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Security Guarantees and Nuclear Non-Proliferation

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the value of “security guarantees”, that is, positive security assurances that include a formal or informal defense commitment, in preventing nuclear proliferation. It will demonstrate that such guarantees have proven to be a very effective instrument in preventing States from going nuclear. It would thus seem logical to reinforce or extend them. However, this path is fraught with obstacles and dilemmas.

Security Guarantees as a Critical Non-proliferation Tool

Security guarantees by a nuclear-armed State,

potentially involving the use of nuclear weapons to protect an ally, have played a very important role in preventing proliferation. They exist in various forms, from unilateral statements to formal alliances backed by permanent military deployments¹. In many cases, during the Cold war, security guarantees were made manifest and tangible by the presence of nuclear weapons. This was the case in NATO, but also for some time in Japan and Taiwan.

The North Atlantic Organization Treaty (NATO) has played the role of a non-proliferation instrument. Article 5 of the Washington Treaty (1949) creates an obligation to assist any member State

victim of an armed attack. This article has been widely interpreted as implying the possible use of nuclear weapons by the United States, the United Kingdom and France in defense of their allies. NATO's non-proliferation role is not limited to Article 5. Over years, the organization has developed a web of collective defense cooperation and consultation mechanisms, resulting in the existence of what could be called a "security blanket" making member States feel secure. Most importantly, it has developed a unique collective system of nuclear planning. Starting in the mid-1960s, through the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), NATO developed a common mechanism of consultations, planning and employment doctrine, which has given all members a nuclear culture and a say in the process of possible weapons use – including through a widespread presence of US nuclear weapons in Europe, and the availability of large number of these weapons in wartime to allied forces. The creation of the NPG was largely a *quid pro quo* for the abandonment of the Multi-Lateral Force, an ambitious scheme which would have given, at least in some early versions of the proposals, non-nuclear countries such as Germany a finger on the button. Soviet opposition to the MLF played a significant part in the debate of the mid-1960s leading to the signing of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)².

The shadow of US nuclear weapons extended even beyond NATO's borders. One of the reasons Sweden ended up renouncing to build nuclear weapons was that it believed that there was a *de facto* nuclear umbrella covering its territory, because of its geographical situation (see below).

In the Asia-Pacific region too, continued US protection of several key allies has almost certainly prevented them from going nuclear. Japan is protected by the Security Treaty between the United States and Japan (1951). South Korea is covered by the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of Korea (1953)³. Taiwan, though not benefitting from the same security guarantee that it enjoyed until the recognition of Beijing, was and is still indirectly protected by the Taiwan Relations Act (1979)⁴. Australia, for its part, is covered by the ANZUS treaty (1951).

Some US reports have referred to "about 30 countries" being covered by the American nuclear umbrella. This number suggests adding Japan, South Korea and Australia to the 27 non-US NATO members, and perhaps Taiwan and/or

Israel (total: 32).

The importance of positive security assurances in preventing proliferation can be demonstrated *a contrario*. The lack of a strong security guarantee, or doubts about the scope and value of an existing one, have been key drivers of nuclear proliferation since 1945.

- *China* realized during the first Formosa Straits crisis (1954-1955) that whereas Taiwan was now under the protection of the United States (US-RoC Mutual Defense Pact, 1954), the Soviet Union could not be counted on. Mao launched the country's nuclear program in 1956. The second crisis (1957-1958) and the break-up with the Soviet Union in 1959 comforted China in its decision.
- *Israel*, which very survival had been put into question the day after the State was born, was reluctant to count on any other country than itself. Ben Gurion stated in 1955 that "*Our security problem could have two answers: if possible, political guarantees, but this is not up to us. But what depends on us, we must invest all our power (..)*"⁵ The decision to acquire nuclear weapons became even more important after the 1956 war. By the late 1960s, Ben Gurion had become convinced that no Western power would give the country such a guarantee⁶. He continued trying and specifically asked the Kennedy administration for a "bilateral security agreement", even musing with membership of NATO⁷. But Washington only agreed to a general commitment to Israel's security and to an informal promise to support Israel in case of an Arab surprise attack – whereas Tel-Aviv wanted a real defense treaty⁸. A recent, thorough study of the Israeli program suggests that "*if the United States had agreed to guarantee Israel's existence through a defense pact (..), Ben-Gurion's determination to acquire the nuclear option might never have been aroused*"⁹.
- *France* did not think that the US guarantee was credible. The United States did not come to help French forces at Dien Bien Phu (1954), nor did it support the Suez operation (1956). The US push for a strategy of flexible response after 1957 was seen as

a sign of US hesitancy to defend Europe. De Gaulle's decision to "operationalize" the French nuclear program when he returned to power in 1958 was in no small part based on his belief that "*nobody in the world, in particular nobody in America, can say whether, where, how, to what extent US nuclear arms would be used to defend Europe.*"¹⁰ In fact, he did not believe in nuclear guarantees at all: one could not expect to be protected by a State which would engage its very survival in doing so¹¹.

- *India* tried to get formal security guarantees from the United States in the early 1960s. Washington hesitated, in particular after the 1962 India-China war¹². There was a commitment in principle to assist New-Delhi against Beijing¹³. However, the United States did not want to find itself embroiled in a war against the Sino-Soviet bloc, and India did not want to commit itself to be alongside the United States in the fight against communism¹⁴. New-Delhi justified its decision to not sign the NPT by the absence of credible security guarantees. The 1971 treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union was seen as limited and insufficient protection¹⁵. These factors also played a role in the second phase of India's nuclear program. In 1991, Mikhail Gorbachev refused to renew the friendship treaty, and declined to take a stance about Moscow's attitude in case of a conflict with China.
- *Pakistan* too sought security guarantees before going nuclear. There was a US-Pakistan Agreement of Cooperation (1959), which committed Washington to the defense of its ally. But Islamabad did not trust the United States, for whom the agreement was aimed at resisting Soviet aggression. It noticed that Washington had supported India in 1962, and, most importantly, that the United States had not come to defend Pakistan in 1965 and 1971¹⁶. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto thought that Pakistan's security was likely to be sacrificed on the altar of great powers relationship. The nuclear program was launched in 1972. The next year, Bhutto denounced the agreement with the United States. He sought rapprochement with China, but had little hope that Beijing could offer a formal military alliance¹⁷. After the Indian test, Is-

lamabad tried again to get Western or Chinese security guarantees, but to no avail¹⁸. The nuclear program then went into full gear. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Carter reconfirmed the 1959 pledge and asked the US Congress to reaffirm it¹⁹. Pakistan agreed that it was a step forward, but it was not as good as a treaty commitment²⁰. (In addition, it would not necessarily protect the country in case of a war with India.) In 1998, after the Indian tests, Islamabad hesitated before doing the same. Some in the Pakistani elite argued that the lack of security guarantees was in itself a reason to do it²¹. Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif did a last-minute attempt to obtain US protection, but did not succeed²².

