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**THE WEST'S NEW
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
CHALLENGES**

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This paper sketches some of the most important developments in the international security environment since 2008. In some places it focuses on the United States. That is because its economic and political situations make it less disposed to provide global public goods than has been the case in previous decades. While these conditions may be reversible, their implications for global security over the next decade are serious.

1. The scarcity of good jobs and the squeezing of national budgets in the West.

The U.S., Europe and other states that have shaped the post-war international system are experiencing a crisis in the availability of jobs that provide a middle-class standard of living for their citizens, especially their young. This probably is related at least somewhat to growing levels of income inequality in the U.S. and elsewhere. (More than 24% of U.S. national income is controlled by the top 1 percent of the population; no matter how extravagantly these people spend their money they cannot produce the demand necessary to raise employment and wages). The dissatisfaction, angst, and political turbulence that these trends cause may also be related to the redistribution of manufacturing and other industries (including services) to China, India and other developing countries. The gains in welfare in China, India and other developing countries are good for humanity as a whole, but many OECD states are not prepared to help their wage-earning populations to adjust.

Many present and potential effects may flow from these economic trends. The resource base for the governments of the U.S. and Europe will be constrained and citizens and governments will struggle to balance expectations of social welfare with state budgets and debt loads. In the ensuing struggles over resource allocation, trade-offs will be acute between domestic priorities and international functions, including defense. To the extent that budgets related to national and international security will be squeezed, states will experience internal and international tensions over how to reconcile their interests and objectives with their capacity to pursue them.

Economic stress and the perception that structural unemployment will persist can exacerbate animosity towards immigrant communities, which in turn can rebound back against the countries whence they come. Europe's struggle to integrate its growing Muslim communities -- and the ways in which this struggle plays out in political discourse and elections -- is one example. The phenomenon exists in the U.S., too, directly primarily to Mexico and Central America. Immigration issues are becoming more prominent in Australia, potentially affecting relations with East Asian states and India.

The simplistic point is that the immense importance of the economic and employment crises has security implications that go beyond the problem of generating state resources to fund defense capabilities and policies.

2. The challenge to international governance of the global economy.

The economic crisis that began in the U.S. financial system in 2008 has persisted and spread. Europe is experiencing it most acutely now. The emanations from Europe extend back to the U.S. and the rest of the world. There is nothing more important to the security of the majority of the world's families and countries than the economy.

Economic experts and some political leaders recognize that the challenge is global and that new mechanisms are needed to address it. Older tools and expectations also need to be seriously readjusted. Among the most important requirements is to integrate China into leadership of the global economic management regime, but the current Western leaders and Japan are wary about this, as are Chinese leaders. Moreover, there is little confidence that leaders of key states will have the knowledge and will (and political support) to cooperatively work out constructive policies and to build new regimes for managing the 21st century economy. As a simple way to see the challenge, consider that as economic power shifts further to China and Asia more broadly, the acceptability of the dollar or the euro as the global reserve currency will no longer be defensible. But nor would the yuan be accepted as a replacement. Will agreement be possible on an international currency managed by an international body? What are the alternatives?

Failure to inspire confidence in management of the global economy can undermine confidence in international problem-solving in other domains. Pessimism about international problem solving can reinforce nationalistic competition, reversion to a law-of-the-jungle mentality. A vicious circle can be created in which loss of confidence in international regimes produces non-cooperative nationalistic actions which inspire and reinforce the crudest political parties within states. These parties reinforce nationalistic competition and opposition to policies that involve accommodating the interests of other states or the advice of international agencies. This non-cooperation further exacerbates negative conditions, in a reinforcing cycle.

