

CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

**RETHINKING U.S. NUCLEAR
POSTURE**

MODERATOR:

JAMES ACTON,

ASSOCIATE, NONPROLIFERATION PROGRAM,
CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT

SPEAKERS:

MICHAEL S. GERSON,

RESEARCH ANALYST,
CENTER FOR NAVAL ANALYSES

JEFFREY G. LEWIS,

DIRECTOR, NUCLEAR STRATEGY AND NONPROLIFERATION
INITIATIVE, NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2009
1776 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

*Transcript by
Federal News Service
Washington, D.C.*

JAMES ACTON: Okay, well, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon, and welcome to the Carnegie Endowment. The last few years has seen a huge resurgence in interest in nuclear weapons and issues about posture and doctrine, which really hadn't been discussed publicly for kind of 10, 20 years. And I think as the number of you here this afternoon for this talk demonstrate, its interest in posture and doctrine has very much come back into vogue in recent years.

And two events in particular have recently forced thinking on these issues. The first was of course President Obama's speech in Prague setting out the goal of the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. And then the second is the ongoing Nuclear Posture Review. And there's a lot of difficult thorny issues that have to be tackled. And what I wanted to do today was invite a couple of guests in to discuss two of the difficult-est and thorniest issues that need to be worked through.

The first of those issues is the circumstances under which the United States reserved the rights to use nuclear weapons. As many of you know, historically the U.S. has actually kept quite a wide variety of circumstances in which it holds out the option to use nuclear weapons. And those have been summarized as deter, defeat, dissuade and assure. And there's a debate at the moment about whether the U.S. should narrow those circumstances, perhaps going so far as to say that the U.S. maintains nuclear weapons only to deter the use of nuclear weapons from others.

Some would go even further and add the word "only" into that sentence, the U.S. only maintains nuclear weapons to deter nuclear weapons of others. And some would go even further and actually have a no-first-use pledge. So that's one of the issues that we're going to look at today.

The other issue is the vexed subject of extended deterrence. Perhaps the one fact about extended deterrence that everybody can agree on is that it's much easier to deter your enemies than it is to assure your adversaries. But this gap between assurance and deterrence opens up a fascinating question. If the U.S. has capabilities which it feels it doesn't need to deter an adversary, should it retain those capabilities simply for the sake of assuring an ally, and that's the issue that Jeffrey Lewis is going to look at today.

I'm going to introduce both speakers now to save breaking up the flow of this afternoon's talk with another introduction. So speaking on the subject of no-first-use to my right is Mike Gerson. Mike at the moment is a research analyst at the Center for Naval Analyses. Mike gets quite a lot of hands-on experience of deterrence policy because quite a lot of his time for CNA is spent in the Pentagon giving advice to the U.S. Navy on deterrence policy. He's been involved in a number of studies, including the Navy's new maritime strategy, a cooperative strategy for 21st century sea power. Mike's published widely in the area of nuclear weapons and deterrence, and he was an undergraduate at the University of Texas, and a graduate student at the University of Chicago.

To my left is Dr. Jeffrey Lewis, who will be familiar I think to many of you. Jeffrey has become one of the most distinctive voices in nuclear policy over the last few years. Contrary to popular belief, he's not a physicist, though the fact that many people think he is I think is a testament to the quality of the technical analysis that he puts up on his blog ArmsControlWonk. In addition to the blog, he's also the author of a number of articles and one book on China's nuclear policy called "Minimum Means of Retaliation." He's was formally the executive director of the Managing the Atom Project at Harvard University, and has a Ph.D. from down the road at the University of Maryland.

While unquestionably not his best achievement, I think the achievement that Jeffrey is probably secretly proudest of is becoming a Global Services member with United, which for those of you who do a lot of flying, is the level above 1K. He got that far largely through spending a lot of time over the past two years flying around the world talking to U.S. allies about extended deterrence, which is his particular qualification for speaking on that subject today.

So that's quite enough from me. And so to open up by discussing the issue of no-first use, it's my pleasure to introduce Mike Gerson.

MICHAEL S. GERSON: Thanks, James. I want to thank the Carnegie Endowment and the nonproliferation program for the invitation, and a personal thanks to James who is not only a good friend but a tremendous colleague, and has been a tremendous source of advice and encouragement and support throughout the time he's been here, and particularly with this project. So thank you, James. I should also clarify that Jeffrey is not a physicist. I'm also not President Bush's former speech writer. We have no relation as far as I'm concerned, politically or otherwise.

What I want to do today is examine whether or not states should retain the option to use nuclear weapons first. It's common knowledge in this community, in the nuclear weapons community, in the nonproliferation community that the United States has sort of always had the option to be the first to initiate the use of nuclear weapons in conflict, although I would suspect that most Americans who don't follow these issues would probably be surprised by the fact that the United States still retains the option to use nuclear weapons first. In fact, we could argue that the nuclear age began with the first use of nuclear weapons by the United States, and we've essentially retained that option ever since.

What's interesting about this is that despite all of the changes in the international security environment, and despite all of the calls for revising nuclear policy, revising our nuclear force posture, this fundamental continuity, the threat to use nuclear weapons first still remains and I think needs to be reexamined in light of today's challenges.

To some extent, President Obama kick-started this effort by, in his Prague speech on April 5th, announcing that we would seek to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security strategy. This has raised a bit of an issue because the question is sort of what does "reduced role" mean. It's not quite clear what the role of nuclear weapons is or what it should be or what "reduce the role" means.

From my perspective, if we can all agree that nuclear weapons are for deterrence, the fundamental question is what are we going to deter, and therefore from that perspective, when I think about reducing the role, I think of narrowing the number of things that the United States might deter with nuclear weapons, narrowing the number of things we say nuclear weapons are for.

So the focus of my talk today is to lay out the case for the United States to adopt the policy of the no-first-use of nuclear weapons. Such a policy would say something to the effect of *the sole purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons is to deter and, if necessary, respond to the use of nuclear weapons on the United States, its allies, its territories, and/or its forces abroad*. Such a policy would of course restrict U.S. nuclear weapons to deterring only the use of nuclear weapons. We would not use nuclear weapons to deter the threat of the – implicit or explicit threat of nuclear weapons to deter chemical and biological

attacks or conventional attacks. Nuclear weapons would solely be used to deter other nuclear attacks.

Just by way of a brief background, no-first-use has been a constant feature of the nuclear age. Proposals for the United States to adopt a policy of this sort have been around for quite a while. In the Cold War, probably the most important example of this was an article in the spring 1982 issue of *Foreign Affairs* entitled, “Nuclear Weapons and the Atlantic Alliance.” In some ways, before the current four horsemen on nuclear abolition, there was what was called at the time the “gang of four,” which was McGeorge Bundy, George Kennan, Robert McNamara and Gerard Smith who, in this article of the spring ’82 issue of *Foreign Affairs* advocated that NATO should adopt a policy of the no-first-use of nuclear weapons.

The focus of their argument, just very briefly, was that NATO had always relied on the threat of nuclear first use to deter a large-scale conventional attack. And their argument was nobody had put forth a reliable or effective way to control nuclear war once the threshold had been crossed. And if no one could reliably control – reliably or effectively control a nuclear war once that threshold had been crossed, there must be serious doubts about a policy that relied upon such a threat.

The counterargument of this of course was that taking away the option to escalate to nuclear use would make conventional war more likely by giving the Soviets this potential advantage to capitalize on their numerical superiority. That was the sort of Cold War argument.

The end of the Cold War brought forth a new set of arguments. Those in favor of no-first-use argued that the demise of the Warsaw Pact conventional threat in Europe coupled with significant advancements in U.S. conventional capabilities, most notably precision-guided munitions allowed for the United States to essentially reserve nuclear weapons only for deterring nuclear attacks.

This kind of argument in proposals for no-first-use – there was a massive flurry of articles in the early to mid-’90s. The Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons advocated “no first use.” The National Academy of Sciences report on the future of U.S. nuclear weapons policy advocated “no first use.” Again, along these lines that the major conventional threat had disappeared, therefore we didn’t need to rely on the threat of nuclear weapons to deter – to help to bolster deterrence of a conventional attack. Moreover, the conventional capability – U.S. conventional superiority demonstrated so well in the first Gulf War made it such that conventional capabilities were absolutely sufficient for deterrence. Even Paul Nitze, one of the architects of NSC-68 in 1994 asked “is it time to junk our nukes?” His argument was smart conventional weapons should be the principal U.S. deterrent.

They’re safer, they cause less collateral damage, they provide more flexibility, there’s less risk of escalation, and perhaps most importantly, they’re highly credible. So people who had once concocted rather elaborate scenarios for nuclear war-fighting came around to this view, that smart conventional weapons would be the principal deterrent, whereas those in favor of no-first-use advocated one set of use. There was another set of counterarguments. Whereas in the Cold War the counterargument to no-first-use was that it would make conventional war more likely, those conceded that in some ways conventional war was not the right issue. However, we still needed the

threat to use nuclear weapons first to deter chemical and especially biological attacks. This was the principal argument against no-first-use and continues to be one of the principal arguments.

This policy of retaining the option to use first – to retain the option to use nuclear weapons was necessary for policy of calculated ambiguity. In '98, Defense Secretary Cohen said we think that the ambiguity involved in the issue of nuclear weapons contributes to our own security, keeping any potential adversary who might use either chemical or biological unsure of what our response would be. We think that is a sound doctrine. In essence, calculated ambiguity is seen by its proponents as kind of being the best of both world. The United States gets the deterrent benefits of holding out the option to respond with nuclear weapons while at the same time committing itself to nothing if deterrence fails.

