Age” would do little to stop the North from taking Seoul, destroying the South Korean army and wiping out those elements of the U.S. 2nd Division on the peninsula. If Seoul fell, the South might collapse or surrender. In keeping with their argument that it was more important to defend our allies than punish our enemies, this group maintained that holding onto Seoul was of overriding importance. In their view, anyone who argued for any effort that detracted from the U.S. ability to hold Seoul was confusing the postwar nonproliferation policy with the practical realities of the military situation on the ground.

The primary arguments against a focus on defending Seoul did emphasize the postwar situation. How would South Korea and Japan relate to a North Korean regime that proved itself willing to use nuclear weapons? Was the U.S. prepared to contain a nuclear North Korea indefinitely? If the North survived intact, how would it act in the future? If other would-be aggressors saw the North get away with nuclear use against a U.S. ally, what would stop them from going nuclear? What would stop U.S. allies?

**Target Categories.** Participants who favored punishing the North and those favoring occupation agreed on the need to conduct a counterforce campaign against the
North's nuclear capabilities. Both groups saw the North's nuclear forces as the most serious threat to allied forces in the region and believed that the massive use of air power could quickly paralyze command and control of the forces and eliminate the nuclear weapons and means of delivery. Proponents of counterforce targeting also argued that the campaign would not detract from efforts to defend Seoul. Air power either could do both simultaneously or could be quickly turned to the defense of Seoul after a brief but decisive series of strikes.

Participants favoring occupation of the North and most favoring punishment also agreed on plans to target the North Korean regime. In their view the North's leaders were responsible for the war and should be held directly accountable. Proponents of leadership targeting maintained that killing the regime's key figures would paralyze the military—making it easier to destroy the nuclear forces and disrupt the ground offensive in the South. They argued that attacking the leaders was also important to the postwar policy of nuclear use. Proof that the U.S. could and would kill the leadership of any country breaking the nuclear taboo was seen as a powerful deterrent to a possible next use.

Opponents of leadership targeting believed it was the action most likely to result in indiscriminate nuclear use by the North—either because the leaders would have no incentive to exercise restraint or because lower-level commanders cut off from the top would adopt their own targeting policies. They also wondered who the U.S. would negotiate with to end this Korean war if the attacks on leadership succeeded and they feared an unnecessarily prolonged war.

A minority of those who favored punishing the North proposed targeting North Korea to include its citizens and society. This group argued that nuclear use was such a heinous crime against humanity that the people had to be held accountable for their leaders. Everyone in this group recognized that North Korea was a totalitarian state where individuals had very little personal freedom and no say in government. Nevertheless they felt that the punishment for nuclear use had to be the severest possible (capital punishment, some called it) to deter future societies from allowing their governments to acquire and consider employing nuclear force. Opponents of this position felt that genocide was not the answer to the decision of a few, possibly insane, leaders. They also argued that the precedent was extremely dangerous in that someday it might be applied by another great power to an American ally like Israel.

Participants who favored defending Seoul opposed counterforce, counterleadership, or counter-nation campaigns. They believed such targeting was likely to trigger a less discriminating nuclear response from the North, aimed at Seoul, major points of debarkation for U.S. reinforcements arriving in South Korea to restore conventional military equilibrium on the ground, U.S. military bases in Korea and Japan, or Japanese cities. They doubted that Korea or Japan would agree to any of these campaigns or that the U.S. could conduct such campaigns or a defense of South Korea without using bases in Japan.

With regard to the counterforce campaign they argued that even with all available air assets devoted to the mission, it would be far more difficult to eliminate the North's nuclear forces than estimated by the proponents of counterforce. They felt that Seoul would fall well before the nuclear threat was eliminated and that a division of air assets between counterforce and ground support/interdiction would only assure the failure of both missions. These opponents also argued that, whatever the military merits of proceeding with the counterforce campaign might be, the U.S. President
would be operating under a political requirement to protect U.S. ground forces around Seoul first. No President could allow U.S. troops in the field to be overrun without doing everything possible to stop it. Those who favored the defense of Seoul supported an air campaign to provide ground support to U.S. and South Korean forces around the capitol and interdict North Korean forces headed South.

Proponents of counterforce argued that success in the ground campaign depended on the elimination of the nuclear threat. The North had proven itself perfectly willing to use nuclear weapons on the battlefield. What confidence could anyone have that they would not do so again, particularly if the United States and South Korea began to turn the North back? This group felt that Seoul could be regained if it fell to the North, after U.S. ground forces arrived. This goal could be achieved if North Korea's nuclear forces were removed from the equation, since these forces represented the only serious threat to U.S. ground forces. They recognized that the President would be under pressure to defend U.S. troops around Seoul but countered that the political cost of losing two U.S. brigades now had to be weighed against the possibility of losing the two or more divisions soon to arrive in South Korea under IRON SHIELD to a nuclear strike. They also wondered how long Japan would support a costly conventional war fought under the nuclear shadow. The proponents of counterforce intimated that the Japanese might consider discretion to be the better part of valor and come to an understanding with the North before the U.S. could restore the South Korean border, let alone occupy North Korea.

**Nuclear Versus Conventional Use.** Participants were divided roughly evenly between those who were willing to employ nuclear weapons to achieve their political-military objectives and those who would confine U.S. military operations to the use of conventional arms.

Participants favoring some form of retribution who supported nuclear use argued that effective counterforce and counterleadership targeting required nuclear weapons. North Korean nuclear forces might have to be subjected to nuclear barrage attacks, and North Korean leaders might be in facilities hundreds of meters underground. Even some of those who felt conventional weapons could destroy the relevant targets argued for nuclear weapons because of their increased prospects of success and a quick campaign. Others favoring some form of retribution argued that the political credibility of extended deterrence depended on nuclear retaliation even if the targets in question could be destroyed quickly and effectively by other means.

Those who favored restoring the South Korean border who proposed nuclear use argued that the situation on the ground was desperate. North Korean forces were streaming through gaps in the South Korean defense opened up by the North's tactical nuclear use. The South's forces were in retreat and disarray. Conventional air power could not restore the situation. What was needed was a decisive use of tactical nuclear weapons at key points to stem the invasion, give North Korean forces some of the same "shock treatment" the South was just subjected to, and rally the South with a show of American resolve. This group also believed that the U.S. had to respond in kind to North Korean nuclear use to establish some type of intrawar deterrence.

Many opponents of nuclear use argued that it would assure a North Korean nuclear retaliation against U.S. forces, South Korea, and Japan and escalate completely out of control. The U.S. would lose the moral high ground by stooping to nuclear use and thus lose coalition support. Moreover, Japan would leave the war if the U.S. went nuclear, and the U.S. could not defend the South without Japan's support. Those
concerned about the postwar nonproliferation policy argued that U.S. second use justified the possession of nuclear weapons and would undermine efforts to persuade states not to pursue the nuclear option.

The prevailing argument against nuclear use, however, was that it was not necessary to achieve U.S. political-military objectives. Proponents of retribution who argued against nuclear use maintained that conventional weapons could carry out counterforce and counter-leadership missions just as effectively and with less collateral damage. Those favoring a restoration of the South Korean border who opposed nuclear use argued that modern conventional munitions were just as devastating against massed armor and logistics as nuclear weapons but would not leave the area around Seoul a radiating ruin. Both groups took issue with the argument that extended deterrence required a nuclear response. In their view, extended deterrence required effective retaliation. Ultimately nuclear targeting would be placed under political constraints that would limit its potential impact on the war. Conventional weapons were so precise and so limited in collateral effects that military planners would be granted virtually unlimited flexibility in their use. They also argued that the conventional defeat of a nuclear power would strike a tremendous blow against the perception that nuclear forces were the ultimate weapons and reduce the status of nuclear weapons as items of prestige.

Proponents of nuclear use questioned whether effective conventional attacks on North Korea’s leaders or nuclear forces were less likely to trigger a nuclear response. In their view, the North Koreans’ decision to retaliate would be affected less by the nature of the U.S. weapons used against the North than by the effectiveness of the U.S. attacks. U.S. strikes that threatened the leader’s survival, the survivability of nuclear forces, or the prospects for a successful invasion would lead to nuclear retaliation. Proponents of nuclear use also wondered how many lives the U.S. should be prepared to pay to retain some “moral high ground.” Even if the U.S. could defeat the North using conventional weapons, American (and Korean) military casualties were bound to be higher than if the U.S. used nuclear weapons to quickly win the war. (Those favoring conventional use suggested that this case would only be true for overall casualties if the North did not conduct nuclear retaliatory strikes against South Korean cities.) Finally, proponents of nuclear use wondered whether the political price a President might pay for using nuclear weapons immediately would be less than the cost of forgoing nuclear strikes if the next North Korean nuclear weapons fell on U.S. troops.

**Overwhelming Versus Proportionate Force.** Participants split evenly between those who favored bringing overwhelming force to bear on North Korea and those who were willing to match the North Koreans proportionately. Proponents of retribution argued for overwhelming force to assure a quick war and decisive victory. Opponents of overwhelming force doubted that the U.S. public and its regional allies were prepared to fight an all-out war, which the North would almost certainly turn nuclear. They favored the proportionate use of force, believing that a policy of escalation control was the best approach to avoid the annihilation of South Korea while achieving the limited objective of restoring the South Korean border. Proponents of overwhelming force doubted that the U.S. and its allies were prepared for a long limited war, an unstable peace, or the prospect of a third Korean war a few years hence.
Trends in the Team Discussions

Figure 4.3 is an outline of the policy options distilled from the group discussion of Step Two. Participants split evenly between those proposing to conduct a campaign of retribution against North Korea and those favoring restoration of the South Korean border, followed by a negotiated end to the war. Those favoring retribution feared the consequences for nuclear nonproliferation and the idea of a taboo against nuclear use if the North did not pay dearly for its transgressions. They agreed to punish the North by attacking nuclear forces and leadership sites but split over whether to destroy North Korea as a society. Those favoring restoration of the border emphasized the defense of Seoul and would target North Korean field forces in and en route to the South. Participants were evenly divided between those who would use nuclear weapons and those who would confine the U.S. to a conventional war. Those favoring retribution would bring overwhelming force to bear, whereas those seeking a restoration of the border would employ force proportionate to the North’s.

STEP THREE: "THE DAY BEFORE"

Division over the Political and Military Value of Nuclear Weapons to the United States in Regional Wars

A large number of military participants, joined by many participants with a strong professional interest in nuclear nonproliferation, argued that nuclear weapons of-
ferred little military or political value to the United States in regional conflicts, even against adversaries using nuclear weapons. They maintained that conventional weapons now could (or would soon be able to) destroy virtually all types of targets, including mobile missiles and buried leadership targets, as effectively as nuclear weapons and with lower collateral damage to noncombatants. They argued that the credibility of America's extended deterrent depended on the effectiveness of the U.S. response to aggression and not on the type of weapons employed. In their view, U.S. allies would find the promise of another DESERT STORM as reassuring as the old "nuclear umbrella," and perhaps more so because its execution would not irradiate the region. They also asserted that potential adversaries reviewing U.S. military effectiveness in the war against Iraq would find little comfort in the fact that the United States had not employed nuclear weapons. America's overwhelming conventional superiority virtually guaranteed the destruction of any adversary's conventional forces, command structure, and economic infrastructure—and even the leaders themselves. The fact that a regional adversary might possess nuclear weapons did not deprive the U.S. of these capabilities, although it clearly would complicate the execution of any U.S. regional war plan.

At the political level, this group argued that any degree of reliance on nuclear weapons for regional military contingencies, in either secret guidance to military planners or declaratory policy, contradicted U.S. nuclear nonproliferation policy. By valuing nuclear weapons, the U.S. lent credence to the programs of potential proliferators. Even a U.S. policy of "no first use" would legitimate the possession of nuclear weapons for retaliation against the first use of another power. Because an expansion of the nuclear club was seen as highly detrimental to U.S. security interests and nuclear weapons were judged to be of little military value to the U.S., this group favored guidance to planners and declaratory policies that virtually eliminated reference to the U.S. nuclear arsenal or the nuclear dimension of deterrence.

The second group agreed that nuclear weapons could be deemphasized in guidance and declaratory policy but opposed the degree to which the first group would do so. They contested both the military and political judgments of the first group. In their view conventional weapons were far from a perfect substitute for nuclear weapons. Conventional weaponry had been unable to destroy mobile missiles in the war against Iraq. States such as North Korea have extensive command, military, and production facilities of uncertain location buried far beyond the reach of conventional earth penetrators. Moreover, this second group could conceive of circumstances where the difference between defeat on the battlefield and holding a defensive line could only be met with tactical nuclear use. In particular, they believed that nuclear weapons provided a hedge against the possibility that a small forward presence of U.S. forces might not be reinforced in time to halt an enemy's conventional attack.

The second group also questioned the political judgment of the first group. The first group assumed that allies would consider an effective conventional campaign to be the functional equivalent of nuclear retaliation. The second group thought someone should ask the allies before the U.S. acted on that assumption. In their view, when confronted by a serious Soviet military threat, the primary concern of U.S. allies had been the credibility of extended nuclear deterrence. The allies had not been enamored with the idea of fighting a highly destructive conventional campaign to retake their country after a successful invasion; also they were not entirely comfortable with a nuclear guarantee based solely on U.S. strategic forces. American allies appeared to believe that the unprecedented destructiveness of nuclear weapons supported a higher-quality deterrent than conventional forces. A potential aggressor might be
more tolerant of risk where his calculations covered only a conventional military campaign than if he had to consider the prospect of nuclear annihilation. The presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in the theater, procedures for consultation, and shared release authority helped allies feel that they had a tangible nuclear deterrent. While the current trend in allied nations was denuclearization, this second group believed that it was important to retain the capability to provide a credible theater nuclear deterrent should political circumstances change. Some in this group mentioned the idea of a nuclear swing force or a nuclear expeditionary force that could deploy from the United States to the theater to protect a threatened ally.

