CARNEGIE INTERNATIONAL NONPROLIFERATION CONFERENCE

U.S.-CHINA STRATEGIC STABILITY

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BRAD ROBERTS: Just to be clear, we are the session on “China-U.S. Strategic Stability.” The first item of business is to invite you to please turn off cell phones and Blackberrys and the like because they will automatically generate feedback into the system. And you don’t want to be like those five people who have their ringers on in the opening plenary who got scowled at.

As you know, the structure of the proceedings is to have the opening plenary sessions to tee up a few main arguments about building or breaking global nuclear order and then to break into these different tracks of discussion and there’s this – a strategic track of which this is a part. There will be a related later panel discussion of U.S.-Russia strategic stability. But we were invited to come and introduce some ideas for discussion here about the U.S.-China strategic relationship. And before introducing my fellow panelists, I’d like to make a few opening remarks of my own on this topic to frame the discussion.

And if you were here this morning you’ve heard the two main premises I would like you to keep in mind. The first of these is that the emerging international nuclear order seems more likely to be determined by what happens in Asia than by what happens in Europe and that the – and this is in part because it’s now the most nuclearized region of the world with the addition of three new nuclear-weapon states over the last decade.

It has a very high degree of latent nuclear potential. Many countries have moved very high up the capability curve even if they have not sought weapons. There is a demonstrated weakness of the nonproliferation regime in Asia and shaping desired outcomes. And as the A.Q. Khan network reminds us there’s an emerging supplier network that’s somewhat outside of the traditional networks of the established nuclear-weapon states. So that’s all on argument for the proposition that – there are some big problems in Asia that are going to shape the emerging international nuclear order.

The second proposition is that by and large what happens in Asia in the nuclear realm is going to be driven, for better or for worse, by what happens in the U.S.-China strategic relationship. And in my view this is more likely to be decisive to the next nuclear order than what happens in the U.S.-Russian relationship. The U.S.-Russian relationship has a fairly clear trajectory. We both sides know what we want and in the U.S.-China relationship we still don’t even have a common vocabulary to discuss what the problem is that we confront.

And, historically, the U.S.-China nuclear relationship has not been of great interest in the United States. Most of you know, if you do nuclear, you don’t really do China. And if you do China, you don’t really do nuclear. Most of America’s China-expert community is either China watching at a sort of broad array of China’s foreign and defense policy or they’re zeroed in on one set of topics, but they don’t – that China-watcher community doesn’t think much about the strategic nuclear relationships.

And this is a gap in our analytic community. China, in contrast, has been very serious about the China-U.S. nuclear relationship, has devoted a lot of time thinking, effort, institutional resources into getting its intellectual house in order about matters military, matters nuclear and matters U.S.-China strategic over approximately the last 10 to 15 years.

And there is something of a mismatch here. And as you know there is also underway in China a modernization program. You’ve read about it, you’ve heard about it; more detail – and this
has been rumored for a long time. But we are beginning finally to see some of the details emerge in operational capability.

Over the last two to three years, China has approximately doubled the number of missiles capable of reaching some part of the United States: from 20 to approximately 40. Over roughly the same period is had increased its force of medium-range ballistic missiles, so those designed to hold at risk Russia, India, Japan and U.S. bases in East Asia from approximately 50 in 2005 to approximately about 100 today. And, moreover, China has plans to deploy a force of submarine launch ballistic missiles. And current estimates are that there might be four or five of these each carrying 12 missiles.

And so, from the United States’ perspective, what we look out and see is that the number of nuclear weapons capable of reaching us from China is going up, from 20 to 40 to what, 45, 100 and something – to even within the force structure that would include some submarines, possibly as many as 200.

Now, at the same time of course, the United States isn’t sitting by idly. The United States is in the throes of its own, quote, “transformation,” not modernization. But it’s in the business of adding missile defenses to its overall strategic posture. It’s in the business of adding non-nuclear strike capabilities. You heard Alexei Arbatov speak to these topics this morning. And I believe that the – we have a national consensus that we should do those things in order to ensure that the United States and our allies are not coerced by, quote, “rogue” states with WMDs.

We have a consensus that we should pursue that overall strategic posture without upsetting strategic stability with Russia, and on China, we’re kind of undecided. And the punch line in putting this panel together is that it’s time to decide. It’s time to have a clear U.S. understanding of what it would like in the strategic military relationship with China and to have a clear understanding with China of how that will unfold.

We have a simple choice in front of us as a nation, as the United States, of accepting that what China is doing in the way of modernization is necessary and appropriate as an adaptive response to the things that we’re doing in our posture for another reason. Alternatively, we choose to say, can’t live with that. China’s modernization is threatening and we need to think more of China in the way we have thought of the rogue states, rather than the way we might think about Russia.

This choice of ours is pretty consequential for Asia. It’s certainly consequential for Japan; it’s certainly consequential for Russia; it’s certainly consequential for India that would feel the weight of new Chinese capabilities. So the overall framework of this panel was to probe deeply into these questions: What is strategic stability? How do we get it? What best serves our American interest? What best serves China’s interests? Can we bring these things together? Can we have a strategy for stability that promotes global nuclear order, Asian nuclear order rather than erodes that order.

So that’s the context for the discussion, that’s why we’re here. And we had three panelists lined up. I was asked six months ago – Carnegie is very efficient at organizing these events as you can see, and six months ago we were debating how to bring this panel together and there were three speakers I had at the top of my list and they all three accepted. And two of the three are here and the third, Bob Pfaltzgraff, lives in Boston and you all know what the weather’s doing outside this
afternoon and what it’s going to do this evening. And he was told by his airline that he could not get here and back to Boston today.

So at 11:00 he sent along his remarks and I will not read them to you because you have them in your chairs, but I would like to summarize the arguments for you because they are one of the two main perspectives here. But before I do that let me just point you to the bios in the conference packets. I’m not going to read out the bios of our two speakers; that would not be a productive use of our time. By way of brief introduction, Chu Shulong comes from Tsinghua University in China and this is usually referred to by Americans who don’t know it as China’s MIT.

It’s one of the very most distinguished universities in China and Chu Shulong is well-renowned internationally as one of the leading professors there on international security, on U.S.-China relations and he too has had to learn the language of nuclear stability as penance for working in this field. But he’s been a very important and valuable addition to this small community of people who thinks about China-U.S. nuclear relationships.

Admiral Rich Mies will follow Chu Shulong. Admiral Mies is a retired commander of U.S. Strategic command, has been playing a leadership role in the dialogue of the National Academy of Sciences that it sponsors with China on matters nuclear, participates in some other dialogues sponsored by the departments of state and defense on strategic stability. So we have here two very thoughtful students on this topic. The third, Bob Pfaltzgraff, known to many of you as the dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Bob comes to this topic because of his particular interests in missile defense, and as a member of the State Department International Security Advisory Board.

