

Thursday Topic meeting helper document: more on posture, missions, and role

1. posture—probably better to go with “nuclear weapons posture” instead on nuclear posture, although it does not make a huge difference.

A) Experts use the phrase “nuclear weapons posture”

Joe **Cirincione**, Ploughshares Fund **and** Andrew **Grotto**, Center for American Progress, ORIENTING THE 2009 NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW, Center for American Progress, November 2008, p. 1, www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/11/pdf/nuclear_posture.pdf, accessed 5-18-09. (DCH)

There is an emerging bipartisan consensus that America’s current nuclear weapons posture imposes an unnecessary burden on U.S. efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism and curtail the spread of nuclear weapons, materials, and technology to additional nation-states. It holds that the United States must retain a nuclear arsenal as a strategic deterrent, but should embrace the vision laid out by senior statesmen George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, William Perry, and Sam Nunn of a world free of nuclear weapons in order to strengthen America’s ability to exercise global leadership in countering 21st century nuclear threats. **The Obama administration should use the congressionally mandated 2009–2010 Nuclear Posture Review, or NPR, to realign nuclear policy, forces, and posture with these threats.** This study makes the case for why a successful NPR should be among the Obama administration’s top priorities and provides a roadmap on how to structure and manage the review so that it achieves key policy objectives. It is not a study on nuclear weapons doctrine.

B) Yes, nuclear posture is used (the Review), but alongside “policy and forces” which we probably do not want to use...

Joe **Cirincione**, Ploughshares Fund **and** Andrew **Grotto**, Center for American Progress, ORIENTING THE 2009 NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW, Center for American Progress, November 2008, p. 11, www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/11/pdf/nuclear_posture.pdf, accessed 5-18-09. (DCH)

Accordingly, the Obama administration should use the congressionally mandated 2009–2010 nuclear posture review [see Appendix I] to realign nuclear policy, forces, and posture with 21st century nuclear threats. The goals of the review should be to recalibrate the nuclear deterrent in light of existing and emerging threats, strengthen America’s hand in negotiations over improvements to the global nuclear nonproliferation regime, and send a clear signal to the world that the United States is charting a new course.

C) ‘Nuclear weapons posture’ means policies governing role, mission, and size of the nuclear arsenal---you can “reduce” posture...

Joe **Cirincione**, Ploughshares Fund **and** Andrew **Grotto**, Center for American Progress, ORIENTING THE 2009 NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW, Center for American Progress, November 2008, p. 3, www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/11/pdf/nuclear_posture.pdf, accessed 5-18-09. (DCH)

There is an emerging bipartisan consensus that America’s current nuclear weapons posture—the policies governing the role, mission, and size of the U.S. nuclear weapons arsenal—imposes an unnecessary burden on U.S. efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism and curtail the spread of nuclear weapons, materials, and technology to additional nation-states.

This consensus, which includes more than two-thirds of living former national security advisors and secretaries of state or defense, acknowledges the ongoing role of U.S. nuclear weapons as a strategic deterrent for the United States and its allies. But the consensus also

embraces the vision of “a world free of nuclear weapons” articulated by former Secretaries of State George Shultz and Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of Defense William Perry, and former Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA) in a pair of Wall Street Journal op-eds.¹

2. Missions vs. Role.

This seems to be a core part of the debate and could yield some strong topicality/solvency debates with either choice...in fact there may be four viable choices with mission, missions, role, and roles.

This issue is also based on some other choices with the wording. “Missions” works with nuclear arsenal, whereas “role” works with nuclear arsenal and posture.

Ultimately, though, missions (plural) refers to a number of specific tasks. Some of those tasks may be vary amorphous, but they are still delineated.

Role refers to the overarching goal of deterrence...there are difference ways to categorize deterrence (and there may be a few other roles depending on the definition), but generally the role is to deter. This poses a problem potentially because an aff could “reduce the role of deterrence provided by nuclear weapons” by building more conventional forces (to deter), but the neg could probably win the more limited interpretation that “reducing the role” means “shrinking the importance of.” This is another reason to go with some combination of reducing size AND role.