Concern That the Delegitimization of Nuclear Weapons in the West Was Not Paralleled in Potentially Unstable Regions of Vital Interest to the United States

Whether or not they agreed with the tendency, most participants believed that America’s public, leadership, and institutions of national security were knowingly or unknowingly in the process of delegitimizing U.S. nuclear weapons. Participants pointed to the withdrawal of Army and Navy nonstrategic nuclear weapons from active forces to depots, the denuclearization of most unified commands, deep cuts in U.S. strategic forces, serious contemplation of a comprehensive nuclear test ban, taking U.S. strategic forces off alert, support for NATO’s nuclear doctrine of “last resort,” support for the cancellation of major NATO and U.S. nuclear exercises, the ending of nuclear weapons production and the shift toward cleanup of the nuclear weapons complex, declining budgets for strategic nuclear weapons and research, the decommissioning of the Strategic Air Command, and a strong undercurrent of attitudes in the military that conventional weapons are close substitutes for nuclear capabilities as part of this general trend. Some called it decemphasis, others feared or hoped it would become elimination. All recognized the trend to be the result of contemporary political, military, and moral motivations to focus on the negative—and even evil—aspects of nuclear weapons, in contrast to their positive roles as peacekeepers and deterrents during the Cold War.

Participants could point to signs of similar trends in Russia and Western Europe, but virtually every participant believed parallel trends were not to be found elsewhere in the world. If anything much of the world was moving in the opposite direction, placing increased emphasis on nuclear weapons. The former Soviet nuclear republics of Kazakhstan and Ukraine obviously knew the value of nuclear weapons as bargaining chips with the United States and Russia, and many participants were not convinced that the two actually would give up their nuclear weapons when the time came to do so. Others suggested that Iraq might still be pursuing nuclear and ballistic missile programs. No one was sure whether North Korea was serious about giving up its nuclear option or just deceiving the West. To many, China seemed committed to continuing its role in assisting the nuclear and missile programs of potential U.S. regional adversaries, such as Iran. Others pointed to the continuing nuclear competition among Pakistan, India, and China, and the strategic dimension of Russia’s military relationship with India. Each of these situations could affect vital U.S. interests in Eurasia, and some unease existed as to how the trend would affect U.S. ability to manage regional power balances, given the shift in U.S. attitudes toward the use of nuclear weapons as an instrument of national policy.
Little Faith in the Current Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime

As in "The Day After . . . in the Greater Middle East," the participants in this exercise favored strengthening the nuclear nonproliferation regime and expanding the concept of nonproliferation to cover ballistic missile technologies. All favored highly intrusive challenge inspections of suspected nuclear and missile facilities, and virtually everyone would agree to include the United States in a such a global inspections regime. But virtually no one placed much faith in the success of nonproliferation. It was widely assumed that the sources of nuclear and missile technology were too diverse and the incentives to acquire nuclear weapons too powerful for the U.S. to hope to hold back the tide. And few believed that the United States and its allies could muster the political will necessary to make the nonproliferation regime effective. Even those participants with career interests in the field were cautious in their assessment of the nonproliferation regime’s success. Many participants were struck by the fact that the few problem cases of the regime were the very countries most likely to threaten U.S. interests in the years ahead.

Some participants were concerned enough about the failure of the current regime to consider a unilateral U.S. policy of forcible nonproliferation or what some called counterproliferation, i.e., variations on the Cold War concepts of preventive war or preemption. Others continued to favor exploration of the virtual abolition policy raised in the Greater Middle East exercise. Still others suggested that if proliferation was inevitable, the U.S. should emphasize regional military stability rather than global nonproliferation. While it would be preferred to strengthen the credibility of American security guarantees to local allies and address regional security concerns through diplomacy, confidence-building measures, and arms control, proponents of this policy stated that, in certain cases, it might also lead the United States to accept, encourage, or assist the development of nuclear weapons programs by U.S. allies.

Agreement on the Need to Plan Whether and How to Maintain Extended Nuclear Deterrence When U.S. Allies Are Threatened by Regional Nuclear Powers

Although participants split on the contribution of nuclear weapons to the credibility of American security assurances, they agreed on the need to examine the nature of extended deterrence when U.S. allies are faced with potential or actual regional nuclear adversaries. To what extent and under what conditions could conventional forces substitute for U.S. nuclear guarantees? Would different allies view the problem differently under different scenarios? What kind of U.S. forward presence was called for? What were the plausible results of a U.S. conventional campaign against a nuclear-armed regional adversary? How would the policies adopted in one crisis affect the credibility of extended deterrence relationships in other regions? Could extended nuclear deterrence be multilateralized, i.e., shared with other allies and security partners such as the U.K., France, Russia, and China? What policy should the U.S. adopt with regard to extended deterrence to potential or actual regional nuclear allies? Would the extension of formal extended deterrence relationships to new or potential nuclear powers, e.g., Israel or Ukraine, promote U.S. interests in international security? Few participants had answers to these questions, but all believed them worthy of further study.
Recognition of the Dilemma Facing the U.S. with Regard to Declaratory Policy on Nuclear-Weapon Employment

As in previous exercises, participants had a difficult time grappling with U.S. declaratory policy on nuclear weapons employment. Few participants were interested in U.S. declarations of no first use, negative security assurances, or extended nuclear deterrence to particular friends or allies as part of a strategy to cope with new nuclear adversaries. As in "The Day After . . . in the Greater Middle East," most participants were interested in U.S. statements "bold" in expressions of abhorrence concerning nuclear weapons and intent to defend our allies and interests but "vague" on precisely how the U.S. would respond to nuclear use or attacks. Participants wanted to retain maximum flexibility and saw any statement of how we would or would not react to particular situations as contrary to that objective.

This exercise revealed to many participants the profound dilemma facing U.S. policymakers. In Step Two, participants had been divided on U.S. nuclear retaliation to North Korea's tactical nuclear strikes on South Korean forces. Those in favor and those opposed raised military arguments for and against, but much of the debate focused on the implications of U.S. nuclear use or restraint for postwar policy. Looking beyond the Korean war, those who favored use argued that it was necessary for the continued credibility of extended deterrence. If the U.S. would not respond to a nuclear attack on an ally by a nuclear strike on the attacker, no American ally could rely on the United States. Those who opposed use focused on the influence on nonproliferation: If the U.S. did not exercise restraint when it could defeat the North with conventional means, it would lose a unique opportunity to devalue the nuclear weapon in the eyes of potential proliferators and instead highlight the necessity of nuclear forces for national security and legitimate proliferation.

In Step Three, participants returned to this dilemma in their discussion of declaratory policy. A policy of virtually no use (no use except in response to nuclear attacks on the United States or its forces) or even no first use would cede initiative to potential regional nuclear adversaries and undermine the value of American security assurances, unless the capacity to repeat DESERT STORM could substitute for the nuclear umbrella—a subject of much debate. Continuation of the policy of flexible response, even in its last-resort variant, contradicts efforts to undermine the value of nuclear weapons—another hotly contested topic—to further the cause of nuclear nonproliferation. Since the participants had no solution to this dilemma, they opted for statements that neither confirmed nor denied U.S. plans to defend its allies with nuclear force.

Continued Interest in High-Confidence Conventional Damage-Limiting Capabilities

In a pattern similar to the Greater Middle East exercise, many participants were reluctant to deploy ground forces to South Korea in Step One, but none argued in Step Three that the Base Force should be changed to reflect a greater reliance on air and sea power. Most participants focused on capabilities they would emphasize in future forces: more fast lift, better intelligence on mobile missile targets, conventional counterforce capabilities, and highly effective missile defenses. These capabilities were seen as crucial to future interventions against nuclear-armed adversaries. Participants believed that the willingness of U.S. leaders to risk significant U.S. forces on behalf of regional security and of allies to rely on American security guarantees
was directly related to the combined effectiveness of these conventional military capabilities. There was little discussion of the military capabilities participants were prepared to do without to have the capabilities they desired.

ALTERNATIVE U.S. NUCLEAR-WEAPON EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

For over 40 years, nuclear weapons have been a key element of U.S. military power. In the context of a global Soviet military threat, U.S. nuclear weapons provided a means of deterring Soviet aggression by threatening escalation to a devastating nuclear war, reassuring allies of U.S. commitments to guarantee their security, and giving U.S. leaders confidence in their ability to support those commitments by providing an effective counter to what many believed were substantial Soviet advantages in conventional forces. U.S. policy toward the employment of nuclear weapons was that they would be used to defeat aggression and defend allies if other means failed.

In NATO's Cold War heyday, the flexible response policy had three components: Direct Defense, in which the U.S. and its allies would respond to aggression in kind; Deliberate Escalation, a decision to use nuclear weapons for military effect on the battlefield and to warn an adversary to cease and desist; and General Nuclear Response, initiating a more widespread use of nuclear weapons very likely to result in a central nuclear exchange. The policy required the deployment of U.S. theater nuclear weapons on allied soil and arrangements to share release authority to give allies assurances of the U.S. strategic nuclear guarantee and provide U.S. leaders with credible nuclear options between initiating a central nuclear war and letting Europe fall to a Warsaw Pact invasion.

The policy was risky; a failure could lead to complete catastrophe. Western reliance on it made crisis management more problematic, raised serious concerns in the minds of many Western leaders, and caused deep-seated fears in the American and European publics. With the end of the Cold War, many rightly hoped that the United States could reduce its reliance on the only weapons that really could threaten the future of Western civilization, if not mankind.

It is now clear that the United States is deemphasizing nuclear weapons in its military strategy. Nuclear weapons are not merely being reduced along with other elements of the U.S. force posture following the demise of the Soviet threat. Their role is changing. The amazing show of power in Operation DESERT STORM has created expectations that conventional weapons can and will replace nuclear forces as means of deterring aggression, reassuring allies, and improving American leaders' confidence in their ability to protect U.S. interests. In fact, conventional weapons are taking on many of the options once reserved for theater nuclear forces. For example, in the war with Iraq, advanced conventional weapons were used to destroy hardened missile silos, aircraft bunkers, and underground command posts—targets that were associated with nuclear attack missions in U.S. planning for conflict with the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War.

With the demise of the Soviet threat, the policy of flexible response has evolved to emphasize the last-resort quality of decisions to use nuclear weapons. How far this trend to deemphasize nuclear weapons will go in years to come is an important issue facing U.S. defense planners. A review of discussion from "The Day After . . . in Korea" suggests that two broad alternative U.S. policies toward nuclear weapons employment are worthy of further attention:
1. Continued adherence to the current policy of Flexible Response. Here the United States will respond to aggression with the level of force required to terminate a war quickly and on terms acceptable to the U.S. By retaining flexible response in the context of potential wars with new regional nuclear adversaries, the United States would retain the option of using nuclear weapons first, presumably after U.S. and allied forces failed to halt an attack by superior conventional forces with conventional means. While the trend in theater nuclear forces is in the direction of diminished numbers and withdrawal from allied territory, the policy would lead to a retention of some theater nuclear capability for forward deployment to an ally when warranted by political-military circumstances.

2. A policy of Virtually No Use requires American leaders to stop relying on nuclear weapons for any political purpose other than deterring a nuclear attack on the United States itself (and possibly U.S. forces) or any military task (other than the destruction of urban areas). The policy obviously requires the withdrawal of all, or virtually all, nuclear weapons from allied territory. Future American military operations would rely almost entirely on conventional weapons. American security guarantees to allies and deterrent threats to potential adversaries would be based on perceptions of our ability and will to repeat Operation DESERT STORM. A heavy conventional emphasis is necessary both to demonstrate the illusory guarantee of security offered by nuclear weapons, thus discouraging proliferation, and to enable the United States to secure its vital interests without nuclear means so that it need not rely on nuclear forces.

The “Day After . . . in Korea” exercise suggests that opinion in the Washington policy support community is split between the two alternatives. A significant group of military officers and particularly members of the Air Staff, joined by many participants with a professional interest in nonproliferation, urged consideration of a virtually no use nuclear weapons employment policy. Many in this group did not favor virtual abolition but believed that U.S. defense policy could and should de-emphasize the threat of nuclear use. Other participants were highly skeptical of the feasibility of virtually no use and doubted that virtual abolition would be advantageous to the United States. They favored a continuation of flexible response.

As in the previous chapters, our analysis of the teams’ deliberations reveals that the choice among the three alternatives is based on assumptions about the relative feasibility and desirability of the potential outcomes, judgments about what the United States might be required to do to help achieve a given outcome, and assessments of the risks the United States would run in pursuing a policy toward that end.

Flexible Response

Assumptions. A continuation of flexible response assumes that U.S. leaders will not trade American lives to preserve some “moral high ground” held by those who choose to withhold their nuclear arsenals from use. The policy also assumes that the United States will retain a broad spectrum of nuclear weapons capabilities, including theater and strategic delivery systems and warheads of varying yields, to support the policy (or that strategic weapons on ICBMs, SLBMs and long-range bombers can be an effective substitute). Flexible response also assumes that American allies plan to rely on U.S. nuclear weapons for their own national security and will accept theater nuclear weapons on their territory (or if strategic weapons replace theater forces, that allies will be adequately reassured). Furthermore, the policy assumes that if the U.S.
were to give up flexible response for a policy of no first use or virtually no use, it would not dissuade many states from pursuing the nuclear option.

With regard to the desirability of flexible response, the principal assumption behind the policy is that conventional weapons are a poor substitute for nuclear forces. Nuclear weapons are assumed to be a superior deterrent because an adversary is less likely to believe that his military goals can be achieved at a reasonable cost in the face of nuclear war. Expressions of willingness to employ U.S. nuclear forces are assumed to be a superior means of reassuring allies of U.S. security guarantees because allies are assumed to believe they are a superior deterrent. Nuclear weapons are assumed to give U.S. leaders a degree of confidence in their ability to meet security commitments, because they see nuclear weapons as a superior means of deterrence and reassurance and believe they make up for any disadvantages in the area of conventional forces. Finally, flexible response assumes that nuclear weapons are militarily superior to conventional weapons in at least some respects; for example, in destroying deeply buried facilities, area targets such as industrial plants, large armored formations, or targets of uncertain location like mobile missiles.

To many, a policy of flexible response also assumes that theater nuclear weapons are superior to strategic weapons. U.S. allies threatened by a regional adversary have a direct say in the use of nuclear weapons deployed on their soil—this policy is considered to be a more powerful deterrent to attack than a mere U.S. promise to defend an ally. Theater nuclear forces are assumed to be a superior means of reassurance because a nation with U.S. nuclear weapons on its soil has a direct role in the plans for their use. They are also assumed to be a superior means of providing U.S. leaders with self-assurance of their ability to meet U.S. defense commitments. Theater nuclear weapons deployed on allied soil provide a President with options short of intercontinental war. Also theater nuclear weapons spread the responsibility (and the potential blame) for nuclear use by involving the political leadership of the ally on whose behalf nuclear weapons would be used.