Connoisseurs of this topic, of which there may not be too many, but connoisseurs of this topic will perhaps remember that there was a leaked and then quashed report of a State Department advisory board in the last week of the Bush administration, which was in response to a request from the secretary of state for guidance on how to talk with China about matters nuclear. And Bob was a participant in that process and the report was never formally released so it’s not fair to cite it as an official document of that advisory body, but the ideas that are reflected in there are the ideas that he’s put forward in the paper that’s on your chair.

And let me just summarize them, let me read selectively from the text rather than put his words into mine or my words into his mouth. In the second bullet he describes strategic stability; he defines strategic stability as a relationship in which both sides gain knowledge about each other’s strategy such that they gain increased confidence that neither will dramatically alter the relationship – or at the very least, one of the parties will have sufficient advanced warning to be able to take corrective action.

Thus he argues, in answer to my question, what kind of strategic relationship should the United States want and can it have with China? We should want a strategic relationship that is resistant to sudden change, dislodgement or overthrow – one that has the constancy of character of purpose – one that is based on reliability and dependability of behavior. To my second question, my panel chair’s second question, what kind of strategic relationship can we have as opposed to should we want?
He discusses several issues – the answer to both questions, he argues, lies in a discussion of the respective interests and goals of China and the United States – and whether differences between the two countries and their respective interests and goals are a basis for instability rather than stability. Further he argues, if you’re following along the next main bullet there, China has essentially three interrelated strategic goals, Bob Pfaltzgraff’s view of those goals. Chu Shulong I think will articulate some different ones, but they are: first, regime survival; second, dominance of the Asia Pacific as a springboard to growing global influence; and third main strategic goal, preventing Taiwan’s independence and eventually reintegrating Taiwan as a part of China.

He goes on to argue that China views the United States as its principal strategic adversary and as a potential challenge to the regime’s legitimacy, especially with regard to Taiwan. What about the U.S. strategic goals? He again cites three: first, to retain a position of dominance in the Asia Pacific; to thwart North Korea’s nuclear ambitions and to preserve South Korea’s independence; third, to prevent forceful reunification of Taiwan with the mainland. Thus China and the United States have a complex relationship that has elements of cooperation and elements of competition.

He goes on to argue about the deep economic interactions of our two countries. He turns then to military modernization and its implications for strategic stability. He notes the absence of transparency in China’s military modernization. He repeats the most recent information from the most recent Pentagon report on China’s military power, a document not much loved in China and goes on then to argue that these programs of military modernization are consistent with the objectives he has defined, with a power projection ascendency strategy, and this is exactly what you’d expect to see from a China committed, as he views it, to those objectives.

In the area of strategic nuclear modernization, he argues, China’s nuclear arsenal apparently reflects the importance assigned by Beijing to strategic forces as the umbrella under which its political-military interests will be advanced in and beyond the Asia Pacific region. So he then circles back. Remember what he was doing was discussing a series of issues around the question of what kind of relationship can the United States have in the strategic military domain with China.

So back to the core question. If China seeks to extend its power and influence in and beyond the Asia Pacific region, it follows that it will attempt to do so by building capabilities not so much to counter U.S. strengths but instead to exploit U.S. vulnerabilities. He cites one piece of a very abundant literature in China about exploiting vulnerabilities of strong adversaries, and concludes that these are indeed guiding principles for China’s force modernization, and then comes to his closing arguments on how to get strategic stability.

This leads me to the conclusion that to the extent that the United States perpetuates its vulnerabilities, it provides an open invitation to China, to Chinese efforts to exploit such vulnerabilities. Let me be more specific, he said. There is considerable discussion to the effect that the United States should maintain or develop with China a strategic relationship based on mutual vulnerability, and that increased emphasis, notably on missile defense on our part, will lead China to increase its own programs in order to counter such U.S. systems.

Aside from the shaky empirical basis for such an assertion, he argues, the Chinese emphasis on exploiting U.S. vulnerabilities argues basically – I’m sorry, argues logically for efforts on our part to cut off such U.S. vulnerabilities wherever possible, and the forces that will shape the China-U.S. strategic military relationship. I could even argue that the conscious perpetuation of U.S.
vulnerability in the mistaken belief that the results will be strategic stability makes no sense. It may even encourage China to attempt to exploit vulnerability at a time of crisis and leave to undesired escalation based on miscalculation.

Obviously we should avoid crisis miscalculation, he argues. So for the United States, strategic stability can best be enhanced by reducing vulnerabilities and including a strategic nuclear posture that includes deterrence by denial. Therefore, deterrence of China has both offensive and defensive elements.

We need to take seriously China’s perception of its growing nuclear-weapons capability as tools of military power and political intimidation, regardless of whether this is China’s motivation for such modernization, or if this is the consequence of China’s military modernization. This also means rejection of a mutual vulnerability relationship with China in the mistaken belief that this will lead China to forgo modernization options.

He is a man of clear conviction and clear writing, and I can admire those qualities. I’m sorry he is not here to present his own arguments. Some of them were aimed at me, so you’ll forgive me if I don’t always defend them in the discussion, but they reflect the way a lot of people in the United States think.

The basic question I posed of, do we tolerate or trump China’s modernization – the answer is obvious to many people who first think about this, but it’s not the same answer for everybody. For some it’s absolutely obvious that Pfaltzgraff has the right answer. And for some it’s absolutely obvious that it’s the wrong answer. So what I hope we can accomplish this afternoon is to get a little beyond the obvious and to probe a little more deeply into the requirements of stability and the nature of the objectives that guide the thinking in both countries on this topic.

So without further delay let me turn first to Chu Shulong to lay out his arguments for us on this topic. And thank you for your trouble in traveling such a long distance to participate with us in this discussion.

SHULONG CHU: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for Carnegie giving me the opportunity to exchange views with you on this topic. This is important for China, I mean the strategic renaissance. Problem is two kind of strategic relations here. One is overall relations between U.S. and China. Even to size in recent years, and including new administration do not define U.S.-China relations has strategic of why.

Actually U.S. side has been very careful to use the term to define relations with China. Even you define your relation with a lot of other countries as a strategic one. But I do think that the relationship between U.S.-China of strategic importance to both countries. Second is the strategic weapons relations between U.S.-China, and the strategic capability.

First let me say a word as far as my observation, my knowledge about other Chinese, including Chinese leader comment militarism, scholars’ understanding about the strategic capability. The argument that we hear just now emphasizes strategically intention. That is the meaning of the stability. Agreed, this is part of the strategic stability, and used to be a very important part to Chinese understanding about U.S.-China strategic relations.
I recall the debate last decades, 1990s, there was a harsh debate among Chinese whether U.S. engage in containment strategy toward China. I’m glad to no longer hear that kind of debate now in the past eight years of Bush administration, and this time the new administration. I think the Chinese are now more, including the last 10 years since ’83, Chinese were my opinion very much relaxed to think about the U.S.-China strategy. A few people made argument there is a kind of containment. Even Chinese do not accept the early Bush administration definition of strategic competition because Chinese do not think that, one, we are in a position to compete with.