- *South Africa* did not benefit from any security guarantee. In the early days of the Cold war, the ruling Nationalist party sought to ally itself firmly with the West but was rebuffed when it asked for membership of NATO. In the 1970s, increasing Soviet influence and Cuban military presence in the region aggravated Pretoria's sense of isolation. However, at the same time, the apartheid policy had become increasingly unpopular throughout the world, and congressional pressures forced the United States to terminate its assistance to the regime. As a consequence, "*it seemed apparent to the South African leadership that some other means had to be applied to secure Western support in times of crisis*". Hence the operationalization of the program in 1977 and the adoption in 1978 of a strategy of "gradual revelation" of Pretoria's capability if attacked, in order to force Western intervention²³.
- *North Korea's* historic leader, Kim Il-Sung, had doubts as per the protection given by the alliance treaties signed in 1961 with the Soviet Union and China²⁴. These doubts emerged after the Cuban missile crisis, in which Moscow's stance was seen as weakened. A review of Soviet archives showed that North Korea's program was in no small part driven by the fear of being abandoned by Moscow and Beijing in case of a war with the United States²⁵. Indeed, after the Cold war, China reportedly made it clear to Pyongyang that it should not count on Beijing's protection under all circumstances anymore²⁶. And Russia left the

Mutual Assistance Treaty to expire in 1995, to be replaced with a simple “Friendship Treaty”. There is ample evidence from “track two” dialogues and testimonies from defectors that a primary rationale for the DPRK’s nuclear weapons program is protection from outside military aggression.

The issue of security guarantees was also a factor – to varying degrees – in the political calculus of most countries who considered acquiring nuclear weapons²⁷.

- *Australia* considered twice a nuclear program²⁸. A key motivation was that, at the time, Canberra thought that the ANZUS treaty security guarantee (1951) appeared to Australian eyes as being less solid than the one provided by the NATO treaty²⁹.
- *Indonesia* briefly considered a military-oriented nuclear program in the mid-1960s. British support for Malaysia and growing US operations in South-East Asia created the perception of a potential “Western threat”³⁰. Despite its good relationship with China, Jakarta did not consider that it was covered by a security guarantee.
- *Norway* had a strong nuclear research program (and was a leading producer of heavy water), but once covered by the Washington treaty in 1949 gave up the idea of considering a military option: the NATO guarantee was explicitly mentioned as a reason to *not* develop nuclear weapons by the Norwegian Chief of Defense Staff in 1954³¹.
- *Germany* had an interest in nuclear weapons in the late 1950s, weary as it was of the lack of certainty in the US security commitment to Europe and its reaction in case of a Soviet invasion. Trilateral cooperation with France and Germany was initiated in 1957 (only to be terminated by De Gaulle upon his return to power in 1958). Its signature of the NPT in 1969 and ratification in 1975 was made possible because of its satisfaction with the new NATO nuclear-sharing arrangements as well as the creation of the Nuclear Planning Group, which allowed Bonn to have a say in the Alliance’s planning and decision-making.

- *Sweden, Switzerland and Yugoslavia*, three European countries which seriously entertained developing nuclear weapons, were all outside the bipolar military system and had a status of neutrality or non-alignment, thus leaving them without any clear security guarantee.

The case of *Sweden* is particular³². One the reasons Stockholm ended up renouncing to build nuclear weapons was probably that Sweden believed that there was a *de facto* nuclear umbrella covering its territory. The country’s geographical situation implied that the Soviet forces would probably have violated its borders, forcing NATO to intervene before they reached Norway. Lines of communication were opened between the US and Swedish military. In addition, there was a secret US pledge to defend Swedish territory³³. (According to recent research, this was not the most important reason to explain the Swedish nuclear abstinence³⁴.)

- *South Korea’s* nuclear temptations emerged at times when the United States seemed to diminish their security commitment³⁵. In July 1969, President Nixon announced the « Guam doctrine »: Asian allies of the United States were to take a greater part of the common defense burden. Washington began to withdraw one of the two divisions stationed on the peninsula – at the same time that it initiated a rapprochement with China. This led Seoul to seriously consider, starting in the end of 1970, a military-oriented program. Washington threatened to cut off economic relations and to withdraw all remaining forces³⁶. Kissinger informed Park that the security guarantee would not be valid anymore if Seoul persisted. At the same time, however, in exchange for a renunciation to any nuclear ambition, the United States announced that it would proceed every year to major joint exercises³⁷. South Korea signed the NPT in 1975. Two years later, in 1977, President Jimmy Carter announced that it would withdraw the second US division and US nuclear weapons before 1982. A few months later, Seoul announced its intention to build a reprocessing plant, and made it clear that it would resume its program unless Washington changed its mind. Carter renounced the withdrawal in 1978.

- *Japan* has never, it seems, conducted specific military-related nuclear activities, but has studied at least at two occasions the costs and benefits of going nuclear. One of these studies was done by the non-governmental so-called “Study Group on Democracy” [sic] in 1968-1970. Another was done by the Japanese Defense Agency in late 1995. In both cases, the conclusion was that continued reliance on the US nuclear umbrella was for now the best option for Tokyo³⁸. At times when Japan doubted the reliability of the US deterrent – in particular when the United States withdrew from Vietnam – Japan sought and received renewed assurances of support³⁹.
 - *Brazil* and *Argentina*, which both embarked in a nuclear program, did not benefit from a security guarantee against each other. (The 1947 Rio Treaty was meant to cover external aggressions.)
 - *Taiwan* launched its nuclear project in 1967, following Beijing’s first tests⁴⁰. Taipei felt increasingly abandoned by major powers, who were then recognizing the People’s Republic as the legitimate government of China. The withdrawal of US nuclear weapons in 1974 comforted its decision. The death of Chiang Kai-Chek and US pressures led to the abandonment of the program in 1976. However, in 1979, following the US-China rapprochement, the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) replaced the mutual defense treaty. Taipei started constructing a uranium enrichment facility in 1987. Renewed US pressures led Taiwan to give up its nuclear intentions in 1988⁴¹.
 - *Libya’s* decision to rejuvenate its nuclear program in the late 1980s was largely driven by security considerations after the 1986 US air strikes against Tripoli and Benghazi⁴². Libya did not benefit from a security guarantee.
 - *Kazakhstan* has stated that its decision to sign the NPT was driven mainly by the signature of the Tashkent treaty (see below), which included, on paper at least, a Russian security guarantee, and could protect it against China⁴³.
 - *Iraq* was not covered by a security guarantee. The 1972 Friendship Treaty with the Soviet Union was not a military alliance and contained no provisions for assistance in case of an aggression. *Egypt* under Nasser did not benefit from a security umbrella either⁴⁴.
- What this enumeration makes clear is that (1) *almost all countries who embarked in – or considered – a nuclear program were also countries which did not benefit from a credible security guarantee*⁴⁵, and that (2) *almost all those who gave up the nuclear option in the face of a perceived threat did so after they were assured that they would be protected*⁴⁶. This double correlation suggests that such guarantees are critical as a nuclear non-proliferation measure⁴⁷.
- This is not to state that a credible security guarantee is a panacea for non-proliferation. Research has convincingly shown that other factors such as international norms and domestic agendas also play important roles in proliferation dynamics – sometimes even dominant ones, thus making the absence of a security guarantee a much less relevant factor (i.e., there can be correlation without much causality if any). Furthermore, factors that come into play in nuclear decisions may vary in importance: for instance, countries that have no security guarantee but do not face an tangible, clear military threat may end up renouncing a nuclear option simply because the costs of such a program would not have warranted its benefits (building an operational nuclear force is *costly*). Conversely, a country having made a significant investment in its nuclear program may be less inclined to abandon it for the promise of a security guarantee. Indeed, the expression “nuclear program” covers very different situations - from mere intentions to massive investment in military-oriented activities.
- It seems clear in any case that the presence of a credible security guarantee *significantly decreases* the chances of a country going nuclear, and conversely that its absence *significantly increases* such chances.
- How this question played in the domestic debates of each country considered here varies significantly, but there were common factors. One researcher notes that “*security guarantees opened up enough policy space for conservatives in Japan, Sweden and Germany to allow for nuclear abstinence*”⁴⁸.