Scholars tend to think that effective international regimes depend, at least in the beginning, on a hegemonic power that is willing to pursue not only its narrow national interest but also to underwrite the provision of the general public good. The U.S. has been an example of this sort of benign hegemon. The Bretton Woods institutions, NATO and other regimes are examples of the post-World-War II effort to structure

international problem solving. But the U.S. is no longer a hegemon, and its political situation these days makes it less capable of acting benignly in providing public goods. Nor does any other state have the combination of wealth and hard and soft power required to make it an effective global hegemon. China's economic power and savings make it a necessary part of any cooperative approach to manage the global economy, but its economic power is not hegemonic, and the values it projects and the interests it pursues are not seen by many other players as particularly benign. China lacks soft power. The EU is an indispensable partner in any international effort to manage the economy, but only when it acts as a unit. The difficulties the EU experiences reconciling its internal differences and getting in front of the crisis cascading from Greece shows that a U.S.-EU partnership to take the lead in global economic management is problematic. This suggests a parallel problem of cohesive leadership in the security domain, as seen in the divergent approaches of NATO states to the Libyan operation.

3. The mismatch between the acute security problems we face and the instruments we have to redress them.

The largest security problems that have arisen since September 11, 2001, and more obviously since 2008, involve construction, not destruction. It is relatively easy to destroy personalities and regimes like those of Saddam Hussein, Gadhafi, Milosevic, Mullah Omar, and so on. Military instruments of destruction do this well, and the U.S. and NATO are unrivalled in their possession of these instruments. But the hardest security challenge is to construct security-enhancing entities amid the human and physical rubble left after the war. The experience in Iraq is one example. It is on the more positive side of the spectrum, notwithstanding the huge problems and uncertainties that remain about Iraq's future. But this questionable "success" story came at the cost of trillions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of casualties and millions of dislocated lives. Afghanistan is another daunting story. Libya will be still more different.

Neither the U.S. nor NATO (nor the EU) is well-equipped in knowledge, personnel, and materiel to effectively reconstruct the societies and places that are sometimes destroyed in the pursuit of security objectives. Yet, without decent prospects of reconstruction, security threats will re-emerge.

Still more challenging, the U.S. and NATO states are facing budget pressures that will prevent them from acquiring even the destructive capabilities they feel they need, not to mention the constructive resources. In 2010, for example, only four of 26 allies spent 2 percent or more of their respective GDPs on defense.

One rational response would be to cooperatively coordinate procurement of defense capabilities to encourage specialization and avoid wasteful redundancies. But governments, defense industries, and military services have interests and traditions that make it difficult to maximize the collective capability which each euro, dollar or pound buys. (This resembles the fiscal and banking challenges now confronting the Eurozone, where national governments struggle to coordinate their policies in the absence of a unified coordinating authority).

Another rational response to these trends would be to adjust objectives to better match available resources. The U.S., France and other NATO states would recognize that their constricting military capabilities and even less-ample reconstruction resources require them to hold back from new interventions except in cases where there is an imminent direct threat to NATO states' security. However, it is not so easy for leaders who espouse democratic values and commitment to human rights to ignore the felt duty to protect innocent populations whose own states have turned murderously against them.

The challenge of reconciling the West's diminished means and its undiminished moral-political commitment to protect innocent people could have an implication that has not been recognized yet. Western leaders and populations who feel that the international community should intervene against perpetrators of genocide or other mass depredation will feel that states like China and India, as they grow wealthier, should share some of the burden of defending civilized values and interests. But China and India, like other non-Western states, are especially reluctant to endorse international interventions into the internal affairs of other states. China, particularly, is likely to oppose any exertions of international coalitions in behalf of human rights; India will surprise its Western friends by joining with China more often than not.

To sum up this category of concern: the West will be relatively more resource-constrained relative to emerging Asian powers; the West's comparative advantage in instruments of destruction is less meaningful in a world where reconstruction is the greater challenge; tensions will grow within the West, and between Western states and China and other Asian states, over the latter's unwillingness to share the burdens of providing the public good of international protection against genocide or massive violations of human rights.