So now with the summit between presidents Obama and Hu Jintao last week in London, I think that both sides are like the causative theme of deeper, comprehensive cooperation. It’s also the words Secretary Clinton gave to Chinese leaders in Beijing a month ago. So this is now a serious concern or worry about the strategic element, the intention between U.S.-China in Beijing. Because we do not see that the relations between us as a zero sum game, the financial crisis tell the world clearly we are no longer in the zero sum game time. Nobody is living in that period. We live in same world.

Also this has a lot to do with the long-term intention. I think the argument, the way we feel just now is kind of normal concern that in the past 60 years, especially in the Cold War period, while you see other countries is rising, have more capabilities, including military, then you’re concerned. But I think that a way – (inaudible) – here should make a clear difference between the former Soviet Union and its relation with U.S. in the Cold War period and U.S.-China relations today.

On the matter of – (inaudible) – deal with international relations, we all understand U.S.-Soviet relations were competitive, struggle for international influence. It was a kind of zero-sum game. That is not the Sino-U.S. relations today. China has, from my best understanding as a scholar, as a person working for government and for military for 20 years in China, and they will hear any Chinese leader in past two decades indicate that China has a goal, strategic goal and interest to compete with the U.S. in Asia and in the world.

U.S. primarily role, we do not – (inaudible) – you define the role as leadership or domination. It’s okay to China because China does not seek to lay the road. And talking about the Chinese goal, one of the three goals of Asia Pacific domination. I never hear like there are serious people in China experienced the goal that way, want to dominate in Asia. If you see, understand, you see that is Chinese goal, I see we are already there for 1,000 years. China is one of the dominated power in Asia for thousands of years. This is not necessary now agenda for China to see like a goal today and in future.

I’m not sure you agree with me or not. I see that today two powers are there, if you borrow the term of domination in Asia. That is U.S.-China. And we can work together. We can live together, like we work together on North Korea issues. So I do not agree with the term of domination, but I don’t think that it is – (inaudible).

So strategic suitability in Beijing as my observation is very much capability. It’s not strategy, not intention, but is capability. In this area I do agree that China is not a status quo power. China is developing, is modernizing its military force, including strategic force. It’s a really dynamic situation there. But we think it’s necessary for defense, for strategical stability. Stability cannot be achieved without maintain there – (inaudible) – that we have strategic ability between our two countries are too huge. So we need to narrow down the difference.
But that does not mean China is going to be arms race with U.S., or seeking parity with U.S. This is not letting answer, but we need to improve our capability, including strategic area, to give us confidence, maybe to get U.S. confidence that there is stability, strategic stability between us.

The threat to stability to U.S., we understand U.S. – a lot of people here taking Chinese modernization as a threat to their strategic capability. As I said earlier, we in China do not see that way. As we agree about Americans seeing why you have reliable capability, then it contribute stability. Certainly – (inaudible).

In China we see the threat to Sino-U.S. strategic stability is two things. One is U.S. increasing military – (inaudible), including nuclear submarine in Western Pacific. And the second is missile defense, including with Japan. And then – (inaudible) – Taiwan. We see that as a threat to the Sino-U.S. strategic stability today, in the future. So we do have problem, we do have difference on the stability.

The last part, what we can do, of my presentation. What we can do? Here I think we have good news, and the good news is that U.S.-China are increasingly partner, cooperative on bilateral, regional, global issues at a strategic level – economic, finance, security, nonproliferation, climate change, work on terrorists, and on issues North Korea, Iran, Indonesia, and others. So we see increasing the partnership, cooperation between two countries, and we are glad to see that the new administration continue that path that the two countries have had in the past years.

So even Americans talking about a G-2 and – (inaudible). Chinese leaders do not use term, but we do agree that there is more cooperation between our two countries. And that cooperation is increasingly important to U.S. and China, to Asia and to the world. So when we talk about bigger picture than just the strategic weapons, we have good news. We see a positive direction, growing common interests, common ground between U.S., China. I think that is very good news.

So on this understanding I think that we have a framework to discuss, to work out specific difference between us, political system, ideology of human rights, Tibetan issues, Taiwan issue, missile defense, Chinese military build-up. So I think we need more strategic dialogue, real frank, strategic dialogue, and two presidents agree to – (inaudible). And the dialogue I think, yes, they work.

I think that two country need more dialogue and they need to talk about the strategic intention of the two countries. They need to talk about strategic – (inaudible) – military development, U.S. in Asia Pacific and Chinese military modernization, and to see desirable and acceptable level of strategic development.

And last, they do need a frank discussion about missile defense, to work out difference on their defensive, offensive relationship, now and in future. Thank you.

ROBERTS: Thank you, Chu Shulong.

(Applause.)
ADMIRAL RICHARD MIES: Thanks, Brad. I’m pleased to be here today, and I hope some of you in the back can read the wording on my slides. I apologize if some of the font gets smaller. As I’ve listed on this slide, Brad Roberts has posed four questions for this panel to address, and I’ll try to respond to each of them in order. I emphasize that my responses are my personal views and not necessarily those of the U.S. government. As Brad said, I do nuclear, and I don’t profess to be a Chinese expert.

In response to Brad’s first question I’ve highlighted (on the second slide) what I believe to be the major U.S. concerns with respect to China’s nuclear posture. Most of these concerns center around the extensive modernization of China’s strategic capabilities and our limited transparency into the nature and extent of that modernization and China’s evolving strategies. This modernization emphasizes a broad set of strategic capabilities, including both conventional and nuclear force structures, as well as cyberspace and anti-space capabilities. Of the five recognized nuclear powers, China alone is making both qualitative and quantitative improvements to its strategic capabilities.

Consistent with China’s emphasis on asymmetric warfare, this modernization includes expanded conventional precision strike and other anti-access and area denial capabilities. Additionally, Chinese espionage has also been described within our government as comprehensive and pervasive.”

I’m out on more of a limb here (on the third slide) in that I’ve listed my impressions of what I believe are China’s concerns with U.S. strategic posture. Some of these I believe are legitimate concerns. On the other hand, I believe others are based on misinterpretations. For example, based on my own personal experience, the 2001 nuclear posture review was intended to put us on a path to achieve a nuclear-weapons strategy, policy, and force structure with lower nuclear salience, less adversarial character, and reduced warhead numbers because of our changed relationship with Russia. China did not interpret it that way.