Finally, the presence of a security guarantee might explain why some regional powers which *could* have been tempted to go nuclear refrained from doing so. *Vietnam*, for instance, benefitted from a strong defense cooperation with the Soviet Union (though this explanation is probably not sufficient). Today *Malaysia* officially considers itself protected by the Five Powers Defence Arrangements (FPDA).

The Expansion of Security Guarantees Since 1990

The end of the Cold war has implied the termination of Soviet alliances throughout the world, along with the disappearance of the bipolar confrontation. However, interestingly enough, a significant expansion of security guarantees has taken place since then. This development stems in particular from the demise of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union (which allowed for the enlargement of NATO), the creation by Russia of a new military alliance, as well as growing concerns about WMD risks in the Middle East and North-East Asia, which have led Western allies to increase the number and value of their national security commitments.

- *Europe*. The three successive enlargements of NATO to the East, in 1999, 2005 and 2009, have brought in twelve new members. It has *ipso facto* dramatically increased the number of non-nuclear countries protected by the Article 5 guarantee and more specifically by US, UK and French nuclear forces – from 13 (out of 16) to 25 (out of 28).
- *The Middle East*. Reinforced security guarantees have been given to countries of the Gulf region after the 1990-1991 Iraq war⁴⁹. There was a US military presence in Saudi Arabia designed to deter Iraqi aggression from 1990 to 2003. There is now an informal or *de facto* commitment to defend several of the smaller Gulf States, notably Qatar, which has become the new hub of US military deployments in the region⁵⁰. European powers have given security guarantees in various forms to several Gulf States. In addition to its longstanding commitment to the security of Djibouti (1977), France has signed defense agreements with Kuwait (1992), Qatar (1994, 1998), and the United Arab Emirates (1996, 2009)⁵¹. The United Kingdom also has its

own defense commitments, notably with the UAE (1996)⁵². In addition, in 2006 Bush became the first US president to state unambiguously that Washington would defend Israel by military force⁵³.

- *Asia*. In 1993, President Clinton reaffirmed in a particularly strong way the US commitment to the security of Japan and South Korea in light of the emerging North Korean threat. He stated that “*it would be pointless for [the North Koreans] to develop nuclear weapons, because if they ever use them it would be the end of their country*”⁵⁴. Under the Bush administration, the United States sought to reaffirm or reinforce several existing bilateral alliances, partly due to an increase in potential nuclear threats (China, North Korea, and Iran). As early as 2001, President Bush declared that there was a US obligation to defend Taiwan in case of Chinese attack, and pledged to do “*whatever it took to help Taiwan defend herself*”⁵⁵. After September 11, the defense relationship with Japan and Australia was strengthened; a new trilateral alliance seems to be in the making⁵⁶. After the first North Korean nuclear test in 2006, the US nuclear commitment to Seoul and Japan was reaffirmed in a particularly strong way⁵⁷.

More generally, Washington explicitly acknowledged the importance of “nuclear umbrellas” in defusing proliferation, by making “Assuring allies and friends” one of the four functions of US nuclear forces in the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review⁵⁸.

The creation of the European Union (EU) in 1992 and the French rapprochement with NATO since the early 1990s have led Paris to affirm in an increasingly explicit fashion that its nuclear forces protected also common allied interests. France subscribed to most of the 1999 Strategic Concept’s developments dealing with nuclear deterrence.

In 2001, then-President Jacques Chirac said that the French nuclear capability is part of the Atlantic Alliance's "*global deterrent*", and also that his appreciation of any threat to French vital interests – those which are covered by nuclear deterrence – would "*naturally take into account the growing solidarity of European Union countries*"⁵⁹. In 2006, he stated that "*the defense of allied countries*" could be part of French vital interests⁶⁰. This sentence was interpreted as signifying that French security commitments towards the Gulf region could potentially include a nuclear dimension.

Sarkozy has not backtracked from this approach. His decision to rejoin NATO's integrated military structure – even though France remains outside the Nuclear Planning Group, for symbolic reasons – clearly signals that Paris views its nuclear forces as part of a common Alliance deterrent⁶¹. According to a presidential adviser, the opening of a joint military base in Abu Dhabi – along with the signature of a new defense agreement with the UAE has an important "*deterrence*" dimension⁶². Paris has also made an implicit commitment to the security of Israel⁶³. And France has promoted the insertion of a mutual defense clause in the EU Lisbon Treaty, which includes a mutual assistance clause in case of an "*armed aggression against [a Member State's] territory*" (Article 42)⁶⁴. While these various developments do not automatically translate into a new, different for the French nuclear forces, it is clear that Paris is increasingly comfortable with the idea of security assurances to its friends and allies, possibly including a nuclear dimension.

Finally, Russia has created its own military alliance through the Collective Security Treaty (1992) or "Tashkent treaty". In 2002, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was created, with a view to parallel NATO. As of June 2009, the organization included Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, which are implicitly covered by a Russian nuclear guarantee. Even though Russian officials refer sometimes to all Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries being protected by Moscow's nuclear forces, it is reasonable to assume that only CSTO countries are effectively under the Russian nuclear umbrella.