Another argument for retaining the option to use nuclear weapons first, in addition to the deter chemical and biological, which is really the most fundamental, is that simply leaving open this option, keeping adversaries unsure of what our response might be creates an incalculable risk.

And so today, the fundamental debate on the issue of declaratory policy is really one between calculated ambiguity on the one hand, essentially maintaining what we have, or switching to something more specific like “no first use.” And so the debate is between those who want to keep all options open and those who want to restrict our options.

As I note – as I said before, the principal argument since the end of the Cold War for no-first-use has been that nuclear – that the threat of nuclear weapons is essentially unnecessary to deter anything but nuclear weapons. The argument is that conventional superiority provides sufficient punishment and denial capabilities to deter conventional attack as well as chemical and biological attacks.

I'll agree that it's unnecessary, and I'll be happy, if you want, in Q&A to discuss a little bit more about why I think it's unnecessary. But what I want to argue is that retaining the option to use nuclear weapons first is not only unnecessary but also potentially dangerous. In arguing for “no first use,” proponents of the policy have not paid enough attention in their arguments to the risks of calculated ambiguity, and that's sort of what I want to focus on today.

So thus my argument stands in contrast to those who believe that the more options the better, and that ambiguity aids deterrence by creating uncertainty and incalculable risks. My argument comes from a position that a fundamental tenet of deterrence is that limiting your options can in fact enhance deterrence and make you safer.

This notion of deliberately tying one's hands or limiting one's options is of course attributed to the work of Tom Schelling who argued that limiting one's own options could be a commitment tactic to enhance the credibility of one's threats. Examples in this context are burning a bridge – having your army cross and then burning a bridge so that one could not retreat, or more importantly, making your commitments public. Making statements public in fact becomes a commitment tactic by increasing the cost of going back. The example is, if you're going to go on a diet, one of the best ways to make sure you actually keep on that diet is to tell everybody you know that you're going on the diet.

So that's the sort of position that I'm come from, is that while the traditional view has been that as many options as possible is the best way to go, and in some ways the military thinks that way in part because their – their job is to put military options in the toolbox of national power, what I want to argue is that limiting our options, limiting U.S. options to use nuclear weapons first by declaring a no-first-use policy will in fact make us safer.

My argument is essentially this: Nuclear first use is one of two things. It's either not credible, in which case it adds nothing to U.S. security, but rather is politically complicating in the nonproliferation context. Or, if it is credible, it's potentially dangerous by fostering crisis instability. So that's – I'm going to talk a few more minutes about that.

On the one hand, I think you can make a case that U.S. threats, whether they're implicit or explicit – and really what we're talking about here is the ambiguous threat – are simply not credible. It's not credible for a variety of reasons. I mean, one is the nuclear taboo, this moral and political aversion to using nuclear weapons that has emerged in the long absence of nuclear use and conflict. In the nuclear arena, the United States is largely seen as cool-headed, risk-averse and sensitive to casualties and collateral damage. The United States does not seem to be able to benefit from the sort of rationality of irrationality type argument. The prospect that the United States would unilaterally shatter the almost seven-decade record of non-use in conflict I think contributes to the belief that the United States would in fact not use nuclear weapons.

Another argument is I think that one could make the case that an unintended consequence of the United States first use – the United States efforts to lead to the global non-proliferation regime is that it reduces the credibility of the United States to use nuclear weapons first. If the United States spends all of this time working on the efforts to prevent others from getting nuclear weapons, it seems – it makes it less credible that the United States would risk shattering that and throwing it all away by using nuclear weapons first.

And finally, in the Gulf War, despite the threats of calculated ambiguity and the ambiguous threat of nuclear weapons, which some believe deterred Saddam, Bush, Scowcroft, Powell, and Baker, all said after the conflict that they had actually never intended on using nuclear weapons. And such public admission I think reduces the credibility of those threats.

Now, on the other side, I think that retaining the option to use nuclear weapons first is dangerous. Retaining the option, particularly against adversaries with small nuclear capabilities, generates crisis instability and preemption incentives, especially against adversaries with inferior capabilities. Crisis stability is I think a useful lens through which to look at issues today because if nuclear weapons are used in my view, it's not going to be a bolt from the blue; it's going to be in the context of a severe political and military crises, and therefore, crisis stability becomes an appropriate lens through which to view nuclear dynamics.

Essentially crisis stability refers to incentives to preempt and strike first in a crisis. A crisis is said to be stable if neither side has an incentive to strike first, and both know that. And a crisis is said to be unstable if one or both sides has a real or perceived incentive to preempt. So in other words, the essence of crisis instability is the fear of the other's first strike and how that may motivate you to strike first in order to prevent the advantages that one might seek.

This has been traditionally an argument associated with the 1960s, and with McNamara and left-leaning academics, but actually, this view actually took hold beforehand and was prominent among some members of the military. For example, Gen. Leslie Groves who was the leader of the – military leader of the Manhattan Project said in 1957 if Russia knows we won't attack first, the Kremlin will be very much less apt to attack us. Our reluctance to strike first is a military disadvantage to us, but it is also paradoxically, a factor in preventing world conflict today.

So from the perspective of crisis instability, retaining the option to use nuclear weapons first—even if ambiguous, essentially the all-options-on-the-table approach—is essentially dangerous because it generates fear of a U.S. disarming first strike in an intense crisis and thereby increases the chances that nuclear weapons are used accidentally, inadvertently, or deliberately.

There are essentially three pathways – I think there's probably more, but I would argue that there are essentially three pathways in which you may get nuclear use through crisis instability; in other words, adversaries' fear of a U.S. disarming first strike. First, the fear of a U.S. first strike could prompt an opponent to adopt a launch-on-warning posture, disperse its forces rapidly and haphazardly, raise alert levels, and perhaps even pre-delegate launch authority to ensure launch even if commanding control apparatus is severed. This rapid dispersion in the heat of an intense crisis increases the chances that – of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. And so the fear of a U.S. first strike in an intense crisis generates all of these incentives to disperse forces to make them more survivable, to ensure some sort of retaliation, and that increases the chances that they in fact may be used accidentally or in an unauthorized way.

A second sort of pathway is the fear of a U.S. first strike prompts a state that is concerned about the survivability of its forces to disperse those forces, to raise alert levels, to erect its TELs if it has mobile missile launchers, and that leads to a misinterpretation. Whereas they perceive their efforts as signaling resolve to the United States and reducing vulnerability of their forces, the United States misinterprets such actions as the sign of an impending launch and we preempt. So that's a situation in which we'd lock ourselves into preemption through miscalculation.

I think a third pathway is that the fear of a U.S. first strike creates a use-it-or-lose-it dynamic. This is a situation in which nuclear weapons are used deliberately, and the use-it-or-lose-it dynamic is also characterized I think as a now-or-never possibility. It's, we've got nuclear weapons now, but we may not be able to use them later. There are essentially two mechanisms that may be cause use-it-or-lose-it dynamics.

The first is a first strike out of desperation. In this situation, the adversary is compelled to strike to avert what it perceives as an even greater disaster if it doesn't, which is the elimination of its nuclear weapons and the subsequent convention or perhaps even regime change. In this case, the adversary's use of nuclear weapons is less to achieve something, but rather than to mitigate disaster, however slightly. As one author put it, vulnerability could prove a temptation or a goad to strike quickly, not so much out of any belief that it would do much good, but because it appeared that waiting could only be worse." Similarly, Schelling argued the decision to attack might be made reluctantly, motivated not by the perspective gains of victory, but by the disadvantages of not seizing the initiative.

That's one mechanism. A second mechanism is whereby the adversary believes that its nuclear capability provides sort of a trump card against a U.S. attack or invasion. If an adversary

believes that nuclear weapons provide a mechanism of de-escalation, whereby the use of nuclear weapons is used to coerce the United States into a negotiated settlement, it may believe that it basically has to do this earlier than it wanted because if it waits, it may lose its nuclear capability, and therefore loses this option to bring out a negotiated settlement. This is what I call somewhat paradoxically escalatory de-escalation, the deliberate use of nuclear weapons, crossing the threshold, but for the purposes of ultimately creating a settlement.

I know this sounds a little crazy, but this is actually almost exactly what NATO – a large component of NATO strategy in the Cold War flexible response had this option. The deliberate use of nuclear weapons had military value, but most importantly, NATO's deliberate escalation in the conventional context was designed to signal resolve and impact the Soviet's will to continue the conflict. Therefore, it was escalation for the purposes, ultimately, of trying to de-escalate the conflict.

So I think those are sort of three pathways. Very briefly, I want to talk about two common arguments against “no first use.” The first is the impact on allies, and the second one is, would anyone believe it? I think these are also two common critiques of that. Very briefly, the concern is on the allies that no-first-use will weaken extended deterrence. It may create incentives for them to develop their own nuclear capabilities.

The proposal – the reason I think that's problematic is the proposal in which I see for no-first-use, the allies are still covered by the U.S. nuclear umbrella. And if the no-first-use would still involve the threat to use nuclear weapons to deter nuclear attacks, we simply wouldn't be using them to deter conventional or biological attacks. And I can go into this. I mean, I think that conventional capabilities are adequate and far more credible in both of those circumstances. So it's not like we're totally pulling away nuclear weapons. We're still using nuclear weapons to deter nuclear attacks.