Additionally, the past administration’s failure to correct a misperception and a mischaracterization that a military preemption strategy associated with our conventional forces was also closely associated with our nuclear forces has contributed, I believe, to Chinese distrust and Chinese concerns.

In response to Brad’s third question, I thought it would be useful to quickly summarize (on the fourth slide) some of the enduring tenets of U.S. nuclear-weapons policy as an introduction for you to facilitate a meaningful comparison of U.S. and China nuclear postures. I think it’s important to note that these tenets span many, many administrations and have endured with remarkable continuity. In general, U.S. nuclear-weapons policy is fundamentally designed as a war prevention rather than, as some people perceive, a war-winning, a war-fighting, or war-limiting framework. As such, it’s guided by several key principles.

First and foremost, the primary value of nuclear weapons is not in their use but in the potential of their use, the threat of their use. They are primarily national instruments of war prevention rather than war-fighting, and in my estimation have always been viewed by our civilian leadership as weapons of last resort.
Second, deterrence ultimately depends not on our capability to strike first, but on the assurance we always have of a retaliatory capability to strike second. Accordingly, we have designed our forces to be highly reliable and survivable under virtually every imaginable scenario.

The third and fourth tenets are related. Our nation’s nuclear-weapons policy and force structure are intended to deter potential adversaries’ use of any weapon of mass destruction, not just nuclear, as well as large-scale conventional aggression against the United States and its allies. As I’ve discussed with my Chinese counterparts, there is a common fallacy about deterrence that holds that nuclear weapons deter only nuclear weapons. To accept that, one has to accept that nuclear weapons have played no role in the remarkable peace among the nuclear powers during the past six decades, despite periods of significant tension and East-West confrontation.

I think it would be equally fallacious to assume that without some fundamental change in the political configuration of the world, nuclear weapons have no relevance for the future. Deterrence is about preventing all major wars, not just nuclear ones, since major war is the most likely road to nuclear war. As such, a policy of no-first-use, if it’s believable, weakens deterrence of major conventional war and rests on a false strategic premise. A declaratory policy affirming nuclear weapons as weapons of last resort, and the least preferred option short of surrender, has always seemed to me a wiser and more believable choice.

Fifth, our strategic forces must have credible deterrent capabilities. Deterrence is a function of both capability and will. A potential adversary must believe you have a credible capability as well as the will to use it. The great paradox of nuclear weapons is that they deter conflict by the possibility of their use, and the more a potential adversary perceives the credibility of our capabilities and our will, the less likely he is to challenge their use. The converse of that proposition is also true. To allow nuclear weapons use to become incredible would increase, not lessen, the risk of war.

Sixth, positive and negative security assurances are vital in support of our nonproliferation goals and the NPT. And finally, the U.S. has a long-standing commitment to collaborate with our allies to aggressively reduce nuclear risks.

The next slide is a simplistic comparison of the attributes of our U.S. and Chinese strategic forces, and I would argue that based on my discussions with delegates from China, there are more similarities than there are differences. Both sides acknowledge the primacy of deterrence and the importance of assured second strike capabilities. And as China continues to modernize, I believe the similarities will continue to grow.

For example, we see evidence in Chinese writings reflecting an interest in counter-force targeting, and the value of deterring not just through retaliation but through denial of objectives as well. We are aware of internal debates within China on the policy of no-first-use, and the nuances of what constitutes first use.

So what should the U.S. do? In response to Brad’s last question I’ve listed a spectrum of potential options (on the sixth slide) that the U.S. might consider pursuing. I have to be a little cautious here because I studied at Fletcher under Professor Pfaltzgraff, and I’ve learned it’s never polite to disagree with a former professor. But I believe a limited national missile defense complements our strategic offensive deterrent capabilities, and can protect us from small-scale rogue nation attacks. But beyond that I don’t think pursuing that course is a wise one.
If I thought the first option was feasible, I might recommend it. However, my experience tells me otherwise. For as far as I can see into the future, the strategic offense will always have an advantage over strategic defenses. For every strategic defensive initiative there is a more cost-effective offensive counter. It becomes a losing proposition. We witnessed this during the Cold War when both sides tried to build missile defenses to protect certain regions. Attempting to build an effective national military defense against China would be destabilizing. It would only result in undermining the credibility of China’s deterrent and foster further expansion of China’s offensive capabilities.

At the same time, I see the bottom option as unacceptable to existing U.S. interests. It would undermine U.S. extended deterrence commitments, and it would likely be counter-productive to our nonproliferation goals.

I don’t see the second option as desirable either because I don’t believe the nuclear abolition option would work in this situation to U.S. advantage. Regardless of U.S. conventional military superiority, conventional weapons are contestable, both temporally and geographically. Without nuclear weapons as the ultimate deterrent, it would be extremely difficult for the U.S. to maintain the necessary conventional force presence to meet its extended deterrence commitments worldwide. In my view the likelihood of conventional conflict with China would inevitably increase rather than lessen. I’ll expand more on the nuclear abolition option on the next slide.

So in my mind the third option is the most reasonable and the most stabilizing, which I think is important. It potentially avoids the strategic offense-defense arms race, and while accepting the mutual vulnerability from nuclear weapons that I think is both inevitable and stabilizing because nuclear weapons are not contestable, it would enable the U.S. to accomplish a number of things:

- We could devote more resources to develop new conventional weapons sensors, communications, theater conventional missile defenses, and reduce U.S. vulnerabilities in space and cyber through more effective defensive measures to convince China it cannot overcome the U.S. militarily from a conventional standpoint.
- Second, it would enable us to devote more resources to the more imminent threat of nuclear terrorism by continuing to improve our world class capabilities in radiation detection and forensics, and to further expand our network of sensors, both nationally and internationally, to prevent the illicit proliferation of nuclear material worldwide, and to determine the origin of any discovered nuclear and radiological material.
- And lastly, it would enable us to expand our extensive counterintelligence programs to better thwart espionage and terrorism.

As I indicated on the previous slide, I’d also like to take the opportunity with this next slide, as I was encouraged by the Carnegie people, to be a little provocative and take a few moments to address the broader widely publicized initiative to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Given the clear risks and elusive benefits inherent in the path to nuclear abolition, I believe a significant burden of proof rests upon those who advocate this position to answer some fundamental questions about the logic of zero and demonstrate exactly how and why such cuts
would serve to enhance our national security. Without compelling answers to these questions, and achievable actions, I believe this vision will prove counterproductive, promote unrealistic expectations, and serve as a justification to continue to allow our strategic enterprise to atrophy, thereby reducing its credibility.

The quote at the bottom summarizes my view. Nuclear abolition has to be the cart to a geopolitical horse. Nations don’t distrust each other because they’re armed. They’re armed because they distrust each other.