In sum, a policy of flexible response assumes that the advantages of nuclear weapons to U.S. defense and foreign policy outweigh any advantages that might accrue if the U.S. were to eschew their first use. Any policy that limits the U.S. ability to employ nuclear forces at times and places chosen by American leaders is assumed to have little effect on the prospect of proliferation and cedes initiative, and perhaps even victory, to a superior conventionally armed adversary or one armed with nuclear weapons.

Requirements. A strategy of flexible response requires that the United States maintain a range of nuclear capabilities in the face of international and domestic pressures to denuclearize U.S. and allied defense strategy. The U.S. either must reverse or stem the trend away from theater-based nuclear systems; retain sufficient theater nuclear forces, supporting capabilities in CONUS, and reception capabilities overseas to provide for a redeployment in crisis; or reshape the opinions of potential adversaries and allies to accept strategic nuclear forces as equivalent to theater-based systems for deterrence and reassurance. Any of these approaches will demand a considerable effort to gain sufficient public support for ongoing research and development of nuclear forces.

Risks. A policy of flexible response carries three related risks. First, that the reliance on nuclear weapons expressed in public rhetoric and guidance to military planners will not hold in crisis or war. If U.S. leaders proved unwilling to use nuclear weapons rather than accept an American military defeat or allied occupation, the policy would
lose its value completely. No future adversary and, perhaps even more important, no future ally would believe the U.S.

Second, by focusing increasingly scarce defense dollars on nuclear forces, efforts necessary to improve the capability of conventional weapons so that they might become a better substitute for nuclear forces might be underemphasized. In this case, a President engaged in war who is unwilling to use nuclear weapons and is contemplating the defeat of an important ally also might be deprived of a viable conventional option.

Third, a U.S. declaratory policy of flexible response will lend legitimacy to potential proliferators, who will argue that their security situation drives them to the nuclear option for the same reasons.

**Virtually No Use**

**Assumption.** A virtually no use nuclear weapons employment policy assumes that conventional weapons constitute a viable alternative to nuclear weapons, from both political and military standpoints. Militarily the assumption is that conventional weapons can destroy virtually any target or accomplish any military mission as effectively as nuclear weapons. Also such conventional weapons are assumed to provide a deterrent at least equal to nuclear weapons, and possibly superior, because the high damage expectancy and low collateral damage reduce political inhibitions against their use. An adversary might doubt that the U.S. will employ nuclear weapons on an ally’s behalf; given DESERT STORM, he would have less doubt about the U.S. willingness to use conventional forces. For the same reason, conventional weapons are assumed to reassure allies of U.S. security guarantees at least as well as nuclear forces. And because a President could defeat a regional adversary without irradiating the region, conventional weapons are assumed to provide a high degree of self-confidence in America’s ability to meet its security commitments.

The policy also can be based on an assumption that the political support for nuclear weapons is in decline. The U.S. public and Congress, as well as U.S. allies, expect nuclear forces to be deemphasized now that the Cold War is over. In the near term, the virtual elimination of theater nuclear weapons threatens to leave a President with few intermediate nuclear options. As noted above, a virtually no use policy assumes that advanced conventional weapons could fill this gap.

The virtually no use policy also assumes that if the U.S. were to virtually denuclearize, both the major nuclear powers and potential proliferators would be affected dramatically. The assumption is that a U.S. war against a nuclear-armed regional power that was fought and won under a virtually no use policy would convince allies of the reliability of U.S. security guarantees and regional allies of the illusory nature of nuclear power. The nuclear armed states would follow suit and join with the U.S. in a plan to denuclearize lesser nuclear powers and prevent the acquisition of nuclear weapons by new powers. Presumably a world confined to conventional weaponry would be to the military advantage of the United States, even if the U.S. was restricted to a tiny nuclear arsenal. No world power could match DESERT STORM.

**Requirements.** Virtually no use is not merely a policy for the day when nuclear weapons are virtually abolished; to many it is part of a policy to achieve that end. For the U.S. to defeat a regional nuclear adversary armed with ballistic missiles (some of
which might be mobile) without resort to nuclear weapons would require significant improvements in U.S. conventional military capabilities. The effectiveness of ballistic missile defense, intelligence gathering and targeting, and conventional counterforce systems must be upgraded dramatically. Then the U.S. must convince its adversaries that the U.S. can defeat them with conventional weapons alone and must convince its allies that their adversaries are deterred at least as well as they were under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. American leaders must be weaned from the notion that nuclear weapons can be relied on for deterrence and defense in circumstances short of an attack on the United States. At the same time, considerable diplomatic efforts are needed to attain a more successful nuclear nonproliferation regime.

Risks. Two risks accompany the virtually no use policy. First, the United States might find itself in a position where it cannot defend its vital interests without nuclear weapons and hence backs down or loses a war or where it can win a conventional war only at great cost in American lives. Second, if virtual abolition left a virtual nuclear arsenal in place, the strategy would be vulnerable to breakout by countries with nuclear energy programs, including the present major nuclear powers and some other highly industrialized states. While international support might be forthcoming for strikes on the nascent nuclear arsenal of a state like North Korea and U.S. military planners might be relatively confident in the success and limited duration of a military operation designed to destroy this arsenal, neither condition may hold if China or Russia were to take steps toward nuclear rearmament.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The post–Cold War prospect of regional nuclear powers with aspirations that conflict with America’s vital interests presents new and interesting problems for U.S. defense strategy. On the one hand, with the end of the Cold War many defense planners as well as most Western leaders and citizens breathed a sigh of relief. Nuclear deterrence is widely seen as having played the dominant role in Western security for the past 40 years, but few people view a system of international security based on the threat of mutual annihilation as good in and of itself. From recent unilateral decisions and bilateral agreements with the former Soviet states, it seems clear that reducing U.S. dependence on nuclear weapons is a major American goal after the Cold War.

On the other hand, nuclear weapons appear to be an attractive and plausible option to many of the medium-sized military powers most likely to threaten the U.S. in regions of vital interest. With a small nuclear arsenal, nations that could not hope to compete with the United States on the conventional battlefield can become America’s equal, at least concerning the regional balance of power. Military planners and leaders contemplating an attack on the United States have to use unconventional means. The U.S. may consider this approach to be unreliable since the regional nuclear adversary cannot reach the United States. With medium-range delivery systems, however, the regional nuclear adversary can threaten the destruction of America’s regional ally.

Applying the experience of nuclear deterrence in U.S.-Soviet relations during the Cold War to this hypothetical situation, an American threat to answer a regional adversary’s use of nuclear weapons against a U.S. ally (or a successful conventional invasion under the cover of potential nuclear use) with nuclear retaliation should be an adequate deterrent to regional aggression. The United States clearly dominates the
escalatory ladder; it can utterly devastate any conceivable foe and is not subject to a response in kind. If regional adversaries understand these facts as well as we do—and we have no reason to believe they would not—they should conclude that a conflict would result in their defeat and refrain from threatening or intimidating our regional ally. Why shouldn’t extended nuclear deterrence hold in the proliferation age?

The problem boils down to a question of whether the United States would carry out its threat. Is the promise of U.S. nuclear retaliation to nuclear use or overwhelming conventional force credible to potential adversaries, allies, and our own leaders? What factors cast doubt on its credibility?

One source of doubt stems from the relative stakes of the United States and the adversary in any regional crisis. During the Cold War, American leaders worked hard to demonstrate that the defense of Western Europe, Japan, and Korea meant as much to the United States as its own physical security. The Soviets and our allies had to believe that we shared the same interest in the outcome of a war in those areas.

It is probably fair to say that American leaders actually did believe that American security and the American way of life were largely dependent on the security of its key allies. In recognition of this identity of interests, sizeable conventional forces and theater nuclear weapons were deployed to allied territory; their presence raised a very high risk that invasion would lead to intercontinental war. These deployments were not mere symbols; their size and nature made it virtually impossible for the United States to back out of the commitment in crisis or war. Before any crisis actually occurred and practically regardless of how it might unfold, the U.S. was “locked in” to the defense of its allies. Even so, the Soviets periodically tested our resolve, especially during the early phases of the Cold War. Also our allies constantly worried that the United States would not carry through on its promise.

In the post–Cold war era, Americans may not be united on whether a local threat to a regional ally is equivalent to a threat to our own physical security or way of life. If the United States does not view the threat as equivalent, it will be difficult to convince others. We are deemphasizing theater nuclear weapons and reducing our large forward deployments of conventional forces to a less impressive “forward presence.” True, no threat exists to justify anything like the U.S. military establishment in Europe during the Cold War. Our friends in the Middle East do not want a large American military presence. Also we feel increasingly confident of Korea’s ability to defend itself. If a threat arises, current policy is that we promise to return in force. But this guarantee is not self-enforcing; American leaders could back out in ways that were never seriously contemplated during the Cold War.

While a future regional crisis or war will place everything at risk for our local ally and his adversary merely because they are there, geography, distance, and limited (perhaps even token) forward deployments will allow the the U.S. to determine precisely the stakes in the particular situation and act accordingly. The possibilities for delay, debate, and indecision are substantial. In the Cold War, the U.S. effectively committed itself to nuclear use against the Soviet Union well in advance of any particular crisis or war, especially in Europe. In the future, the U.S. commitment will depend much more heavily on the circumstances. This U.S. position is a lower-quality security guarantee than our allies once possessed.

A second source of doubt arises from the long-term consequences of an American decision to use nuclear weapons against a regional adversary. During the Cold War, “the day after” U.S. nuclear use received little attention. If nuclear deterrence failed,
it was widely assumed that a U.S.-Soviet war probably would escalate to an intercontinental nuclear exchange involving tens of thousands of weapons and, practically speaking, the end of Western society. Leaders and defense planners labored hard to create means of limiting nuclear weapons effects, war plans and targeting options short of Armageddon, and technical means to support a controlled termination of nuclear hostilities. However, few expressed great confidence in the prospect of limited nuclear war. Strategic calculations focused on deterrence “the day before” and actual use on “the day of.” Nuclear war was perceived to be something final in a historical sense. Since virtually no one believed there would be a meaningful “day after” for U.S. policy, little incentive existed to think about the long-term consequences of nuclear use.

At least from the U.S. perspective, no such finality attaches to nuclear war with a regional adversary. It is quite conceivable that a nuclear war could leave the regional adversary’s (and the regional ally’s) territory a radioactive wasteland while the U.S. emerged unscathed (or perhaps with one city destroyed by a weapon delivered by unconventional means). This prospect is horrifying, but it is not Armageddon. For the United States there will be a day after, and its character will matter to the American people and their leaders. Risking America for the sake of Europe was a gamble the U.S. was prepared to take. How will Americans feel about risking Seattle for Seoul? American nuclear use against a regional nuclear adversary, whether in retaliation for a nuclear strike on an ally or to salvage a defensive operation facing conventional defeat, will send messages to other regional nuclear adversaries the U.S. may face in subsequent crises. One U.S. “win” with nuclear weapons might show potential proliferators the folly of nuclear security, but also it might convince them that they need even more secure and effective nuclear arsenals than those possessed by the just-defeated power. The more American planners think through the potential consequences of U.S. nuclear use, the more likely they are to hedge the nuclear guarantee. The more it is hedged, the less credible a deterrent the guarantee will become.

The attitude of many military planners toward U.S. nuclear weapons constitutes a third source of doubt about the credibility of U.S. nuclear guarantees. From the quick, decisive, low-casualty, conventional victory over Iraq, many defense planners infer a future in which the U.S. can relegate its nuclear deterrent to an extremely narrow range of contingencies—in particular, nuclear attacks on the United States itself. In their view, conventional weapons can now or will soon be able to accomplish virtually any military mission assigned to nuclear forces. The possibility of another DESERT STORM is considered sufficient to deter all other plausible threats to the United States for the foreseeable future. Moreover, U.S. planners do not want to use nuclear weapons in war: such weapons demand special security, maintenance, support, and training arrangements; their collateral effects interfere with military operations; they are so indiscriminate in their destructive capacity that they require specific presidential authorization that leads to civilian interference in war planning; and if the military were to count on them in campaign planning, they probably would be severely disappointed because the political leaders might very well veto their use.

If extended deterrence remains an important aspect of U.S. defense strategy, this problem of credibility in the face of new regional nuclear adversaries will have to be
addressed. The key issue for defense planners is whether conventional weapons are a viable military and political substitute for nuclear capabilities—as judged in the eyes of the potential adversaries we must deter, the allies we must protect, and the American political leaders we serve.
I am telling you in straightforward terms, an Indian planner should assume that Pakistan has a certain nuclear weapon capability, and similarly any prudent Pakistani military planner ought to assume that India has got a certain nuclear weapon capability.

—Gen. Krishnaswami Sundarji, former Chief of Staff of the Indian Army
Quoted in "Pakistan's Bomb: Proliferating Excuses"  

**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter reports the results of the fourth and last series of exercises. "The Day After . . . in South Asia" exercise examined the U.S. response to a nuclear war between India and Pakistan. Forty-six government officials and defense analysts participated in three sessions of the exercise held in Washington in July 1992. (See Appendix E for a list of participants.) The exercise was also played with Ukrainian and Kazakh defense officials and analysts in Kiev and Alma-Ata in the fall of 1992.

This chapter first discusses the influence of new nuclear powers on the prospects for the internationalization of a taboo against nuclear use and the establishment of an indivisible nuclear peace. Next, the debates among participants concerning major policy decisions raised by the advancing scenario are reported and summarized. Based on the participants’ discussions, alternative U.S. policies toward the maintenance of a global nuclear peace are described and analyzed. The chapter concludes with some general observations about America’s stake in the nuclear peace and the feasibility of nuclear peacemaking operations.

**IS THE NUCLEAR PEACE INDIVISIBLE?**

If nuclear weapons are used in war by one or more powers in one conflict in one region of the world, are the chances increased of additional use by other powers in different regions in different wars? Are the effects of next use likely to be so unsettling to international security and even the global ecology that preventing the outbreak of nuclear hostilities and limiting the effects of nuclear war (should it occur) ought to be considered a vital national interest? Is the nuclear peace indivisible? If so, does the United States, as the last superpower—or merely as a responsible nation—have a duty to prevent the next use of nuclear weapons, by force if necessary, and to halt nuclear conflicts before they escalate?
U.S. policymakers never seriously confronted this question during the Cold War. The risk of nuclear war was one tool in the superpowers' struggle for marginal advantage. Mutual deterrence threatened mutual annihilation. No one worried about the signal sent to would-be nuclear powers by a central nuclear exchange—the dead do not have that much invested in the future. At least to the United States, a nuclear war between the superpowers meant the end of the world; there was no cause to consider "the day after."