This may also happen with “restrict mission” if restricting one flawed mission strengthens an existing mission. (“overawe potential rivals”)

Anyway, there are three or so “role” cards in the initial “use subgroup document” that categorize the ways “role” can relate to deterrence. The BAS evidence that provides over 10 ways the role can be drastically reduced is also still the best single interpretation in a card.

Some additional thoughts on this....

A) use both....reduce the missions and role of nuclear weapons. Probably better to pick one or the other, although....

Joe **Cirincione**, Ploughshares Fund **and** Andrew **Grotto**, Center for American Progress, ORIENTING THE 2009 NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW, Center for American Progress, November 2008, p. 3, www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/11/pdf/nuclear_posture.pdf, accessed 5-18-09. (DCH)

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B) This evidence uses “mission” as a single overarching concept. If it’s “missions,” it may include more than just the 12 major missions:

Joe **Cirincione**, Ploughshares Fund **and** Andrew **Grotto**, Center for American Progress, ORIENTING THE 2009 NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW, Center for American Progress, November 2008, p. 21, www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/11/pdf/nuclear_posture.pdf, accessed 5-18-09. (DCH)

The United States currently has an estimated 10,000 nuclear warheads in its total stockpile of which approximately 5,400 nuclear warheads are in the active stockpile: 4,075 “operational” weapons and another 1,260 warheads kept in “reserve.” The operational stockpile consists of around 3,575 “strategic nuclear forces” and 500 “nonstrategic (‘tactical’) nuclear forces.” The remainder of the weapons is in storage awaiting dismantlement.

Strategic nuclear forces. A nuclear warhead is generally considered “strategic” if it is delivered using a long-range strategic delivery platform as part of a deterrence mission. These platforms include:

Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, or ICBMs. America has an estimated 500 Minuteman III ICBMs, but plans reductions to 450.

The ICBMs are located at three U. S. Air Force bases in five states: Minot AFB (ND), Malmstrom AFB (MT), and Warren AFB (which overlaps corners of CO, NE, and WY). These ICBMs carry an estimated 764 nuclear warheads, most of which are 20 times more powerful than the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Ballistic Missile Submarines, or

SSBNs. The United States has 14 SSBNs,

two of which are currently in overhaul. These are based out of Bangor Naval Submarine Base (WA) or Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base (GA). The SSBN fleet can carry 288 Trident II D5 ballistic missiles. Each missile, in turn, can carry six nuclear warheads for a total of 1,728 operationally deployed strategic warheads on the SSBN fleet—nearly 40 percent of the operationally deployed arsenal. The explosive power of these warheads ranges from eight times to 30 times more powerful than the Hiroshima device, depending on the warhead model. More than 60 percent of SSBN patrols now occur in the Pacific, compared to just 15 percent in the 1980s. The targets for these patrols are likely China, North Korea, and Russia.

Long-range heavy bombers. Two bombers, the B-2 Spirit and B-52 Stratofortress, are dual-hatted for nuclear and conventional missions. America has 16 B-2s and 56 B-52s on operational status, and another four B-2s and 38 B-52Hs are used for training, testing, and backup missions. The B-52s are stationed at Barksdale AFB (LA) and Minot AFB (ND), and the B-2s at Whiteman AFB (MO). The bombers can carry several different types of nuclear weapons, including some with a so-called “dial-a-yield” capability that enables the user to choose from a range of explosive yields. The explosive power of the air-delivered strategic arsenal ranges from less than the explosive yield of the Hiroshima bomb to 80 times as powerful. More than 1,000 strategic warheads are

operationally deployed to the bomber force.

Non-strategic “tactical” nuclear forces. These are nuclear weapons intended for tactical use on a military battlefield. There are no binding international legal constraints on them. America has an estimated 1,290 non-strategic weapons, of which 500 are considered “operational” and ready for deployment. The remaining 790 are considered “inactive.” An estimated 350 warheads from the active stockpile are forward deployed on the territory of several NATO allies. The non-strategic arsenal consists of sea-launched Tomahawk cruise missiles and air-launched gravity bombs.