So here are the four basic questions that I think we need compelling, comprehensive answers to:

First, is it feasible? If so, what detailed, specific actions must be taken by individual nations and the international community, and what time frames are envisioned to accomplish these actions? As we contemplate reductions in our nuclear forces toward zero, how will we prevent the credibility of our extended deterrence commitment to fall into serious question by some of our allies? And instead of promoting nonproliferation, how will we prevent our reductions from having the perverse opposite effect? Additionally, as we proceed toward zero, potential adversaries may be emboldened to challenge us. How do we prevent a smaller U.S. arsenal from appearing to be a more tempting and easier target for preemption, or breakout, or a race to parity? Without fundamental geopolitical change, I question whether we can make those changes.

The second question, is it verifiable? If so, and by whom, and with what means? How would compliance be enforced? Is such an intrusive and comprehensive verification regime achievable in our existing geopolitical framework?

Third, if it is both feasible and verifiable, is it inherently stabilizing and hence sustainable? Since nuclear weapons cannot be disinvented and many nations will have latent nuclear capabilities, what disincentives will preclude cheating or breakout? If the threat of biological terrorism remains a major threat today, despite the abolition of biological weapons, why do we believe that abolition of nuclear weapons will significantly reduce the nuclear threat?

And lastly, if it can be achieved and sustained, is it really desirable? How can we be sure we are not making the world safe for conventional war? To me this is a most fundamental question that many abolitionists have blithely ignored.

I’ll get off the stage with this next slide. I use it to reinforce my last question. Some of you in the audience may be too young to remember, but let me remind you as this graph of wartime fatalities as a percentage of world population illustrates, conventional warfare took a devastating toll throughout history before nuclear weapons were even invented. However, since the advent of nuclear weapons the transformation of major warfare has been dramatic.

I would argue that nuclear weapons have revolutionized and transformed warfare. They have extended the potential of warfare to a level where classical warfare concepts cease to apply or cease to have meaning. Nuclear weapons are fundamentally different from conventional weapons. Pound for pound, they are several million times more potent and no adequate defense against them is known or foreseen to exist. As I stated earlier, conventional weapons are contestable, nuclear weapons are not.
Whereas in the past, before nuclear weapons existed nations sought to achieve strategic objectives through war, I would argue that nuclear weapons have created a strong restraining force among nations to avert war.

In closing, what puzzles me is why the arms control community views nuclear weapons with such disdain rather than as an ally of disarmament. As I think this graph illustrates, I believe nuclear weapons have done as much as, or more than disarmament to avert war. The abolition of nuclear weapons may be a noble goal, but I firmly believe that avoidance of major war is an even nobler one. Thank you.

(Applause.)

ROBERTS: We'll open it up for questions at this time. I think we don't have roving microphones, so we'll have to ask people to come to the mike in the middle of the room. That's the only way in this echo chamber people in the back can hear what's being said. I invite you, please, to introduce yourself by name and institutional affiliation. As you can see, the line is already long, so please keep your comments relatively concise. We have approximately 30 minutes.

Q: Kenji from CSA. While China’s vertical proliferation is understandable, what is not understandable and acceptable, especially in Asian theater, is China’s horizontal proliferation, both prior to China’s joining NPT and after signing the NPT. China has equally used its client states. Chinese weapons designs have been found in Libya; China has continued to proliferate to Pakistan as we speak. China has used other states to give nuclear capability, and two recent additions are Myanmar and Bangladesh. One wonders when China will stop proliferating.

CHU: I keep reading in Western news media every day in the past 20 years, I don’t see hard evidence, even given by Western intelligence community to support your idea that China still proliferating. There is no evidence given China has something to do with at least last 10 years proliferation efforts in our nuclear program on North Korea and Iran and others – (inaudible) – but you need to give hard evidence to support your claim.

Q: If I may respond, Chinese weapon designs are found in Libyan documents that were turned to IAEA as late as 2002. China has consistently ignored the issue of A.Q. Khan being arrested by, you know, Interpol or anything like that. So China has been continuing to block the sanctions on Iran. China has utilized the six-party process to its advantage to the extent that North Korea has proliferated. Sometimes Chinese words are difficult to match with Chinese actions.

ROBERTS: Brief reply.

CHU: No, I have nothing.

Q: Hi. I’m Dave Hafemeister from Cal-Poly University. If China’s going to modernize, and they’ve only tested 45 times, that’s not very much to our 1,045. You would think that they would need to test if they’re going to have any reliability. So a two-fold question here. If the United States was to not ratify the CTBT, how would that affect China’s desire to test?

And secondly, if the United States tested, how would that change China’s desire to test?
ROBERTS: Let me just note that Chu Shulong is not obliged to defend every Chinese policy, or to articulate every point of Chinese policy.

Q: Actually I’m more interested in the American response to this.

ROBERTS: So you’re free to –

CHU: Good question. I think in 1969, when CTBT was ratified at the U.N., China was really reluctant because at that time Chinese leader, they didn’t think we need more test to see if, to make our weapons more safer, more efficient. But we understand that the international community opinion. I think China understand the trends, global trends. So China agreed to the test ban. So if you ask other major countries to resume the test, I think China would not resume test. Yes, China has interest to improve its nuclear safety, but China would look other ways to do that instead of testing.

ADM. MIES: I would just comment that I don’t think testing is as critical to fielding a new weapon as many people portray it to be, and if you remember, going back in history, the first bomb that was used in World War II was not tested. I think there is enough knowledge about nuclear weapon design and how that design can be simplified to have a high degree of confidence that you could build a nuclear weapon that would work without necessarily having to test that weapon.

I think clearly that was the intention in the U.S. government with regard to the reliable replacement warhead design. It was a warhead that we would have high confidence that even with changes to an existing design would not require testing. So I don’t see testing as critical as some people believe it to be.

Q: Therefore, do you support a CTBT?

ADM. MIES: I think that depends on the politics of some issues which I’m not expert in, but I would say in spirit we are living with the CTBT today in the sense that we’re observing a moratorium with respect to testing, and from that standpoint I have no problem with living with that moratorium. I don’t think there is any desire on the U.S.’s part to want to return to testing unless we absolutely felt it was necessary to ensure the credibility of our existing capabilities.

ROBERTS: Next up.

Q: I’m Christina Hensell from the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute. I’m not quite sure that I completely believe in Admiral Mies’s slide and the idea that nuclear weapons have prevented war in the past. But even if that were true, it’s not clear how helpful they are in the future, toward future threats. And certainly we’ve heard about quite a few of them, terrorists and other such things today, where others have questioned how useful this is.

We know that the accident risk is greater, the more countries have these materials. And certainly if we want to prevent proliferation, one would not want to promote the idea that these are useful weapons at war fighting. So my question is, if one wants to stop proliferation or roll it back, and we heard about a fissile material cutoff treaty today and so on, one would presumably need more verification and thus transparency, including in countries like China. However, today their
nuclear deterrent in large part relies on a lack of transparency. We don’t know where it is so we can’t target it.