Some concern arose that one of the superpowers' nuclear allies might precipitate a nuclear holocaust neither superpower have would initiated on its own. For this reason, the U.S. made considerable efforts in the late 1950s and early 1960s to discourage Britain and France from acquiring nuclear capabilities—to no avail. The Soviets came to the same realization rather later in the game, after its erstwhile ally China became capable of pursuing an independent nuclear weapons program (thanks in part to Soviet assistance). In both cases the superpowers emphasized political restraints on their allies' potential behavior, and again they were not concerned about the implications of cataclysmic nuclear war for the states remaining the day after Armageddon.

Today the risk of a deliberate exchange of U.S. and former Soviet nuclear weapons seems even more remote than it was during the Cold War. But other nuclear wars are becoming more plausible. The proliferation of nuclear weapons capabilities is overlaid on a new "arc of crisis," extending from Eastern Europe through the former Soviet Union and the Greater Middle East and terminating in East Asia. In some cases regional wars along this arc undoubtedly would engage America's vital interests unambiguously. An invasion of South Korea would destabilize a region of economic and strategic significance to the United States. A Middle East war would threaten world energy supplies and undermine global economic stability. In such circumstances, the U.S. would have a direct and obvious concern in keeping the nuclear peace—to protect its allies, U.S. forces, and the underlying vital interest.

But what U.S. interests are at stake if India and Pakistan, or Iran and Iraq, or Russia and Ukraine go to war? In these cases neither geography nor commerce produces a compelling case for U.S. action. What would make a nuclear war between these states any different? The principal argument for the position that a nuclear war among powers otherwise peripheral to the United States would engage America's vital interest must be that nuclear use would break an international norm—a "nuclear taboo," causing other states to acquire nuclear weapons, and lowering the threshold for subsequent nuclear use. Sooner or later nuclear war would come to America's doorstep, and in the meantime the world would become a far more dangerous place. America's freedom of action might be diminished and its position in the world might decline.

But acting is not without cost either. Through direct or horizontal escalation, the U.S. or its allies might be subject to nuclear retaliation for trying to stop a nuclear conflict.

THE EXERCISE EXPERIENCE: OVERVIEW

In STEP ONE: The Day Of . . ., participants addressed a rapidly deteriorating political situation on the Indian subcontinent, set in 1996. (The Annex to this report contains a complete copy of the exercise materials.) In the scenario, intelligence reports
indicated that India and Pakistan have developed and deployed small nuclear arsenals and that any conflict between the two had the potential to escalate into a nuclear war. Teams developed an overall perspective on the situation, considered issues and options for presentation to the President, and recommended decisions for the President to take.

In STEP TWO: The Day After . . . , participants were convened immediately following an Indo-Pakistani nuclear exchange. Again, the teams were tasked to help the President get a perspective on the situation and decide how to respond to the crisis.

In STEP THREE: The Day Before . . . , the exercise moved back in time to before the crisis (i.e., to today). In consideration of the lessons learned in the two previous moves, teams sought to agree on appropriate options to present to the President for key nuclear proliferation–related policy issues that should be faced today.

STEP ONE: “THE DAY OF”

Situation Report

It is the early summer of 1996.

During the preceding year, political-military relations between India and Pakistan seriously deteriorated after a false dawn during the early 1990s. Hopes for a sustained rapprochement between the two countries had been dashed by a combination of domestic and international shocks that characterized the post–Cold War environment in South Asia.

India. The five years following Rajiv Gandhi’s assassination in 1991 had become a time of troubles for India. Through much of this period, the political process had been marked by a series of political crises flowing from the death throws of the once dominant Congress Party. After a series of weak and ineffective collation governments, the Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), gained a decisive majority under the leadership of a young and charismatic member of a long-active Indian political family. She stunned the India political scene by leading the BJP to victory during the 1994 elections. The core of the BJP platform was a strong element of nationalist state capitalism that domestic and foreign critics labeled as Hindu fascism.

Noteworthy was the BJP’s commitment to make India a great power, which included an overt call for an Indian nuclear arsenal. Simultaneously, the new Indian government solidified its political, economic, and military relations with the new and more nationalist government of Russia. This move was stimulated in part by the rapid deterioration of relations with Pakistan and its Islamic allies. Adding to Indian and Russian concern was the appearance of an assertive post-Deng regime in China that was very actively engaged in the now renamed “Greater Middle East.”

In response to the political success of the BJP, the domestic environment rapidly deteriorated. Several states, including Punjab, were placed under martial law rule. Severe clashes occurred between Hindu and Muslim militants in many of the major cities throughout north and central India, including New Delhi. This widespread domestic turmoil prompted the BJP to favor a deeper engagement of the Indian Armed Forces in internal security matters, which generated controversy within the
Indian high command. Further, the BJP hierarchy courted the advocates within the
Indian military for the nuclear program.

Even with domestic difficulties, the Indian economy continued to grow if only from
the stimulus of the early 1990s moves to privatization that the BJP carried forward.
Even through U.S. and India trade flourished, serious difficulties arose between New
Delhi and Washington. The crux of the problem concerned BJP’s decision to press
ahead with the widely publicized announcement of the existence of India’s nuclear
arsenal in the fall of 1994.

Pakistan. Paralleling India’s descent into increased domestic trouble, a series of
weak and unstable civilian Pakistani governments followed Benazir Bhutto’s ouster
from power in the fall of 1991. To Pakistan’s north, a weak coalition government in
Kabul barely managed to survive as Afghanistan increasingly took on the character of
a crossroads from Pakistan into the Central Asian states of the newly formed
Confederation of Turkistani States (CTS). This entire area was now the object of a
new “great game” that included Russia, China, Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and
Pakistan.

Pakistan’s economy continued to make modest progress, in part stimulated by the
find of large natural gas fields in Baluchistan and rising trade with the CTS and Iran.

Much to the concern of India and the United States, Pakistan had developed a close
military-industrial relationship with Iran, including a joint development of a 3000-
kilometer Chinese-designed solid-propellant IRBM. Chinese military technological
ties with Pakistan and Iran had expanded steadily since the late 1980s. This position
contrasted with U.S. and Pakistani political-military relations, which had been re-
duced to a bare minimum. All U.S. military assistance was frozen during the 1990s.

In spite of some progress between India and Pakistan on negotiating their security
differences—including a formal pledge not to attack each other’s nuclear facilities,
relations deteriorated rapidly during the summer of 1994 after the electoral success
of the BJP. A source of considerable friction was the continued clandestine support by
the Pakistani security services to the increasingly effective Kashmiri and Sikh na-
tional liberation paramilitary organizations. After a new national election of indecisi-
ve result following severe communal riots in Karachi and Lahore, the Pakistani
military declared a martial law government three days after India announced its
formal status as a nuclear weapon state.

China. The transition to a post-Deng generation leadership had occurred without
major domestic political disruption. The new leadership’s watchword is to continue
building China as a great power through a combination of state and private capital-
ism coupled to strong authoritarian political control—“radical perestroika without
much glasnost.” Contrary to the expectations of many foreign observers, the new
political-military leadership has taken a surprisingly activist stance toward the
Islamic world, including expanded political, military, and economic ties with the
CTS, Iran, and Pakistan. The renewed sense of a common threat reinvigorated
Russian and Indian security ties.

Although U.S. and Chinese trade and economic ties continued to expand, national
security issues are a source of tension between Washington and Beijing. China con-
tinued to resist U.S.-authored international restraints on the sale of advanced missile
technology. Further, the Chinese continued to hold to the stance that Russia and the
United States must accept the principle of numerical parity as part of any multi-
lateral nuclear arms agreement that leads to deep reductions (e.g., to less than 1000
warheads) of the former superpower nuclear arsenals. Further, China claimed that
the U.S. and Russia should not be allowed to gain global supremacy by deploying
substantial anti-ballistic missiles (ABM). The new Russian government strongly
resisted this stance and demanded that the lesser nuclear-armed states such as the
United Kingdom, France, and China accept a ceiling that is a fraction of the final
Russian and U.S. ceiling.

The Former Confederation of Independent States. The Confederation of
Independent States (CIS) proved stillborn by the end of 1992. Russia and Ukraine
maintained an uneasy relationship. The Crimea remained a source of tension, but
the Ukrainian decision to allow the Russian Federation a long-term "lease" of
Sevastopol had cooled the conflict. Many observers remained concerned about the
stability of this arrangement after Boris Yeltsin was compelled to retire from political
life after a grave, personal health crisis. A young and more nationalist leadership had
come to power during the 1994 elections. The new president, a rival of Yeltsin,
pressed for a more assertive Russian stance on a wide range of international issues.

Aiding the new government was a Russian economy undergoing a revival in part fu-
eled by an internationally financed oil and natural gas boom. U.S. economic ties
with Russia had expanded greatly and included a wide spectrum of collaborative ef-
forts between segments of their respective aerospace industries.

A source of conflict between Washington and Moscow was the willingness of the new
Russian government to vigorously promote military exports to a wide range of recipi-
ents. After playing ball with the U.S. government on many military export deals, the
new government signaled a much more nationalistic stance. Further, U.S. efforts to
gain meaningful international restraints on the sale of advanced weapon technology,
systems, and expertise were undermined by Ukraine's aggressive export policy, espe-
cially its very large swap of military hardware for oil signed with Iran during the sum-
mer of 1993.

The new Russian government's stance on military exports was very popular with the
Russian military, who were very unhappy with the rapid disarmament of the
federation. By 1995, the Russian military had shrunk to 1.5 million men with a focus
of effort on maintaining a smaller but technologically well-equipped quasi-profes-
sional fighting force. From the Russian military's perspective, the most serious near-
term threats flowed from the unresolved conflicts with Ukraine, the CTS in league
with Islam, and a more assertive China.

Even with these difficulties, U.S. and Russian political-military relations developed
positively, marked in particular by the steady decline in strategic nuclear forces
under START. The prospect of multilateral nuclear arms negotiations, however,
remained stalled.

The United States. The United States had experienced modest growth during the re-
covery after the 1990–1991 recession. U.S. defense budgets have declined steadily to
a level just below the modified Base Force levels proposed by the Administration in
1993. Continued large federal deficits, increased demands for domestic programs,
and slow growth have put strong pressure on the U.S. to make further major cuts in
defense spending after FY96.
Within the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf region, U.S. peacetime military presence remains relatively unchanged. The U.S. Navy has a small flotilla of destroyers and a command ship based at Bahrain. Some additional prepositioning has occurred in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. Noteworthy, two Army brigades of heavy armor on prepositioning ships based in the Persian Gulf complement the Marine MPS brigade in Diego Garcia. USN carrier battle groups (CBGs) operate intermittently in the Indian Ocean from either Japan or the Mediterranean.

**The South Asian Military Balance.** India is continuing a major conventional force modernization program through substantial collaboration with Russia, including the sale of the SA-12B GIANT anti-tactical missile system. Some programs have been cut back to fund the overt and growing nuclear weapons program.

In the summer of 1994, U.S. intelligence detected the beginning of the construction of silos for the Agni II ICBM. At this point, four silos appear to be operational with another 12 still under construction. U.S. intelligence has concluded that by the end of 1995, India had an operational nuclear arsenal of seventy-five 200-kiloton boosted fission bombs that could be delivered by SU-24s or TU-26s. An additional twenty-five 50-kiloton warheads are estimated to be carried on the Prithvi II, a 600-kilometer range ground-mobile short-range ballistic missile (SRBM).

India's fissile material production capability is estimated to be able to produce around 30 bombs per year. U.S. intelligence has evidence that the Indians (using Japanese parallel processing supercomputers) had conducted very sophisticated design tests of a two-stage thermonuclear weapon.

Pakistan has been having considerable difficulty in modernizing its conventional forces with first-line equipment, in many cases settling for hybrid designs. This pressure ensured wide support within the Pakistani military for their nuclear weapon program. By 1996, U.S. intelligence estimated that the Pakistanis had produced twenty 50-kiloton boosted fission bombs for delivery by F-16s or the new Chinese B-7 supersonic bomber. Another twenty 50-kiloton weapons were estimated to be available for the Hatf IIB, a 600-kilometer range ground-mobile SRBM.

Flight testing of the Chinese-designed solid propellant IRBM continued with active Iranian financial and technical support. U.S. intelligence hinted that the Chinese might have provided Pakistan with the design of a 200-kiloton boosted warhead for this weapon. By 1995, testing had ended with first evidence of field deployment in Pakistan during the early winter of 1996.

**The Crisis.** At a fourth-of-July diplomatic party, the U.S. Secretary of State was approached by the Indian ambassador, who expressed grave concern about the deteriorating situation in South Asia. He requested that the U.S. receive the new Indian Chief of Staff as soon as possible for the expressed purpose of their presenting a number of "new and unprecedented" procurement and military cooperation proposals. The Indian ambassador concluded the meeting with the remark that "America must become decisively engaged to tamp down the embers of war."

During the second week of July, renewed violence occurred in Kashmir and Punjab. During a televised news conference, the Indian prime minister formally charged Pakistan with complicity and dramatically revealed evidence from several arms caches seized during the previous week. This news conference created a sensation
within the Indian Parliament (Lok Sabha) with many members of the BJP calling for a “final solution” to the Pakistani military threat.

After an intense interagency debate, the secretary of defense gained approval to extend an invitation to the Indian chief of staff to visit Washington during the last week of July for extensive discussions on future purchases of advanced U.S. military equipment.

During the second week of July, the Indian Army announced that it was going to conduct a "very large" combined armed exercise, DESERT DRUM, in the Indian Desert and the Rann of Kutch during September. Simultaneously, the Indian navy and air force announced that both services would conduct the “largest” air-naval exercise, GOLDEN EAGLE, off the west coast of India during August.

This announcement was promptly denounced by the Pakistani government as an act of intimidation and aggression by a government that was “losing its head to fantasies of Hindu imperialism.”

Simultaneously in Beijing, a senior foreign ministry spokesperson announced that a major military delegation would fly to Islamabad for consultations with the Pakistani high command. In the July 17th daily briefing, the national intelligence community noted evidence that an Iranian military delegation would arrive in Pakistan a day after the Chinese. The U.S. intelligence report concluded that the focus of the trilateral discussion was accelerated deployment of the new 3000-kilometer range IRBM, designated the Hafiz III. Wide consensus now existed within the intelligence community that this missile was a clone of the CSS-12, which had been detected in operational sites in both western and eastern China during the fall of 1995.

By the third week of July, widespread urban warfare had resumed in Amritsar, the capital of Punjab. A renewed outbreak of violence occurred in southern India when a Tamil liberation cell attacked a local passenger train and caused a major loss of life.