The historical record clearly shows that *security guarantees in the form of defense commitments*, notably when they include a nuclear dimension, have played an important non-proliferation role. Vague promises of "assistance" are not enough

to prevent proliferation. As a presidential adviser put it when the Johnson administration was examining options for a non-proliferation policy, "*It is doubtful that a country which feels really threatened and is capable of building nuclear weapons will indefinitely refrain from doing so merely in exchange for general or conditional guarantees*"⁶⁵.

Most importantly, the recipient State must be convinced that the assurances given meet its security needs. Chinese protection did not prevent North Korea from advancing on the nuclear path. Existing formal US guarantees did not prevent France from going nuclear, or Australia to seriously consider doing the same. Soviet "friendship" did not prevent India, Egypt or Iraq from embarking in its own program. American security umbrellas did not prevent several Asian countries from considering their own program. (And the US commitment to the security of Saudi Arabia did not prevent it to acquire medium-range ballistic missiles in the late 1980s.) Whatever is stated in written or oral form, the *beliefs* of recipient governments regarding the value of security commitments, and how they transmit it to the next generation, matter significantly (for instance, a security guarantee can be judged as credible by one set of leaders but not by the next one).

The Future Role of Security Guarantees in Preventing Nuclear Proliferation

Further efforts to limit the proliferation may require an increase in the number of security guarantees and the reinforcement of existing ones.

Growing concerns about nuclear proliferation and the possible emergence of new WMD-armed nations in the Middle East and in Asia are likely to “test” existing security commitments. Gulf countries, NATO members and East Asian allies will ask for stronger and more explicit security guarantees in case of WMD aggression – especially, of course, if Iran develops an operational nuclear capability. A review of nuclear proliferation decisions confirmed that “*the perceived reliability of U.S. security assurances will be a critical factor, if not the critical factor, in whether such countries as Japan, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Taiwan, and Turkey reconsider their nuclear options*”⁶⁶.

- *The case of Saudi Arabia.* It is widely believed that Riyadh benefits from a specific US pledge for protection, but it stems from vague statements and private assurances⁶⁷. US troops are no longer present in the region and cannot symbolize the American security commitment. There is thus what some have called a “*credibility gap*” in extended deterrence in the region⁶⁸. According to US ambassador Chas Freeman, in 2003 King Fahd asked for a nuclear guarantee in case Iran produced the Bomb⁶⁹. Several sources claim that three options for the Saudi nuclear future were considered that year by Riyadh: a nuclear deterrent; a security guarantee; or a nuclear-weapon free zone in the region⁷⁰.
- *The case of Turkey.* There are increasing doubts in Ankara about the reliability of its allies. In 1991, Turkey was shocked as some Atlantic Alliance members showed reluctance at the deployment of NATO defenses on Turkish territory, raising questions about the validity of the security guarantee Ankara was supposed to benefit from. In 2003, before the invasion of Iraq, a crisis of confidence developed with NATO as several Alliance members refused to invoke Article 4 of the Washington Treaty. In addition, operations in Iraq and the general post-September 11 context

have strained Turkey’s relations with the West. How will Ankara react if Iran develops nuclear weapons?

- *The case of Japan.* Like Turkey, Japan clearly benefits from a “nuclear umbrella”. However, the advances of the North Korean program (the Taep’o-Dong 2 test of 2006, the nuclear tests of 2006 and 2009) and the continued development of the Chinese missile and nuclear force – along with significant political tensions between Japan and its neighbors – have contributed to raised new questions in Tokyo about the credibility and reliability of the US deterrent. The nuclear option is once again widely discussed in Japanese political and strategic circles.

Finally, the expansion of the membership of non-proliferation treaties (NWFZ treaties, the CW and BTW conventions, and perhaps even the NPT) may require more security guarantees. For instance, a hypothetical future NWFZ in the Middle East may require the United States and/or NATO to give a nuclear guarantee to Israel⁷¹.

There are several ways to reinforce existing security guarantees.

- Public statements can be made stronger and more explicit. The fact that it was Secretary of State Rice who came in person to Japan to reaffirm the US nuclear umbrella after the 2006 North Korean test was seen as important by Tokyo. Commitments can be formalized in a defense treaty. They can be materialized through military presence and “*habits of cooperation*”⁷².
- Existing guarantees could be multilateralized: for instance, France, the United Kingdom and the United States could give joint reassurances to some Gulf countries if Iran went nuclear. (This would also have an additional value: to avoid that one country protected by several others to play on their differences.)

- Missile defense – “extended deterrence through denial” – may be an increasingly important commitment of both deterrence and assurance towards allies. This will be all the more important since the practice of deploying nuclear weapons on allied territory was common during the Cold war⁷³. It has now become marginal: today only five NNWS are reported to host nuclear weapons (US B-61 bombs), thus roughly about one-tenth of all countries covered by an explicit US defense commitment, one-sixth of all countries generally considered as covered by a “nuclear umbrella”⁷⁴.
- That said, *the potential role of nuclear weapons stationing should not be discarded*. Precisely because it is no longer a standard practice, deployment abroad would be now one of the strongest possible signs of guaranteeing a country’s security when faced with a serious WMD threat⁷⁵. There are actually advocates in the United States and North-East Asia of a *redeployment* of US nuclear weapons in the region, precisely on the grounds that military presence and missile defense may not be sufficient for deterrence and/or assurance. Alternatively, Washington could consider redeploying nuclear-armed cruise missiles at sea – a practice abandoned in 1994⁷⁶.
- States covered by “umbrellas” can be emboldened and embark in dangerous adventures. Such is the case why the United States never wanted to give Taiwan a complete assurance of support in *any* circumstance – an attitude which could induce the temptation for Taipei to declare its independence, and lead to conflict with Beijing. It is no coincidence that the term “ambiguity” has been frequently associated with the expression “security commitments”. (Conversely, nuclear guarantees may be resisted by the recipient State, which may fear for its freedom of action. Many Israelis oppose a formal defense pact with the United States for this reason⁷⁷.)
- Giving security commitments to allies that have unfriendly relations with their neighbors can be a tricky diplomatic balancing act. During the Cold war, the US State Department expressed the fear that a publicly declared security guarantee to Israel would harm America’s relations with the Arab world – especially since it may have been seen as giving a “free hand” to Israel in the region⁷⁸.

Problems and Dilemmas

However, the reinforcement or multiplication of security guarantees is no magic bullet when it comes to the prevention of WMD proliferation.

Aside from the obvious – a real security guarantee, that is, a clear defense commitment, can only be given to a friendly State, not a potential enemy – several dilemmas appear.