I would argue that also allies really shouldn't want the U.S. to be so cavalier with nuclear weapons since it's likely that it will be their territory against which the nuclear weapons are fought. The old NATO joke was that on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, the allies worried that we wouldn't use nuclear weapons, and on Tuesday, Thursday, they worried that we would. So I think that, you know, there's a potential – I think that that argument is relatively flawed.

I would say that the United States should not adopt no-first-use unilaterally. And what I mean by that is it shouldn't do so without significant consultation with our allies. I think it would need significant consultation over time to walk them through this logic, to explain why retaining the option, however ambiguous, is potentially dangerous. It may take time, but there is some precedent to this, and the precedent is in the Cold War, the change from massive – what was called massive retaliation—to flexible response.

In the 1950s, NATO strategy was predicated on the belief that the conventional defense was not possible, and therefore nuclear weapons had to be used from the outset. This was codified in MC-48, in 1954, and another NATO document, MC-142 in 1957. But by 1967, largely from the U.S. – because the U.S. walked them through this—they switched policies. They went from a position in which they believed that a conventional defense was absolutely impossible to one in which a conventional defense was the first line of defense, and nuclear weapons would only be used if a conventional defense couldn't hold.

So I would argue that if – in what was still roughly the height of the Cold War in the 1960s when the Soviets were building up massively, the U.S. was building up massively, we were working on MIRVs, if the United States could convince our allies to change a fundamental belief they held throughout the 1950s, I think we could do – I think no-first-use is possible.

Finally, would anyone believe it? Simply declaratory policy, the U.S. might not mean it, it could change it whenever is necessary. This is what people argue about China's no-first-use policy, although I think people who actually work on China's – or on China's issues and read the documents find that there's actually some validity to those claims that they are serious about their no-first-use.

Declaratory policy does matter. It often forms the basis of military guidance and planning, and I think it's often cited – I mean, the Prague speech and things like this get cited in military documents and planning. It shapes the public discourse, and it's a signal of public intentions. It's a signal to our adversaries. I mean, if the U.S. pours over every word of the white papers – the defense white papers from China and from Russia, it's certainly likely that others will do the same. And so I think it does matter.

Finally, I think, and most importantly, a public unequivocal declaration by the president of the United States, that the United States has now adopted a policy of the no-first-use of nuclear weapons creates audience costs, which are the domestic and international political consequences of violating our commitments. And so essentially, audience costs is a commitment tactic. We engage our reputation for keeping our word by making it clear in public, and that increases the cost of violating our commitments, because you can imagine that if we – if we say we have a no-first-use policy, and then we violate it, that may call into question the credibility of all other kinds of security, economic, and other political commitments. I mean, if the United States were willing to violate something as important as a commitment on nuclear weapons, they might be willing to change its mind on anything else.

So the argument is that essentially, yes, ultimately it cannot 100 percent prevent an American president from using nuclear weapons, but it significantly increases the costs to them of doing so. But these policies need to be reiterated both in public and private. So it's something that you have to do over and over again. And I think you certainly have to tie these words to actions in terms of the way in which we structure our posture and our alert posture. But nevertheless, I think that there are good reasons to believe that it can be made believable. And I'll stop there.

MR. ACTON: Thank you, Mike.

And now on the subject of the vexed issue of extended deterrence, Jeffrey.

JEFFREY G. LEWIS: Yeah, I can't help myself. Mike, I thought you were going to tell the other joke, which was that the United States was committed to defending NATO to the last German.

MR. GERSON: (Chuckles.) That's also a good one.

MR. LEWIS: I think Mike's talk very clearly highlighted why extended deterrence is such a popular subject of discussion these days, which is to say that extended deterrence always seems to

come to the fore when the United States begins talking about a posture that approaches what might be called minimum deterrence. In fact, in the very first use of the term “minimum deterrence” that I can find in an official document, it’s a 1961 memo by Robert McNamara, that looked at three different deterrence postures for the United States, and minimum deterrence is dismissed on two grounds, one of which is we won’t be able to credibly extend a commitment to protect allies.

And I think that became the canonical argument against minimum deterrence, and it endured through the Cold War, to probably one of my favorite episodes, which is when – in 1976, I suppose, or very late 1975, President-elect Carter was getting a briefing from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and he asked, I think quite sensibly, for a study of what one could do with a 200- to 250-sized SLBM—submarine-launched ballistic missile—force. And the Joint Chiefs apparently immediately leaked this to Robert Novak, the late Robert Novak, and Rowland Evans who modestly noted that Carter’s idea would presage the end of democratic Western Europe. (Laughter.)

But, you know, it’s not so strange because Carter’s plan is not – Carter’s idea is not very far away from where we are headed now, which is to say, if you look at our operationally deployed strategic missile submarines, we’ve got about 290 launch tubes. And if you take 250 times a loading of four [warheads per missile], that’s a thousand warheads. And I think those are – although I don’t think the posture review is going to propose a minimum deterrence force, we are I think for the first time really in that neighborhood, and as a result, there’s a significant amount of attention being dedicated to this issue of extended deterrence, I think so much that – we can’t say very much about it – but I think a lot of you know that there have been a series of roundtables that the Pentagon has put on there. There are going to in total be four. And one of those for NGO experts is dedicated to the subject of extended deterrence. And it would be my judgment that extended deterrence may in fact be the central argument in this posture review.

Now, a cynic would say extended deterrence is a wonderful argument to continue business as usual. I think that’s sort of amusing. It’s probably not quite fair. But there is – there is something to that argument, and at this point, it’s obligatory to say that when we talk about extended deterrence, each ally is different, just as every child is special, and within each ally, there are a range of opinions. But that’s I think precisely why extended deterrence is such an appealing argument. Just like you can always find a lawyer who will agree with you, you can always find an ally or an aspect of an ally’s government who will favor your particular policy.

My favorite example of this is after Gerhard Schroder and some of his SPD – when the Greens were the SPD’s partners – made some comments about getting nuclear weapons out of Germany. And I mentioned that to a former senior U.S. official. And he said, ah, but you aren’t talking to the real German government. And this I think gives the argument a kind of stickiness. In fact, this past week, I was in Winnipeg, and a Canadian academic quite seriously argued that Canada could not be confident of the United States extended deterrent to Canada, and that Canada ought to consider a range of independent defense options, and he seemed to be toying with nuclear weapons. And I thought, look, if I can find a Canadian, right, who will tell me that the extended deterrent umbrella is not credible, this is not going to be hard in other countries.

Obviously the other reason I think the argument has such appeal is, as James pointed out, it’s an excellent opportunity to become a Global Services Member. I mean, you do get to go to wonderful places. And, well, I will just say, you know that movie, “Kill Bill,” that restaurant where there’s such a fight, it’s just a wonderful restaurant.

But, you know, I mean, I joke about these things to give you a sense of why the argument sort of sticks because there – you can always find people who are going to agree with you, and it's a fascinating subject. But one of the things I noticed is when we talk about extended deterrence, we don't practice very good social science, and we aren't very conscious of the observer effect, which is to say, you go and you talk to people from a foreign government, and you basically ask them for a wish list, and not surprisingly, they will give you a wish list. They will tell you all of the things that they would like to see the United States do. But that doesn't necessarily tell you what are really crucial things. And as a wayward philosophy major, I take seriously this question of method.

So what I really want to focus on today are two efforts to reframe the way we look at the question of extended deterrence, first, on the subject of Japan, and then second on the subject of NATO. It's worth noting on the subject of Japan, I think the Strategic Posture Commission report, which advocated retaining a cruise missile, which can be deployed on certain U.S. attack submarines, but which is currently in storage – the Strategic Posture Commission got a – got a wish list from the Japanese. And I think if anybody goes and talks to the Japanese, you will get a very similar wish list. And it will start with TLAM-N, this archaic nuclear weapon that the Navy doesn't want anymore, and it will end up with precision low-yield nuclear warheads. And that's really quite serious.

And what I noticed the Strategic Posture Commission did was, it made a choice. It emphasized the TLAM-N as a capability to keep, but it didn't suggest, for example, developing precision low-yield nuclear warheads. And to me, that raises a fascinating methodological question, which is how do we pick among the wish list that allies give us of the capabilities that we genuinely need to retain?

And so I think the place to start answering that question is by being honest about the actual costs. And I think that in Washington, we often talk about the costs being that Japan builds nuclear weapons, but I think that is not a realistic outcome. I think there is no main stream constituency in Japan today for building nuclear weapons. The cost to our posture decision is anxiety on the part of some Japanese officials. You know, if we were to retire TLAM-N, some Japanese would feel anxious about that. Now, it's worth noting others would probably applaud the decision, particularly many of those in the new government. But I do think that there is this anxiety. And it's worth talking about why Japanese policymakers might be anxious and might fixate on certain capabilities.

I would suggest – and this is the – when we really drove down our meetings in Tokyo, Japanese policymakers fundamentally don't feel like they have any alternative to the U.S. security alliance. They don't have the capacity to be sort of unarmed and neutral, and they certainly don't have the capacity to have an independent nuclear deterrent and a wildly capable military. Even if they have economic wherewithal, they don't have the political wherewithal.

So at base, they have no control over their net level of security because they simply have to accept whatever the United States provides. Now, that's – imagine being an American policymaker and being put in such a position. That would be terrifying. I think of it as kind of like a fear of flying. You become irrationally anxious when you have no control. Another colleague of mine compared it to riding on the back of the motorcycle. You can see all of the bumps and the twists and the turns, but you can't do anything about it; you're just along for the ride.