Thus, perhaps perversely, I’m wondering, if China moves an SSBN-based force, if we might be able to get toward more transparency. And in addition to that, I wonder what other sorts of confidence-building measures might be suggested by either our Chinese or other speakers, to help bring China into arms control, since I don’t think the common measures under START would be acceptable to China, at least at this stage of their force structure.

ROBERTS: Let me turn first to you. Would you like to add something?

CHU: Yes. Korea, like China, does have transparency problem, not only in foreign policy security but very much as a Chinese living in China every day, it’s very much a domestic matter. So they need a lot of improvement.

The thing that China has improved a lot in transparency in domestic and external affairs, and so its job going to be more – (inaudible). And besides that, I think a strategic dialogue between China and U.S., China and Japan, China and Russia, and India, is not ICBM measures to increase confidence, trust. And see like the countries are – (inaudible). And working on multilateral level by the U.N., IAEA is not a way to increase transparency, mutual understanding. Yes, China is still slow in the process, but I see China is steadily going latter direction.

ROBERTS: Admiral Mies?

ADM. MIES: Well, I’ll try and take on your questions in some logical order. First, I think it’s hard to prove a negative, impossible maybe. So just as it’s hard for the disarmament community to say that certain actions have promoted peace, I can’t claim that this result is solely the product of the existence of nuclear weapons. But I would argue that I think it’s hard to disprove that nuclear weapons haven’t significantly contributed to the transformation of warfare and the avoidance of major war among the great powers. I haven’t heard anybody make a good argument that that’s not the case.

I’m not advocating further proliferation. Don’t get me wrong. My point is that nuclear abolition has to be cart to the geopolitical horse, and you can’t put the cart before the horse. Without fundamental geopolitical change, I would worry that if you could abolish nuclear weapons, the danger you run is that you return to the 20th century world, which had unprecedented horrors and travesty far greater than maybe even Mr. Steinberg’s speech implied if a nuclear weapon went off in a single city.

I don’t believe nuclear abolition will necessarily reduce the nuclear threat from terrorism because I think that threat may always be there because you have a latency of knowledge and understanding, and until you could get rid of all fissionable material, that could be used in a weapon the material will be available. And I think that’s a significant problem and that will continue long after the abolition of nuclear weapons. So I don’t see it as a simple problem.

I also see significant risks that you encounter as you try and go down that path to lower and lower numbers. The most critical risk is how our allies view our commitments, and as they increasingly become concerned or doubtful of the seriousness of our commitment, or the credibility
of our commitment, to what degree are they encouraged to develop their own nuclear capabilities, and therefore have the perverse effect of promoting proliferation while we’re trying to work toward abolition.

Q: If I could get one –

ROBERTS: I’m establishing a bad precedent here by letting everybody come back in. Ten seconds.

Q: I just wondered about the possibility of cooperation with China on missile defense could be important as you go to low numbers. If there’s any chance of that.

Q: Mike Gerson from the Center for Naval Analysis. Under the broad rubric of strategic stability, or the other terms crisis stability and sort of below that, first strike stability. I’m interested in your comments about how you think crisis stability, first strike stability are current – how they fit currently in the U.S.-China relationship, and how they may fit in the future. And in particular I’m interested in this in the context particularly because you indicate that you would like to continue a policy of calculated ambiguity, whereas part of that is to deter chemical and biological attacks, since we don’t have the capability to retaliate in kind. Does it also portend perhaps an intense crisis, create incentives for preemption?

And to our Chinese colleague, have the Chinese thought about crisis instability, particularly in the context of in an intense crisis with the U.S., dispersing forces and erecting signaling mechanisms like that that may be misinterpreted by the U.S. as an impending first strike, in which case we choose to preempt?

ROBERTS: Okay, first to you.

ADM. MIES: I don’t know of any serious thinking within our U.S. government which has ever involved preemption involving nuclear weapons. I think we’ve always viewed our nuclear weapons as weapons of last resort, and we’ve always relied primarily on them as a deterrent capability with the assured second strike. That isn’t to say that this administration or past administrations haven’t thought about preemption on a conventional level, but I don’t think it’s a serious consideration.

These weapons are the President’s weapons. They’re not military weapons. They’re national instruments. Their primary role is deterrence, and they’ll only be used as weapons of last resort.

I can’t speak to the Chinese leadership. They haven’t been transparent enough. We believe so.

CHU: I think that is a Chinese concern for a long time, that the U.S. has plan and strategy to actually use nuclear weapons for long time. And more recently, in 2001 NPR caused a big problem among Chinese, that the sentence say the Taiwan Strait is one of the seven places that the U.S. is going to use nuclear weapons, even first. So that’s cause a big concern among Chinese. So a new NPR will drop that kind of words.
So there is worry among Chinese that U.S. consider first use, consider the first strike nuclear weapons. And missile defense is a problem because that increase, according to Chinese, the possibility that U.S. might use nuclear as a first strike. So I think we need a dialogue. But I pretty much can agree with people here. I think U.S. does not have a plan to use nuclear first, even if it does not say so, because U.S. does not need to use nuclear weapons.

As a crisis, I do agree that the danger between our two countries might not be strategic matters, but manager skills on crisis look on the past 20 years. We are ready for full crisis between our two countries once every five years, so I think it’s dangerous. We need better communication. We need better workable mechanisms to communicate, to prevent a crisis incidents and to manage. I think that’s the time vital than last time, if he’s weak. But we’re still in a dangerous situation, so we need more work together.

ADM. MIES: Let me just briefly pile on and maybe address your question from our dialogues with the Chinese without giving you a specific answer. I spoke in my presentation of the nuances of what constitutes first use, and hence what would then allow you to respond. In our discussions with our Chinese counterparts, it’s not been clear to me. My impression is there’s a question about if we use conventional precision strike to destroy strategic assets of the Chinese, is that equivalent to first use, have we broken the first use because we’ve taken out their nuclear capabilities, even though we used conventional capabilities?

And then secondly, does an EMP weapon which has significant effects and is a nuclear weapon but doesn’t kill anybody, does that constitute first use – or because you didn’t use it in a mass destructive way but used it for other purposes, is that first use or not? I don’t know the answers to those questions but I think there are nuances to how you define first use.

Q: Bruce MacDonald with the Strategic Posture Review Commission. Question for all three panelists, perhaps most specifically for Professor Chu. When I was at a conference at Changhua (ph) in ’06 with your colleague Li Bin, one of the things that I heard about the United States, I raised the issue, well, China shouldn’t really worry about U.S. missile defense. It’s very limited, and if you can’t penetrate our missile defense, you’ve got bigger problems than you realize. But the response was, well, that’s all fine but we don’t know how much you might deploy, that you could go a lot further. And Russia has thrown some of those same accusations at us as well. Oh, 10 interceptors in Europe is not a problem but there’s potentially no limit.

