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# Compete, Deter, and Win in a Trans-Regional Perspective: On Meeting the New Challenges of Extended Deterrence

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# “Compete, Deter, and Win” in a Trans-Regional Perspective: On Meeting the New Challenges of Extended Deterrence

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## Context:

On February 26-27, the Center for Global Security Research (CGSR) at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) hosted a workshop to examine extended deterrence in a trans-regional perspective the challenges of the “compete, deter, and win” strategy set out in the U.S. National Defense Strategy. This was the Center’s third annual workshop on extended deterrence. This session brought together participants drawn across the policy, military, and technical communities. Among the 65 participants, 10 were from allied countries in Europe and 12 from allied countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Discussion was guided by the following key questions:

- How close are the United States and its allies to having the needed strategy and posture to compete, deter, and win (in the words of the 2018 National Defense Strategy), from the perspective of 21<sup>st</sup> century regional contingencies and their potential for all-domain escalation?
- Are the United States and its allies in agreement about the fundamental characteristics of modern regional war and 21<sup>st</sup> century strategic competition? Where do they agree and disagree?
- What more should be done to strengthen U.S. alliances and extended deterrence in light of the changing character of strategic competition and modern war? What more *can* be done?
- Can alliance strategies in one region be informed by experience in another? Where there are barriers to progress in one region, are there useful lessons from the other? Or are extended deterrence challenges *sui generis*?

## Key insights:

1. The U.S. strategy of “compete, deter, and win” does not have clear regional parallels in the trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific alliances. The “win” in “compete, deter, and win” is especially problematic.
2. Allies generally have a strong understanding of the “Red theory of victory”—that is, the approaches of regional adversaries to securing their interests in peacetime, crisis, and war. There was good evidence that allies have “gone to school” on their regional adversaries to

understand their strategies and operational concepts, including for all-domain escalation management.

3. Neither allied experts nor their American counterparts have a well-developed understanding of the “Blue theory of victory”—that is, the approaches that the United States and its allies should pursue to negate the coercive and war-winning potential of Red theories of victory.”
4. Some important progress has been made in strengthening extended deterrence in the two regions, including its nuclear element, and adapting it to new challenges. There were, however, disparate views about the strengths and weaknesses of the current regional postures. While some participants saw many potential additional steps ahead and were concerned about mismatch between the emerging threats and modest progress in addressing them, others saw far lesser urgency for additional steps.
5. Significant barriers to further strengthening regional deterrence postures are evident in both Europe and Asia, including public antipathy to nuclear weapons in some allied countries. Uncertainties (and frictions) about how to proceed on deterrence are also created by stalled talks with Pyongyang and concerns about escalation of tensions with Russia and China. The assurance of allies is also undermined by their lingering anxieties about the U.S. commitment to their alliances.
6. Extended deterrence provides an optic through which to view much broader changes to the international system than just those in the military domain. This is so because it reflects assessments of potential pathways to major war and of the interests and perspectives of major actors in the system. While an improved deterrence is a part of the solution, it is only a partial and inadequate response to changes in the interstate system.
7. In exploring extended deterrence in a changing security environment, the trans-regional perspective offers useful insights. But its applicability is limited.
  - a. The insights follow from the fact that the trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific alliances face quite similar challenges posed by major power neighbors who have prepared to achieve a *fait accompli* at the conventional level of war and to expand the scale, scope, and intensity of conflict if the United States and its allies attempt to reverse that *fait accompli*. Multi-domain deterrence and conventional-nuclear integration have become common themes in these alliances.
  - b. But the applicability of the trans-regional perspective is limited by the salient differences between alliance structures (multilateral in Europe, bilateral in Asia), by geography (continental in Europe, maritime in Asia), and by the very different strategies of Russia and China in the gray zone (with Russia focused on deconstructing the order around it and China focused on “salami-slicing” its way through its list of territorial claims).

### **Panel 1: Understanding the Red Theories of Victory**

- In war, how do Russia, China, and North Korea hope to bring the United States and its allies to a culminating point (to quote Clausewitz) where they no longer choose to run the costs and risks of further war?
- In peace, how do they hope to subdue the United States and its allies without fighting (to quote Sun Tzu)? What are they competing *for*, and how are they competing?

- To what extent do they cooperate and/or learn from each other?

What do China, Russia, and North Korea have in common? Predominantly, it is the fact that they are revisionist states unsatisfied with the present status quo and are aspiring to overturn it. They approach this task, though, in different ways suitable to their potentials and needs.

China, for example, seeks to resolve maritime and land disputes on favorable terms, reunify Taiwan with the mainland, and secure China's regional security position, including through the regional dominance without the U.S. alliances and U.S. military presence in Asia. There are still questions as to whether China will seek to become a dominant global power, or whether it will be satisfied with a regional hegemon status. Domestically, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) works to maintain its rule and territorial integrity. On the economic front, the People's Republic of China (PRC) seeks to prevent economic isolation or embargo, and to sustain economic growth. These are nuanced objectives that require maintaining a degree of cooperation with most states in the region, even as China pushes for other objectives that undermine the interests of other countries.

China's competitive steps consist mostly of gradually improving its position, rather than rapidly achieving a desired end state. For this purpose, China has adopted incremental "salami tactics" to enlarge effective control of territories, using economic inducements and punishments, dividing opposition in Asia, and using United Front and Political Warfare tactics to weaken adversary will and alliance cohesion. Even as it has built military systems aimed at U.S. military forces, China has cautiously avoided major confrontation with the United States by taking advantage of the asymmetry of stakes between the United States and its allies and partners in defending their territorial claims. Mobilizing regional coalitions against China has proven to be difficult as many countries in the region want to avoid picking sides, and China's actions skillfully oscillate between periods of provocation (1988-1996; 2008-2015) and periods of restraint and win-win policies (1997-2008; 2016-2018).

Potential areas where conflict could flare up between the United States and China include Taiwan, the South and East China Seas, as well as North Korea, India, and Vietnam. China's perceived advantages in a conflict with the United States may include higher stakes, stronger will, ability to "eat bitterness," geography, and U.S. dependence on base access to Japan and Korea as well as space and cyber domains. Compared to the United States, however, China's overall military capabilities remain inferior. Another complicating factor for China is its dependence on imported oil, gas, raw materials, and food.

To accomplish its goals, China relies on four theories of victory. The first theory of victory is based on shaping the military and political situation to China's advantage such that the United States concedes without fighting. The second theory is to deter American intervention by emphasizing superior will, asymmetric interests, and by raising the costs and risks of U.S. intervention via conventional forces and anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities. The third theory is designed to limit U.S. ability to intervene effectively by attaining military objectives before U.S. forces can arrive. It is about presenting the United States with hard-to-reverse fait accompli, an especially likely scenario if an ally has capitulated. Lastly, China's fourth theory of victory is to limit damage in a major war with the United States by bringing the conflict to a

quick end. The common theme in all these theories of victory is that China is highly likely to engage in separating the United States from its allies.