And I think as a result of fundamentally not having control over one's own level of security, Japanese policymakers tend to fixate on individual capabilities as proxies, or measures, of the U.S. commitment to them. And in the 1990s, it was keeping 100,000 troops in East Asia, and 100,000 because it's a nice round number, not because those troops have any particular mission. Today, I think it's the nuclear armed Tomahawk Land Attack missiles, and tomorrow it's going to be something different.

Now, what we have to do is decide which steps are in our own interests and appropriately measure the level of Japanese anxiety that produces. And it's worth noting that, you know, there are times when we decide something is in our interests, even if it causes anxiousness in Japan. And I think the Bush administration's negotiation of a six-party agreement with North Korea, which, Japanese officials openly in the press would refer to it as betrayal, is a very good example of where we make a strategic choice about the overall good even if it then requires going back and doing a little bit of hand-holding.

This is not to say – and I want to be really clear about this – that I'm saying we should be cavalier about Japanese security concerns. I actually think we need to be much more serious about Japanese security concerns than we have ever been in the past. But to my mind, being serious isn't retaining archaic nuclear weapons that our navy doesn't think it can use. Being serious means putting into place the kind of robust political relationship with consultations and dialogue that would be appropriate to our most important bilateral relationship in Asia.

I will have a couple of specific policy recommendations at the end, although I think it's worth noting that I think the Obama administration, and especially Kurt Campbell, are trying very hard to do that right now.

I think the situation in NATO is actually rather similar. You know, the United States currently deploys a few hundred nuclear weapons at airbases in five countries in NATO. And one of the things I find interesting is NATO countries don't tend to talk about the existence of those weapons or the role that those weapons play. And in our project, we were actually – we intended to be very sensitive to that, and so we had a proposal for moving the United States to a thousand deployed warheads, and we were silent on the issue of whether any of those would be warheads deployed in Europe. But every European policymaker we talked to assumed that at 1,000 warheads, the weapons were coming home. And they were prepared to talk about offsets and other things that the United States should do, which I found very interesting.

And if I think there's – the dominant – the dominant character I would say of the existence of those weapons in Europe is that we don't talk about them. I think NATO countries have been incredibly reluctant to make the public case about why they need U.S. nuclear weapons on their soil. And as a result, because there is no public case, I think you see a corresponding lack of funding for security at the sites at which the European allies provide security, and you see a corresponding lack of investment in dual-capable aircraft. And NATO's aircraft are getting quite old, and we're coming up to a series of decision points.

Because there is this sense of, you know, the less said the better, these decisions are all being deferred. And I don't think that there's much appetite in NATO take on this thorny issue of whether they should stay or whether they should go. And as one senior NATO official told me, if it ain't broke, why fix it?

But I want to suggest from an American perspective that it actually may be broken; it may be broken in an important way that we – that may compel us to action, which is to say, because there is no support, I worry very much about a singularity, an event. It could be a security event. Our friends from Peace Action, Belgium, could get in the wire with a cell phone and take a picture of a volt. It could be a very ugly public debate about certifying a particular new aircraft for nuclear weapons. It could be a debate about deploying refurbished B-61s on airbases.

I do worry that something could happen that will deny NATO its preferred option of not talking about this, and then force the participants into a very ugly public debate in which the result would be the rapid, disorganized, uncoordinated withdrawal of the weapons amidst recriminations. And to me that would be much worse than beginning the dialogue about what the optimal posture is and whether that includes weapons.

So let me just close with two general policy recommendations and a thought about why these two things are linked. On the issue of Japan, I confess, I don't care about the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile, Nuclear. You know, if the Navy wants to retire it, let them retire it. But the goal is to focus on expanded consultation with Japan with the ultimate goal of having consultations with the Japanese that are analogous to those that we do with our NATO partners in the NATO Nuclear Planning Group and its subsidiary high-level group.

And I think the purpose of those consultations is to help communicate to the Japanese a realistic view of the role that weapons play in United States and Japanese security so that it is – so that the Japanese view is consistent with I think the reduced role – not just that we want nuclear weapons to play, but the reduced role that they do as a matter of fact play.

And within NATO, I think I think within the context of the ongoing NATO strategic review, I think we have examine the role of nuclear weapons within NATO security with a high – a near-term priority agenda item of immediately consolidating the existing weapons to two sites, preferably U.S. airbases where the United States provides security.

The number of weapons could stay the same, but I think we do want to, as a near-term measure, consolidate in order to address security concerns, and avoid this kind of singularity, while at the same time using that consolidation as a way to have a very frank dialogue about how we sustain consultation and burden-sharing in the NATO context at much reduced levels of nuclear weapons because I do think if the United States ends up around a thousand warheads, it's very unlikely that we're going to do something like deploy 20 percent of them in an archaic gravity bomb system in Europe. And so instead of waiting for events to push us in, I would suggest that we be proactive. This doesn't have to be like the Baltimore Colts leaving town, for those of you who are football fans.

What these two recommendations share in common I think is a singular focus on shifting the brunt of alliance management from hardware to software, and by software, I mean the sort of day-to-day work of alliance diplomacy. And what we should always be conscious of is never falling into the trap of allowing countries to fixate on any particular piece of hardware, because our weapons capabilities are always going to evolve and change. Our weapons are constantly shifting, but the things that will endure are our shared interests and our shared values.

MR. ACTON: Thank you, Jeffrey. Well, I'd like to thank both speakers, both for very, very rich presentations, but also for sticking really to the timelines that I gave them in advance. And there were serious deterrent threats, believe me, to keep them sticking to those timelines. The good news of course is that leaves us a lot of time for questions. So who wants to kick us off that? There will be a microphone circulating. I would ask everybody just to introduce themselves before asking a question. Tell us your name and where you are from.

Yeah, at the front here, Tom. And is there a mike? Thanks, Kim.

Q: Tom Collina, Arms Control Association. Thank you both, all three of you, for the presentations. Very interesting. Excuse me.

My question goes to the ongoing Nuclear Posture Review, and where you both think the issues you talked about are at play in that process, to the extent that you know. And where would you predict where that will come out when the review is announced at the beginning of next year? Thanks.

MR. ACTON: Jeffrey, do you want to start on that one?

MR. LEWIS: Well, I won't steal Mike's ability to comment on declaratory posture, though he may not want to. So I will – I'll focus on extended deterrence. I mean, I really do think that at the end of the day, as the range of plausible military missions for nuclear weapons continues to recede, in the place of those as a justification are political justifications. And you saw it in the Bush administration with assure and dissuade, with assure being very directly aimed at allies, and I think dissuade actually being indirectly aimed at assuring allies.

And so, you know, I think extended deterrence was a huge part of the last posture review. I think it may be the biggest part of this posture review. And that constrains how transformational one can be in terms of – or at least is thought to constrain how transformation one can be in terms of number, declaratory posture, and in type of warhead.

So I would not be, for example, surprised to see the Department of Defense keeping over the objections of the Navy the TLAM-N, which is very incongruous with the Prague speech, but it's a specific capability that some people within an important ally want to keep.

MR. ACTON: Before I ask Mike whether we has anything to say, I have to apologize because I was supposed to say at the beginning that Mike's comments here purely reflect his own personal opinion and are not in any way associated with any of the organizations that he does work for. I apologize for not saying that in advance.

MR. GERSON: I was going to say it just now. Jeffrey, do you want to make any comments on declaratory policy?

MR. LEWIS: No. It's a difficult question. Declaratory policy is – has always been a very contentious issue in large part because it's always – it's about deterrence and it's a battle of logics. We can't prove that one – I can't plot it on a graph and say clearly it's going in this direction. We can look at things like weapons systems and say, well, these are aging here; this is doing that, and we can sort of get our hands around it analytically, but ultimately questions about declaratory policy are

ultimately questions about deterrence and questions that turn on sort of battles of whose deductive logic is more persuasive.

So the answer is I really don't know. I think that the Prague speech set the bar quite high and raised expectations perhaps in the international community as well as I think the nonproliferation and nuclear community, our community, that there were going to be some pretty fundamental changes in declaratory policy – could be one obvious place where that could happen. But there are also strong arguments – again, as Jeffrey pointed out, if extended deterrence is going to be the key issue in this Nuclear Posture Review, it's also one of the key arguments against “no first use.” And so – I mean, ultimately the answer is I don't know where it's going to come out. I think I'll just leave it at that.

MR. ACTON: Thanks, Mike. Stephen, yeah.

Q: Stephen Young with the Union of Concerned Scientists. Question for Mike: On first use, and the statements by some that that position wouldn't be credible by the U.S. – it wouldn't be credible for the U.S. declared policy. But couldn't you make it credible by changing also your deployment policies, change how you field your submarines, change how you deploy your ICBMs, take the requirement for being on-alert, away, so not required to be on alert any longer. Basically, go towards a Chinese posture, which in my view makes that policy relatively credible. Wouldn't that help answer that question?

MR. GERSON: Absolutely, absolutely. I mean, I think that the words have to be followed by deeds, but I think you need both. I don't think you can do just one without the other. So I think declaratory policy is a good starting place, but ultimately yes, actions have to follow those words and deployment patterns and alert status is one way to go about that. So absolutely, I think they're absolutely hand in hand.

MR. ACTON: Yes. Sorry, I don't know your name.

Q: Hi. I'm David Stern from the Stimson Center.

I guess this question is mostly for Jeffrey. There were rumblings in Europe and NATO following the United States' decision to switch from the planned site three ground-based interceptor – or missile defense to SM-3s. And that decision, a lot of people criticized it, thought it had – it reflected a poor U.S. security commitment to our allies. How do you think that would impact our potential policy options in regards to extended deterrence with our allies in trying to – and still trying to balance that with guaranteed nuclear security umbrella, and making sure that those alliances stay intact?