The Indian chief of staff began his meeting with the Secretary of Defense on July 25th with an opening statement that highlighted the common geostrategic interests of India and the United States and their commitment to democracy and the rule of law. As expected, the Indian chief of staff formally requested that the United States sell India three PAVE PAW-class radars to provide warning of a possible Pakistani and/or Chinese missile attack. The second request was for technological assistance to upgrade the Russian-designed SA-12Bs to deal with possible follow-ons to the new Pakistani Hafiz III. The Indian delegation provided a surprisingly detailed appreciation of the technical capabilities of the Hafiz III and emphasized its high accuracy as a dangerous counterforce weapon but expressed confidence in the effectiveness of the SA-12B as a defense of their strategic weapon bases.

The formal presentations were followed by a private meeting between the Indian Chief of Staff and the Secretary of Defense. During this meeting, the Indian general dropped a diplomatic bombshell. He proposed that negotiations begin between India and the United States for a bilateral defense treaty. During this presentation, the Chief of Staff made a passionate plea that the “United States, India, and Russia must stand together to resist the rise of an Islamic global threat to peace aided by Chinese great-power chauvinism.” He concluded with the ominous note that “India was prepared to take decisive action if the international community remained indifferent to India’s legitimate security concerns.”
That afternoon, the Indian ambassador in a previously arranged meeting with the Secretary of State made a demarche. Restated in more formal language, the chief of staff’s proposal for a bilateral mutual defense agreement would include:

1. A joint Indian-U.S. defense planning council
2. A willingness to greatly expand aerospace-industrial ties
3. A commitment to join the U.S. proposed multilateral nuclear negotiations—accepting the Russian position that all third party nuclear-armed states should accept a ceiling, which was a ratio of the limits placed on Russian and U.S. arsenals
4. A willingness to sign a no-first-use pledge to be sanctioned formally by the UNSC.

In response to the Secretary of State’s question as to “what is the rush?” the Indian ambassador restated the warning of the Indian Chief of Staff that “time was running out for peace in South Asia without decisive action by the great powers—the United States and Russia.”

That evening, the Russian ambassador approached the National Security Advisor. During a private meeting, the ambassador strongly endorsed the Indian proposal. He concluded the discussion by handing over a private letter from the president of the Federation of Russia to the President. In that letter, the president of Russia called for a new era in U.S. and Russian political-military relations.

On July 28, 1996, Pakistan launched two Hatf III IRBMs to their full 3000-kilometer range. Both reentry vehicles were recovered by a mixed fleet of Pakistani and Iranian research ships while U.S. reconnaissance aircraft monitored splash-down activity. During a low-level pass, a USN P-3 stationed from Diego Garcia had a near miss with a Pakistani helicopter that was part of the recovery operation. That afternoon, the Pakistani government lodged a formal protest to the U.S. government that “U.S. air activity had endangered a Pakistani aircraft.” U.S. intelligence confirmed that there was a substantial Chinese military and scientific presence at both the launch site and on the recovery fleet.

On August 2, the chief of staff of the Pakistani army announced that a very large combined arms exercise would take place during September. The date was not specified, although it was widely understood by the diplomatic community in Pakistan that the exercise would parallel the Indian exercise in time and location.

On August 3, the U.S. ambassador to Beijing was called to the office of the Chinese secretary of state on a matter of grave urgency. In the ensuing memo to Washington, the U.S. ambassador relayed Beijing’s alarm about credible reports from India and Japan that the United States was considering greatly expanded political-military ties with India and Russia. Such a move would be considered by Beijing as a very dangerous act that would only encourage the militarists in New Delhi to ignite a terrible conflict in South Asia. The Chinese secretary concluded that China would not stand idly by if India threatened the national existence of Pakistan.
Patterns of Response to the Situation

Participant teams were asked to identify key defense and military policy issues facing the U.S. in this South Asian crisis and, if possible, agree on recommended action. They were given a “Draft Memo for the President” as a starting point for discussion. Six issues dominated the teams’ deliberations:

1. Overall U.S. strategy and policy toward the Indo-Pakistani crisis
2. A high or low U.S. profile in the crisis
3. The role of U.S. military power in crisis management
4. The diplomatic approach
5. Multilateral versus unilateral diplomacy

Overall U.S. Strategy. From the outset, participants focused their discussion on the U.S. interests implicated by the emerging crisis. Most agreed that the presence of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use drew the attention of U.S. policymakers. An Indo-Pakistani war per se would not involve U.S. vital interests. U.S. and Western economic stability was not dependent on South Asia as a market or a source of raw materials, and the region’s geopolitical importance to the United States in the post–Cold War world was arguable. Without the issue of nuclear weapons, all agreed that the President and other key leaders would not put aside their ongoing work to focus on this crisis.

Participants agreed that the important question was whether the risk of a nuclear war on the Indian subcontinent affected U.S. vital interests in ways that war per se did not. A substantial minority argued that the risk of a nuclear war in South Asia did not place America’s vital interests at risk. This group focused on the immediate effects of a potential nuclear war. Since neither India nor Pakistan had the means or reason to threaten the United States with nuclear attack, the war itself presented no risk to Americans. Also the crisis did not threaten U.S. allies. Western and U.S. economic stability was no more affected by a nuclear war on the subcontinent than it would be in a conventional conflict between India and Pakistan. Potential ecological effects—primarily from fallout—were considered manageable. To this group, these factors argued against any U.S. involvement in the crisis. Moreover, this group failed to see how a President could hope to gain much public and Congressional support for an activist U.S. policy.

In addition, the minority considered the risks of involvement to be quite high. The South Asian balance of power was seen as linked to the Sino-Russian rivalry, which did affect U.S. vital interests. An Indo-Pakistani nuclear conflict could involve China and Russia, and their nuclear weapons could reach the United States. Those favoring noninvolvement argued that the potential for escalation, combined with the highly unpredictable future course of the crisis, made U.S. involvement far too hazardous.

The majority of participants argued that preventing a potential Indo-Pakistani nuclear war was of vital interest to the United States. They emphasized the long-term implications of nuclear use on the subcontinent and argued that despite public and Congressional misgivings, the President must show leadership. Some focused on the destructive impact of a nuclear war on the viability of the nonproliferation regime. If
the U.S. were to stand aside while nuclear weapons were used by one side or both, one potentially powerful disincentive to the acquisition of nuclear weapons—the possibility of U.S. military action—would be removed. While some maintained that the unprecedented devastation of a nuclear war would cause states considering or pursuing the nuclear weapons option to withdraw in revulsion, those arguing for U.S. involvement in the crisis feared that one side’s nuclear use might lead to a victory that would accelerate proliferation.

Others who favored U.S. involvement in the crisis focused less on a violation of the nonproliferation regime than on the implications of a potential nuclear war for international stability. They were less concerned about a nuclear conflict on the subcontinent per se than the potential for escalation to a much larger nuclear exchange between Russia and China. In their view, direct U.S. involvement was essential to confine the crisis to India and Pakistan.

A “High” or “Low” U.S. Profile in the Crisis. Participants who maintained that America’s vital interests were not at stake and argued against direct U.S. involvement in the crisis recommended that the potential conflict not become a focus of American diplomacy and that it should not receive special emphasis from U.S. government press offices. In their view, the U.S. should treat an Indo-Pakistani conflict the same as any other war where U.S. vital interests are not involved—as deplorable and as a situation where America might offer its good offices but an item of no special note in daily press briefings.

Those who believed that vital U.S. interests were at stake and favored direct American involvement wanted to put the issue on the front burner. They argued that the government should go into a crisis management mode and focus its vast energies on defusing the situation. They would organize a major diplomatic effort, using every available important forum of international politics. Also they wanted the government’s public affairs offices to focus media attention on the fact that the U.S. government believed a peaceful resolution of the crisis to be of vital importance to the United States.

The Role of U.S. Military Power in Crisis Management. Participants who wanted the United States to stay out of the conflict saw no role for U.S. military power. Those who favored involvement also saw no immediate role for the U.S. military but would approve contingency planning for noncombatant emergency evacuation of U.S. citizens in India and Pakistan. Also they would approve the exploration of military options to prevent a nuclear war by preemptive attack or some form of quick response against the Indian and/or Pakistani nuclear postures. Not many participants believed that such options existed short of U.S. nuclear use (although some believed that a conventional option might be feasible), but virtually all believed it necessary to find out through analysis. Most recognized that merely planning activities could leak to the press but were unwilling to let this concern stop the government from thinking.

The Diplomatic Approach. Participants favoring U.S. involvement to defuse the crisis focused on a diplomatic strategy of mediation. They believed that the U.S. had little credible coercive influence or economic leverage over either India or Pakistan and argued that American interlocutors might defuse the crisis by playing the “honest broker.” Great stock was placed in the potential success of U.S. proposals for
India and Pakistan to call off their military exercises and agree not to test nuclear weapons or ballistic missiles until the political situation stabilized.

Some participants suggested that the United States might provide the Indians and Pakistanis with briefings about the negative military, political, and environmental effects of the employment of nuclear weapons to discourage their consideration of nuclear use options. Others doubted that Americans could appreciate, or even anticipate, how the psychology of nuclear deterrence would operate between and within these two very different cultures—which are so much more different from ours.

A very small minority favoring involvement argued for a tilt toward India on the basis of an argument that such a move would paralyze potential Pakistani military action. The majority opposed this argument on the grounds that India probably would pocket any U.S. commitment and perhaps still act aggressively. A further argument against siding with India was that a pro-Indian tilt would put the U.S. at odds with China, generate enmity toward America in the Islamic world, and draw the U.S. into the crisis as a participant, rather than an observer or mediator.

**Multilateral Versus Unilateral Diplomacy.** Participants favoring U.S. involvement split over whether the strategy of mediation should be multilateral or unilateral. Some argued that the Russians and Chinese, who were perceived to have real leverage with India and Pakistan, should be enlisted to restrain their allies while America played a supporting role. Those in this group believed that China and Russia should take the lead, as the two powers had a much more direct interest in preventing a nuclear war that might otherwise escalate to involve them.

Those favoring a unilateral emphasis suggested that alliance relations between China and Pakistan and between Russia and India, and the antagonisms between the two blocs, were as likely to inflame the crisis as damp it down. This group suggested that the U.S. had leverage with both Russia and China and that the lack of leverage over India and Pakistan might enhance an honest broker image.

**U.S. Post-Crisis Policy.** Those favoring a multilateral mediation effort with China and Russia in the lead tended not to consider a long-run U.S. policy for South Asia. Generally they favored a nuclear weapon–free zone and better adherence by India and Pakistan to the nonproliferation regime, but they also saw the problem as India’s and Pakistan’s, and to a lesser extent Russia’s and China’s, more than America’s. Generally this group was unwilling to accept the notion of a de jure nuclear weapons balance in South Asia or to encourage U.S. efforts to foster nuclear stability between the antagonists. Some were deeply skeptical of America’s ability to use technical means to solve what one participant called “a 50-year conflict between the Pakistani and Indian states overlaid on 1000 years of Hindu-Moslem hatreds.”

Those favoring unilateral mediation had a very clear notion of the long-term U.S. policy. In their view, the aspect of the Indo-Pakistan crisis threatening American vital interests was the potential for nuclear war. They believed that those without a long-term policy were basically unwilling to accept the fact of India’s and Pakistan’s nuclear arsenals, because to do so would shatter the illusion of an effective nonproliferation regime. Those in favor of unilateral involvement tended to believe the regime was a concept out of synch with international realities. India and Pakistan had nuclear weapons and would never give them up. The time had come for the United States to accept that fact.
Those favoring unilateral involvement argued that the only realistic course was to support the establishment of a stable mutual deterrence relationship on the subcontinent. Not everyone in this group was sanguine about the prospects for stability, but none saw any practicable alternative to trying. They favored improving the survivability and security of each side’s nuclear arsenals—but not their military effectiveness. They would support the policy of providing each side with reliable tactical warning and surveillance capabilities—to deny the prospect of surprise. Also they favored nuclear education—to teach Indian and Pakistani leaders the “responsible” management of nuclear arsenals.

Most participants opposed the policies of this group. In the majority view, helping India and Pakistan to become responsible nuclear powers would only encourage further proliferation. Potential nuclear-weapons states would see that once they attained some level of nuclear capability the U.S. would welcome them into the nuclear club.

**Trends in the Team Discussions**

Figure 5.1 is an outline of the policy options distilled from the group discussion of Step One. The dark solid lines and boxes indicate majority agreements. While a substantial minority opposed direct U.S. involvement in the crisis, arguing that no vital interests were at stake, the majority favored activism. Some in this majority focused on the signal that would be sent to potential proliferators if the U.S. stood aside; others were concerned about the need to intervene before China and Russia were drawn into the conflict. This majority favored putting the U.S. government into a visible crisis management mode to signal our intense interest in a peaceful resolution of the crisis. They also favored limiting the U.S. military role to reviewing (what most participants believed to be an unpromising set of) military options.

A diplomatic strategy of mediation was seen as the primary, and to many the sole, means of U.S. influence. Most participants favoring activism would pursue it multilaterally, relying on China and Russia to restrain their allies. A minority would emphasize a unilateral approach focusing on the U.S. potential as an honest broker between India and Pakistan. Those favoring a multilateral approach tended to focus on defusing the crisis at hand. Those emphasizing unilateral diplomacy were prepared to pursue the creation of a stable mutual nuclear deterrence relationship on the subcontinent.

**STEP TWO: “THE DAY AFTER”**

**Situation Report**

Relations between India and Pakistan continued to deteriorate throughout August and early September. Much popular media discussion took place in both countries about a fourth and decisive war.

On September 9, the Secretary of State sent a formal reply to the Indian demarche of July indicating that the United States was prepared to enter into negotiations about expanded military-technological ties without a commitment to a more expansive
political-military relationship. The note included a recommendation that India take the steps necessary to initiate bilateral negotiations with Pakistan on confidence-building measures with a priority on nuclear-weapons matters. The note cited the spiral of implied threats and counterthreats between the two nations, emphasizing the danger in both countries’ upcoming simultaneous exercises (now viewed by many as cover for military mobilization by both sides).

On September 12, the President received a direct communication from the Indian prime minister expressing “disappointment” at “some aspects” of the U.S. response. Overall, however, the note was conciliatory and contained no threat of imminent Indian military action.