North Korea's strategic approaches to advancing its interests in both peacetime and war are closely intertwined. Most of their provocations occur in the gray zone and intentionally remain below the retaliation threshold. Since Pyongyang is unlikely to survive in a protracted war, North Korea wants to undermine the alliance structure and to achieve its objectives as soon as possible. In the event of war, North Korea plans to unleash cyber attacks targeting command and control infrastructure as well as financial institutions which would wreak havoc in the Republic of Korea (ROK). Nuclear weapons are featured prominently in North Korea's strategic approach, playing an especially significant role on a psychological level: the mere threat to use its WMD could upset the calculus on the part of the United States and the ROK. Similarly, North Korea has mastered the tactic of creating "conflict fatigue" in South Korea – firing weapons at night, conducting a series of nuclear tests and missile launches from 2010 to 2015, and repeatedly threatening to use nuclear weapons. These activities lower the South Korean public's confidence in ROK military and sow discord in South Korean society and exacerbate tensions in civil-military relations.

Subduing the enemy without fighting is a central element of North Korea's strategic thought. Kim Jong Un managed to dramatically change his public perception from a "little rocket man" to a worldly statesman and approachable diplomat. This, in turn, bought Pyongyang some breathing room in the midst of increasingly restrictive sanctions. North Korea will continue to pressure South Korea, given that President Moon Jae-in has strong domestic incentives in the South to reduce tensions between the two countries. This has generated concerns that South Korea might be the weak link in the U.S.-ROK alliance, and may succumb, unwittingly or otherwise, to North Korean pressures or negotiation demands.

Russia is pursuing objectives similar to those of China and North Korea but its approach also reflect its unique circumstances. To destroy the security system, Russia targets its center of gravity, which is in the Euro-Atlantic space. Not only does it go after the network of U.S.-led alliances, but also transatlantic institutions which are repositories of prevailing values and rules. Russia's "system warfare" is about disrupting the system, not about occupying new and large geographical spaces. Since Russia cannot change the security environment through internal actions, Putin attempts to pressure the system by taking actions beyond Russia's borders through "short of war" and "short war" strategies.

These strategies are enabled by five mutually reinforcing conditions: 1) destabilization campaigns aimed at the entire Euro-Atlantic space; 2) a conventional advantage over neighbors; 3) a missile advantage over Europe; 4) theater nuclear advantages; and 5) strategic actions around the globe. The destabilization campaign acts as the center while the other elements serve as "domes," minimizing risks of military action in response. They also enable a rapid transition from peacetime to war if necessary. While destroying the Euro-Atlantic security order, Russia does not seem to have an alternative plan in mind. It seems to be content with nothingness substituting the existing order, which will give Russia a free hand to cope with European countries one at a time.

This course of action is dangerous as it not only leads Russia through unpredictable paths but also leads to an unknown outcome. Yet, Russian leaders have convinced themselves that this is the correct course of action, and all institutions are operating on the same premise. The united strategic thought culminates with the single decision-maker at the top. Deemed destabilizing and inefficient, the dual structure of power which existed in the Cold War and the 1990s was ripped out by Putin. As a result, creating a powerful political opposition in Russia has become much more difficult. Further, unlike during the post-Cold War efforts, Western attempts to integrate Russia are unlikely to succeed as integration is perceived to be a threat which has led Putin to take steps to separate Russia's society from Western influences. Integration was also "weaponized" as Russia turned existing interdependencies against the West, providing Russia a room to operate in the West's "rear areas."

Importantly, for Russia, the distinction between war and peace is blurry: Russia needs to be both offensive and defensive, but always in control of pace and initiative. A centralized General Staff for planning all of the country's military activities is instrumental in keeping the initiative even though its capacity to control everything is limited. While the Russian military is prudent and conservative during peace, in crisis it acts just the opposite. Unlike in the West, there are two different military mindsets that drive Russia's actions during peace and war. The Russian military officials are also skeptical about arms control, and they will not agree on any cuts that could undermine their power and influence. The reason is that the generals of today are the disenfranchised, disempowered and defunded majors and captains of the 1990s. They keep these memories and take pride in now being at the vanguard of a whole-of-state campaign to impose disorder in Europe. Given the essential role of Russia's military in the destabilization campaign, the timeframe in which Russia has to achieve its aims should not be measured by its economic power or demographic potential but by the shelf life of its weapon systems.

On cooperation, Russians are very distrustful of the Chinese and very much cognizant of the fact that they rely on China much more than the other way around. Hence, the future of Sino-Russian cooperation will be transactional, rather than transformational for either party. There are a lot of common themes in North Korean, Russian, and Chinese theories of victory for achieving their strategic aims "short of war" or through "short war" and through separation of the United States from its allies. Yet, it appears that the extent to which they can learn from each other is limited due to divergent capabilities, specific goals, and priorities. However, if one of these states succeeds in undermining the U.S.-led alliance structure in one region, it will likely benefit adversaries in other regions. Simply put, they have immense stakes in each other's success.

### **Panel 2: Understanding Progress in Developing Blue (Blue/Green) Theories of Victory**

- How does the United States expect to deter conflicts and, if necessary, win them? What is its theory of victory in regional wars against adversaries armed with nuclear weapons and prepared to compete for strategic advantage in all domains? How does it envision the mixture of strong deterrence and effective competition creating the circumstances for an enduring peace?
- How do U.S. allies view the requirements of competing, deterring, and winning? Do they have a theory of victory? How dynamic are these views? How convergent or divergent, with the United States and across regions?

In both Europe and the Asia-Pacific, U.S. allies neighboring China, Russia, and North Korea were the first to awaken to their respective challenges. However, there was the expectation that it would be the United States that would create a theory of victory for them. In Northeast Asia, the initial U.S. fix to the problem was a “re-extension” of the nuclear umbrella which ultimately failed to address allied concerns regarding U.S. conventional power projection capabilities in the region. Missile defense did not fix the problem either, despite initially being seen as having the potential to address decoupling fears. A cross-domain deterrence solution, with emphasis on the role of cyber and space capabilities, was also short-lived. Instead of providing solutions, the new domains brought new challenges to the United States and its allies and provided new weaknesses for adversaries to exploit. In the current context, the United States and its allies in Europe and the Asia-Pacific are still grasping with eroding U.S. conventional advantages. They have also only recently come to terms to the problem of information confrontation as practiced by revisionist states, which aim to dismantle core Western institutions and norms.

Despite being successful in deconstructing bad solutions to problems posed by the Red theories of victory, the United States and allies were unsuccessful in constructing good solutions. Neither allied experts nor their American counterparts articulated a well-developed understanding of the Blue theory of victory. The American strategy of “compete, deter, and win” does not have clear regional parallels in the transatlantic and trans-Pacific alliances. Although prior policies and approaches could be lined up against this new policy construct, the resulting picture is ad hoc and incomplete.