C) If nuclear weapons are generally used to support US foreign policy, than affs might be able to restrict the use of nuclear weapons is just about any crisis in stability because all of those scenarios would be “its missions”—this evidence also speaks to posture review and weapons posture

Phillip Coyle, Snr. Advisor World Security Inst. and 40 year public service in the field, 2009
(March 17, CQ Congressional Testimony, NUCLEAR WEAPONS COMPLEX;
COMMITTEE: HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS; SUBCOMMITTEE: ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT)
Committee on House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development

Before an American president would order the use of nuclear weapons - especially the use of tactical nuclear weapons - certain criteria would be considered.

These criteria are a necessary, but not necessarily sufficient, set, as other factors might further pertain against nuclear use. For an American president to choose to use nuclear weapons, the following would be required:

1) A unique mission or crisis situation that is extremely unlikely to be solved by other means, such as diplomacy.

2) A mission that cannot be accomplished as well or with the required decisive finality if conventional weapons had been used.

3) A mission whose benefits must outweigh the inevitable backlash, recriminations and criticisms that would follow, and

4) A mission that has to put an end to the crisis situation that motivated the use of nuclear weapons in the first place. If the end result is unchanged or the problem is essentially ongoing, no U.S. president could justify the use of nuclear weapons.

There are few missions that would meet these requirements. U.S. conventional capability offers other ways to accomplish many of the missions tested by the first criterion. Under the second criterion, although conventional weapons strikes might not be able to eliminate the threat as conclusively, they could probably do so if their deployment level was increased. Hard targets that could not be conclusively destroyed with conventional bombs or missiles might be taken out by ground forces.

The third criterion is also significant. Using nuclear weapons would have enormous costs; only removing an extraordinarily immediate and severe threat to U.S. security would justify their use. This will likely remain the case

unless there is some shift that eliminates the nuclear taboo. The United States didn't use nuclear weapons against North Korea in the 1950s when - compared to today - the U.S. military had many fewer options, and when it might have been more politically acceptable to do so. As time has passed, the nuclear taboo has only become stronger, and it remains despite the confusion and uncertainty of the post-Cold War period.

Also, the unique cost of nuclear weapons suggests that any proposed use should have some finality in addressing the ultimate threat. Nuclear weapons used against individual nuclear installations or individual terrorist bases would not eliminate the overall problem. The demonstrated use of nuclear weapons might alter the threat perceptions of some U.S. foes, but, given the motivations of conceivable future adversaries, it could also enhance their commitment. The difficult fourth criterion of finality symbolizes why we still hear inchoate threats of nuclear retaliation to a hypothetical major terrorist attack.

At present, Russia views nuclear weapons, including tactical nuclear weapons, as a deterrent to America's conventional military superiority. Ironically, this is exactly the argument that the U.S. made during the Cold War when America felt it needed a "flexible response" to stop the vast Russian Army coming through the Fulda Gap.

Nevertheless, both because of the large numbers of tactical nuclear weapons which the United States still retains, and the likelihood that an American president would not order their use, Complex Transformation does not need to plan appreciable capacity to replace those tactical nuclear weapons. Thus, Complex Transformation that supports operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons supports the U.S. nuclear weapons deterrent overall.

Next Steps in Nuclear Arms Reductions

For three decades the U.S. Congress also has supported the continuing reductions in the stockpiles of U.S. nuclear weapons regardless of the political party in power.

Going beyond the reductions in the Moscow Treaty, nuclear strategists are entertaining prospects of lower and lower totals of nuclear weapons. As a next step, a stockpile of 1000 U.S. nuclear weapons has been proposed and has gained wide acceptance in the United States.

A 1997 study by the National Academy of Sciences called for "a program of progressive constraints to reduce U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals to 1,000 total warheads each and then, if security conditions permit, to a few hundred warheads, provided adequate verification procedures and transparency measures have been implemented."

Authored by a group of distinguished scientists, retired senior military officers and experts policy analysts, most of whom have been closely associated with various aspects of nuclear security affairs, the study set a credible goal for next steps in nuclear arms reductions by the United States and Russia.