Two days later, Exercise DESERT DRUM began with considerable Indian media fanfare. Simultaneously, the chief of staff of the Pakistani armed forces announced a massive all-arms exercise, GREEN FLAG, in southern Pakistan. U.S. intelligence noted that Pakistani forces were mobilizing and deploying south of Lahore and east of Multan—traditional invasion routes into Punjab. Overall, U.S. intelligence estimated that both sides had now put more than 200,000 troops into the field as part of an apparent mutual game of intimidation and brinkmanship.

On September 17 at noon Indian time, the Indian prime minister was slightly wounded in an unsuccessful assassination attempt. However, her teenage daughter and two of her bodyguards were killed in the exchange of gunfire. One gunman remained alive but was wounded severely.
Within hours, massive demonstrations were held throughout India; these rapidly degenerated into anti-Tamil and anti-Islamic riots. By nightfall, news broadcasts from ITN and CNN reported that Islamic and Tamil enclaves in several Indian cities were under siege, with more than 700 people already confirmed dead and thousands more seriously wounded.

At 1900 Pakistani time, the young general who was the Pakistani prime minister went on television and denounced the assassination attempt. He appealed for calm in all of South Asia but bluntly called on the Indian government to "protect all of its citizens against lawlessness." He concluded his speech with a warning that Pakistan could be on the verge of a "great trial."

By September 18, U.S. intelligence detected an acceleration of airlift into Pakistan from two Chinese military airfields associated with the shipping of missile systems. That evening, the U.S. ambassador to Alma-Ata reported that the CTS governments had refused a request from the Russian government to grant emergency overflight rights for a military airlift to India.

At 0300, September 19, the entire western Indian naval fleet, including two aircraft carriers, sortied and headed to a position 200 nautical miles southwest of Karachi. By 0600, the entire Pakistani navy began preparing to go to sea.

Throughout the day of the 19th, mobilization of Pakistani and Indian forces continued. In both nations massive demonstrations cheered troop convoys that moved through the cities. One aged European correspondent remarked to his close friend, the U.S. station chief in Rawalpindi, that the Pakistani send-off reminded him "of the film clips of the crowds in Paris and Berlin in August of 1914."

Late on the 19th, U.S. intelligence confirmed that the Chinese were airlifting CSS-12s to Pakistan.

By September 20, clear indicators showed that Pakistani nuclear forces were going into a dispersed posture. U.S. photoreconnaissance satellites almost immediately identified four field sites (a total of 36 launchers—double the previous estimate) for the Hatf III.

Indian nuclear forces were not yet fully dispersed. Especially noteworthy was the retention in place of all of the Indian air force long-range SU-24 and TU-26 nuclear bombers at their six main operating bases in central India. Heightened activity, however, was detected around the Agni IRBM launch site 600 kilometers southeast of Jaipur. SA-12B sites near the bomber bases and the Agni site were on full alert (and were observed receiving reinforcements—Russian PVO personnel and additional electronic equipment).

On the evening of September 21, the prime minister of India announced to a cheering Indian Parliament that the surviving gunman had confessed to being a member of a fanatic Islamic group financed by the Pakistani secret service. She demanded that Pakistan immediately demobilize its forces to preserve peace and pay proper restitution for the loss of the lives of her daughter and bodyguard.

At 2200 EST, the Chinese formally called for an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council. Later, the Chinese ambassador to the UN on a late-night U.S. news broadcast declared that India was "spoiling for a fight with Pakistan that would plunge South Asia into a horrible war."
At 0300 EDT, the U.S. Situation Room received a hotline message from Moscow informing the President that the Russian air force was conducting an airlift of anti-missile equipment and personnel from the Russian Far East via Vietnam to India. It requested that the U.S. use its “good offices” to convince Thailand to provide over-flight rights even in the face of Chinese counterpressure.

At 0500 local time, 150 nautical miles off the coast of Karachi, the Indian carrier battle group Viraat (ex-British Hermes) encountered three Pakistani destroyers. At 0515, the lead destroyer launched two missiles at a Sea Harrier launched from the Viraat. The Harrier successfully evaded attack and launched a Sea Eagle antiship missile that hit the second Pakistani ship through a cloud of chaff. Ten more Sea Harriers were immediately launched from the carrier. A few minutes later the surviving destroyers launched a mixed volley of Chinese- and French-designed antiship missiles at the Indian carrier task force.

Within 30 minutes, all three Pakistani ships had been sunk. Four Harriers and one Indian frigate were lost and one oiler was damaged. At 0659 local time, the Indian naval victory turned to disaster when the Viraat was struck by three torpedoes. Two minutes later, the carrier was struck by two cruise missiles launched from a second Pakistani submarine. With its back broken, the burning Viraat rolled over and sank at 0905 local time. Most Indian aircraft were transferred successfully to the second carrier (the Vikrant, the ex-Russian Baku), but 550 Indian seamen and officers were lost with the Viraat.

Throughout the day, heavy artillery and tank duels occurred across various points of the India-Pakistan border. By nightfall, the Indians were launching major probing actions east of Hyderabad and Lahore. Many aerial dogfights occurred in the vicinity of the border, but neither side’s air force saw major action. At 1600 the Vikrant launched 28 Sea Harriers to strike the naval base near Karachi.

At 1700 local time, the prime minister of India went on national radio and television and declared that as of 2400 local time, September 20, 1996, India was in a “state of war with the Republic of Pakistan.”

At 0300 local time, September 21, the Indian army launched a multi-corp attack along the rail line to Hyderabad. To the north, another multi-corps offensive pushed east of Multan. Fighting was fierce, but apparently Pakistani ground forces were not holding up. Early reports indicated that the Pakistanis had fallen back several tens of kilometers during the opening hours of combat.

At 0530 local time, U.S. intelligence detected a coded signal to all Pakistani major commands to execute OPERATION THUNDERBOLT.

At 1700 EDT, the National Security Advisor to the President received an urgent phone message from the DCI to “put the senior members of the Emergency Action Group on the video hook-up—that the Warning Staff had concluded that Pakistan was about to conduct nuclear operations!”

At 0645 local time, the two Indian Ocean DSPs detected the launch of 36 Haf IIs from four launch sites. The missiles were launched in two distinct volleys of 18 missiles separated by 90 seconds. Almost simultaneously 70 Haf IIB SRBMs were launched from sites in north and south Pakistan. Other intelligence collectors indicated that an all-out Pakistani air operation was also under way.
At 0657 local time, the nuclear event detection system on the two DSP and the four GPS satellites (viewing the region) detected 12 atmospheric nuclear detonations with an estimated yield in the 50- to 70-kiloton range. Six detonations occurred over the Indian corps positions east of Multan and six over the Indian forces east of Hyderabad. Within minutes similar yield detonations occurred over the nine Indian air force main operating bases within 300 kilometers from Pakistan.

At 0659 local time, SA-12Bs were launched from defense sites around the Indian bomber and IRBM bases at the first Hatf III volley. Within minutes, three 200-kiloton detonations were detected at high altitude over central India. At 0703, the Agni IRBM site was hit by three ground burst 200-kiloton weapons. Three minutes later the six Indian main long-range bomber bases were hit with air-burst 200-kiloton detonations. Five minutes later, a 200-kiloton weapon detonated 60 kilometers over New Delhi. U.S. diplomatic communications promptly went off the air.

For the next 20 minutes, an additional 18 nuclear weapons detonated over Indian field forces and additional key logistic sites and airfields. The Indian navy escaped damage when a B-7 attempted to attack the carrier battle group and was shot down by a Sea Harrier. On crashing some 20 kilometers north of the battle group, the B-7 detonated (apparently salvage-fused) a 60- to 80-kiloton weapon. Within an hour after the last detonation, the U.S. intelligence community issued a preliminary conclusion that the Indian national command system was “in complete disarray and unlikely to act for at least two to three hours.” This assessment also indicated that both Indian ground penetrations into Pakistan were now being subjected to encircling ground counterattacks with Pakistan having gained local air superiority over the battlefield.

At 0800 local time on national radio, the Prime Minister of Pakistan declared that all citizens should continue to take precautions against “the increasingly remote possibility” of an Indian nuclear attack. He claimed that he ordered the preemptive attack “to save Pakistan” because of “clear evidence of an imminent Indian nuclear attack.” He concluded with the claim that the Pakistani strike had “succeeded even beyond our hopes” and that Pakistan was “on the verge of a great and glorious victory.” On receiving this news, many residents left their shelters in Islamabad to celebrate.

At 0830 local time, the eastern hemisphere DSPs detected a single missile launch from the Agni IRBM site. Over the next few minutes eight additional missile launches came from suspected Prithvi SRBM field sites. Ten minutes later 70-kiloton airbursts were detected over six Pakistani main operating bases and the nuclear production facilities at Kahuta and Sihala. At 0846 the headquarters of the Pakistani High Command in Islamabad was the clear ground zero for a 200-kiloton low-altitude airburst.

At 0900 local time, the Pakistani government began transmitting (through a seized circuit of the Indian domestic satellite system and commercial short-wave) an ultimatum that any further nuclear attacks by India would lead to nuclear retaliation against Indian nuclear power plants.

During a video hook-up with the President, the DCI estimated that India had suffered 80,000 prompt civilian and 40,000 prompt military fatalities. Pakistan’s losses were heavy—100,000 civilian and 15,000 military dead—but the military advantage had
dramatically shifted in Pakistan's favor. He highlighted the DIA and CIA estimate that a very real chance existed that the Indian military had suffered a decisive defeat.

The DCI estimated that if the war continued and if Pakistan carried out its threat to attack India's nuclear reactor infrastructure, India might suffer another 1,000,000 prompt fatalities and another 20,000,000 slow deaths. He went on to say that if India recovered, the war continued, and the nuclear attacks moved to the cities; the number of deaths on the subcontinent "could reach 100,000,000." In closing, the DCI noted that the Russian air defense personnel associated with the airlift to Indian air bases might have suffered up to 2000 fatalities.

By midday, the Chinese military had gone to a full war mobilization in Xinjiang and Tibet, and all other Chinese forces were rapidly going to higher levels of readiness.

At 0330 EDT, September 21, the White House received a hotline message from the President of the Russian Federation that requested that the United States join Russia in seeking a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution guaranteeing to the world that Pakistan's nuclear aggression will not stand. If China vetoed the joint initiative, then Russia and the United States should be prepared to take decisive military action in the very near future to ensure that Pakistan was denied the fruits of a nuclear crime.

Patterns of Response to the Situation

Participants were asked to identify key policy issues facing the U.S. in the escalating crisis, consider how to respond to the Indo-Pakistani nuclear exchange, develop policy options in support of crisis decisionmaking, and if possible agree on recommended action. They were given a "Draft Memo for the President" as a starting point for discussion. Team discussions covered four major issues:

1. Whether the U.S. should remain engaged in the crisis
2. The role of diplomacy
3. The need for a military coalition

Whether the U.S. Should Remain Engaged in the Crisis. Participants agreed that the crisis now involved a meaningful threat of nuclear attack on the United States, principally by way of horizontal escalation to China and Russia. No one put a number to their calculation of probabilities, but all were extremely concerned about the risk. All agreed that avoiding a nuclear attack on the United States was the top objective of American policy.

A substantial minority favored immediate disengagement from the crisis, arguing that the low level of U.S. interests involved in the war did not justify courting the increasing risk of nuclear attack. This group also argued that the U.S. public and Congress would not support an Administration that chose to run such risks, particularly when it was completely unclear how the U.S. could repair this disaster. Many in this group believed that Russia and China would recognize how much they could lose from escalation and would damp down the conflict on their own. They sug-
gested that if China and Russia could not act on their own, the United States was unlikely to get them to do so.

The majority agreed that the risks of nuclear attack on the United States were increased but argued that the U.S. should remain engaged to keep the war from escalating into a Sino-Russian conflict. They recognized that continued American engagement would be criticized by many but believed that disengagement was more likely to leave Russia and China on the path to a nuclear confrontation. They argued that by staying actively engaged in the crisis the United States could help China and Russia see the risks involved. In their view, if the U.S. failed to do so it would be no worse off than if it had never tried.

The Role of Diplomacy. Participants who argued that the United States should remain engaged in the crisis despite the risks split over the issue of diplomatic strategy. Some argued that the United States should pursue an exclusively diplomatic strategy aimed at disengaging India and Pakistan and/or isolating the nuclear war to the subcontinent. This group saw no feasible military option that would further U.S. objectives. If diplomacy failed, they would join those who would disengage from the crisis.

A second group would try diplomacy first but were willing to pursue military options. If diplomatic efforts failed to halt or at least wall off the war, this group was prepared to build a military coalition to intervene and bring at least the nuclear war to a halt. They argued that the U.S. and other great powers could not simply watch a nuclear holocaust take place. To many in this group the thought of doing nothing was morally repugnant. To most, the specter of a future of "small" nuclear wars was a threat to America's vital interests and had to be nipped in the bud. They also argued that while the United States was the last superpower, it was neither omniscient nor omnipotent and could use the help of other states to resolve this crisis.

A third group would dispense with diplomacy and proceed immediately and unilaterally to military options. In their view, diplomacy had already failed catastrophically; China and Russia probably would be unreliable partners in the "peacemaking" effort that this group believed essential to the future of regional and international security. Also time was running out for military action before a second Indo-Pakistani exchange. They saw the United States as a "full-service superpower," which meant having both the will and the capability to handle this type of crisis on its own.

The Need for a Military Coalition. Participants who favored the consideration of military options discussed the risks of horizontal escalation and the likelihood that the Indian and Pakistani nuclear arsenals could be destroyed quickly and completely. All agreed that, other things being equal, reducing the number of nuclear weapons available for use by India and Pakistan to limit the damage the two could do to each other was worthwhile. They also agreed that no President would authorize any military action on the subcontinent unless he was confident that the United States would not be drawn into a war with China or Russia.

Those favoring the consideration of military options split into four groups. The first would only proceed if Russia and China joined with the United States in an attack on the Indian and Pakistani nuclear arsenals. Some in this group would proceed if China and Russia would simply agree that the United States would carry out the attacks. With the short timeline, they believed that only this option was realistic. Others insisted that the Chinese and Russians share the responsibility—and whatever resulting blame—by participating in the attack.
The second group was willing to proceed with the military option if only Russia consented, believing that the two could keep China at bay. Many others felt that isolating China was risky in the crisis and that it would have negative repercussions for long-term Sino-American relations. The third group would try to enlist Russia and China but was prepared to proceed unilaterally if necessary. As noted above, the fourth group—those who would dispense with diplomacy—would proceed unilaterally without attempting to gain Russian or Chinese support. They believed China and Russia would accept a fait accompli.