Roughly since 2014, NATO has been playing catch-up as Russia continuously reshaped the European security environment. Many believe that in this context, the alliance has suffered from three curses, the first of which has been a general reluctance to openly recognize Russia’s operations as acts of aggression. This has led to a loss of clarity about the issues and stakes. Second, because a war in Europe has become unthinkable to political leaders, it has led to military complacency. Lastly, NATO has been undermined by condescension. Europeans see the current American administration as contemptuous of NATO, and thus treat the administration with disdain. Instead of thinking about how to tackle the common challenges together with the United States, some Western Europeans are focusing on building greater autonomy. Instead of focusing on menacing new Russian missiles, some Europeans are worried more about new American missiles in Europe.

Despite these disadvantages, it is essential to keep in mind that Russia has nothing to offer Europe at the social and economic levels. NATO, therefore, is not in the business of mirroring Russia’s egregious acts of aggression, but instead, it strives to better counter and deter those actions. Some substantial progress has been made over the past five years. In addition to publicly visible events and decisions, NATO has done much about how deterrence applies to the 21<sup>st</sup> century and on reinforcement concept, even though the bulk of these works remain classified. The Alliance also benefits from its deterrence by reputation – overall \$1 trillion in spending, numerous allies and partners, and over 2 million in uniform. Because of this compelling macro data, Russia can overestimate the Alliance capabilities.

Spanning 29 nations, one of the most challenging obstacles for NATO is prioritization, which is why the Alliance continues to struggle in articulating a comprehensive Russia policy. Without consensus, developing a coherent strategy, let alone a theory of victory, will be impossible. Another roadblock for the NATO theory of victory is that discussions about deterrence and defense strategy stop at the “day zero” of conflict. There are no discussions about how to act if deterrence fails, as such thinking about fighting wars goes beyond the politically permissible framework of discussion. A term “victory” itself is controversial since the strategic culture of some allies is not built on defeating the opponent but rather on constructing cooperative relationships through greater integration. Given the existing limitations, NATO’s approach has focused primarily on daily management of the Alliance posture.

There are five elements needed in order to make this daily management of the alliance’s deterrence posture effective. First, NATO has to invest more resources in 24/7 vigilance and situational awareness, as it cannot assume advanced warning of Russia’s aggressive actions. Second, the alliance has to improve its political decision-making through short-notice crisis management exercises for the North Atlantic Council. Third, the alliance has to implement adaptation of its command structure. Fourth, there is a need for ready forces. Despite having many alliance members to contribute numerous forces in theory, some allies are struggling with contributing even single battalions, as they have not had to do this in more than a decade. Lastly, despite improvements, much more needs to be done to improve force movements across the Atlantic and throughout European landmass. In contrast to Russia’s snap exercises, it took NATO three years to prepare the 2018 Trident Juncture Exercises.

The United States and its allies do not appear to be substantially better prepared for the China challenge. The United States only recently characterized China as a “strategic competitor” in its 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS). On the other hand, Japan has been competing with China for many years now. Thus, we see a convergence of Japanese and American strategic thinking on China. Since the nationalization of the Senkaku Islands in 2012, Japan faced China’s whole-of-force approach. To contest Japanese claims over the Senkaku Islands and inflict economic costs, China increased ship dispatches around the Senkaku Islands, stepped up its military posturing, limited trade with Japan, and mobilized the Chinese public with anti-Japan rallies and protests. Overall, however, these Chinese attempts have been unsuccessful. Instead of driving a wedge between the United States and Japan, Chinese actions led to a deepening of U.S.-Japan cooperation and improving U.S. relations with India and Australia. Japan was also forced to think of a more holistic response to Chinese antagonistic posture, in particular by establishing the National Security Secretariat.

For Japan, the goal is to negate China’s gains and maintain the status quo by coalition building and strengthening defense. In the event of war, the priority would be to defend islands to the southwest and retrieve them if occupied. Conceptually, Japan considers war preparation to be important for deterring both during peacetime coercion and war. Keeping allies like the United States on board, strengthening defenses, and responding with a whole-of-government approach is crucial to the success of Japanese policy. Despite apparent competitive dynamics, Japanese leadership wants to stabilize the competition and establish crisis management mechanisms for reducing risks. In contrast to the United States, which sees an ideological component as a large component of competing against China, Japan views it as only tangentially related. Japan is, therefore, reluctant to put any pressure on the Chinese political system. Of more immediate

importance, given the establishment of the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) Strategic Support Force (SSF) in 2016, is competing in the cyber and space domains and tackling Chinese psychological and political warfare. Japanese experts are also struggling with finding effective deterrence and restoring-the-status-quo strategy for "salami slicing" as demonstrated in China's activities in the South China Sea.

Australia and China are becoming close economic partners, while Australia and the United States are treaty allies—an inherently complicated set of relationships for all three. Since the early 1990s, China has been developing non-nuclear strategic weapons such as cyber weapons, counterspace weapons, and conventionally-tipped missiles. These developments are explained by China's inferior conventional capabilities as well as the need to improve its position in the case of Taiwan contingency since, in China's view, the threat of nuclear first-use lacks credibility. The United States and Australia face three challenges in developing the theory of victory for countering China's plans for non-nuclear war termination. First is the challenge of recognizing the problem. In both the United States and Australia there is an over-emphasis on the likelihood of China's first-use of nuclear weapons for conflict termination. However, policymakers and analysts alike are yet to grapple with the intermediate rungs that Beijing has added to the escalation ladder between a conventional conflict and nuclear war. Second is the challenge of designing an appropriate response to large-scale space, cyber, and conventional missile attacks. Third is the challenge of executing a plan for responding to Chinese plans for gaining leverage within the context of an alliance. The lack of mutual understanding between allies about the stakes, collective commitments undermines the deterrence capability of the alliance. In other words, the United States and Australia have some work to do in properly defining the problem, designing responses, and implementing those responses together to counter a China that is trying to end a war before it crosses the nuclear threshold.

### **Panel 3: Meeting the Gray Zone Challenge**

- How have NATO and the U.S. bilateral alliances in the Asia-Pacific dealt with the efforts of neighboring major powers to use means short of armed combat (including shows of force, increased local military presence, political warfare, information warfare and cyber activities) to try to re-make the regional order in ways they prefer?
- Have they done enough? What more needs to be done?
- What barriers to further progress have emerged? Are there valuable cross-regional lessons and implications?

Russia's approach to the gray zone conflict could only be understood in the context of its political objective to deconstruct the European security order. In order to achieve this aim, Russia seamlessly integrates indirect, non-lethal tactics for exploiting its asymmetric advantages. Among these tactics are information confrontation, cyber operations and subversion of foreign political processes to destabilize, polarize and disintegrate the West and its institutions. Russia's wide range of non-kinetic measures could act as substitutes for or work in conjunction with a broad spectrum of military measures, ranging from "little green men," to "big green missiles." Military measures themselves, including large-scale snap exercises and nuclear posturing, could be instrumental in gray zone destabilization campaigns and may provide a backstop for aggressive non-kinetic activities.