Various posture proposals with a 500-warhead figure also are being advocated.

The fiscal year 2008 Defense Authorization Act mandates two separate nuclear posture reviews that may well affect future U.S. policy. Yet recent posture proposals still don't persuasively articulate the contemporary missions of the American nuclear forces that might remain after further reductions. If many of the proposed missions for nuclear weapons are not credible within the security future of the United States, those missions will not justify the retention of nuclear weapons to carry them out.

As the continued reductions occur, many of the long-held assumptions and analytical frameworks that undergird the U.S. nuclear weapons posture become more tenuous. Past assumptions are not a basis for predicting future requirements. Most critically, as the U.S. nuclear stockpile passes below 1,500 nuclear weapons to the next stage of 1,000 or even 500, the planning assumptions for Complex Transformation cannot be based on the past.

D) these are good questions and part of the debate---ROLE/MISSION = same

Joe **Cirincione**, Ploughshares Fund **and** Andrew **Grotto**, Center for American Progress, ORIENTING THE 2009 NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW, Center for American Progress, November 2008, p. 18-19, www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/11/pdf/nuclear_posture.pdf, accessed 5-18-09.

Deterrence and doctrine

- The mission(s) and role(s) for nuclear weapons. Should the employment of nuclear weapons be limited to deterring and if necessary responding to nuclear attacks? Or are there other legitimate missions for nuclear weapons, e.g. to preempt or retaliate against the use of chemical or biological weapons attacks? Would the United States ever use nuclear weapons first? What role, if any, exists for tactical nuclear weapons? Does uncertainty over the strategic direction of China or Russia materially affect these questions?
- Nuclear weapons targeting plans. Should the United States continue to rely on preset targeting plans against Russia, China, and other possible adversaries, or abandon them in favor of flexible targeting procedures that tailor a response to unique contingencies as they emerge?
- Deployment practices, including alert rates. Should the United States retain rapid launch options for nuclear weapons, such as “launch on warning” or “launch under attack”? What are the operational implications?
- Declaratory policy. Should the United States publicly renounce and/or reaffirm (as the case may be) its policies regarding security assurances?
- The role, if any, of nuclear weapons in sustaining key security alliances. How important is America’s nuclear umbrella to the NATO alliance and U.S. relations with Japan? Should NATO remain a nuclear alliance? What about extending the umbrella to others, e.g. allies in the Middle East? [19]
- The relationship between nuclear forces, conventional long-range strike, and ballistic missile defense systems.

also—maybe they are the same if the “missions” are types of deterrence:

During the Cold War, the U. S. nuclear deterrent had two basic missions: deterrence of nuclear attack (by threatening swift, effective retaliation), and deterrence against overwhelming conventional attack against North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries by the Warsaw Pact. In the post-Cold War era, the first mission has been updated to include deterrence of attacks that employ other weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

(Dr. Kathlenn C. **Bailey** et al., Senior Associate, NIPP and member, USDS International Security Advisory Board, WHITE PAPER ON THE NECESSITY OF THE U.S. NUCLEAR DETERRENT, National Institute for Public Policy, August 15, 2007, p.1, <http://nipp.org/Adobe/Deterrence%20Paper%20-%20version%202.pdf>, accessed 5-25-09.)

E) Problems with role....it may just mean “deter”—the role is to deter...but it also may be unclear exactly what the nuclear weapons’ (program/arsenal/etc.) role really is:

Turpen, '09 (<http://www.stimson.org/print.cfm?pub=1&ID=746> “Retaining Nuclear Know-how”, Dr. Elizabeth Turpen is a Senior Associate with the Cooperative Nonproliferation Program at the Henry L. Stimson Center., Feb. 9, 2009
Our nuclear arsenal and the scientific infrastructure that ensures its safety, reliability and performance are entering a new and potentially destabilizing phase. This is based on a confluence of current events, including: 1) the change in administration; 2) a congressional commission on US strategic posture already underway and a legislative mandate for a new posture review in 2009; 3) insufficient consensus in Congress on the role of our nuclear forces; 4) lack of progress on obtaining key elements of 2001 Posture Review’s “responsive

infrastructure," and; 5) recent retirements and changes in committee leadership in Congress. This constellation of factors has the potential to give rise to decisions that would be to the detriment of our nation's scientific base and our national security.