4. The importance of integrating China into institutions of global governance.

Several of the points raised above indicate the importance of integrating China into the major institutions of global governance, and the negative implications of failing to do so. If failure occurs, it is inevitable that Western states will blame China for it, and China will

blame Western states. The established powers naturally, but unrealistically, want China to adopt the core principles, rules, norms and practices of the international regimes that were established largely under Western terms. Chinese leaders naturally fear that they would be outnumbered in the existing regimes, and could prefer to hold out and exert their growing power in bilateral or regional settings where they will be stronger. Chinese leaders also remain acutely aware that their country is still developing and does not have the “luxury” to provide global public goods if doing so brings any less benefit than would accrue from a narrow nationalist approach. Leaders of a one-party state will be wary of international norms and rules in the domains of human rights and security that reflect the values and experiences historically associated with competitive democracies.

In the 1990s, it was commonly argued in the U.S. (often by business-influenced groups) that as China grew wealthier and more integrated in the global economy, its political system would become more liberal. Eventually there would be convergence around the most effective and powerful model in world history: market democracy. This all seems questionable now. China has grown much wealthier and more important, but has not liberalized as predicted (or wished). The relative decline of the U.S. (and Europe) and the unimpressive performance of their political leaderships has taken some of the shine off democracy. Some states now see the authoritarian market model as more promising. If Turkey continues to grow at an outstanding rate and its populist governing party falls prey to temptations to limit the checking and balancing functions of a free media and judiciary, in effect if not in law, then the soft power advantages of Western-style market democracy will be further questioned, especially if Turkey is viewed as being rebuffed by Europe. If and as India fails to maintain the 8-9 percent economic growth it managed in recent years, and again appears to be a more difficult place to do business than China, the superiority of the democratic market model will be challenged as well.

The considerations adduced here are admittedly simplistic and debatable; but to the extent they are valid they show how important it would be to integrate China into international institutions and how difficult it will be to do so in terms that the West will like. And because the West is comprised of dozens of states whose unity is hard to maintain, while China is one state led by one party, it is more likely that China will be able to seduce Western states, one at a time, to defer to its preferences than the other way around. With time, however, if China does not develop forms of soft power that assure others, and if the U.S. restores its economic and political capacity to lead, it is likely that stronger cooperative policies will be developed to balance China. Then adept

diplomacy would need to be pursued by China and its counterparts to create balance that is stable and reliant more on diplomacy than on mobilization of military forces.

5. India's continued preference for autonomy.

American and, to a lesser extent, European leaders have claimed or hoped in recent years that India will be an invaluable partner in economic and security affairs and in global institutions. Implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, the point is made that partnerships with India will help balance China's growing power. The unrealism of these hopes and assumptions is becoming more evident. Since 2008 it has become clearer that India will concentrate on its internal growth and development, and that this growth will be handicapped by the inefficiencies of its political system and related challenges of indigenous insurrections and disorder. The recent protests against endemic political corruption express the virtue of democracy in form even as they expose its vices in practice in India.

Beginning with the Clinton Administration and increasing dramatically under the Bush Administration, U.S. officials have hoped that India would significantly increase its military and defense cooperation with the United States. Some believed India would contribute forces to the U.S.-led war in Iraq. Many thought that India would increase the tempo and extent of military exercises with the U.S., and perhaps move toward considering giving the U.S. access to Indian ports and airports in certain contingencies. The U.S. encouraged India to expand the range of its naval patrols eastward to help in defending sea lines of communication through the Straits of Malacca. The Pentagon and U.S. military exporters hoped India would shift its historic reliance on Russian military imports, giving an added and growing share to U.S. firms. The effort led by the U.S. to exempt India in 2008 from global rules that had barred civilian nuclear cooperation with states that did not have international safeguards on all of their nuclear facilities was expected to further overall defense cooperation between the two countries. Yet, many of these hopes have gone unfulfilled. India has resisted signing agreements on communications and other technical issues which the U.S. requires for certain forms of defense cooperation and exports. Recently India has expressed caution in agreeing to further joint exercises and military-to-military activities with the U.S. While India is deeply concerned about China's growing power in all its forms, including military, New Delhi refuses to get drawn into a closer military embrace with the U.S., reflecting India's abiding determination to be and appear autonomous.