Russia's gray zone activities have been lumped together under the nomenclature of "hybrid warfare." The hybrid challenge posed by Moscow has been widely recognized by both NATO and the EU member states. NATO allies have made individual and collective efforts to strengthen their capabilities to deal with specific aspects of the Russian hybrid approach, including the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn, Estonia, and NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence Riga, Latvia. Finland, a non-NATO member of the EU, established the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki. Countering hybrid threats has become a priority for EU-NATO cooperation. The United States and its European allies and partners have also "named and shamed" Russia's aggressive actions in cyberspace and have imposed economic sanctions, and attempted to counter Russia's propaganda. Despite substantial progress, the Alliance has not delivered substantial costs to Russia and largely failed to dissuade it from pursuing destabilizing acts. The West has been reactive, stopping short of developing a whole-spectrum proactive strategy.

One of the impediments to a more robust response to Russia's activities seems to be a lack of consensus and clear understanding of the role of non-military, asymmetric means in Russia's overall "theory of victory." The use of the term "hybrid warfare" does not help much in this regard, as it frames Russia's approach to conflict in Western conceptions, thus inherently creating greater confusion. The use of the term also betrays the Western reluctance to regard Russia's acts as forms of active aggression – while there is an emphasis on "hybrid," there is insufficient attention paid to "warfare." The Western focus on Russia's hybrid tactics likewise seems detached from their close relationship with the whole spectrum of Russia's military capabilities. While Moscow's approach to conflict encompasses coordinated use of non-military and military means across different phases of conflict, in the West there is a tendency for their compartmentalization and stove-piping. For example, there is a widespread tendency to think that strengthening conventional posture in the Baltic states adds little to tackle the hybrid challenge from Russia. Yet, while military deterrence measures alone are insufficient to address different kinds of hybrid threats, they could deprive Russia the possibility of bolstering its hybrid tactics by overt and covert military threats. Effective NATO deterrence may also reduce a risk of Russia's miscalculation that its military intimidation campaigns could influence Western response to hybrid actions.

In the Asia-Pacific, China is using gray zone coercion in an effort to create a 'new normal' in the East China Sea while avoiding a military response from Japan and the United States. Tactics of gradually expanding its regional influence one step at a time have been described as "salami slicing." The Chinese Coast Guard sails around the Senkaku Islands on a daily basis and regularly enters Japanese territorial waters. Chinese unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) have also been detected in the vicinity of the Senkaku Islands.

Japan has endeavored to counter Chinese maritime gray zone challenges through a combination of internal and external balancing. For internal balancing, Japan has reinforced its coastguard with improved surveillance and communication capabilities and by improving coordination with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force. Japan has also been preparing for high-end conflict in case of an escalation into armed conflict. For external balancing, Japan has strengthened

cooperation with the United States. The Trump administration reaffirmed the U.S. defense commitment to the Senkaku Islands without emphasizing a neutral position on the issue of sovereignty, a departure from pronouncements during the Obama administration. The United States has also expressed that it does not draw a distinction between the Chinese navy, maritime militia, and the Chinese coastguard if they are involved in activities deemed to be pressuring Japan. The 2015 U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines opened up further opportunities for enhanced alliance cooperation, including through coordination and bilateral planning mechanisms for bilateral response to gray-zone challenges.

The Japanese internal balancing measures have not proven impactful on Chinese behavior, and a gap in perceptions exists between the coast guard and the Self-Defense Force (the former viewing Chinese actions as a law enforcement problem and the latter as an escalation control problem) continues to hinder response efficiency and effectiveness. To close this gap, coast guard enforcement should continue with regularization of joint coastguard-Self-Defense Force training and exercises to enhance coordinated maritime security and escalation control. Additionally, more should be done to counter Chinese gray zone assertiveness through external balancing. The United States and Japan can do more collaboratively in formulating flexible deterrence options, such as joint Japanese-U.S. coastguard fishery control exercises and Self-Defense Force-U.S. Air Force scramble exercises. Japan and the United States should seek consultation with China for crisis management in general and on the implication of unmanned systems in particular.

Cross-regionally, both NATO and the Asia-Pacific alliances face neighbors employing gray zone tactics in pursuit of prevailing order-changing ends. Both can be more assertive in their responses and can learn broader strategic lessons from the other. However, the differing strategies of their respective adversaries, the differing structures of their respective alliances and their differing geographic contexts compel particularized deterrent strategies. Where Russia aims to disrupt the European order, China seeks to secure its territorial gains while maintaining the order in the Asia-Pacific. The goal and scope of Chinese political and information influence operations and cyber activities seem also different than in case of Russia. Where NATO is a multilateral alliance comprised of many countries with unique interests, the Asia-Pacific alliances are bilateral. Where potential Russian gray zone territorial advances in Europe are primarily land-based involving populated regions, China's incursions in the Asia-Pacific have been maritime in nature implicating small, remote islands. Accordingly, narrowly-tailored, region-specific strategies are needed.

#### **Panel 4: Preventing the Conventional Fait Accompli**

- How has NATO been adapting to deter a limited military attack, including a territorial fait accompli, against one of its members?
- How have the U.S., Japan and South Korea prepared for analogous military threats in the Asia-Pacific region?
- Have they done enough? What more can be done?
- What barriers to further progress have emerged? Are there valuable cross-regional lessons and implications?

A *fait accompli* involves the use of decisive and rapid force to achieve strategic goals, including a land grab, before a wider war can be joined by others. One way aggressors seek to get away with this aggressive tactic is through threats of further escalation aimed at undermining the defender's resolve to fight. The *fait accompli* tactic poses a serious risk for the United States and its European and Asia-Pacific allies.

In Europe, NATO's strategic focus since 2014 has shifted back to deterrence and defense after more than twenty years of focusing on counter-insurgency and peacekeeping missions outside of its borders. Denying Russia's leadership any options for achieving a conventional *fait accompli* has become an urgent priority for the Alliance and its greatest risk and vulnerability. There are three primary reasons for this: Russia's strategy for conflict, geography, and specifically advanced capabilities.

It has become conceivable that in addition to strategic intimidation campaigns, Russia may cross the threshold of a direct military confrontation. In such a case, Russia could launch a rapid attack mounted with little warning to quickly achieve a limited land grab and to achieve decisive military advantage before the Alliance can react. Any military gains could be then underpinned by Russia's escalatory threats against NATO allies, including confronting the Alliance with an unacceptable alternative by means of nuclear blackmailing: either escalation or surrender. If successful, such a *fait accompli* could undermine the Alliance's strategic centre of gravity: its unity, solidarity and resolve.