On the campaign trail, President Obama embraced the vision of a nuclear free world, but he made clear that until the time such a world was possible, the US would maintain a "robust deterrent." Resolving the inherent tension in these divergent goals is no easy task. The backbone of our deterrent is the scientific base at our nuclear weapons laboratories, namely, Los Alamos, Livermore and Sandia National Laboratories. In order to recruit, train and retain young, talented scientists our political leaders must articulate a vision for the Laboratories that translates into meaningful work – a mission young scientists can embrace and to which they will dedicate their professional lives. Simultaneously, the work to achieve the vision must cause minimal concern regarding the overall trajectory of US nuclear weapons policy in order to facilitate achievement of our nonproliferation goals.

Since the end of the Cold War, **the U.S. has not managed to achieve a widespread bipartisan consensus on the role of its nuclear weapons.** This lack of consensus became most obvious in the years following the Bush Administration's 2001 Nuclear Posture Review, when both Republican and Democrat led Congresses were unwilling to pursue key elements of what was deemed by the previous administration as necessary to achieve a robust, responsive nuclear weapons infrastructure. In light of President Obama's commitment to pursue a nuclear free world and the state of the U.S. economy, many anticipate a steady decline in nuclear weapons budget. This requires achieving a rather tricky balance for the foreseeable future – a sufficiently capable scientific infrastructure to be successful stewards of the weapons while ensuring that budget reductions do not eviscerate the science and technology base applicable to contemporary national security challenges.

we're uncertain as to the "roles and missions"

http://www.csis.org/component/option,com_csis_pubs/task,view/id,5162/ (accessed 6/3/09)

NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN 21ST CENTURY U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

Report by a Joint Working Group of AAAS, the American Physical Society, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies

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U.S. nuclear policy and strategy in this post-Cold War and post-9/11 security environment have not been well articulated and as a consequence are poorly understood both within and outside American borders. This situation has led to doubts and uncertainties about the roles and missions of nuclear weapons and their value against 21st century security threats, including allies' uncertainties about U.S. assurances as they relate to emerging nuclear-armed neighboring states.

Changing “Role” may not mean much without other implementation (in terms of making the role “smaller”)

Josiane Gabel, 05 (is a research assistant at CSIS. “The Role of U.S. Nuclear Weapons after September 11 Gabel,” Josiane. *The Washington Quarterly*, Volume 28, Number 1, Winter 2004-05, pp. 181-195

The 1990s thus saw parallel efforts to deemphasize nuclear weapons and to emphasize their renewed importance in international relations. Unfortunately, the failure to integrate these contrasting currents of thought into a viable nuclear posture that adapted to the situation resulted in inertia. The 1994 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), a strategic review mandated by Congress, and Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 60 in 1997 —the two most authoritative statements on nuclear policy of the 1990s—brought no fundamental changes. These statements endorsed a smaller role for nuclear weapons in security strategy and claimed that the United States would be a leader in nuclear reductions (to numbers decided by START II) but also established that nuclear weapons would continue to play a role as a hedge against future contingencies. To observers, this policy of "lead and hedge" amounted to "business as usual, only smaller." Some saw this approach as an inability to cope with post-Cold War challenges that came with implementing extensive arms control agreements. Safely storing and destroying thousands of nuclear warheads and fissile material, as well as verifying and building on agreements, were overwhelming new tasks for policy managers. Fred Iklé, President Ronald Reagan's undersecretary of defense, lamented this lack of change: "Alas, new thinking has been obstructed by the Cold War's nuclear detritus and by ingrained habits of thinking."