- Protected States can be tempted to reduce their conventional defense commitments, thus making them more dependent on foreign protection, enhancing the risk for the protector to be quickly and heavily involved in a military crisis involving the protected country.
- It may be difficult to discriminate among allies and friends: those who feel “left out” will either ask for identical guarantees – but failing to meet their demands may en-

Some dilemmas concern more particularly the *reinforcement* of existing guarantees:

- Countries that give a security commitment generally want to preserve a margin of maneuver and not be caught in “entangling alliances”. A key reason why Article 5 of the Washington treaty remained vague is that the US Congress would not have sanctioned an automatic commitment to war⁷⁹. After 1957, Washington never wanted to give any automatic character to its nuclear response to a Soviet aggression. Fear of a “commitment trap” is one reason why US, UK and French leaders have chosen to cloud with uncertainty what the nature of their response to a CW or BW attack would be⁸⁰. The CWC language on mutual assistance offers several options due to Washington’s willingness to avoid being bound to provide a particular type of assistance⁸¹.

- Stronger, more explicit guarantees run counter to the very principle of ambiguity embedded in the policy of deterrence. If one assumes that the efficiency of deterrence supposes that the adversary is unable to calculate the exact costs and risks that would be associated with aggression, then there is an inherent limit to what is possible to achieve in terms of strengthening security assurances for the purpose of non-proliferation without compromising deterrence.
- New security guarantees can pose political or even ethical problems to the “donor” or to the “recipient”. Since the end of the Cold war, and most importantly since 9/11, questions have been raised about the wisdom to continue giving protection to authoritarian regimes, such as Pakistan, or to quasi-fundamentalist States such as Saudi Arabia. (A nuclear guarantee to a country from which most of the 9/11 perpetrators originated would be controversial in the United States⁸².) But the problem may also exist the other way round. Some countries may not *want* to be protected by the United States. In 2003, Mexico symbolically decided to withdraw from the Rio Treaty, to protest against the Iraq war. A formal security guarantee to Saudi Arabia, which would mean open and complete reliance on the United States for its security, may be challenged from within: “*such a formal deal could raise anti-American sentiment in the desert kingdom*”⁸³. US proposals for a “defense umbrella” over the Arabian peninsula, may find Gulf countries unreceptive – because they want to maintain good relations with Iran and have no desire to be seen by Tehran as American puppets.
- Another dilemma exists regarding the possible deployment of nuclear weapons. Critics of the Atlantic Alliance’s nuclear posture have a point when they say that “*NATO has established a pattern that it does not want others to emulate*”⁸⁴. In legal terms, nothing would preclude, for instance, Islamabad from deploying nuclear weapons in Saudi Arabia, or forbid the presence of Chinese nuclear weapons in, say, Burma, or prohibit the stationing of future Iranian nuclear weapons on Syrian soil – as long as such weapons are not under the control of the recipient country...

Such countries would be more than happy to use the US precedent to justify themselves. In addition, nuclear presence can induce a sense of insecurity in a neighboring country, heightening its need for nuclear weapons (e.g. Turkey/Iran).

In the case of Turkey, one should also note also that the presence of US nuclear weapons gives a “nuclear education” and training that could be helpful if one day that country decided to go nuclear. Nuclear stationing thus presents a dilemma: it can be both a non-proliferation tool and a mechanism that reinforces, to some extent, the risk of proliferation.

- Finally, might not the creation or the reinforcement of security guarantees actually *contribute*, to some extent, to proliferation? The US-Taiwan treaty of December 1954 has been called the “*last straw*” leading to Mao’s decision to go nuclear⁸⁵. The contemporary cases of Iran and North Korea also deserve thinking. Assuming that Iran has not yet decided to build operational nuclear weapons, the existence of a growing web of alliances around the country could be used, in internal debates, as an argument for “going all the way”. As per Pyongyang, it seems to consider that the very existence of a US nuclear umbrella over South Korea is a rationale for its nuclear program.

A third series of dilemmas concerns the *increase* in the number of security guarantees:

- It may end up diminishing their individual value. As an adviser to the Johnson administration put it in 1965, “*The character of our determination will be diluted as we have 20 such commitments and our fundamental image of capability to defend the free world might be impaired*”⁸⁶. At the same time, the US has commitments to many more countries today and it remains to be seen that their individual value has been lowered.
- It could create the risk that, mathematically, one of them will be seriously tested though a conflict or a crisis. The problem then for the protecting country is that it may have to intervene *more forcefully than it would have otherwise* to maintain its “reputation” as a reliable ally – and the higher the number of allies, the higher the

stakes. Also, an important number of security commitments may raise the cost of “defeat” or “withdrawal” when the protecting State is involved in a war which does not involve a protected country. (Some in the Johnson administration argued that a key reason to remain involved in Vietnam was that absent a US victory, the credibility of US security guarantees would be weakened⁸⁷. The same argument was made in the years 2004-2008 regarding Iraq.) It can also be argued that a further expansion of nuclear umbrellas may lead to the definition of “new lines of confrontation” between various blocks of allies⁸⁸.

Nuclear powers should also remain aware that discussions about a possible nuclear program can be a way to induce Western countries into giving a security guarantee or strengthening an existing one. In the early days of South Africa’s nuclear program, it was thought that a nuclear test could be a way to force the West to include Pretoria in their security arrangements⁸⁹. In the 1970s, Tokyo, Seoul and Taipei may have considered that giving signs of interest for a military nuclear option was the best way to ensure US military protection. Today, the way some Japanese officials from time to time mention a nuclear option for Tokyo may be a trick to verify that the US guarantee is still valid, and induce Washington into making statements to that effect⁹⁰.

Thus while security guarantees are clearly one of the solutions to the risk of further nuclear proliferation, the idea of systematically reinforcing or multiplying raise significant objections. They cannot be considered a “magic bullet”.

A final element in this debate is the possible temptation to “denuclearize” security guarantees. While this paper has focused on all forms of security guarantees – and the nuclear element is generally implicit rather than explicit in most of

them – three factors may lead to a lessening of the role of nuclear weapons in such guarantees. First, as time passes and technology matures, conventional strategic weapons, missile defense or a combination thereof will be increasingly be seen as a possible alternative to “nuclear umbrellas”. Second, nuclear powers may want to reduce their nuclear arsenals and the role of nuclear weapons in their defense policies to advance their non-proliferation goals, leading them to deemphasize the nuclear component of extended deterrence. Third, some recipient states themselves (for instance in the Gulf) may prefer an explicitly non-nuclear guarantee as to not provoke potential adversaries with whom they want to try to maintain good relations.