MR. LEWIS: I mean, I suppose my first answer to that is that it was something about the debate that I fundamentally did not understand. I mean, it seemed crazy to me. It's—you're deploying a more capable system, faster, that covers, you know, more of the allies. I would have thought that this would be a big win. But it does get at this thing – and we noticed this in our own consultations – which is to say that allies don't always make, particularly people at the foreign ministry level who are very concerned about how things feel and how they look—they don't sit down and do technical calculations about the precise nature of the architectures.

And so you get, I think in many cases, an unhealthy fixation on specific capabilities that bear little or no relationship to the alliance, you know, the credibility of the alliance threats, or even the capability of the alliance.

And I will digress with one example of that. I was recently in South Korea, and I kept talking about reducing the number of nuclear weapons. And one reason, by the way, to do that, is you might free up, say, B-52s, some of which are currently training for nuclear missions, to go off and actually be useful, like, you know, dropping bombs on Taliban. And the South Koreans kept saying, you know, why do you want to reduce U.S. nuclear capabilities. And it's like, no, I set the number. The capabilities may say flat. In fact, in some cases, the overall combat capability may go up. But there is this tendency to substitute fixations on specific things with – you know, for broader judgments about alliance credibility.

And I think that it is incumbent on any administration of any political stripe to avoid ever falling into that trap, because whether you like the particular thing they are fixated on at this particular moment, you will end up tying your hands – I think Gen. Fogleman once said tying your hands as you go down the road, to mix the metaphor, which I love. You'll end up tying your hands as you go down the road, and you will regret it.

MR. ACTON: Thank you. Yes, at the very back.

Q: Walt Slocombe. I'm a lawyer. I used to work in the Defense Department.

MR. LEWIS (?): That's like saying Michael Jordan used to play some ball. (Laughter.)

Q: I wanted to ask about the force structure implications of the no-first-use policy, because it seems to me it is not self-evident that it reduces the force structure requirement. For example, in contrast to what Dr. Young said, it seems to me it makes survivability and alert rates much more important because by hypothesis you have to be able to absorb a first strike. What does it also mean for command and control survivability, which is the biggest vulnerability in any system that begins on a post-strike decision?

And what does it mean for conventional forces? By hypothesis, you were going to be relying on conventional forces for things that at least in principle you might do with nuclear weapons – I don't think you can do with nuclear weapons, but you can pretend you can. And then finally, what is your thought as to what it means for targeting policy because it's always going to be one of the difficulties about relying on nuclear weapons to respond to chemical and biological weapons – is what the appropriate targets are, but it's also true that one of the reasons for the first launch under attack or preemption is a belief that you have to have a very high level of damage expectancy in order to achieve deterrence at least against first class opposition.

MR. ACTON: Simple, straightforward question to engage with there, Mike. (Laughter.)

MR. GERSON: I'll try a couple of those. I don't think that the force structure requirements necessarily have to change. There needs to be some mechanism by which one equates words to actions. I would say on the issue of – that it may in fact increase the necessity for – to keep forces on alert, that only really matters for Russia. And a lot of the logic – a lot of the argument that I'm pointing out – I mean, Russia is certainly one player here, but that also – I mean, the extent to which

the United States has a first-strike capability against Russia is questionable. And so those dynamics are not quite as robust or not quite as acute because the concern that I'm laying out is when an adversary fears of a U.S. disarming first strike, which is really countries that have very minimal nuclear forces.

So I take your point on not necessarily changed force structure requirements, but in the case of U.S. survivability, U.S. alert rates, that really only matters for one country that may or not have the capability to launch a first strike of its own.

On the conventional – what does that do to conventional forces, I think that puts an added premium on the United States ensuring that it maintains conventional superiority no matter what. A posture that has no-first-use in it essentially guards against the military from ever thinking – I don't think they would ever think this, but from ever thinking that nuclear weapons provide a cheap alternative or some sort of a force multiplier in conventional contingencies, or for that matter chemical and biological contingencies.

So in that sense, a no-first-use posture necessitates a very strong conventional force. Now, I'll admit that it seems to me that one reason that adversaries are very concerned about the United States and very concerned and perhaps interested in developing their own nuclear capabilities is because of our conventional superiority. So there is a balance to be struck between maintaining conventional dominance and scaring others into developing nuclear weapons as a means to offset our conventional superiority.

On targeting policy, I – absolutely. What do we respond – if we're going to use nuclear weapons to respond to chem/bio what would we hit, and what would we hit that we couldn't hit with nuclear weapons? And might not nuclear weapons only complicate the battle space? I'm sorry, conventional, yes, thank you. I have a feeling you're going to be correcting me on many points of this at some point.

But, yeah, I mean, I think that's exactly right, that targeting is always an issue. I mean, I tend to take the view, just as a separate note, that second-strike counterforce is a very good way to go. If an adversary crosses the nuclear threshold and shows both the capability and the will to do so, a good policy may be to then go after everything that's left, but I do think that one of the big problems with chem/bio is, yeah, what would we hit, and what would we hit that we couldn't hit with conventional. And might not using nuclear weapons only complicate the battle space, create via fallout fire, panic in other cities as they fear that they may be next, and ultimately complicate prosecuting the war and winning the peace.

MR. ACTON: Thank you. Yes. Yup. Amy, yup.

Q: Yan Ho Kim (ph) with Voice of America.

I'd like to ask about –

MR. ACTON: Oh, no. It was Amy who was – Amy Wolf.

Q: Now I'm confused. Amy Wolf, Congressional Research Service, and I don't mean to pile on but I'm going to pile on Michael a little bit. You just confused me. When you were going through

your three examples of why maintaining a first use policy is dangerous, and you talked about a country dispersing its nuclear weapons, loading up its TELs, you know, having a risk of accidental or an authorized launch, who else besides Russia would be in that kind of position?

I mean, nobody else that we might be shooting at except Russia or maybe China – and China is already built to ride it out – would be in that position? So I assumed you were talking about Russia because that's what it sounded like to me. So if there's someone else who I'm missing that we might be inspiring to have their own preemptive first-use attack against us, I'm wondering who it is.

And second, you talked about withdrawing from a first-use posture because it's not credible to threaten nuclear use against chemical and biological weapons, but your dangers were against a nuclear-armed state. So is it – I agree, we shouldn't be willy-nilly threatening nuclear use against chemical and biological nations, but that was – there was a disconnect there that withdrawing for one reason, you're pulling back the role of nuclear weapons, but you're leaving it with nuclear, but then your risks are nuclear.

And then I have one final comment, not to be pedantic, but you claimed that if we made a no-first-use pledge, the politics of having made the pledge will be restricting to us because if we then used nuclear weapons, we'd look back because we violated the pledge. I'd like to argue that whether or not we make the pledge, we'd look bad because we used nuclear weapons, and the added looking bad, probably not much of a deterrent from crossing the threshold.

MR. GERSON: I was only – in the context of Russia, I was only talking about Russia. Mr. Slocombe's comment was Russia is targeting our command and control; essentially, Russia launching – if I understood him correctly, a splendid first-strike attempt on us. And so in that context, they were the only ones that can do that. But in the scenarios that I laid out, there may be cases in which an adversary sees advantage in using nuclear weapons against us. That's not an attempt at a disarming first strike. Any of the countries – I mean, with the exception of our allies, countries that have nuclear weapons. I mean, what's the –

Q: (Off mike.)

MR. GERSON: Well, certainly Russia and China are two. The extent to which – the extent to which others are developing mobile capabilities increases – I mean, we were talking down the line. But the extent to which there is a trend towards mobile and re-locatable forces –

Q: (Off mike.)

MR. GERSON: I'm sorry?

Q: (Off mike.)

MR. GERSON: I'm only talking about in the context of a U.S. – of a disarming first strike against the United States against Russia. But others may in fact see the need to maintain survivability for the use – to strike against the United States, but not in the context of a disarming first strike – in the context of deescalating a conflict, or in the context of seeing that they either have – it's either now or never and somehow this is better than averting an even worse situation.

I agree completely that we would look bad if we used nuclear weapons. I think the pledge is an added element there, but the United States has always retained this option. We always have this sort of all-on-the-table approach. Certainly using nuclear weapons would violate the taboo, would break a seven-plus decade – almost seven-decade record of nuclear non-use. But in the context of we're narrowing our commitments even further, adding to that pledge is just one more step in that process. But fundamentally I take your point completely.

MR. ACTON: Okay. Yes. Leonor Tomero.

Sorry, just hold on one second for the microphone.

Q: Leonor Tomero, Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation.

My question is for Jeffrey about the B-61s in Europe. What's the military value of B-61s? I guess, how do the allies who are in favor of keeping them, what do they think the military value is? And do you lose anything in terms of deterrence by eliminating them that you don't already get with our ballistic missiles? Thank you.

MR. LEWIS: Without describing who said this, I feel very confident in saying that at the highest levels in NATO, it is understood that the United States would never use a B61 off the wing of an airplane in any conceivable scenario that would involve NATO. And I'm – those same people will deny that in public, but I don't think there is any military utility to those weapons. It doesn't mean that there aren't scenarios in which nuclear weapons might be useful; I just don't think we would use those, and I don't think we would give them to the Dutch to use.