The Use of U.S. Nuclear Weapons. Those who opposed military options outright presented a variety of rationales for their position. Some argued that anything less than a near-perfect attack, eliminating both the Indian and Pakistani arsenals, was unacceptable. They particularly feared an outcome where the attack against one arsenal was markedly less effective than against the other, but argued that the U.S. would probably make mortal enemies of both states in any event. Many preferred letting the nuclear blaze continue until it burned itself out (what one participant termed the “Yellowstone option”) and argued or hoped that reports of the horrific results would cause other states to abandon their nuclear weapons programs.

Those willing to consider military options spent much time discussing the possible use of nuclear weapons to destroy the Indian and Pakistani arsenals. Some argued that highly successful conventional attacks were not practicable to quench the nuclear conflagration. The total Indian and Pakistani target base would consist of at least 100 facilities, the precise location of many targets was unknown, and intelligence was probably unreliable. While a perfect U.S. strike was not expected under any circumstances, an extraordinarily effective attack would be necessary if the damage from follow-on Pakistani or Indian nuclear attacks were to be limited in any meaningful way. This group argued that a high damage expectancy against the large set of Indian and Pakistani targets required an immediate nuclear strike by the United States or a combination of nuclear powers. Moreover, the resort to nuclear weapons would be a warning to other states who otherwise might think that the United States was unprepared to use them and would demonstrate the seriousness of the American intent to maintain an indivisible nuclear peace.

This option was opposed by the majority of participants. Many argued that the United States could not use nuclear weapons for the ostensible purpose of enforcing a nuclear peace. Others argued that China and Russia might find U.S. nuclear use in their backyards disturbing to the point where it might precipitate a crisis with one or both. Others suggested that instead of limiting the damage that Pakistan and India might otherwise inflict on one another, the U.S. would be doing the job for them.

Still others argued that a conventional counterforce option was viable. Those who favored this option split between those who would only conduct a conventional campaign and those who were prepared to switch to nuclear weapons if required. Those who would rely exclusively on conventional weapons agreed that the U.S. could not employ nuclear weapons to uphold the nuclear peace. Those who were prepared to turn to nuclear weapons argued that stopping the uncontrolled use of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan, and the possibility that they might deliberately attempt to drag in China and Russia, demanded the use of whatever means were required to defang the antagonists.
Trends in the Team Discussions

Figure 5.2 is an outline of the policy options distilled from the group discussion of Step Two. A majority of participants believed that the U.S. should remain engaged in the crisis but opposed the use of nuclear weapons to stop the Indo-Pakistani nuclear war. Without at least a U.S.-Russian and probably a U.S.-Russian-Chinese coalition, most participants probably would oppose any U.S. military intervention in the crisis. Otherwise, no consensus emerged on U.S. policy. Participants were divided on diplomatic strategy, the need for and nature of a military coalition, and the practicability of conventional military operations.

STEP THREE: “THE DAY BEFORE”

Debate over the Future Course of U.S. Nonproliferation Policy

Participants generally favored a stronger nonproliferation regime, but few placed much faith in it. Most participants agreed that adherence to the norms of this regime would not become a litmus test in U.S. foreign relations. There was some talk of focusing on the companies that actually transfer weapons-related technologies, but the costs of an airtight international export control system were not analyzed.

Much discussion centered on the relationship between the size and nature of U.S. nuclear weapons programs and the viability of an effective nonproliferation regime. Most participants agreed that America’s huge nuclear arsenal and its ongoing testing program belied U.S. rhetoric that nuclear weapons are useless and/or evil and hindered the development of tighter export controls and tougher sanctions on commercial mercenaries and potential proliferators. They began to discuss how small the U.S. arsenal might become in the U.S.-Russian context, and then in the great power–potential proliferator context. How much could the United States continue to reduce its arsenal so as not to rely on nuclear weapons for its national security before that level came within easy reach of potential regional adversaries? At what point would the United States no longer be a nuclear superpower? What is nuclear stability in a multiparty scenario? What are its attributes? There was also some talk of extending U.S. nuclear deterrence to nonnuclear-weapons states. Participants broached these issues but got no further than agreeing on the need for intensive study.

A minority saw no relationship between proliferation and the U.S. nuclear arsenal and would avoid linking the two in U.S. foreign policy. They argued that nuclear weapons in large quantities were an important symbol of superpower status and that the desire for nuclear weapons on the part of potential proliferators is unrelated to the size of the U.S. arsenal or the status of its nuclear weapons programs, arising instead from internal political dynamics.

Division over the Advisability of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

The split described above extended to a discussion of a comprehensive test ban (CTB). The majority argued that such a ban would preserve a healthy but diminishing U.S. lead in the understanding of nuclear weapons effects essential to bomb de-
sign, deprive others of arguments not to join the CTB, and help foster the creation of an international nuclear taboo. A minority opposed U.S. adherence to a CTB on the grounds that testing was essential to the reliability of the U.S. arsenal. The minority never addressed the majority’s claim that a test ban would preserve a valuable U.S. lead in the knowledge of nuclear weapons effects.

Recognition That in Policing the Nuclear Peace the United States Approaches the Limits of Superpower

Few participants argued that a nuclear war similar to the scenario portrayed in “The Day After . . . in South Asia” would not undermine efforts to establish international norms against nuclear proliferation and weapons use. In that sense virtually everyone agreed that the nuclear peace was indivisible. But very few participants would make the United States responsible for its preservation. One participant recalled the Clint Eastwood line, “a man’s gotta understand his limits,” in arguing that even “the last superpower” could not handle all the world’s problems.

Interest in High-Confidence, Conventional, Damage-Limiting Capabilities

Had conventional weapons been widely perceived as capable of taking out the Pakistani and Indian nuclear arsenals, such an option might well have received support from a majority of the participants in Step Two. In Step Three, considerable support existed for the development of the high-confidence conventional counter-
force and supporting intelligence capabilities discussed in every other exercise. No one, however, was prepared to state what element of the current force structure they would be prepared to give up to acquire the new weapons system.

**ALTERNATIVE POLICIES TOWARD THE U.S. ROLE IN MAINTAINING THE “NUCLEAR PEACE”**

Does the United States have a stake in an international nuclear taboo and will it pay the price of enforcing it? A review of discussion from “The Day After . . . in South Asia” suggests that the Washington policy support community is split between two broad policies toward the U.S. role in maintaining the indivisibility of the global nuclear peace:

1. A policy of nonintervention, in which the U.S. will only respond to nuclear use with force if it or its allies come under nuclear attack. Otherwise, the U.S. will allow nuclear wars to run their natural course.

2. A policy of conditional intervention. In this strategy the United States would move to forcibly stop a nuclear war where it had the military capability and political support to “defang” a nuclear aggressor or “quench” a bilateral nuclear conflict.

Analysis of the participants’ deliberations reveals that the choice between the two alternatives is based on assumptions about the relative feasibility and desirability of the potential outcomes, judgments about what the United States might be required to do to help achieve a given outcome, and assessments of the risks the United States would run in pursuing a policy toward that end.

**Nonintervention**

**Assumptions.** Unless based on the proposition that America should not intervene in the affairs of other states for moral or legal reasons, a noninterventionist approach assumes that the United States cannot maintain the nuclear peace. Nonintervention assumes that U.S. military capabilities are not now, and probably never will be, equal to the task of eliminating the nuclear forces of one or both parties to a nuclear conflict. It assumes that “splendid” strikes on such arsenals are not feasible; sufficient forces will survive the U.S. attack to inflict unbelievable harm. Nonintervention also assumes that the level of domestic and international political support necessary for such an operation will not be forthcoming, because neither the U.S. public nor the international community cares enough about an indivisible nuclear peace to run any risk of a nuclear attack on themselves.

Underlying the noninterventionist policy is an assumption that U.S. interests in preserving the nuclear peace are too remote to justify the risks of intervention. In some objective sense the nuclear peace may indeed be indivisible—use, especially successful use, in one part of the world increases the prospect of further use elsewhere—but noninterventionism assumes that the U.S. interest is indirect and not compelling. Of particular concern is the risk of nuclear retaliation, potentially against the United States in the case of the nuclear “elephant” states with ICBMs (such as Russia and China, and in the future conceivably such states as Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and India) and possibly lesser nuclear powers. The latter might be prepared to employ
unconventional means of delivery. Perhaps more likely the threat is that of retaliation by nuclear "jackals," states with IRBMs, such as North Korea and Iran in the not too distant future, against U.S. forces and allies in the region. A second concern is the risk of horizontal escalation whereby U.S. intervention against one or more jackals in a regional nuclear war will draw in the elephants, placing U.S. territory at risk.

Finally, conceding for the sake of discussion that the United States could develop the military capability and political support necessary to effectively intervene in a nuclear conflict, the noninterventionist strategy assumes that the monetary costs to create such an option would be far too high considering America's domestic needs.

**Requirements.** A policy prepared to let nuclear powers—elephants or jackals—fight a nuclear war to victory or exhaustion must either assume that the consequences of the next use of nuclear weapons can only reinforce a no-use ethic; hope that the United States will never pay the consequences of a growing sense that nuclear use is an acceptable tool of statecraft, albeit in extremis; or contend with a growing risk of nuclear attack on the United States itself. The first two alternatives require little of the United States (except perhaps good luck); the third, emphasizing preventive and protective measures, has demanding consequences. Here a high priority must be placed on effective nonproliferation and missile control regimes to reduce and delay the spread of nuclear weapons that might threaten the United States. It also requires that the United States support the development of nuclear ethics among the new nuclear powers and implant and foster international acceptance of the nuclear taboo. A realistic noninterventionist policy also would seem to require substantial investment to retain a credible nationwide ballistic missile defense system. Finally, to cope with the near-term risk of regional nuclear wars, the noninterventionist policy suggests a need to develop nuclear disaster relief and cleanup capabilities on a massive scale.

**Risks.** The principal risk to the United States of a noninterventionist policy is that the next and subsequent uses of nuclear weapons will undermine the nonproliferation regime and an internationalization of the nuclear taboo. The use of nuclear weapons by one side, leading to unilateral victory rather than mutual annihilation, would increase dramatically the pressures on national leaders to pursue their own nuclear weapons options. The pressures to go nuclear can only be increased if the United States is unwilling to act decisively on behalf of nonnuclear-weapons states placed under the nuclear gun by a regional adversary. If the nonnuclear states cannot call on the major nuclear powers, principally the United States, for protection, they are likely to take matters into their own hands. In the mid-term, the risk is a nuclear attack on U.S. forces or allies. The creeping long-run risk is a nuclear attack on the United States itself. A more indirect, but no less real, risk is a series of environmental disasters in the guise of small nuclear conflicts with serious consequences for the global ecology.

**Conditional Intervention**

**Assumptions.** A policy of conditional intervention is not blind to the risks of intervention, but the assumption is that the long-term consequences of nonintervention could be worse than the immediate risks of military engagement. Like nonintervention, a policy of conditional intervention assumes that the United States cannot
maintain the nuclear peace among nuclear elephants. But conditional intervention also assumes that the United States can keep the nuclear peace to the extent that a nuclear jackal threatens a nonnuclear-weapons state and possibly also between the jackals. Small nuclear forces in the tens of weapons are assumed to be vulnerable to the advanced conventional capabilities present or soon to be incorporated into the U.S. arsenal. The policy assumes that U.S. domestic and international political support is dependent on a quick and decisive operation and further assumes that U.S. military capabilities are equal to these requirements. An assumption that highly effective damage-limiting operations are possible leads to a further assumption that the risks of retaliation against U.S. forces are manageable. As far as the risks of horizontal escalation are concerned, the policy assumes that in many cases all the major nuclear powers will have a strong incentive to suppress jackals to maintain a high threshold on nuclear use, i.e., by reserving it to themselves. This incentive and the risk of retaliation are considered strong enough to keep the regional adversary’s major ally from responding against the United States.

Perhaps the best contemporary analogy to explain the philosophy of conditional intervention is the American willingness to intervene in Somalia but not Yugoslavia. In both cases innocent people have been brutalized by warring factions. The U.S. chose to intervene in Somalia because American leaders believed it was possible to achieve some measure of peace at a reasonable cost and risk. Thus far, the U.S. has chosen not to intervene in Bosnia because American leaders have no such confidence.

Requirements. A policy of conditional intervention would incorporate many of the programs required by nonintervention. A high priority would be placed on effective nonproliferation and missile control regimes and the development of “nuclear ethics” among the new nuclear powers. Conditional intervention also requires the option to deploy a credible nationwide ballistic-missile defense system and would not ignore the development of nuclear disaster relief and clean-up capabilities. Most important, the development and maintenance of a high-confidence, and preferably conventional, damage-limiting capability, incorporating highly effective counterforce and defensive forces—and superb intelligence—are necessary conditions of a conditional intervention policy. It would also seem important to build support among the major nuclear powers—today’s elephants—for intervention to enforce the no-use norm.

Risks. The basic problem with conditional intervention is that the assumption that the risk of nuclear retaliation is manageable will be proven wrong in some future nuclear conflict. Any nuclear attack on U.S. forces, U.S. allies, or the U.S. itself, brought on only because the United States interposed itself between the parties to a nuclear war, would be a disaster of incredible proportions. In addition, a basic risk of nonintervention is that nonnuclear powers would fend for themselves by developing their own nuclear weapons. The risk of a failed U.S. intervention might be the same.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The National Interest in an Indivisible Nuclear Peace

“The Day After . . .” exercises in general and “The Day After . . . in South Asia” in particular reveal that the policy support community in Washington has yet to articulate the implications of nuclear proliferation for U.S. defense strategy or the U.S. defense
posture. As an abstract proposition, they do see it as a threat per se—proliferation is bad. But when it comes to action, proliferation-related problems are filtered through the prisms of alliance relations, Western economic stability, or geopolitics. In the Korean and Middle East exercises, participants were willing to respond to nuclear use because traditional vital interests were at issue. In the former Soviet exercise and especially this South Asian exercise, the strong tendency was to stand aside, because participants could not see what the United States could usefully do, because they could not see how to justify military action to the American public, and because many could not justify such action to themselves.