The Baltic states are particularly susceptible to a potential Russian *fait accompli* attempt, given their exposure to a direct Russian military threat, a critical forces-distance-time gap between rapid deployment of Russian forces and NATO forces in the region and Russian Anti-Access/Area Denial capabilities in Kaliningrad. The new Russian SSC-8 intermediate-range, nuclear-capable missile would be instrumental in achieving military, political and strategic objectives of a *fait accompli*. The missile is capable of striking almost every capital and key civilian and military infrastructure in Europe with little warning. It could thus deny the Alliance effective military response options and split the Europeans. By placing Europe at risk in this way (but not the territorial U.S.), Russia seeks to decouple European and U.S. security interests and the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence in Europe.

At the 2014 Wales Summit, it was decided that NATO's posture should rely on timely reinforcement of threatened allies with conventional forces rather than on strong forward defense. This led to enhancing the NATO Response Force and, as part of it, creating the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) to become NATO's Spearhead Force. At the Warsaw Summit two years later, NATO leaders decided to enhance the Alliance's forward presence with the deployment of combat-ready, multi-national battlegroups to the Baltic states and Poland. These deployments complemented additional regional initiatives, including a U.S. armored brigade in Poland, provision of additional force enablers through the U.S.-European Deterrence Initiative, prepositioned storage sites, enhanced Baltic air policing and heightened multi-national exercises. The 2018 Brussels Summit also saw enhancements to NATO's responsiveness, readiness and reinforcement capacities through the NATO Readiness Initiative.

In spite of these efforts, more can and should be done. The credibility of the tripwire function of NATO's enhanced forward presence depends pivotally on the ability to provide rapid and effective reinforcement. To this end, NATO should take the following: 1) improve rapid decision-making through development of short-/no-notice decision-making exercises to stress-test NATO's political and military responsiveness; 2) conduct visible peacetime exercises rehearsing and demonstrating swift availability of allied air forces and long-range precision strike weapons from air and maritime platforms; 3) review and adapt air and missile defenses to account for the SSC-8 and protect reinforcement forces on their move across the Atlantic and across Europe; 4) further enhance forward presence and pre-position necessary supplies in the Baltics; 5) reconfigure NATO's rapid reaction forces to make them lighter reducing response time to a few days; 6) enhance follow-on forces (e.g. a significant number of mechanised and armoured divisions) by reviewing and bringing forward the deadlines for fulfilling the relevant NATO Capability Targets; 7) undertake peacetime exercises rehearsing the rapid movement of troops across the Atlantic and across Europe; and 8) develop a comprehensive concept for deterrence and defense without delay.

North Korea continues to possess capabilities threatening the United States and its Asia-Pacific allies. The challenge for the United States and South Korea is not only its nuclear and missile programs, but also deterrence of limited military provocations such as the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in 2010. Hypothetical scenarios of North Korean conventional fait accompli attempts include taking over the Baengnyeong Island, an isolated island just below the Northern Limit Line (NLL) which hosts key South Korean military posts and is regarded as "a bone to North Korean throat." Taking control of this island by North Korea could lead to unraveling of the entire armistice structure in the Korean Peninsula.

The U.S.-ROK alliance enjoys military capability advantage at every level of war with the DPRK, reinforced with political system and economic advantage. North Korean long-range artillery threat against Seoul and high risk of nuclear escalation could, however, turn any fruits of the U.S.-ROK victory, to invoke JFK's apt metaphor, into "ashes in our mouth." This makes response to any North Korea limited provocations so challenging.

In recent years, the United States and ROK have strengthened the alliance deterrence posture. The ROK has taken a greater share of responsibility moving toward transfer of operational control (OPCON). The ROK's development of greater indigenous capabilities has also been significant in complicating DPRK decision-making with respect to provocative behavior and limited aggression. This reduces reliance on U.S. defense platforms, enabling the ROK to possibly take responsive actions independent of the United States, altering the DPRK's calculus. The United States, on its behalf, reset its forces with essential munitions, consolidated capabilities, pre-positioned wartime stocks, deployed new ballistic missile defense systems, rotationally deployed its high-end systems, and was socializing off-Peninsula troops with local conditions. Combined Force became postured to respond to potential crises or provocations and, if necessary, "to fight tonight." The operational cooperation was strengthened through the Combined Counter-Provocation Plan.

The combination of Trump, Moon, and Kim could either lead to a perfect storm or perfect opportunity that will lead to peaceful transition on the Peninsula. It is not clear that a U.S.-ROK

policy of “wait and see” will spawn meaningful engagement and induce the DPRK to alter its strategic direction, given its objectives of regime survival predicated in part on system competition with the ROK. While uncertainty exists, the efforts to engage North Korea are having consequences for deterrence. The U.S.-ROK alliance suspended a number of military exercises considered by DPRK as provocative. The Inter-Korean Comprehensive Military Agreement also created additional operational risks for the alliance. While it introduced important risk reduction and confidence building measures, it weakened the hardware part of deterrence posture. The agreement which was publicized and politicized also demonstrated frictions between the United States and South Korea, whose interests have not been aligned very well in recent years. Even though, there is a consensus that, in spite of recent efforts to engage the North, any erosion of defense capabilities should be guarded against, it becomes increasingly difficult. Discussions about any further deterrence adaptation measures have been put on a back burner. There are lingering concerns that the current dynamic in the Korean Peninsula will only lead to weakening U.S.-ROK capabilities, divide the South Korean public, and divide the U.S.-ROK alliance.

Common themes might be found while looking at some of the barriers for strengthening deterrence in both regions. A common denominator is that steps to bolster deterrence in the two regions are impeded by a lack of political consensus. While military planners in Europe provide sound arguments about what more needs to be done, changes are impeded by a lack of shared will within NATO to implement them owing to different perceptions about urgency of such steps. The heavy political investments into radical peaceful transformation on the Korean Peninsula is achieved at the price of reduced readiness to react in case the process is derailed and the DPRK returns to its provocations. Both in Europe and in the Asia-Pacific, there is a tension about whether capabilities matter more than intent, or whether steps to maintain or bolster deterrence should be driven only by clear assessment of the potential adversary’s motivation. It is also difficult to find a right balance between maintaining credible deterrence and reassuring adversaries that the U.S. and its allies do not plan attacks against them. In both regions, these tensions tend to favor cautious steps at the expense of regional deterrence posture even though potential adversaries act in the opposite way. One way of escaping from this trap is to put greater focus on extra-regional reinforcements. Yet, what may matter more for shaping calculations of a potential aggressor are the local military capabilities, not the overarching global posture.