So – and to me, this is the crux of the problem, which is, you have nuclear weapons sitting in Turkey; the last time there was a Surety Inspection there was no aircraft-generation exercise, which leads me to conclude that there are some issues associated with whether there are aircraft, and so why can't you – I'll say it this way: Isn't it dangerous to have weapons sitting around that you can't use and that you don't want because you're not willing to make the effort to consult and explain the purpose of those weapons? And I've heard very senior policymakers and very senior military officials say that they feel they would be comfortable if the weapons came out of Turkey if you let them then – let the Turks participate in exercises where they could see the actual capabilities that we would use to defend them.

And if you did give them the option to participate in plausible defense missions with the goal of basically preserving consultation and burden sharing, I would say it's those two things you preserve, and the weapons are in some sense valuable because the Europeans have to pay for security for them, and so at some level they're committed to the mission, but I think, as I discussed earlier, they aren't really doing that. So I'd rather encourage them to pay for something that they think they can use and that bears some plausible relationship to the military role of the alliance.

MR. ACTON: Thank you. The gentleman just at the front here?

Q: Thank you very much. Bryan Bender with the Boston Globe. Maybe both of you can take a stab at this. Michael, you sort of touched on this in your opening remarks, about military options. Obviously, the Nuclear Posture Review will have a significant element which will look at just that. I'm wondering if you both could give your analysis or opinion on how much that desire for military

options could hamstring some of these other, I guess, political desires to deemphasize nuclear weapons or the uses of nuclear weapons.

MR. ACTON: Who wants to start with that one?

MR. GERSON: Jeffrey?

MR. LEWIS: Sure. Well, I mean, in a strange way, I don't think that that should complicate extended deterrence, because I mean, the way I envision the problem that we have with extended deterrence now is, it's not about – yes, I understand abstractly the desire to hold in reserve a variety of contingencies against a variety of options leads you to have forces for implausible options that you may not necessarily need, but at least as I see it – I mean, we have a worse problem with our allies right now, which is we have not done the hard work of even explaining to them that forces we want to get rid of, that even we don't want to hold the option for, are no longer necessary to their security.

So in some sense, because these things have become proxy more so than they've become an option, I think that's why they stare around. But I mean, I can certainly see in – because I also do the stuff that Mike does – I mean, I am certainly aware at how trying to guard against the least likely probabilities presses you into retaining capabilities that are, I think I said earlier, incongruous, to say the least, with the kinds of things that the president is trying to do diplomatically.

MR. ACTON: Mike, anything you want to add?

MR. GERSON: Just that, I mean, this desire for more and more options has essentially been the story of the development of U.S. nuclear strategy through the Cold War, beginning with flexible response and onto NSDM 242 and limited nuclear options and then PD 59 and the countervailing strategy.

I mean, it was essentially all about more and more options to provide a credible deterrent across the spectrum of conflict to ensure that the Soviets believed that there was no option for which the United States did not have an appropriate and credible response. And so this idea of more and more options is deeply engrained in the thinking of nuclear strategy and nuclear declaratory policy, and so it is a significant obstacle because of the – again the point that, why? And you can start – if you start playing the what-if game, it's, well, what if this, what if that, well, we should just not have any other option. We should have every option possible.

MR. ACTON: Thanks, I am trying to take these questions more or less in the order I see them – Bruce MacDonald. Just at the front there.

Q: Bruce MacDonald with the Strategic Posture Review Commission. Question, I think, primarily for Jeffrey. I take it from your comments that you are not questioning the value of extended deterrence, correct me if I'm wrong on that, but you do have some concerns about the way that it is being implemented, let's say.

And in looking, or thinking, about what you said, I also did a quick review being not only the posture commission came out in support of the extended deterrence to maintain the assurances and in particular on the TLAM-N, as you mentioned, but the Council on Foreign Relations panel

also spoke out very strongly in favor of maintaining nuclear weapons in Europe as long as the NATO allies felt that it was politically reassuring.

So I guess my question is, one, do I understand you correctly about extended deterrence in general? And then specifically, I sense in your comments a bit of – here's the way our allies ought to feel. I mean, Japan shouldn't just need a TLAM-N and we certainly don't want to just sit back and, like, take an order – well, they'll have a TLAM-N with a side of fries, you know, and then respond to it.

But on the other hand we can't be ignorant, either, of what it is that reassures them. If we have a friend who has a particular issue we may think, well, they shouldn't feel that way, but the reality is they do feel that way. And it strikes me the best way is to deal with where they're coming from and not say well, you shouldn't feel that way, so therefore we're going to change things.

So maybe you can clarify your intention a little bit on that question. How do you deal with anxieties or security concerns of allies even if, maybe in our calm rational moments, we say to ourselves, well, they shouldn't feel that way?

MR. LEWIS: Right, well, let me start by saying, if it wasn't clear, I intended to complement the posture commission, although I disagree with the TLAM-N recommendation because I am certain that, you know, you, as everybody else who has ever done this, must have been confronted with the wish list. And the wish list ran from, I suspect, the things that you recommended, to the things you did not.

And so that raises the natural question, as you say – how do you not just take an order, but on the other hand, not blow them off? What rule set do you use to make wise decision about what is in both of our interests without just sort of mechanically reproducing what you're told? I was trying to make explicit in some way that rule set.

So the way that I approached that was, I tried to talk about – it's not that I think that they ought to feel, but I tried to emphasize what I think is happening, which is to say, yes you get a wish list, but I suspect – and I don't think this is something that is negative about the Japanese because I imagine as an American policymaker you would feel exactly the same way – I suspect it's incredibly anxiety-inducing to not have fundamental control over your level of security. And that's a real problem. And I think it is a relatively healthy thing in the sense that the Japanese fixations have been as relatively limited as they have, because this would be terror-inducing.

And so my suggestion is we can, instead of playing this game of giving allies exactly what they ask for in terms of specific capabilities, that we address this at the root cause which is by dramatically expanding the type of consultation we have. And I realize that that's not easily done and I know that the State Department is working, is moving heaven and earth to increase the quality of our discussion with the Japanese. But I think that our goal with the Japanese should not be short-term hardware solutions but needs to be a long-term effort to build the same kinds of consultations that we have with members of the NATO Nuclear Planning group.

And within that context, if you have that kind of consultation, then I think that allows you to do what is right, to do what is in your interests, to maximize your capabilities and then use the consultation process so that the allies understand that because, you know, I think it's crazy, and it's a

sign of what a poor job we have done, that the Japanese government seems to be emphasizing, at least privately, a capability that the Navy thinks is useless. I mean that's quite a stunning gap between the warfighters and the political decision-makers. And you know, more so than retaining the capability, I would emphasize closing that gap.

MR. ACTON: I wonder if I could just abuse my chairman's prerogative by kind of adding something onto that answer which is if the issue is fundamentally that U.S. allies doubt U.S. resolve, deploying a particular capability is going to do nothing to reduce their anxiety.

I mean, one reading of the history of the Cold War in Europe is that the U.S. kept on giving new and better capabilities to Europe, but European policymakers didn't worry less about the U.S. commitment. Their worry was pretty much constant. And I would actually expect exactly the same thing to happen with Japan. I mean, if the Navy was not to mothball TLAM-N and indeed to go further and redeploy it, I actually think that the Japanese government would come back privately saying, well, this is the next capability you need. And the only way to actually get equilibrium on that is precisely the kind of software upgrades that Jeffrey is talking about.

MR. MCDONALD: Can I just say on that, too, the posture commission didn't speak enough in favor of – (inaudible, off mike). (Inaudible) – and a different capability should not – (inaudible) – in dealing more directly with the fundamental concerns and anxieties that they have.

Also, a chance for a plug – later this week the Institute of Peace will be releasing a publication of a number of the expert papers written in support of a commission. (Inaudible) – touch a little bit more on these very issues.

MR. ACTON: Thanks. I think it is generally a bad idea to allow two fingers in a gathering this big. But since it is Walt Slocombe in the back, then I am going to allow one of two fingers.

Q: Thank you. You haven't mentioned – and it's connected with this – an argument which was always made in favor of a dual capable aircraft, and I suppose can be made about TLAM-N – that they were seen as uniquely connected with extended deterrence, and in particular, that U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe meant that was – I mean, I never believed this argument – but it was widely made.

I wondered what your view on it – it's not entirely a sort of cargo cult fixation on the part of the allies. It has, to some degree, been rationalized as – these are uniquely for extended deterrence and if you get rid of them we're just a sort of lesser-included case in the general deterrence. I don't believe that argument but I'd be interested if you did.

MR. ACTON: We're going to deal with this in two sentences.

MR. LEWIS: I agree, it's not just a cargo cult fixation, and I can understand how it would be unpleasant to be a lesser-included case. But I think that that is the fact of the matter; it's not a bad thing and we can talk our way out of this by holding hands. (Laughter.)

MR. ACTON: There was a question towards the front on this side which now seems to have disappeared, yes, the gentleman just at the front here.

Q: Hi, Gary Mitchell from the Mitchell Report. I want to pose a question that may be just a clumsier way of posing one that's already been asked, I'm not quite sure, but it sort of has two components to it. And that is, given the global political realities of 2009, what's the practical operating distinction between no first use and no use? And second, given that what we seem to be more concerned about these days is non-state actors with nukes, what's the value of the, sort of, game theory way of thinking about this approach?

MR. GERSON: I'm trying to understand a little bit – the difference between no first use and no use – do you mean a no-use policy or just not using nuclear weapons – just the fact that we haven't used them?

MR. MITCHELL: I'm talking about U.S. policy.