The Soviet threat to America’s vital interests was obvious to most Americans during the Cold War. If Moscow had been able to dominate Western Europe, the Middle East, and Japan, it would gain the ability to directly threaten the United States. The U.S. would be denied access to critical sources of raw materials, key trading partners, and important aspects of its cultural heritage. The United States would become a fortress in the Western Hemisphere engaged in a struggle for the survival of its economic well-being and even the quality of its political life. And it might all begin with a failure to meet the Soviet or Soviet-sponsored challenge in Berlin, or Quemoy, or the 38th parallel, or Cuba, or the Congo, or Vietnam, or the Middle East, or any one of a dozen other trouble spots. The lesson of Munich and World War Two was to reject appeasement, in President Kennedy’s words, to “go anywhere, pay any price, bear any burden” in the cause of freedom and our own national interests.

But while Moscow was recognized as the source of communist influence, threats to the nuclear peace are of diverse origins—emanating from the natural advance of technology; the fears, hatreds and dreams of peoples, their political elites, or their dictators; the greed, or need, of intellectual mercenaries; the calculations of great powers and superpowers. In some respects, we have met the enemy and he is us. When the United States had a chance, it proved unwilling or unable to put the genie back in the bottle or to even control it. And thus the problem is not easily attacked. The indivisible nuclear peace seems an abstract concept and the threats to its viability remote and polymorphous. American leaders cannot say “Moscow is to blame, give us the resources to keep the Soviets at bay.”

The threat of a nuclear conflict in a region far removed from the traditional concerns of U.S. national security policy illustrates the problem. As discussed next, it is hard to devise practicable plans for U.S. military operations to stop such a conflict. Nevertheless, most participants in our exercise agreed that the next use of nuclear weapons in one part of the world could make nuclear warfare more acceptable to other states and thus threaten U.S. national security. Most also agreed that the U.S. response to that next use could affect the extent to which other states believed the taboo had been broken.

What was not addressed was the extent to which the U.S. military posture and the prior exercise of American military power to maintain the nuclear peace might discourage India or Pakistan from starting a nuclear war in the first place. Americans seem to think in terms of responding to direct threats that they can quantify and treat as technical problems. They are less comfortable thinking about the qualitative and judgmental nature of managing a complex international balance of power. Many appear confident that the U.S. can radically scale back its military posture because there is no apparent threat, believing that it will return to its former prominence.
when a serious threat emerges. There is no strong underlying consensus that the U.S. global military presence is itself a stabilizing factor in international security.

Perhaps the most serious challenge facing national security planners in the next several years will be to articulate a coherent rationale for the U.S. defense posture and a rationale that can gain broad public and Congressional support. Given the lack of any direct and immediate threat to the United States, its allies, or its vital interests, and the many serious problems at home, the widespread perception of a need to focus on American domestic policy is understandable and to a large extent accurate. But some danger exists that America’s retreat from the more active leadership role it played during the Cold War will add yet another element of uncertainty to an international environment already beset by instability. Thus the U.S. will be closer to war rather than the peace many imagine to be close at hand. The United States has an interest in shaping the nuclear peace, and explaining that interest to political leaders is a critical challenge for the defense community in the years ahead.

The Feasibility of Nuclear “Peacemaking” Operations

In 1993, the U.S. is reluctant to stand between Serbs, Croats, and Moslems engaged in a brutal struggle in the former Yugoslavia despite the fact that many analysts and decisionmakers fear that the West’s unwillingness to intervene militarily may indirectly encourage violent solutions to ethnic disputes elsewhere in Eurasia. At this point, Western policymakers sometimes appear less concerned with the balance of rights and wrongs in the Yugoslav civil wars than they are with the need to stop them before similar conflicts spread chaos across the former Soviet empire.

What stands in the way of Western action may not be a failure to recognize the long-term Western interests at stake, so much as an all too clear appreciation of the military requirements of a peacemaking operation designed to keep the various parties from killing each other, doubt that the Western powers can impose a solution on the warring parties by force, and an apprehension about the price the West would undoubtedly pay in the blood of its soldiers to enforce an indefinite and incomplete peace in the region. This same sense of operational requirements imposes severe caution on those who would consider a military option to quench a nuclear conflict. While many might agree that the nuclear peace is objectively indivisible and that the U.S. has a stake, if not a vital interest, in its maintenance, few expressions of (subjective) interest in U.S. military intervention to achieve that end were heard in either this exercise or “The Day After . . . in the ‘USSR’.”

The immediate political goal of intervention would be to somehow repair the tear in an ideally seamless fabric of the global nuclear peace and reinforce the nuclear taboo, either by punishing the transgressors or denying them any of the advantages that stem from the possession of nuclear weapons. Policies of punishment and denial in response to nuclear use are intended to support restoration of the indivisible nuclear peace by deterring future use. By punishing those who transgress the nuclear taboo, the United States would hope to demonstrate that the costs of use outweigh any gains; by denying users any advantage that might follow nuclear use, the United States would hope to show potential users that nuclear use will yield no gains. By demonstrating a willingness to intervene militarily, the United States would seek to instill a sense of caution in the decisionmaking of potential future users.
How would military planners turn these political goals into military objectives and plans? Who are these "transgressors" we would intend to punish? Anyone who used nuclear weapons? But what about the traditional right of states to retaliate in kind? The first user? But how does that square with NATO's refusal to adopt a "no first use" policy so that its nuclear weapons might counter a potential adversary's superior conventional forces? The country that "started" the war? But will that be obvious? Also will other important states agree with our judgments? Assuming we could assign blame to one side or both, whom precisely do we punish? The society? But is not nuclear war punishment enough? The national leaders? How? By killing them? How many others will we kill in the attempt? And then who is to control the termination of national nuclear operations? Must punishment await postwar trials? But how are we to obtain these leaders, and in the meanwhile what incentive do they have to terminate the nuclear war early and at a lower level of damage? And are we willing to apply the same "justice" to the next user? Would the precedent of punishing North Korea for using nuclear weapons first against the South apply to Israeli first use against the Arabs? And would we deny ourselves first use to retrieve U.S. forces from defeat in some future war?

How would the U.S. deny a nuclear user the advantages stemming from the possession of nuclear weapons? Could a military campaign be conducted against a nuclear user so as to place it in the position it would have been in had it not used nuclear weapons in the first place or perhaps an even less advantageous position? Intervening to eliminate the nuclear posture of one state would be quite difficult. The relevant target set could be quite large, encompassing command and control sites in urban areas, as well as remote and hard-to-determine locations; fixed and hardened and/or mobile and dispersed launchers in a wide array of field locations; military units that are difficult to distinguish from their nonnuclear counterparts scattered across large expanses of territory, and heavy defenses. If the military objective were to deny the user the benefits of possession, counterforce operations would have to cover the complete target array simultaneously and be effective practically to the point of perfection. Where both sides are using nuclear weapons, would it be possible to put them in the position they would have been in if they had fought a conventional war? To cover two arsenals would not only roughly double the target set; if the goal were to deprive either side of an advantage, the operation would have to have roughly equal results—with "equal" defined not only in terms of effectiveness against the two nuclear postures, but also the effect on the battlefield situation.

It does not seem that nuclear peacemaking is practicable now or in the foreseeable future. The notion that the United States could step in and keep two parties from destroying each other and damaging the planet in the process is a politically and morally attractive notion. But few participants had great confidence in the ability of the U.S. to step in, impose law and order, and stop a nuclear war anything like the one described in this exercise. There was considerable discussion of a damage-limiting objective—simply to reduce the ecological effects of a bilateral nuclear exchange, but it is not obvious how that reinforces a no-use norm. In the context of a nuclear exchange between parties in which the United States has no particular vital interest, a damage-limiting strategy seems to be motivated less by a desire to reestablish deterrence than by simple planetary hygiene. In the past, such motivations typically have not informed military planning. Perhaps American
intervention in Somalia to assure the health of a starving people suggests a shift in thinking in just that direction. But the agonized debate over U.S. military involvement in the former Yugoslavia serves as a constant reminder that there are practical limits to our willingness to act on behalf of our moral beliefs.
Appendix A

PARTICIPANTS IN ONE OR MORE EXERCISES

Lt Col Richard Aiken, USAF
Lt Col Joseph Alt, USAF
Wolfgang Altenburg
Eric Arnett
Ronald Asmus
Lt Col Judy Austin, USAF
Jeremy Azrael
Kathleen Bailey
Lt Jeffrey Barnett, USAF
William Beacher
Ronald Bee
Hans Benendyjk
Bruce Bennett
Mark Bennett
Maj Bob Bivens, USAF
Maj Don Blackwelder, USAF
Robert Blackwill
Bruce Blair
James Blaker
Lincoln Bloomfield
Jim Bodner
Lt Col Dan Bohlin, USAF
John Bordeaux
Steve Bowman
Lt Col Tom Bradley, USAF
Ian Brezinski
COL George Brock, USA
Capt William Bruner, USAF
Glenn Buchan
Oleg Bukharin
Susan Burk
Col Mike Carlin, USAF
Peter Cary
Deborah Castleman
Meg Cecchine
Sandra Charles
Adam Ciralsky
Richard Cohen

Air Staff
Air Staff
Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
AAAS
RAND
Air Staff
RAND
National Security Research
Air Staff
Minneapolis Star Tribune
ACCESS
Georgetown University
RAND
Economic Strategy Institute
Air Staff
Air Staff
Harvard University
Brookings Institution
Center for Naval Analyses
Office of the Vice President
Staff, Senator William Cohen
Air Staff
RAND
Congressional Research Service
Air Staff
Consultant
Joint Staff
Air Staff
RAND
Moscow Physical-Technical Institute
Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
Air Staff
U.S. News and World Report
RAND
RAND
International Planning and Analysis Center
Office of the Secretary of Defense
Washington World Analysts
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Juliet Swieciicki
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Thomas Thornton
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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Miguel Walsh</td>
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<td>Dale Walter</td>
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<td>Ron Zwart</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Beacher</td>
<td>Minneapolis Star Tribune</td>
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<td>John Fialka</td>
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Valer Davydov
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Lt Jeffrey Barnett, USAF
Maureen Cote
Scott Davis
Ralph Hallenbeck
Myron Hedlin
Mal Hegelsen
Eugene Iwanciew
Brig Gen Arthur Johnson, USAF
Thomas Julian
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**NOVEMBER 21, 1991**

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<td>University of Maryland</td>
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<td>Zachary Davis</td>
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<td>Amy Woolf</td>
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February 20, 1992 (FRG)

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Paul Lang  
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Lt Col Steve Pitotti, USAF  
Jacqueline Smith  
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Meg Cecchine  
Sandra Charles  
Marvin Feuerwerger  
Ira Goldman  
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Office of the Secretary of Defense  
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APPENDIX D

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Katy Oh
Jody Paul
Katherine Poehlmann

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Bruce Bennett
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Meg Cecchine
Joe Fromm
Col James Gough, USAF
Stan Norris
Lt Col Stephen Pitotti, USAF
John Schrader
David Shlapak
John Tilson
Marten van Heuven
Dale Walter

MAY 12, 1992
John Bordeaux
Zack Davis
Maj Scott Gough, USAF
Rebecca Grant
Richard Kugler
Bruce Pirnie
Col. Donald Selvage, USMC
Victor Utgoff
Alan Vick

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AAAS
Minneapolis Star Tribune
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Office of the Secretary of Defense
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U.S. Committee of the IISS
Air Staff
NDRC
Air Staff
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IDA
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CIA
Rand
CRS
Air Staff
Department of the Air Force
Rand
Rand
Joint Staff
IDA
Rand
Lt Col Richard Wallace, USAF
   Air Staff
Tom Wegleitner
   RAND

MAY 19, 1992
Dan Fox
   RAND
Ira Goldman
   Department of Energy
Don Henry
   RAND
Ron Mclaurin
   Abbot Associates
Col Charles Miller, USAF
   Air Staff
John Parachini
   Committee for National Security
Walter Perry
   RAND
Don Snider
   CSIS
Tim Webb
   RAND

MAY 21, 1992
Martin Goldstein
   ACDA
Gregg Hulcher
   Office of the Secretary of Defense
Maj Robert Massey, USAF
   Air Staff
David Orletsky
   RAND
Maj Mac Sikes, USAF
   Air Staff
Leon Sloss
   Consultant
Joel Witt
   Department of State
Lt Col Dale Wrisley, USAF
   Air Staff

MAY 27, 1992
Lt Col Judy Austin, USAF
   Air Staff
Lt Col Tom Bradley, USAF
   Air Staff
Richard Darilek
   RAND
Maj Chuck Fletcher, USAF
   Air Staff
Kevin Generous
   ANSER
Scott Hatch
   CIA
Elana Kass
   National Defense University
COL John Kelsey, USA
   National Defense University
Col William Larson, USAF
   Office of the Secretary of Defense
Rod McDaniel
   Consultant
Gary Millhollin
   Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms
   Control
Douglas Reilly
   Department of Energy
Jed Snyder
   National Defense University
Alan Tonelson
   Economic Strategy Institute

MAY 27, 1992
Lt Col Richard Aiken, USAF
   Air Staff
Lt Col Joseph Alt, USAF
   Air Staff
Ronald Bee
   ACCESS
Marvin Feuerwerger
   Washington Institute for Near East Policy
Eugene Iwanciw
   Ukrainian National Congress
Lt Col William Lucyshyn, USAF
   Air Staff
LTC Greg Maronski, USA
   Joint Staff
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bruce MacDonald</td>
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<td>Robert Shuey</td>
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<td>Kate Starr</td>
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### Appendix E

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS: “THE DAY AFTER... IN SOUTH ASIA”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JULY 8, 1992</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eric Arnett</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Beecher</td>
<td>Minneapolis Star Tribune</td>
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<td>Mark Bennett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adam Ciralsky</td>
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<td>Joe Fromm</td>
<td>U.S. Committee of the IISS</td>
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<td>William Kahn</td>
<td>Office of the Secretary of Defense</td>
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<td>CAPT Peter Swartz, USN</td>
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<td>Maj Bob Bivens, USAF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seth Carus</td>
<td>Office of the Secretary of Defense</td>
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<td>Carl Feldbaum</td>
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<td>Joel Witt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lt Col John Alt, USAF</td>
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<td>Sandia National Laboratories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maj Mark Gunsinger, USAF</td>
<td>Air Staff</td>
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</table>
Rebecca Hersman
Robert Howe
Maj Kyle Johnson, USAF
Laurence Jolidon
Richard Kugler
Capt Gregg Rattray, USAF
Joachim Scholz
Col. Don Selvage, USMC
Leonard Spector
David Stephens
Juliet Swiecicki

House Armed Services Committee
RAND
Air Staff
USA Today
RAND
Air Staff
Orion Research
Joint Staff
Carnegie Endowment
Office of the Secretary of Defense
Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
REFERENCES