In both Europe and in the Asia-Pacific, a threat of a conventional *fait accompli* cannot be seen in isolation from gray zone challenges or developments in the nuclear or cyber domains. The U.S. and its allies need to face challenges to all domains sequentially or concurrently. Another significant challenge is how to devise a plan that is sufficiently escalatory to thwart a *fait accompli* attempt, while simultaneously offering an off-ramp for the adversary. This raises serious questions of what should happen if conventional deterrence options fail. Will this encourage recourse to U.S. nuclear options? Similarly, if conventional deterrence prevails, will this encourage recourse to nuclear options by the adversary?

#### **Panel 5: Deterring and Responding to Nuclear Coercion and Limited Nuclear Attack**

- How have the approaches of the U.S. and its regional allies to deter, and if necessary, respond to nuclear coercion or limited nuclear employment evolved over the last few decades?
- Should further improvements to extended deterrence hardware (capabilities) and software (consultations, planning, exercises, etc.) in the two regions be made? If so, how?
- What barriers to further progress have emerged? Are there valuable cross-regional lessons and implications?

Within the last few years, there has been greater recognition of the threat of nuclear coercion and limited nuclear escalation within the United States and amongst regional allies. The United States became more concerned with nuclear-related statements and actions undertaken by Russia and North Korea. This change in approach was evident during the Obama administration, with a statement in the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review articulating that the United States would not allow potential nuclear-armed adversaries to escalate their way out of failed conventional aggression. The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) encapsulated this thinking with its focus on the need to deter limited nuclear attack and to reestablish deterrence in the event that an adversary crossed the nuclear threshold. As a deterrence message tailored to North Korea, the 2018 NPR emphasized that any nuclear weapons use on the part of North Korea would result in a full-scale war leading to a regime change in Pyongyang. A new U.S. nuclear playbook to counter Russia's nuclear threats included emphasis on integration of conventional-nuclear planning and operations and utilized supplemental nuclear capabilities to close any perceived gap in the U.S. extended deterrence.

NATO has had to adjust its own approach in deterring Russia's nuclear coercion and limited nuclear use. Little attention was given to such eventualities in the post-Cold War period, which is why the Ukraine Crisis in 2014 proved to be a wake-up call for the Alliance. The turning point for reversing NATO's post-Cold War nuclear trajectory was the 2016 Warsaw Summit.

Officially recognizing the nuclear dimension of Russia's destabilizing actions and policies allowed the alliance to sharpen its nuclear declaratory policy. More attention was given to readiness, survivability and the operational effectiveness of NATO dual-capable aircraft. Efforts have been made to better prepare political decision-making mechanisms when confronting nuclear-armed opponents in times of crisis. Greater emphasis has also been placed on regional adaptive nuclear planning. The Alliance as a whole, including France, recognized a need for greater coherence between nuclear and conventional forces.

Within the U.S.-South Korea alliance, initial efforts to explore more effective ways to deter and respond to North Korea's nuclear coercion and limited nuclear strike capabilities have been hijacked by the recent presidential summits. These meetings among Kim Jong Un, President Trump and President Moon have largely focused on facilitating avenues for the North's peaceful denuclearization. There is, however, little optimism that a successful result will be achieved as it would require Kim Jong Un to relinquish the country's nuclear arsenal within a certain timeframe and North Korea's return to the NPT as a non-nuclear state. Some critics of the present approach argued that Seoul should acknowledge the failures of such attempts and instead develop a robust, long-term containment strategy towards the North. Others believe that in order to counter the nuclear threats posed by the DPRK, such a strategy ought to consist of a strong nuclear component which would involve the re-deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons throughout

South Korea. Such considerations reflect a range of concerns surrounding the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence relying on the globally-deployable dual-capable aircraft and the U.S. strategic assets.

While there is a need for improvement in extended deterrence software and hardware in Europe and the Asia-Pacific, the needs between the two regions require different approaches. While the framework for NATO's future nuclear adaptation is fairly straightforward, it remains unclear whether NATO allies will manage to implement what they agreed upon in a timely manner due to political sensitivities and domestic tensions. The direction of further nuclear adaptation in the Asia-Pacific is undetermined since there seem to be divergent views between the United States and allies on how to move forward. If diplomatic efforts on the Korean Peninsula fail, calls for a U.S. nuclear presence in South Korea are likely to re-emerge with newfound strength and urgency. Pressing calls from Japan to gain access to U.S. nuclear planning are also a distinct possibility. In order to successfully manage their extended deterrence relationships, the United States and its allies will have to meet the challenges posed by domestic politics, the need for retaining political cohesion, as well as budgetary and time restrictions. All of these factors will have to be considered while simultaneously managing relations with adversaries in ways that discourage arms races and avoid unwanted and unintended escalation.

Deterring and responding to nuclear coercion and limited nuclear attacks require the United States and its allies to consider related conceptual and practical problems, including the question of how important it is for the United States and allies to be able to threaten a nuclear response on short notice in order to re-establish deterrence. Certain questions, such as how to pursue greater nuclear-conventional integration, apply in both regions. An issue which remains controversial in both regions is whether the U.S. pursuit of nuclear capabilities for a limited nuclear strike adds to allied cohesion by making the U.S. response to adversarial nuclear use more likely, or leads to de-coupling by signaling the asymmetries of U.S. stakes in regional conflicts.

There is also a need for greater clarity on whether the ability to deter nuclear coercion and limited nuclear strikes relates to the ability to prevent a conventional fait accompli solely by conventional means, and if so, to what extent. On the one hand, the best way to deter nuclear coercion and limited nuclear attack is through deterring conventional war. On the other hand, the risk of conventional war is related to the adversary's confidence in their ability to exploit even limited conventional advantages under the shadow of a nuclear escalation. If nuclear coercion is a part of campaign aimed at affecting NATO allies' political and military decisions in a way that is favorable to short- and long-term interests, such as the case with Russia, conventional capabilities seem to be of limited value in helping the allies to withstand coercive threats.

#### **Panel 6: Managing Multi-Domain Escalation, De-Escalation, and War Termination**

- Are Red approaches to all-domain escalation control well understood?
- Have Blue strategies for controlling escalation been updated to account for new geopolitical, military, and technical factors?
- Has this been approached primarily as a U.S. task or as a shared task?
- What key allied interests should guide U.S. thinking about this topic? What fractures might appear in U.S. alliances in such a conflict?

- Are there valuable cross-regional lessons and implications?

There are multiple forms of escalation, including ‘general escalation’ or the incremental ramping up of tensions over a span of several years. In contrast, ‘classical military escalation’ involves an increase in the level of violence from cyber to conventional weapons, space domains, or even reaching a nuclear threshold. One side’s advantage in a conflict—whether the advantage is real or perceived—is derived from increasing the intensity or scope of conflict. While escalation may be intentional, inadvertent, or accidental, military activities in a crisis could be perceived as, and become escalatory, even if they are not intended to do so—underlining the critical role of perception during a potential escalation scenario. For example, NATO’s “modern deterrence” posture currently oscillates between projecting strategic restraint and deterring Russia—an interaction that Moscow could perceive differently, creating a risk of misunderstanding and rapid escalation.