MR. GERSON: (Pause.) I'm going to make a couple of points. I mean, I think that if we're not apt to use them anyway, then we get a lot of political benefit from the nonnuclear NPT member states from declaring no first use.

So if we're not going to do it anyway, then we might as well take out any risk of any potential for crisis instability and get the political benefit of being seen to move closer to fulfilling our article six commitments, getting the nonnuclear NPT member states on board – at least more so on nonproliferation objectives. So that is the sort of way I would look at that – is that if your point is we're not going to use it anyway, then we might as well get the political benefits of making that clear.

Q: I also want to say – (inaudible, off mike) – this same arena, which is, when we talk about – who are the nuclear states, what is the likelihood that any of them are going to use nukes against anyone – that's the “we” I'm really talking about; it's not just us but that state actors versus non-state actors are highly unlikely to be deploying nukes despite the fact that they're billions of dollars.

MR. GERSON: That's exactly right, which is why I said that in the unlikely event that nuclear weapons are used it is likely to be in the context of an intense and severe crisis, and therefore, one way to look at this issue is through the lens of crisis stability.

So by the nature of the logic of the argument, it sort of postulates a very intense crisis, which is not likely to happen, but not zero. And the concerns about preemption are what can exacerbate an already dangerous situation. And so, yes, absolutely, I'm not saying that this is likely but my argument is in the unlikely event that nuclear weapons are used, it is going to be in this context, and therefore this is one way to look at those dynamics.

On the distinction between state and non-state actors, I don't really see how nuclear weapons are particularly relevant either to deterring non-state actors or to responding to their use, in large part because, as everyone knows, there is the return address problem.

So it doesn't seem that nuclear weapons would be particularly relevant there, and in some situations, a nuclear response may in fact be beneficial for these organizations to rally support around them; to be seen as the U.S. bearing down on them again. I don't think it is particularly relevant, I don't think it is particularly likely, but the use of nuclear weapons in response, particularly

against some country in which these actors were harbored, does not seem to be a useful mechanism for deterrence or for response.

MR. ACTON: Jessica Mathews at the very back, and I should say, if there are people at the back kind of three or four rows trying to attract my attention, it is very, very hard to see you, so do wave your hand high.

JESSICA MATHEWS: Thanks, Jim. I want to follow up, and perhaps there is nothing more to say than the exchange on this last question, but most of this discussion felt very Cold War-ish to me in the sense of in that period the people who thought about vertical proliferation and the people who thought about horizontal proliferation operated in totally separate universes. And a consequence of the end of the Cold War was that they finally began to intersect.

But most of this discussion had a priesthood quality that sounded, again, divorced from the threats that we actually face. And maybe Michael has said what there is to say on his side, and I think your last answer did begin to take us towards that.

But if you rethink these issues – or let's say this – if you fold in not a negative consequence of let's avoid doing something that is incongruous with what stated policy now is, proliferation, but if you fold it in as a positive criterion of what you want your policy to be, how does that affect, I think, both these issues? And maybe Jeff wants to speak to it on extended deterrence.

I mean, we do have, with the 13 points, for example, a rather explicit agenda of things that the nuclear weapon states have committed to. That seldom tends to show up as we do this kind of thinking.

MR. ACTON: I wonder if I could say a few words, to start with, in answer to that question, because the reason I invited Mike, in particular, to speak about no first use was because the nonproliferation benefits of no first use are heard a lot in this town at the moment. I mean, many of you will have read Scott Sagan's article in *Survival* in which he was very, very clearly arguing this from a nonproliferation perspective, which I think is a very important component of the debate, but one that's heard a lot here in Washington.

What I was really interested in doing was bringing this in from a military perspective, as well. And the reason is, I guess, although it does sound quite Cold War-ish, there are particular examples that I foresee in my mind in which a policy of calculated ambiguity can potentially be destabilizing. I mean, in terms of examples, let's imagine a North Korea five or 10 years down the line, which has started to bury its missiles in silos.

I mean, Ash Carter and Bill Perry, as many people remember, wrote an op-ed a couple of years ago arguing for a first strike with conventional weapons on North Korea's launch pad. Five or 10 years from now, if the North Korea process has gone badly and North Korea's starting to bury weapons in silos, you could imagine the U.S. starting to talk about a nuclear first strike in North Korea. I don't think that's likely, but if it were to happen, then the kind of crisis instability that Mike is talking about could lead North Korea to preempt.

I think the same thing is true if everything goes wrong with Iran five or 10 years down the line. So just to kind of put forward what my thinking on this event was and why I think we should

worry about these things both through the nonproliferation lens and through, kind of like the Cold War, crisis stability lenses, is because there are unlikely scenarios that I can construct, but if they were to pass the consequences of maintaining calculated ambiguity, in my mind, still could be very serious. So that was my particular interest in, kind of, framing this around today. But let me just see if Mike and Jeffrey have anything else they want to add.

MR. LEWIS: I do. I mean, I adore that framing. I ended by saying that our capabilities will change; it's our shared interests and values that will endure. And as I was planning out this talk, I was a little worried about that sentence because that's not exactly what I mean because the interests themselves may evolve. It's the indivisibility of our security and the fact that we share our interests that will not change, and it's our values that will not change.

And so one of the reasons that I think it is so important to build better consultation mechanisms and get away from this fixation on hardware; that the hardware itself is intended, by definition, to deal with the threats of the past. And so to the extent that, politically, we fixate on hardware that is designed to deal with past threats, I think that we inhibit ourselves from thinking creatively about how our interests have changed and how, going forward, we're going to want our alliances to function.

So from my perspective, the entire reason for doing this is not just clearing away dead wood but it is really empowering policymakers in all of the countries involved to do something better and more appropriate for the future.

MR. GERSON: You say that my argument does hearken back, certainly, to some Cold War arguments, and I mean, it should be clear by looking at me I didn't live through most of the Cold War. But I'm somebody who believes that some of those arguments – not everything – but some of it is still relevant in that while it's a mistake to assume that it's all the same, it's equally a mistake to assume that everything is different; this is just sort of one lens through which I think one can view these issues.

I think we worried a lot about crisis stability in the Cold War, and perhaps, even too much. Once both sides had survival with second-strike systems deployed across land, sea and air platforms, there were still arguments to be made, particularly with deployment of some specific systems, but nevertheless, I think the crisis instability threat had been mitigated. Today the situation may be different when the United States has lots of offense – potentially offensive counterforce, first-strike capabilities – against an adversary with limited survivability, limited weapons.

MR. ACTON: I'd be very partial in going to this side. Yeah, gentleman in the aisle seat, about two-thirds of the way back.

Q: I'm Dr. Will Curtis from the U.S. Naval Academy. And following on what Amy had suggested – and you sparked this question in my mind, so if there's anything wrong with it, you assume the responsibility. (Chuckles.)

One is that if, indeed, we have a lack of a public discussion in Europe regarding what I call nonstrategic nuclear weapons or tactical nuclear weapons that are a part of the extended deterrence that we guarantee to NATO, then I would just suggest that it's a lack of the ability on the part of decision-makers to explain the nature of the threat, if you understand what I'm saying. Why are we

extending deterrence to Europe, and whom would the adversary be? Who has the capability to threaten? And if you say it's the former Soviet Union and the former Warsaw Pact – well, Russia at this point – then you may have difficulties there in explaining.

Secondly is that this issue of extending deterrence – you were talking about looking 5 years down and future Iran and so forth – what if Iran does develop a nuclear capability and it sparks either a request on the part of, say, the Saudis or the Egyptians or the gulf state people for the U.S. to extend that umbrella of protection to them, what are the prospects for that?

MR. LEWIS: Well, to tackle the second question first, regardless of how and why we choose to extend deterrence to the Middle East, I think it is extremely unlikely that we would ever forward-deploy nuclear weapons there, which I think reflects back on the situation in Europe because, of course, I think if the weapons weren't there, we wouldn't be talking about putting them there today, nor do I think we would be talking about deploying TLAM-N – it's only because they are already there.

So I agree that policymakers have some trouble communicating the value of extended deterrence, particularly in Japan and in some parts of – at least within most of those parts of NATO where we have forward-deployed nuclear weapons.

But the solution that we have talked about to-date, which is to not talk about those capabilities or retain archaic capabilities, I don't think solves that problem. I mean, I think what we need to do is to find things that we can talk about, interests that we do share and things that, going forward, we do want to do.

And there are some political sensitivities in how you phrase that, but I do think that one of the great benefits of talking, for example, in NATO about what role nuclear weapons play is shifting the focus away from very classic, Cold War-style deterrence mission to, I think, what is a much broader interest in nonproliferation.

MR. ACTON: Greg Thielmann and then Charlie Glaser.

Q: Greg Thielmann, Arms Control Association. Most of our discussion has been about crisis stability or the sensibilities of allies. But there is a bear in the room that we haven't really spent much time talking about, and that is the strategic negotiating partner – the U.S.-Russian Federation.

Could I get a little bit of a flavor for your thoughts on how Russia would react to some of the changes you're advocating – the U.S. adopting no first use or getting rid of its tactical nuclear weapons in Europe? One could argue, I think, in two different directions about Russian reaction but I'm very curious about your thoughts.

MR. ACTON: Mike, do you want to go first?

MR. GERSON: I think that the United States adopting policy of no first use of nuclear weapons can be, potentially, a useful mechanism to put pressure on the other members, with the exception of China, who already has a no first use policy, to adopt similar policies.

Now, Russia is in the start negotiations, and the outcome of that which – we know what the parameters are but we don't know the specifics – and we don't know what the follow-on is going to look like if, in fact, we're going to negotiate on nonstrategic nuclear forces.