I disagree, I think, overall with what Professor Pfaltzgraff is saying, but when he talks about Chinese strategic modernization, the same question goes back. The lack of transparency into China’s program in the area of strategic weapons means that, well, we don’t know where the production of the longer-range mobile ICBMs is going to end. We don’t know where the production of missile-firing submarines is going to end. If it’s only a modest increase in order to give China added confidence to deal with U.S. missile defense, we could probably cope with that, but one can’t rule out some of the scenarios that Professor Pfaltzgraff is laying out.

It would be a tremendous confidence-building measure if there could be some kind of transparency into what China’s planning in the strategic area. So my question for all three panelists, but especially for Professor Chu, is, what is holding up that kind of release of information? Why doesn’t China – it would be a dramatic step forward if it could lay out in kind of – it wouldn’t have
to be excruciating detail, but what it has in mind for its submarine production program, what it has in mind for the mobile ICBM program. What’s preventing that?

And finish just with a caution that without that we become victim, both of us, to the kind of uncertainty and worst case planning that really any prudent leadership would have to take into account. And also just to mention that Chinese taxpayers in essence are paying for those weapons, and don’t they have a right to at least know what they’re buying?

CHU: I think it looks like a specific issue but it has a bigger picture behind. I think first there is a political culture. It’s new. Transparency, the word is new to Chinese. So for 1,000 years open transparency, even in domestic matters, is not a term, is not a concept. So it needs time for Chinese to come up, accept as practice in domestic and foreign policy issues.

Second, I think is basically has a lot to do with overall releasing. Even our bilateral relations are better, but we are still not allies. We’re not friends. So there is no that kind of mood. I think Chinese leaders do not think we have obligation because of the relationship to tell everything you want to know. We don’t have that obligation, and our relationship are not that kind of good.

And the third I think, yes, some military people really believe that secrecy is necessary for deterrence because our force are so small. So we need keep secrets in order to have credibility of deterrence. So I see a lot of force working behind. And I said that – (inaudible) – very much as a Chinese I see a domestic issue because like military budget, we do not say specifically about military budget. But the whole budget is not so transparent. So you don’t know the part of other commercial, social areas, as well you do know for military. So I see that’s a bigger problem that Chinese need to work out in the near future.

ROBERTS: In the interest of time, let’s take the three remaining questions from the floor and we’ll give the panelists a chance to wrap up.

Q: Richard Garwin, IBM fellow emeritus. Apparently I’m one of the few people who talks to the Chinese about nuclear weapons, and also more generally about strategic stability. In fact, I chaired the secretary of state’s advisory panel on international security for the last eight years of the 20th century, and I helped build the U.S. nuclear forces.

Now, I have to talk about Professor Pfaltzgraff’s paper, and Admiral Mies did, even if it was impolitic, disagree with him. I support Admiral Mies. Pfaltzgraff says not only is strategic stability not served by offering China an assurance that we accept mutual vulnerability, but we have no choice. Everything we do to defend ourselves is much more readily countered with their strategic ballistic missiles by counter-measures. Anybody who knows my Web site knows that. And if you don’t know my Web site, you ought to go there.

I’ve been talking to the Chinese since 1988 about this, since 1974 actually, and studying their nuclear weapons since the 1950s. So it’s not so easy for them, for instance, to MIRV – that is, to have much smaller warheads to put on their missiles if they want to make their missiles mobile. Sensible people would require a nuclear test for that, in my opinion.

As for Admiral Mies’ questions about going to zero, those questions have to be answered. He’s absolutely right. If you can’t answer those questions, you shouldn’t go. On the other hand, we
have a long ways to go in my opinion to reduce the perils that President Obama enunciated. And we ought to move smartly ahead on that, also to safeguard, consolidate the nuclear-weapon materials – the highly enriched uranium, not only in the military but in the civil sector, and plutonium in both sectors too.

So a lot of things that they can do, but mutual vulnerability is a fact of life. The Chinese obviously have something to worry about because they see that people advocate dominance by any other name, and they will certainly write papers about it. They will evaluate it. They will use it to increase their military budget.

ROBERTS: Thank you. William?

Q: William Walker, St. Andrews University. In Professor Pfaltzgraff’s paper he lists three of China’s strategic goals. It strikes me that there’s a fourth that’s missing, which I think is possibly the most important of all, which is keeping Japan non-nuclear. Here there is a paradox in that he also goes on to say that the United States is China’s principal strategic adversary. But in a way China also depends on the United States being the strategic adversary, and Japan perceiving that the United States is around to balance its power in the region.

I wonder if you would agree with me that to some extent China’s great restraint has been trying not to provoke the Japanese into responding. And if the United States hadn’t been there to balance Chinese power, and Japan had felt itself vulnerable to Chinese military threat or something, there would have been an arms race in the region. So in a way it’s in China’s great interest to maintain Japan non-nuclear, and to avoid any sense that Japan may feel increasingly insecure. It has to reverse its policy of the 40 or 50 years.

It worries me a bit, I must say, that you might get a dynamic going between the United States and China and possibly with India too, which China feels compels to modernize, particularly around missile defense issues. But you link that also to North Korea, that Japan feels that China is not doing enough to constrain North Korea, not actually solving the problem, for other reasons is trying to maintain the North Korean regime, is not closing down the weapon program.

Adding to that the Japanese fear about China becoming a great power, economic power, coercing and all the rest of it, you might then destabilize this whole situation. I suppose what I come to out of that is it’s really important that China should join United States at this stage in this effort to exercise more restraint in relation to nuclear weapons, both for general global interest but also on the specific issue of giving Japan confidence that in fact the whole thing isn’t going to come apart.

ROBERTS: Thank you. Final question?

Q: Pete Sheehy, Los Alamos committee on arms control and international security. If Presidents Obama and Medvedev are indeed successful in attaining their stated goal of a new round of arms control limits, strategic warhead limits, most people believe that the next stage going down below 1,000 requires that China be a participant. If the United States and Russia do agree on new lower limits and then come to China proposing, let’s negotiate three ways on a new limit, will China enter into that negotiation in good faith? And do you think a new agreement between the three powers can be reached?
ROBERTS: Let me turn first to Rich. We have three questions left on the floor.

ADM. MIES: I agree primarily with what Dick Garwin has said. The great danger in the United States is that a lot of people write a lot of different things, and the danger from our standpoint is the Chinese sometimes pick and choose which ones they choose to believe and which ones they don’t. I think we need to be wary of selective reading of our policies, our doctrine, those kind of things, particularly from people in the public.