How credible are non-nuclear security guarantees? There is no easy answer to that question, especially since, as said above, the nuclear element is not always explicitly present in allied defense commitments. Its existence may also be deliberately left ambiguous. (As far as the United States is concerned, it is explicit only in the case of NATO and Japan.) However, three ideas can be suggested. One is that a deliberate and explicit “downgrading” of an existing security guarantee from nuclear to non-nuclear *in the context of an unchanged threat* would in all likelihood damage assurance and probably deterrence. Another is that in the case of a *new* explicit security guarantee – for instance in the Gulf – non-nuclear commitments would result in a net security gain even if it would not necessarily provide the same degree of assurance and deterrence as an explicitly nuclear one. A final idea that deserves consideration is that the exact formulation of a security guarantee by a nuclear-endowed nation may not matter that much. Unless *explicitly ruled out*, the use of nuclear weapons by a protector should always be considered as being an option, as many countries have understood⁹¹. A potential adversary feeling confident that a protector would never use nuclear weapons in defense of an allied country because it has never explicitly said that it could do it, would do so at its own peril. ♦

Notes

1 Some 50 countries are covered by a formal US security commitment. These include Washington treaty members, Rio treaty members (except Cuba), key Asia-Pacific allies (Japan, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, and Australia), some old “executive agreements” (Pakistan, Liberia) and the Freely Associated States.

In addition to these 50 or so countries, others are considered by US law as “Major Non-NATO Allies”, but despite its name this status does not imply a formal military alliance.

2 In addition to being covered by the NATO guarantee, ten EU members are signatories of the Modified Brussels Treaty (1954), which includes a mutual defense commitment and was not superseded by the NATO treaty.

3 Strictly speaking, South Korea is also protected by the United Nations (the commander of USFK is also “United Nations Commander”).

4 Thailand and the Philippines are also covered by formal US security guarantees (stemming from bilateral treaties), but it remains unclear how much the US “nuclear umbrella” is extended over them. However, none of these two countries has ever been considered a serious WMD proliferation risk.

5 Quoted in Avner Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb* (New-York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 43.

6 Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb*, 66.

7 It is not widely known that De Gaulle had, in effect, given a form of security guarantee to Israel : “*if Israel is attacked, we will not let it be destroyed*”. Press conference at the Elysée Palace, 27 November 1967, in Charles de Gaulle, *Discours & Messages*, vol. 5, (Paris: Plon, 1970), 132. However, Israel was disappointed by his equal condemnation of both sides when the 1967 war erupted.

8 Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb*, 122-123.

9 Michael Karpin, *The Bomb in the Basement. How Israel Went Nuclear and What That Means for the World* (New-York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), 94.

10 Press conference at the Elysée Palace, 14 January 1963, in De Gaulle, *Discours & Messages*, vol. 4, 73.

11 “*You see, for a long time, one could count on the automaticity of alliances, because they were totally committing the existence of a nation. Today, atomic warfare puts all commitments into question. Can you imagine a U.S. President taking the risk of condemning to death tens of millions of Americans in application of an alliance treaty?*” As reported by Alain Peyrefitte, *C’était De Gaulle* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), 707.

12 Anand Giridharadas, “JFK faced India-China dilemma”, *International Herald Tribune*, 26 August 2005.

13 See A. G. Noorani, “The nuclear guarantee episode”, *Frontline*, vol. 18, Issue 12, 9-22 June 2001.

14 Francis J. Gavin, “Blasts from the Past. Proliferation Lessons from the 1960s”, *International Security*, vol. 29, n° 3, Winter 2004-2005, 118. The Johnson administration never went further than a “blanket” promise of

support given the day after the Chinese test (see below).

15 Article 9 of the treaty stated: “*In the event of either Party being subjected to an attack or a threat thereof, the High Contracting Parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to remove such threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and the security of their countries*”.

16 During the 1965 war, Pakistan invoked the 1959 agreement, but Washington chose to suspend all assistance to both countries. During the 1971 war, Islamabad saw that the deployment of a US carrier group did not have any influence on Indian decision-making.

17 In 1965, China had recommended Pakistan to withdraw its forces. In 1971, Beijing had supported Islamabad, but then Moscow had issued threats to destroy the Chinese arsenal. Steve Weissman & Herbert Kroesney, *The Islamic Bomb* (New-York: Times Books, 1981), 51.

18 Naeem Ahmad Salik, “Regional Dynamics and Deterrence (2): South Asia”, *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 25, n° 1, April 2004, 185. While China is considered as Pakistan’s “all-weather friend”, there is no formal military alliance between the two countries.

19 Jimmy Carter, *State of the Union Address*, 23 January 1980.

20 Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan 1947-2000. Disenchanted Allies* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001), 249.

21 Hasan Askari-Rizvi, « Pakistan’s Nuclear Testing », in Lowell Dittmer (ed.), *South Asia’s Nuclear Security Dilemma* (New-York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 107.

22 Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the storm* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 192.

23 Roy E. Horton III, *Out of (South) Africa: Pretoria’s Nuclear Weapons Experience*, USAF Institute for National Security Studies, Occasional Paper n° 27, August 1999.

24 Alexandre Y. Mansourov, “The origins, evolution, and current politics of the North Korean nuclear program”, *The Nonproliferation Review*, Spring-Summer 1995, 28. Article 1 of the treaty with China stated: “*Should either of the Contracting Parties suffer armed attack by any State or coalition of States and thus find itself in a state of war, the other Contracting Party shall immediately extend military and other assistance with all the means at its disposal*”. Article 2 of the treaty with the Soviet Union stated: “*In the event of one of the Contracting Parties being subjected to the armed attack by any state or several states jointly and thus being involved in a state of war, the other Contracting Party shall immediately render military and other assistance by all means at its disposal.*” However, Soviet concrete military help during the Korean war had been limited, and Pyongyang was always wary about China, a former dominant country on the peninsula.

25 Robert S. Litwak & Kathryn Weathersby, “The Kims’ Obsession”, *The Washington Post*, 12 June 2005.

26 Hui Zhang, “Don’t blame Beijing”, *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, September-October 2005, 24.

27 Some possible examples of nuclear guarantees remain unclear. Experts disagree for instance about the

existence of a Soviet nuclear guarantee to Egypt. The absence of a nuclear guarantee may explain why the decision by Sadat to break with Moscow in 1972 did not have any adverse impact on the decision to abandon the country's nuclear military option.

28 Wayne Reynolds, *Australia's Bid for the Atom Bomb* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2000); Jacques E.C. Hymans, "Isotopes and Identity: Australia and the Nuclear Weapons Option, 1949-1999", *The Nonproliferation Review*, Spring 2000, 3-23.

29 Ronald A. Walker, "Armes nucléaires et multilatéralisme", *Géopolitique*, n° 70, July 2000, 44. Article 4 of the ANZUS treaty stated: "Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on any of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes".

30 Robert M. Cornejo, "When Sukarno Sought the Bomb: Indonesian Nuclear Aspirations in the Mid-1960s", *The Nonproliferation Review*, Summer 2000.

31 See Astrid Forland, "Norway's Nuclear Odyssey: From Optimist Proponent to Nonproliferator", *The Nonproliferation Review*, Winter 1997, 11.

