

# Session 1: Extended Nuclear Deterrence and Assurance in Japan

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## Summary

With the concept of extended nuclear deterrence (END) being challenged in the current era of nuclear arms reduction momentum, constrained defense budgets and steps toward a nuclear-free world, this session focused on issues of deterrent capability and credibility relating to Japan's evolving security and defense posture, in response to the rise of China and the changing security environment in Northeast Asia region. Despite the centrality of the long-standing US-Japan alliance, and the continued deterrent role of the U.S. nuclear umbrella in providing security assurances to a non-nuclear Japan against potentially threatening nuclear neighbours, there are doubts about the future of alliance commitment and deterrent resolve.

Andrew Oros set the strategic scene for panel discussion: the global context of reducing nuclear warhead numbers, yet increased proliferators; a U.S. de-emphasizing its nuclear posture, and attendant issues of regional anxiety regarding the rise of China and questions about the overall credibility of the U.S. nuclear umbrella and ongoing assurances to Japan. Sugio Takahashi outlined Japanese defense establishment thinking behind Japan's 2010 National Defense Program Guidelines: its shift from a 'basic' to a 'dynamic' defense posture, and the needs and concerns for maintaining credible extended deterrence against direct threats to regional stability and ongoing strategic probing by China, seeking to shape a new geopolitical balance in Asia-Pacific. For Japan, extended nuclear deterrence and assurance remain essential ingredients in an uncertain region, where the goal of disarmament remains desirable but distant. Martin Fackler provided an overview of Japan's shifting conventional defense-thinking and force structure, with the nuclear umbrella having remained a relatively

static cornerstone of the US-Japan alliance. Highlighting the various external and domestic factors shaping Japan's evolving security stance, including the impact of relative economic decline, anxiety about regional threats and/or possible U.S. abandonment, the salient factors are having a bearing on incremental efforts towards a more rounded, multi-dimensional Japanese force structure, as envisaged in the new NDPG. Victoria Tuke highlighted the changing dimension of nuclear deterrence and elements of divergence between Japan and U.S. threat perceptions and nuclear emphases. Comparing and contrasting the nuclear stances of Japan and India, it is clear that Japan's deterrent stance is clearly more alliance dependent and with less scope for regional autonomy.

Panel session participant discussion contributed comments and questions about the new NDPG and trajectory of Japan's "remilitarization" versus PRC modernization and territorial probing; bases for anxiety by and about Japanese security policy and 'strategic culture', including public perception as a political driving factor for Japan's enhanced security orientation and defense planning. It is a measure of the shift in China's own military profile and neighborhood unease, that Japan's recent NDPG shift gained such a muted response both domestically and regionally. However, the dangers of escalating territorial disputes remain significant and, with assurance and reassurance very much a two-way street in a potentially volatile region, there remains important scope and need for further alliance consultation and regional confidence building measures with respect to nuclear and non-nuclear threat perception and deterrence effectiveness.

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