F) cards say we should “reduce the role” without being explicit:

[British American Security Information Council](#)

September 29, 2008

[“Two missed opportunities for GTZ during the Presidential debate”](#) “Getting to Zero”

<http://www.basicint.org/gtz-blog/?p=110> Chris Lindborg, BASIC accessed 5/27/09

The first U.S. Presidential [debate](#) between Senators John McCain and Barack Obama was supposed to be the big chance for the candidates to showcase their foreign policy visions and differences. Unfortunately, both candidates missed two opportunities within the debate to mention their vision for a world without nuclear weapons. It's actually one issue that both of them seem to agree on, at least in a general way. Moreover, large cuts in the U.S. nuclear arsenal could reap economic and foreign policy benefits.

The candidates could have mentioned their interest in cutting back the U.S. nuclear arsenal and could have offered to eliminate plans for a Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) to save money. Recent estimates put U.S. spending on nuclear-related forces and activities at \$54 billion annually. While we talk about coping with the billions lost in the current financial crisis and discuss ways to cut back government spending in the future, we should remember that from 1940 to 2005, the United States spent \$7.5 trillion in developing, producing, deploying and maintaining its nuclear weapons (2006 dollars).*

We don't want to go down that route again. Maybe we won't have another Cold War, but the next Administration could take on unnecessary financial burdens if it pursues a RRW program and forgoes the chance to make large reductions in the arsenal. For example, following a scenario put forward by Miriam Pemberton and Lawrence Korb, the United States could save \$13.5 billion annually by reducing the nuclear arsenal to the minimum level needed for "a credible deterrent."

Second missed opportunity: Later in the debate, Mr. Lehrer asked the candidates how they would handle the nuclear crisis over Iran. Both candidates responded with how they would manage negotiations and sanctions. They also mentioned, to a varying extent, their support for Cooperative Threat Reduction, and military options, including missile defense. Neither candidate, however, mentioned the connection between the large U.S. arsenal and how its existence may actually encourage other countries to acquire nuclear weapons programs or further develop their arsenals. A Harris Interactive poll conducted in August found that two-thirds of adult Americans understand that the possession of nuclear weapons by some countries encourages other countries to obtain them.

If the United States were to further reduce the number and role of its nuclear weapons, it would improve efforts to restrain future proliferation. Reducing the nuclear arsenal will show that the United States is committed to Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is considered part of a 'grand bargain' in which other countries forego nuclear weapons in exchange for the NPT nuclear weapons states to work toward nuclear disarmament.

So far, the regime has helped to keep the number of nuclear weapons states to fewer than 10. Therefore, the next President must work to strengthen the NPT. If more countries take on nuclear weapons, the opportunities for accidents or nuclear war will increase. Moreover, as the candidates clearly understand (as evidenced by their support for Cooperative Threat Reduction programs), the widespread proliferation of fissile material could increase the chances that it will fall into the hands of terrorists.

Senators McCain and Obama had to cover an incredible amount of policy ground in a short period of time, and the financial crisis has understandably grabbed everyone's attention for the moment. However, this should serve as a reminder how reductions in the U.S. nuclear arsenal could help the next Administration save money and improve security.

*Figure from: Joseph Cirincione, *Bomb Scare: the History and Future of Nuclear Weapons*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, p. 77.

3. An interpretation for "role"---the role is not deterrence now, there are other "strategic purposes" for nuclear weapons. "Role" is more than just capability.

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The 2001 NPR—of which no unclassified version exists but substantial portions were leaked³³—attempted to address this challenge by establishing initiatives to explore the potential development of a new generation of nuclear weapons in order to give the president more flexibility to respond to diverse contingencies. In theory, these weapon programs would put a greater range of targets at risk by including a robust nuclear earth penetrator, or "bunker-buster," which could reach enemy leaders or WMD stockpiles in underground facilities and could minimize the collateral damage of some nuclear attacks by including lower-yield weapons.³⁴ The plans to conduct research into these new capabilities have sparked a sharp controversy. Some critics have attacked the technical feasibility of such weapons,³⁵ while others have pointed out that [End Page 190] the development of new nuclear capabilities by the United States would in effect give clearance to others to do the same, possibly prompting worldwide proliferation. Arms control advocates also worry that research into new models of weapons could lead to the end of the U.S. nuclear testing moratorium, again acting as a signal to other states that they could do so as well.³⁶ Finally, there is concern that more "usable" nuclear weapons would blur the line between conventional and nuclear capabilities, lowering the nuclear threshold by giving nuclear capabilities battlefield uses.³⁷