32 See *inter alia* Paul Cole, *Sweden Without the Bomb. The Conduct of a Nuclear-Capable Nation Without Nuclear Weapons*, MR-460, The RAND Corporation, 1994, xii.

33 NSC 6006/1 (1960) stated that the United States should "be prepared to come to the assistance of Sweden" in case of Soviet aggression. Another directive, dated 1962, stated that Washington will "undertake to come to the assistance" of Sweden. Per T. Ohlsson, *Close Friends and Distant: Relations Between the United States and Sweden over 200 Years*, Columbia University, 23 September 2003.

34 Thomas Jonter, "Why Sweden did not build the bomb, 1945-1970", Paper presented at the 2009 Nobel Symposium, Drobak, 25-27 June 2009.

35 Peter Hayes, "The Republic of Korea and the Nuclear Issue", in Andrew Mack (dir.), *Asian Flashpoint: Security and the Korean Peninsula* (Canberra: Allen & Unwin, 1993); Michael J. Engelhardt, "Rewarding Nonproliferation: the South and North Korean Cases", *The Nonproliferation Review*, Spring-Summer 1996.

36 Mitchell Reiss, *Without the Bomb: The Politics of Nuclear Nonproliferation* (New-York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 78-108.

37 Jungmin Kang & H. A. Feiveson, "South Korea's Shifting and Controversial Interest in Spent Fuel Reprocessing", *The Nonproliferation Review*, January-February 1998.

38 Kurt M. Campbell & Tsuyoshi Sunohara, "Japan: Thinking the Unthinkable", in Kurt M. Campbell, Robert J. Einhorn & Mitchell B. Reiss (ed.), *The Nuclear Tipping Point. Why States Reconsider Their Nuclear Choices* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 223-227.

39 See for instance Maria Rost Rublee, *Nonproliferation norms. Why States Choose Nuclear Restraint* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 67.

40 David Albright & Corey Gray, "Taiwan: Nuclear Nightmare Averted", *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, January-February 1998; William Burr, "New Archival Evidence on Taiwanese 'Nuclear Intentions', 1966-1976", *Electronic Briefing Book n° 19*, National Security Archive, 13 October 1999.

41 Derek J. Mitchell, "Taiwan's Hsin Chu Program: Deterrence, Abandonment, and Honor", in Campbell et al., *The Nuclear Tipping Point*, 299-300.

42 Malfrid Braut-Hegghammer, "Libya's Nuclear Turn-around: Perspectives from Tripoli", *Middle East Journal*, vol. 61, n° 1, Winter 2008, 63-64.

43 On this issue see William C. Potter, "Back to the Future: The Contemporary Relevance of the Nuclear Renunciation Decisions by Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine", Paper presented at the 2009 Nobel Symposium, Drobak, 25-27 June 2009.

44 The Friendship Treaty with Moscow was signed only in 1971, and, like the Iraq treaty, did not contain any assurance of support in case of an aggression.

45 The word "credible" is important. One analyst of the causes of proliferation states that "Superpowers' commitments to North Korea, Iraq, Israel (or Pakistan, France, and Britain) did not lead them to renounce nuclear weapons". But this fails to see that the strength and cope of such commitments – when they existed – evolved over time, and most importantly that they were not necessarily perceived as being credible enough. Etel Solingen, *Nuclear Logics. Contrasting Paths in East Asia and the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 253. The argument is however probably true about Great Britain.

46 This includes Norway, Germany, Sweden, South Korea, Japan, and Kazakhstan.

47 A similar conclusion was reached by a 2007 report by the US Department of State's International Security Advisory Board: "There is clear evidence in diplomatic channels that US assurances to include the nuclear umbrella have been, and continue to be, the single most important reason many allies have foresworn nuclear weapons" (International Security Advisory Board, *Report on Discouraging a Cascade of Nuclear Weapons States*, 19 October 2007, p. 23).

48 Rublee, *Nonproliferation norms*, 222.

49 In January 1980, President Carter had affirmed that "any attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force". (State of the Union Address, 23 January 1980). The principle of such a pledge had been agreed upon a few weeks before the invasion of Afghanistan (Zbigniew Brzezinski, "NSC Agenda, December 4, 1979", *Memorandum for the President*, 3 December 1974).

50 Post-1991 agreements "do not formally require the United States to come to the aid of any of the Gulf states if they are attacked, according to U.S. officials familiar with their contents". Kenneth Katzman, *The Persian Gulf States: Post-War Issues for U.S. Policy, 2003*, CRS Report For Congress, 14 July 2003.

51 The content of these agreements has not (yet) been made public. It is generally acknowledged that the one with the UAE is particularly strong.

52 The latter is described by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office website as being “our largest defence commitment outside NATO” (Country Profiles – UAE).

53 “We will rise to Israel’s defense, if need be. (...) You bet, we’ll defend Israel” (quoted in Glenn Kessler, “Bush Says U.S. Would Defend Israel Militarily”, *The Washington Post*, 2 February 2006); “I made it clear, I’ll make it clear again, that we will use military might to protect our ally, Israel” (President Discusses War on Terror and Operation Iraqi Freedom, Cleveland, 20 March 2006).

54 Exchange With Reporters at the Demilitarized Zone, 11 July 1993.

55 “Bush pledges whatever it takes to defend Taiwan”, *CNN.com*, 25 April 2001.

56 A tripartite defense forum was created in 2006. A bilateral defense cooperation agreement was signed by Canberra and Tokyo in March 2007. Australia is considering a participation in a joint missile defense system with the United States and Japan. “Australia mulls missile defense cooperation with Japan, U.S.” *The Japan Times*, 6 June 2007.

57 “Secretary Rumsfeld offered assurances of firm US commitment and immediate support to the ROK, including continuation of the extended deterrence offered by the US nuclear umbrella, consistent with the Mutual Defense Treaty” (The 38th Security Consultative Meeting Joint Communiqué, Washington, 20 October 2006). “The United States has the will and the capability to meet the full range – and I underscore full range – of its deterrent and security commitments to Japan” (Condoleezza Rice quoted in Thom Shanker & Norimitsu Onishi, “Japan Assures Rice That It Has No Nuclear Intentions”, *The New-York Times*, 21 October 2006).

58 US Department of Defense, *Findings of the Nuclear Posture Review*, DoD News Briefing, 9 January 2002.

59 Discours de M. Jacques Chirac, Président de la République, devant l’Institut des hautes études de défense nationale, 8 June 2001.

60 Allocution de M. Jacques Chirac, Président de la République, lors de sa visite aux forces aériennes et océanique stratégiques, 19 January 2006.

61 The role of French nuclear forces in the security of Europe and NATO was reaffirmed in a particularly strong way at the bilateral French-British summit of July 2009, where both countries affirmed that their nuclear forces should be “consistent with the strategic and security context and our commitments under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty”, and that they “contribute to European security as a whole” (Sommet franco-britannique du 6 juillet 2009: Déclaration conjointe sur la défense et la sécurité).