China and Russia have done a lot of thinking about all-domain escalation, but the U.S. and allied officials and strategists need to gain a deeper understanding of how adversaries intertwine escalation concepts into the cyber and space domains, as well as how the United States and allies should view and manage escalation in different domains. Gaining key insights into Red and Blue strategies should be a shared task of both the United States and its allies. Effectively managing all-domain escalation will require the clarification of thresholds, which are ultimately social constructs defined differently by allies and adversaries. For adversaries, escalating and reaching different thresholds is a tool for ‘winning’ rather than managing a crisis; whereas, U.S. and allied strategists view de-escalation as both a tool and a goal of crisis management.

There are three related, yet distinct, dimensions of a Blue approach for how the U.S. and its allies should prepare for and respond to all-domain escalation. First, the U.S. and its allies must aim to control escalation through plans and postures for conflicts with nuclear-armed dimensions. This is one of the reasons the United States seeks to ensure integration between nuclear and conventional planning. However, the risk that deterrence will fail cannot be discounted; therefore, the United States and its allies must be prepared for conflicts that cross the nuclear threshold.

Second, the United States and its allies must prepare for crisis decision-making. The U.S. is carefully thinking through this by initiating conversations about escalation and restraint if there was a crisis, but more work is required to establish a solid alliance decision-making mechanism. Specifically, questions remain about the appropriate level of integration between the United States and its allies. The U.S. military planners and policy-makers may consider sharing plans with its allies during peacetime. This, however, does not guarantee strengthening of the alliances and it may create a security risk. Currently, alliance dialogues are examining how to coordinate and communicate pertinent details in the midst of potential crises, while seeking to understand each other’s perspectives on crisis management.

Third, the United States and its allies must coordinate messages and actions in peacetime in order to influence an adversary’s understanding of how the United States and its allies may escalate. These coordinated actions could include an enhanced forward presence in NATO or Japan-South

Korea military exercises, but they need to be tailored in peacetime to manipulate an adversary's mindset about escalation.

Although the United States and its allies share key interests, several tensions may arise regarding operational views of crisis management and strategies toward war termination. For example, tension may occur during the first phase of a crisis—where the allies would attempt to manage a crisis by pulling in the United States which could prefer to sit on the sidelines at first. Then, when the crisis escalates, the United States could aim to restore the status quo, resulting in an excessive use of force and an intolerable peace after a war. Another challenge is that the United States and its allies often narrowly focus on reacting to Russia, China or North Korea's actions or provocations, without taking into consideration a broader strategic picture. There is insufficient attention and thinking regarding the underlining strategy and concepts, while simultaneously reacting to developments on the ground.

During the Cold War, detailed thinking about the escalation ladder from the conventional level through tactical and theater nuclear weapons to strategic nuclear forces was developed. Today, it may be necessary to develop a more sophisticated notion of an escalation ladder—one that includes a seamless deterrence and proportional response—such as a slope that will involve pressures to escalate with “non-kinetic” capabilities during a crisis or early in a conflict. In practice, events happen simultaneously rather than sequentially, and there will never be the luxury of time to figure out how Russia and China will conduct operations. However, the United States and its allies need to engage in discussions about the alternative scenarios along multi-domain escalation pathways in order to guide the development and evaluation of policy options. An important cross-regional lesson is that the United States needs to examine how to bolster crisis management diplomacy with its allies. Additional cooperation on the development of different crisis management options can reduce the risks of inadvertent escalation and conflict.

## Panel 7: Integrating Deterrence, Competition, and Cooperation

- Are these objectives adequately integrated in practice in Europe and East Asia?
- Has the re-balancing of these objectives in recent years paid useful dividends?
- Could an increased emphasis on cooperation (and de-emphasis of deterrence and competition) generate an increased will to cooperate in Moscow, Beijing, and/or Pyongyang? Are new forms of cooperation, including but not limited to arms control and risk reduction, plausible?
- Are there valuable cross-regional lessons and implications?

Today, the objectives of deterrence, competition, and cooperation are not adequately integrated—neither in practice nor in strategy in Europe or East Asia. While Russia and China have advanced their strategic concepts to integrate their approaches to deterrence and develop strategies for strategic competition, the United States and its allies are lacking similar approaches, which will be critical for deterring, competing, and cooperating with Moscow, Beijing, and Pyongyang in the future.

An integrated and coordinated approach will rely on allied unity and cohesion. Today, European cohesion is under threat in a way that we have not witnessed since World War II. This is coupled with the weakening of the European security architecture due to trends in society, such as nationalism and populism, as well as exogenous factors from the major powers—Moscow, Beijing, and, for some observers, Washington. Neither new capabilities nor increased U.S. military presence will fix these political problems. Instead, it will be critical to maintain NATO's overall cohesion to address these challenges. Europe's effectiveness vis-à-vis Russia and China will rest on a cohesive transatlantic alliance—the strategic center of gravity.

In East Asia, the lack of a coordinated approach with allies is based on perceptual differences, as well as institutional distinctions. First, each ally has a different concept for how to approach the issues of deterrence, competition, and cooperation. For example, South Korea has been reluctant to talk about the 'China issue,' but South Korean attitudes are changing due to rising concerns over the PLA's military build-up and exercises. In contrast, Japan and the U.S. possess more of a convergent approach toward China and have successfully synergized their strategies to significant gray zone challenges. Second, unlike with NATO, there is not a single integrated structure for allies in East Asia. While there are calls for a trilateral security cooperation between the U.S., South Korea, and Japan to address their common security challenges, there is also growing emphasis on the need to expand regional partnerships beyond Northeast Asia and into Southeast Asia. For example, an "Indo-Pacific" strategy that creates a series of trilateral strategic cooperation among U.S.-Japan-Australia and U.S.-Japan-India could project power in the broader region—enhancing military-to-military relations, defense industry cooperation, and capacity building in Southeast Asia.

However, in both regions, the U.S. and its allies need to prepare for potential adversaries, like Russia and China, that will continue their attempts to weaken these alliances. While the United States' European allies have begun to renew their investment in national defense budgets, the progress is too slow and has resulted in transatlantic tensions. Additionally, great power competition is not the main priority for Europeans' defense spending as European allies are

dealing with other types of threats and instabilities, including securing their southern periphery, terrorism, and migration crises. The risk of turning away from stabilization missions in the Middle East or North Africa in order to deter and confront China and Russia carries serious risks for European allies. These challenges not only highlight the disparities in the U.S. and its allies' desired goals, but also the differences in the costs and benefits for pursuing those objectives.