But I think that – in terms of the one of the things I haven't talked about are, what are the benefits of no first use? And I think one of the benefits is to increase pressure on others to adopt similar policies; to follow a model that China would obviously, and has asked the United States and the other P-5 to do.

And that's the context in which I see one of the benefits; potentially putting additional pressure on Russia who, of course, had a no first use and then reversed it. And of course, part of the reason they reversed it is because of the conventional weaknesses and the necessity to, essentially, pull the NATO model, which is to rely increasingly on their nuclear forces.

However, it seems like part of the reason that the range of specific nuclear delivery vehicles is as wide as it is, is because their nuclear systems are also aging out. And so lower numbers benefit them at that sense, as well.

So I don't want to get too specific on that issue, but I think that it is a useful mechanism to put pressure on Russia; that I think there are a lot of variable – in particular, the outcome of the strategic nuclear delivery vehicle issue in the start follow-on, and what the follow-on to the follow-on looks like.

MR. LEWIS: Well, let me start by saying, I did recommend consolidation to two sites, and that we have a conversation about how we maintain burden-sharing and consultation at lower numbers. And lower numbers could include zero, but, you know, I don't necessarily feel strongly about that outcome. I mean, you could stop at consolidation, you could go to some kind of rear deployment where the weapons are in the U.S. and the Europeans have capacities to stage in the U.S. – you could have Trident SSBN visits. I'm open to life's possibilities, as a result of that conversation.

But, I guess, to really answer the question about Russia, I will observe that there are people who argue that those few remaining forward-deployed nuclear weapons provide some measure of leverage with the Russians in terms of engaging them. And I have to say, I'm very skeptical of that.

Given the numerical disparity, it's not clear to me that 200 versus many thousands that are actually, in some way, linked to the defense concept of the Russian federation. I don't think there's much leverage there. There are some people who think that, at zero, you may paradoxically have slightly more leverage than at a trivial number. I don't know, but it seems to me that however that plays out, the amount of leverage, if any, is so small, and the potential gain is so small that it's probably not a reason to keep them around.

I mean, I continue to think that the reason to get rid of them is because we do run this persistent, year-after-year risk of some kind of event that does much more damage to alliance cohesion, whether it's a security incident or some ugly public debate, and that we would be much better off putting the relationship on footing that emphasizes, you know, I mean, it's the footing that emphasizes the cemeteries at Normandy more than it does, you know, some weapons in a bunker that nobody sees.

MR. ACTON: Charlie Glaser?

Q: The Elliott School at GW. I have two questions, I think, for Michael. One is, you said if we accepted the nuclear weapons for deterrence, then these various things follow. But there is another set of arguments out there, which is you might want to use nuclear weapons first to protect yourself against nuclear weapons. So you might want to use them to destroy an Iranian capability if it ever had one. James referred to the possibility of a future North Korean one, and a Chinese capability as vulnerable.

So it seems like you've made your argument too easy, in a sense, by not taking that set of possible uses into consideration. I'm not saying, you know, I've necessarily come to a different conclusion. But that might be the most important set of first uses out there.

And then a second thing is, it seems like in your talk to me that you sometimes conflated first use with first strike. And I want to make sure which one you're actually referring to because NATO doctrine, as you know, is first use, but it wasn't necessarily a large-scale counter-military strike. And so there could be limited uses that would be purposeful against medium-sized or even large adversaries that are not large-scale counter-military uses, and some of which would be different than the logic that you laid out. So I just wanted to see if you could address those.

MR. GERSON: It feels like we're back in class. (Laughter.) That's a former professor of mine. If I understand you correctly, what you're talking about is the decision for the U.S. to preempt with nuclear weapons. Is that correct? Okay, yeah, this whole thing is the product of something I've been working on off-and-on for a year, and it's – as many of you have painfully pointed out to me – not quite done. (Laughter.) And so, again, I'm sort of working through this.

But essentially, I lay out 3 options by which the United States may threaten to use and/or use nuclear weapons first. The first is to deter conventional; the second is to deter chemical and biological; and the third is to preempt. So I didn't include that here, but I absolutely agree.

I mean, I would make a couple points which I think you'd agree with because some of this came from some of your work – that it's true that the United States may, in fact, want to use nuclear weapons to preempt the use of nuclear weapons.

But there are lots of problems with that. Most importantly, can the United States ever be absolutely confident that it would achieve such a disarming first strike? A dis-arming first strike. And I take your point – I'll get to that in a second, but yeah, first strike as in a splendid first strike.

Could the United States ever be confident that it, in fact, got everything? And if some weapons survive, some we didn't know about were used in retaliation, might that retaliation outweigh the potential cost of the strike in the first place?

The United States could never be, probably, absolutely confident and knew where every nuclear weapon was, nor might it not necessarily actually be completely confident that, in fact, the adversary was actually intending to strike rather than just signaling for purposes of resolve and survivability. In which case, the United States, in preempting, essentially started the nuclear war that it had hoped to prevent.

Another issue there is the move towards mobility, and mobile and re-locatable targets. The example here is the United States doesn't have a very good track record on doing these kinds of things – locating and targeting mobile and re-locatable targets.

As an example, the great Scud hunt of the first Gulf War didn't go so well. According to the Gulf War Air Power Survey, the United States launched approximately, as I recall, 1500 SORTIs against Iraqi mobile and fixed Scud launchers, and the Gulf War Air Power Survey said there's not a single confirmed kill of a mobile Scud launcher.

Similar problems in Operation Allied Force in '99 when the Serbs attempted to move their SA-6 – surface-to-air missile batteries – essentially every couple of hours to prevent them from being struck. And according to some NATO estimates – I don't think that there's actually an official estimate – that in attempts to strike those SA-6 AM batteries, we got three of the known 25.

And so the move towards mobility is, in part, a mechanism to increase survivability, and it significantly complicates whether or not the United States can actually launch a successful first strike. There may be some scenarios in which it's the case. But again, no first use makes it so that it's prohibitively difficult. And again, to this gentleman's point, the extent to which the United States would ever launch such a splendid first strike – if we're not going to do it, we might as well get some political benefit from it.

I take your point exactly on first strike and first use. I may have mixed the two. What I am talking about is the potential for a U.S. first strike – a U.S. dis-arming first strike; the fear of that and the crisis stability dynamic may lead to first use on the other side. In a couple of cases, there's a potential first strike incentive if they can disarm us, but in most cases, what I'm talking about is the limited first use – in a large part, for the de-escalatory purposes that NATO strategy had.

MR. ACTON: Thank you. Any remaining questions? There was at least one person – I see one there; I just want to find out whether anybody else wants to – there was one question over here which I know I hadn't been taking for a while. So okay, a final question for the afternoon, yes, sir? And the microphone is just coming.

Q: Hugh Haskell from the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research. We've heard lots of talk, not just here but everywhere, about the purpose of our nuclear weapons being deterrents – and the word “deterrents” is used kind of axiomatically.

It seems to me that the main deterrent effect of our nuclear arsenal has been to cause other people to develop nuclear arsenals to deter us. And I wonder if maybe we could discuss if deterrence – assuming for the moment that deterrence is a valid reason for having nuclear weapons – just exactly who our nuclear arsenal is supposed to deter?

MR. ACTON: Either of you want to take that?

MR. GERSON: I'll – (inaudible) – just to finish up; there may be some situations in which nuclear proliferation is intended to deter our nuclear weapons. I think most cases, while there are many reasons why states develop nuclear weapons – prestige and domestic politics and other things – one of the most important reasons vis-à-vis the United States is to deter our conventional

capability, rather than our nuclear capability. In this context, nuclear proliferation is, in some ways, an asymmetric response to U.S. conventional superiority.

Again, because I'm fond of history, as it's very clear to you, the irony here is that this is essentially NATO strategy – where we relied on the threat of nuclear escalations to deter a conventionally superior adversary.

So I would just make that point about whether or not nuclear weapons are primarily a response to our nuclear weapons, or whether or not they're a response to other things. I think I'll let Jeffrey take it up.

MR. LEWIS: I guess I would simply say that regardless of whether we agree or disagree about the impact that U.S. nuclear weapons and security assurances have had in terms of increasing or decreasing proliferation, I think we can all agree that looking forward, discouraging the further spread – as Ernie Cantor (ph) always reminds me – discouraging the further spread of nuclear weapons is something that is a much more significant interest now than it has been in the past.

And, again, I think the ability to make our alliances both in terms of their political content but also their military capabilities responsive to new challenges, and that includes the president's Prague agenda, requires putting in place better consultative mechanisms so we can get away from fixations on hardware that was designed to deal with yesterday's threat.

MR. ACTON: Thank you. I think all that remains for me to do is to thank you all for coming and then thank the speakers. The president set out an exceptionally ambitious agenda in his Prague address. And it seemed to me, looking at that, that these were two of the absolute thorniest issues that needed to be addressed – that of the circumstances in which the U.S. holds open the option to use nuclear weapons first; and that of how it deals with its allies.

And my sense was that these were issues that it was necessary to debate on a wider scale; that there was great value in bringing them into a more public forum as far as possible, and in addition to the debates that happen within the Pentagon and within government as part of the Nuclear Posture Review.

And I think both the presentations we heard this afternoon were pleasingly controversial, they certainly sparked a very, very good discussion going and were both very rich in the analytic detail – that, I know, both Mike and Jeffrey have spent a long time working on and developing their arguments. So the final thing is just for me to thank them. (Applause.)

(END)