62 Nathalie Nougayrède, “La France s’installe militairement dans le Golfe”, *Le Monde*, 26 May 2009. The opening of the base and the signing of a new agreement do not imply that the role of the French nuclear deterrent has changed in any way. It is still up to the President to decide whether or not an attack in general - or a particular

form of attack - against the French base or on other parts of the UAE territory would be considered an aggression against French “vital interests”.

63 “Yes, France is a friend of Israel and it will always be at its side when its security and its existence are threatened. (...) France will never compromise with the security of Israel” (Discours de M. Nicolas Sarkozy à la Knesset, 23 June 2008).

64 As of June 2009, the ratification process was still ongoing.

65 Ambassador Llewelyn Thompson quoted in Gavin, “Blasts from the Past”, 118.

66 Kurt M. Campbell & Robert J. Einhorn, “Avoiding the Tipping Point: Concluding Observations”, in Kurt M. Campbell, Robert J. Einhorn & Mitchell Reiss (ed.), *The Nuclear Tipping Point: Why States Reconsider Their Nuclear Choices* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 321.

67 “Though America has never signed a formal treaty with Riyadh, since World War II the United States has made clear by its actions (...) and by informal guarantees given to Saudi leaders by American officials that it will protect the monarchy from outside threats.” (Michael Levi, “Royal Pain”, *The New Republic*, 2 June 2003). According to one author, the Reagan administration gave a security guarantee to Saudi Arabia in return for increasing its oil production. Peter Schweizer, *Victory: The Reagan Administration’s Secret Strategy That Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New-York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994), 141-143.

68 Kathleen J. McInnis, “Extended Deterrence: The U.S. Credibility Gap in the Middle East”, *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 28, n° 3, 169-186.

69 Selig S. Harrison, “U.S. must clamp down on Pakistan nuke dealing”, *San José Mercury News*, 30 May 2003.

70 Ewan MacAskill & Ian Traynor, “Saudis consider nuclear bomb”, *The Guardian*, 18 September 2000; Simon Henderson, *Toward a Saudi Nuclear Option: The Saudi-Pakistani Summit*, Policywatch, n° 793, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 16 October 2003.

71 Security guarantees could possibly have an indirect non-proliferation role or “dissuasion”. This was the apparent goal of President Clinton’s 1993 declaration about North Korea (see above). Increasing a security commitment to Western friends and allies in the Middle East before Iran goes nuclear could have some impact on Tehran’s political calculus regarding its nuclear program.

72 According to US ambassador Maynard Glitman, such “habits of cooperation” gave its real value to the US extended deterrence commitment. Lewis A. Dunn, *Deterrence Today – Roles, Challenges, and Responses*, paper prepared for the Institut Français des Relations Internationales, 14 May 2007, 9.

73 Robert S. Norris, William M. Arkin & William Burr, “Where they were”, *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, November-December 1999, 26-35. In addition to Europe, US nuclear weapons were deployed in such places as Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and Morocco.

74 Hans M. Kristensen, *U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Europe*.

A Review of Post-Cold War Policy, Force Levels, and War Planning, Natural Resources Defense Council, February 2005.

75 Assuming all existing NWFZ treaties come into force, this would be legally possible only in Europe, the Middle East and parts of Asia.

76 Dunn, *Deterrence Today*, 4.

77 A researcher notes that “if the United States had agreed to guarantee Israel’s existence through a defense pact, it is unlikely that Israel would even have considered partnership in the Suez campaign (...)” Karpin, *The Bomb in the Basement*, 94.

78 Karpin, *The Bomb in the Basement*, 238.

79 Wheeler, *Positive and Negative Security Assurances*, 31.

80 The expression “commitment trap” comes from Scott D. Sagan, “The Commitment Trap. Why the United States Should Not Use Nuclear Threats to Deter Biological and Chemical Weapons Attacks”, *International Security*, vol. 24, n° 4, Spring 2000, 85-115. Sagan argues in fact that the ambiguous character of US threats may lead to an inappropriate nuclear response.

81 Woolf, *Nuclear Weapons Proliferation*, 9.

82 As a US expert put it, “should the American people be willing to put their lives on the line to defend societies whose values and ideals seem so different than our own?” (Barry Blechman, *Extended Deterrence: Cutting Edge of the Debate on Nuclear Policy*, The Harry L. Stimson Center, 28 May 2009).

83 Michael Levi, “Royal Pain”, *The New Republic*, 2 June 2003.

84 Martin Butcher, Otfried Nassauer, Tanya Padberg & Dan Plesch, *Questions of Command and Control: NATO, Nuclear Sharing and the NPT*, PENN Research Report 2000-1, 2000.

85 Thomas C. Reed & Danny B. Stillman, *The Nuclear Express. A Political History of the Bomb and Its Proliferation* (Minneapolis: Zenith Press, 2009), 93.

86 John J. McCloy quoted in Gavin, “Blasts from the Past”, 119.

87 John McNaughton, Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs at the US Department of Defense, considered that the need for a strong US commitment in South East Asia was mostly (“70%”) justified by the need to avoid damage to “our reputation as a guarantor”. Quoted in Philip Ball, *Critical Mass. How one thing leads to another* (London: Arrow Books, 2004), 559.

88 On a similar theme see Michael May, *Rivalries Between Nuclear Power Projectors: Why the Lines Will Be Drawn Again*, Center for International Security and Arms Control (CISAC), Stanford University, 1996.

Incidentally, this argument was used by some of the NAM countries in pre-NPT negotiations to reject bilateral security guarantees in lieu of security assurances: in 1965, the United Arab Republic stated that the multiplication of security guarantees would result in a situation where “vast areas were divided under a nuclear trusteeship of this or that Power”. Quoted in Thomas Graham & Leonor Tomero, “Obligations For Us All’: NATO & Negative Security Assurances”, *Disarmament Diplomacy*, Issue n° 49, August 2000.

89 Reed & Stillman, *The Nuclear Express*, 177.

90 Ariel E. Levite, “Never Say Never Again. Nuclear Reversal Revisited”, *International Security*, vol. 27, n° 3, Winter 2002-2003, 71-80; and Llewelyn Hughes, “Why Japan Will Not Go Nuclear (Yet)”, *International Security*, vol. 31, n° 4, Spring 2007, 76.

91 North Korea, for instance, has repeatedly made it clear that it considered the US-ROK alliance as being a nuclear one by definition, since the United States is a nuclear power. And US proposals of a “defense umbrella” to Gulf nations has been widely interpreted in the region as meaning a nuclear guarantee.

Assertions and opinions in this paper are solely those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Fondation pour la Recherche stratégique

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