Still, the debate over the possible role of nuclear weapons vis-à-vis rogue states is wider than the debate over these new capabilities. Experts present a broad range of opinions about the effects of U.S. nuclear policy on the decisionmaking of rogue leaders. Some assert that the threat of nuclear retribution by the United States, even with its existing force structure, can always deter another state because the costs are too high for even the most reckless regimes to risk an attack or transfer WMD to terrorist groups.³⁸ Others indicate that rogue states appear to be immune to U.S. conduct because their nuclear decisions are rooted primarily in the dynamics of regional security.³⁹ Still others point out that the ultimate sanction for rogue-state leaders is not the use of nuclear weapons against their people, but the regime's removal from power.⁴⁰

no terrorism affs—that is not a role of nuclear weapons now.

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Confronting Terrorist Networks

There is a broad consensus that the greatest danger the United States currently confronts is the nexus between WMD and terrorism. Unfortunately, there is also a near consensus that U.S. nuclear weapons do not play a clear [End Page 191] role in meeting this threat. There are two key reasons. First, as recent experience has demonstrated, individuals implacably opposed to U.S. values and willing to die for their cause pose an insurmountable challenge to deterrence theory. The decisionmaking of leaders who are fanatical, willing to martyr themselves, or incommunicado is not understood well enough to know what they may hold dear. Second, transnational networks pose the problem of finding identifiable targets. Terrorist organizations govern no territory, and their leadership is elusive. The idea of a nuclear strike against a state, even a rogue state, where terrorists operate is clearly problematic, especially as the number of countries where terrorists are present or not well controlled increases.⁴¹ Therefore, the operational approach to deterrence—holding at risk target sets of value to the leadership of the adversary—cannot be applied here in its traditional way.

Moreover, a U.S. nuclear retaliatory strike may be precisely what a terrorist organization such as Al Qaeda seeks. In their minds, the subsequent devastation and chaos would reveal the (presumed) evil nature of the United States, accomplishing the goals that terrorists may pursue. Terrorism has thus proven to be the greatest challenge to the U.S. nuclear posture and possibly also a sign that the significance of nuclear weapons is in decline amid new threats to national security.

--The role/mission is strategic—purpose and structure.

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The literature on the role of nuclear weapons since the end of the Cold War and in the wake of the September 11 attacks has had mixed success in reacting to emerging strategic requirements. In hindsight, experts have criticized the lack of adaptation following the end of the bipolar era and the start of the second nuclear age despite scholars' and policymakers' prolific writing on arms control. Today's challenge is therefore clear: to avoid the inertia of the past by achieving a stronger consensus, as the security context evolves, on the strategic purpose and the future structure of the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

Since the dramatic September 11 terrorist attacks, the public's overwhelming attention to security has resulted in considerable research on the threats of the new strategic era. The debate that followed the Bush administration's 2001 NPR offered hope that recognition of the new challenges would include a discussion on adapting the country's nuclear posture. Indeed, the controversy surrounding the NPR produced a remarkable increase in the volume of literature on the mission of nuclear weapons. Still, some experts commented that the profound implications of the NPR's plans amounted to a "quiet revolution" in the nuclear strategy of the United States, but the level of public debate does not reflect such a change.⁴⁸ In fact, the controversy following the NPR focused on a somewhat narrow set of implications, for example, how robust nuclear earth penetrators might affect proliferation, the nuclear testing moratorium, and the nuclear threshold.

The literature would have benefited from addressing in greater depth the issue underlying the proposals contained in the NPR: the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence hinges on the credibility of the retaliatory threat, an aspect that poses an obvious problem in today's context. Is the U.S. nuclear posture still credible in the eyes of adversaries that are diverse, quickly evolving, and at times poorly understood?