The United States also has divergent views from its European and East Asian allies regarding economic competition. In East Asia, the economic domain is quite salient in the strategic competition, especially in light of the U.S.-China trade war. Under the strained U.S.-China relations, Japan is pursuing two alternative economic models that differ from the U.S. interests. First, by revitalizing China-Japan economic relations, Beijing and Tokyo are exploring joint business opportunities and infrastructure investment projects. Second, Japan has shown resolve by ratifying the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), despite the U.S. withdrawal spearheaded by Trump administration. From the European perspective, China and Russia are common economic competitors, but the characterization of the EU as a foe by President Trump was unsettling and unprecedented. This rhetoric undermines the transatlantic cooperation and shared objectives, vis-à-vis common competitors and potential adversaries. The United States needs to do more to balance short-term and long-term goals, with commercial and strategic interests.

Currently, there is limited room for security cooperation between the United States, European allies, and Russia. Although in the past, these nations have cooperated on counterterrorism and counterproliferation issues, Russia's aggressive actions in Syria (i.e. the lack of reaction to Syrian chemical use and targeting opposition groups to Assad instead of ISIL) are good indicators that reveal the situation has fundamentally changed. Cooperation with the West is not among Russia's primary geopolitical objectives, nor does it align with Putin's domestic imperatives.

There is not even a minimal amount of trust in Russian commitments to arms control. Any serious arms control initiatives need to also be preceded by a sustained and robust military build-up of European military capabilities. Without this build-up, any new regional arms control agreement could actually be destabilizing. Yet, the current situation should not prevent the U.S. and its allies from thinking about ways in which they could, in the future, seek to reinforce strategic stability through arms control and confidence-building measures. For example, the Alliance should explore how it would approach a negotiation with Russia once cooperation becomes feasible. Together, allies can consider and discuss what capabilities could be put on a future negotiating table with Russia.

In the Asia-Pacific, if efforts to shape Chinese strategic direction fail, then it will be essential to develop a long-term strategy that will target the weaknesses of China, focus on deterrence and competition, and de-emphasize cooperation. Regarding North Korea, the main challenge today is how to maintain and strengthen deterrence toward Pyongyang while simultaneously negotiate denuclearization. While an arms control structure with North Korea may offer short-term benefits, it could weaken the U.S.-ROK deterrence posture, imply de facto recognition of North Korea as a nuclear power, and undermine non-proliferation regime.

The main cross-regional similarity is the shared doubts about U.S. extended deterrence commitments. Under the current U.S. administration, the uncertainties about U.S. security guarantees have substantially increased. In East Asia, U.S. primacy is being contested with allies questioning how Washington can re-adjust its alliance commitment to deal with a rising China. While military build-up needs to be aggressively pursued in Europe, this also needs to be complemented with a focus on the transatlantic alliance political cohesion. The U.S. and its European allies are currently speaking past each other; for example, some Europeans criticized the Trump administration approach to burden-sharing as exclusively transactional. Moreover, allies' increased budgets may lead to capabilities that may not translate proportionally to effective capabilities against Russia, China, and North Korea. Therefore, the integration of deterrence, competition, and cooperation has a long way to go, starting with the United States reassuring its European and East Asian allies.

### **Panel 8: Lessons and Implications**

- Is “compete, deter, win” a sound strategic approach to the problems of extended deterrence and regional conflict in the era of the 21<sup>st</sup> century strategic competition?
- Are there new challenges of extended deterrence well-defined in this approach?
- Does a trans-regional perspective add significantly to this analysis?
- What more can and should be done to out-think, out-partner, and out-innovate potential adversaries in regional conflicts?

While the current U.S. strategic approach of “compete, deter, win” has raised the importance of extended deterrence and the necessity to deter adversaries in regions like Asia and Europe, “deterring” differs widely from “winning.” Indeed, there is still much debate over what “winning” even entails along with towards what objective the United States would be “competing” for. With such vague language, it is hard to assess whether or not the United States and allies would be able to deliver with this approach.

Moreover, the “compete, deter, win” strategy implies a zero-sum dynamic, which may not be sustainable in the long-term especially when considering that many of the U.S.’ counterparts in Europe have viewed the post-Cold War order as being explicitly *not* zero-sum in nature. There are also concerns that the U.S. focus on the great power competition will divert attention away from dealing with other security challenges, such as instability in the Northern Africa and the Middle East.

The overall strategic landscape of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is increasingly complex and states will have to go further than simply choosing whether or not to pursue deterrence strategies. In domains such as cyber and space where problems surround key components such as attribution and signaling of threat credibility, deterrence in the traditional sense largely fails. Therefore, more thinking must be done beyond the realm of traditional deterrence. Disruptions can be found in all domains of conflict (land, air, sea, space, cyber), and it is for this reason that deterrence should not be viewed as an end-all be-all when considering how to meet adversarial challenges. Efforts should thus be made in developing robust approaches that extend beyond simply deterring aggression and make use of multi-domain, trans-regional strategies.

With the present volatile security environment, trans-regional analyses can provide valuable contributions to strategic assessments. The successes or failures within a given region can have impacts on others, while improvements can be made from assessing previous approaches with countries such as China, Russia, and Iran. Trans-regional analyses help the U.S. allies to think afresh about the problem they face in their own regions while providing them with a global perspective on rising demands on U.S. extended deterrence commitments. Despite their regional locus, the U.S. alliances are trans-regional in practice. Synchronizing respective policies amongst over thirty democracies with unique geographic compositions, histories, interests and challenges is a daunting task. However, there are many opportunities in discussing common approaches that the United States and allies can take going forward. With such broad reach, United States and allies could, for example, pursue coercive diplomatic tactics including leveraging adversaries' reliance on financial institutions and trading privileges. These examples, however, would only be effective if they were to simultaneously offer de-escalatory off ramps attractive enough for the adversaries to pursue. Allies from the two focus regions could also work together on how to operationalize and create differences between China and Russia to ensure that relations would be dealt with one adversary at a time.

On the other hand, the interconnective element of the trans-regional approach should not be overemphasized. The extended deterrence challenges featured within one region differ from those outside as do the adversaries' capabilities within each region. A broad trans-regional strategic approach runs the risk of potentially failing to take into account these differences, exaggerating the connectivity and neglecting the diverse regional scenarios. There is also a need for greater understanding of the extent of similar and divergent interest between the U.S. allies from different regions, going beyond the undefined "rules-based international order." The sustainability of the trans-regional approach is also unclear, given the lack of institutionalized and regular fora for convening such dialogue.

In order to effectively out-think, out-partner, and out-innovate potential adversaries in regional conflicts, the United States and allies will have to overcome several challenges. The first will be to improve the overall responsiveness and readiness of existing alliance structures to ensure timely, effective counter engagements to meet adversaries' coercive actions. Second, tensions abound with regards to the economic and political makeup of individual allies. This comes to a head when the United States and allies consider how to best compete with adversaries and their respective interests come into play. Third, the United States and its allies need to go beyond their focus on regional postures and concentrate on developing strategies to deal with Red theories of victory. The strategies cannot be created by the United States alone and require a sense of ownership and input from regional allies.