I was being polite with respect to not talking about potential Japan nuclearization, but I think that’s the great fear that a lot of us have. If the credibility of our extended deterrent commitment weakens to a point that Japan no longer feels confident of our commitment, at what point does Japan go nuclear? And I think from that standpoint, as Chinese use our extended deterrence commitment versus a nuclear Japan, the extended deterrence commitment is clearly the lesser of evils.

I don’t disagree with your comment about having to go to multilateral negotiations at some point. I don’t know exactly where that point is. I think it severely complicates the ability to achieve that, to achieve some realistic agreement. And I think you can’t exclude France and England from those discussions as well.

CHU: The Chinese modernization, including the military modernization, is a challenge, is a concern to a lot of countries, all the countries in Asia. So I do agree that China has a lot to do to ease the concerns, to engage in frank dialogue, transparency with other countries, big or small, in Asia. I see it as intention from Chinese leadership or government about there is a lot of work to do. But at the same time, as an urgent security issue, I think Chinese modernization is inevitable. Every country wants modernization, so it’s legitimate. So there is also challenge for other countries to accept more powerful China in Asia. Even powerful than most of the neighbors because simply China is bigger in size, our territory, than Indians, that Japanese. So it’s legitimate in terms of national defense for China to have a strong power. Just as Chinese accept American superiority in the world, Asia, because even U.S. is not bigger than China in size, but U.S. is bigger in global interest, global commitments. So I think this also affect our life.

On Japan, I may have a lot of difference to understand Japan among my Chinese fellows, even in China. First, I do not think that Japan is likely to go to nuclear. Even this North Korea threat, even this military build-up in China, because Japan has alliance with U.S. because Japan’s domestic system. But even Japan goes military, including nuclear, I don’t think there is something horrible, terrible to China. Japan for the foreseeable future, not unlikely to be much more powerful in military than China.

Every way Chinese should worry somebody. There’s only country here: U.S. we should worry. We should not worry too much about others. And yes, there is more recognition of Chinese about U.S. role. I see Chinese leader’s comments state clearly in past, that China accept and recognize that the U.S. has a security role Asia Pacific. I think including the alliance system with Japan.
So I think the solution for stable relations among Japan, U.S., China is kind of trilateral strategic dialogue, which are joined with other to propose, including my Brookings paper two years ago, on the security issue, strategy among the three countries.

And the last question is about the Chinese join the arms control. I think for the foreseeable future this not likely that China will join the arms control, disarm in the process between Russia and the U.S., simply because you have too many. You need to reduce, unilaterally or bilaterally. And China has fulfilled. So it's not our agenda to reduce. It's our agenda to increase, even not at a dramatic level.

So I think China is waiting for U.S. and advise to reduce the level, like China has today of in future years – then start to consider to join. At the same time China supports the process of U.S., Russia reduction. That is good for international peace.

ROBERTS: I'd like to add a couple of additional comments in closing because there have been a good set of questions about how do we fit China into this vision of reducing nuclear arrests and reducing nuclear dangers and deepening nuclear order, at a time when we’re uncertain about the relationship we will have with China, can have, and at a time when China is uncertain and modernizing.

The question was, would China come in good faith to this process. My perception is that all three parties – Russia, China, and the United States – would come in good faith, but without any ideas. By and large what we seem to want is, okay, we’ll reduce operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons, U.S., Russian. There are 1,500, and then China at 300, or whatever the number is. Starts making reciprocal reductions. How’s that going to work? Not very well.

What’s our next concept? We don’t have any. They don’t have any. And in my view there is a welter of very complicated questions if your starting point is U.S.-Russians arms control. Because what did we hear this morning? U.S.-Russian arms control will be, this step or the next step, about establishing some agreements about the size and capabilities of U.S. missile defense; about the size and capabilities of U.S. non-nuclear strike. And Russia can accept a deal there that China cannot.

If the United States put 20 conventional Trident missiles and submarines, that doesn’t bother Russia much but that really bothers China a lot. In addition, if the U.S. and Russia really strip down the number of operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons, Russia’s perceived vulnerability to Chinese coercion from the imbalance in the theater systems, there are 60 to 80 medium-range missiles in China pointed at Russia. There are no Russian INF. That doesn’t matter when you have thousands, those strategically operationally deployed nuclear weapons. It matters more to Russia, not much to us. But to Russia.

So those are illustrations of the fact that when we say, is China willing to come into this process, it’s incumbent upon both our communities and the Russians to have some very constructive ideas about how this is done practically speaking. My sense is that our current analysis reflects the fact that when we think about strategic stability, we have a concept of it and we blame the other guy for being the source of instability. That’s a little unkind to say that it’s also true in China, but it’s more or less also true.
China has a vision of what’s stable and says, it’s America that’s threatening. We’re not going to get anywhere in this strategic relationship if we just sit here and blame the other guy. So I think that the challenge for our analytic community is to stop fighting over who’s to blame and start fighting over where we’d like to be in five or 10 years in this relationship, and how does it fit in with where we want to be in the U.S.-Russia, China-Russia relationship. And then talking about how we get there, instead of spending a lot of time talking about how we got to where we are.

Lastly a footnote, George’s first question to us this morning was about what’s the role of nuclear weapons today. We Americans reach immediately for the word deterrence. Deterrence is another one of these words like transparency, that’s a little alien to the Chinese language. It’s not the first concept they reach for. The first concept they reach for is assurance. Nuclear weapons are basically, in Mao’s words, to prevent nuclear bullying – in Mao’s words, to smash nuclear bullying.

These are capabilities that aren’t so much for deterrence because you’re pointing them at somebody, you’re going to prevent them from doing something, you’re going to coerce them. In China’s concept they’re a source of assurance that, despite this big country over the horizon, and a messy Russia and a rising India and a troubled Japan, that China’s going to get that five decades of stability. These are not fundamentally about deterrence for China, and I believe this is also the case, more or less for Russia.

I think we miss something fundamental when we reach to our vocabulary that says, it’s all about deterrence, and then we can just align our policies with deterrence narrowly defined, and we’re not going to find the conceptual basis to proceed in a stabilizing way in this sort of triangular mess of relationships.

I’ve gone on a little too long. I thank Bob Pfaltzgraff for sending along a paper, even if the airlines didn’t cooperate with him. I should say that Chu Shulong has a chapter in a new book, if you have not seen it, an interesting book on Asia’s nuclear future. It’s called “The Long Shadow: Asia’s Nuclear Future,” editor Muthia Alagappa. This is a book of the East-West Center. It’s 16 country chapters on the nuclear countries of Asia, and some overlapping analysis about whether Ken Waltz is right or wrong when it comes to Asia.

Chu Shulong has the chapter in there on China and that would be an opportunity for you to learn more about his thinking on this topic.

With that I’ll wrap up. Please join me in thanking the panelists for their presentations.

(Applause.)

(END)