This has implications for France and the EU, too. Preoccupied with its internal challenges, India is unlikely to share the policy preferences of the U.S., Europe, Japan and others in dealing with global issues, including within the UN. The vote on whether to authorize action in Libya, where India abstained, is typical, not an exception. In practice, India's values and interests often do not align with those of Europe. India will never be a threat, which is also one of its great virtues, but this is not the same thing as being a partner. Like China, India will not feel prosperous enough to contribute significantly to global public goods. India and China more often than not will line up together in resisting Western-led initiatives to protect populations at risk of depredation, to liberalize global trade, to abate climate change. Both countries will oppose NATO power projection.

6. Pakistan.

Since 2008, Pakistan has continued its descent into internal disorder. It continues to produce insecurity rather than security in Afghanistan and India. Pakistan's internal pathologies and dysfunctions are projected externally, which creates a real potential for nuclear war between Pakistan and India.

There is a small bit of good news from this period. The government elected in September 2008 headed by President Zardari continues in office. It might become the first elected government in Pakistani history to complete its term. This indicates some wide public interest in representative government. However, Zardari himself is a cowardly, corrupt, and feckless leader who is respected by almost no one. The civilian government is dysfunctional. The military does not want to take over again because it realizes that the country is in such bad condition that it would be eternally damaging for the Army to be overtly responsible for the state of Pakistan. The military's own competence is now questioned due to the U.S. raid to kill Osama bin Laden and the insurgent attack on the Naval Air Station near Karachi. And yet the structural reasons that have kept Pakistan under control of bureaucratic elites – be they Army or civilian – and feudal economic interests continue to hold. Democratization is the only way to begin the long process of making Pakistan functional and modern, but the conditions necessary for democratization do not appear.

Pakistan's internal afflictions pose serious threats to the rest of the world. The most dramatic of these threats could be the escalation of Indo-Pak conflict into nuclear war. the basic risk now is that groups cultivated by the Pakistani intelligence services may commit another act of high-profile terrorism against India. Following the Mumbai attack of November 2008, India has said it will not be willing or able to restrain itself from retaliating militarily the next time. When the next attack occurs, and if India does

respond militarily by attacking targets in Pakistan, it will be very difficult to prevent escalation. Of course, Pakistan would deny that it – the state or the Army – was responsible for the attack on India. Pakistani officials would say the attack was done by self-motivated freedom fighters, and that the real problem is India’s continued occupation of the Valley of Kashmir or India’s alleged anti-Pashtun activities in Afghanistan. The U.S. and India would cooperatively examine intelligence to see if attribution could be made. The Indians will not be confident that the Americans are telling them all, in part because the U.S. also tries to maintain good relations with the Pakistani military, and the Indians feel the U.S. often protects the Pakistanis. If there is enough evidence to make it difficult to say that the Pakistani state was uninvolved in the attack, and if the attack was dramatic, India will be internally pressed to respond militarily. If it does, Pakistan will feel pressure to counter. If the initial Indian retaliation is of a small enough scale and does not involve putting Indian forces on Pakistani territory, it is possible to imagine the conflict could be contained. Pakistan would respond in low-intensity ways over time; both sides would avoid large-scale conflict. But if India responded as its military have sometimes said it would, by projecting forces onto Pakistani territory, then the Pakistani Army will feel impelled to respond forcefully.

If Pakistan’s conventional forces successfully blocked India’s plans, which is possible, and made it appear that New Delhi had to settle for a less-than-clear victory, the reverberations would be difficult to predict but probably would not be very welcome in India and the West. On the other hand, if the early military interactions do not go well for Pakistan, pressure will grow to escalate to nuclear use. This would have at least four objectives: to deter India from pressing its military exertions; to cause India to withdraw forces from Pakistani territory; to demonstrate the steely determination of the Pakistani Army; and to bring the U.S. and other international actors in to mediate. Pakistani military planners could envision that the use of one or a small number of nuclear weapons could achieve these objectives without risking Indian nuclear retaliation, especially if the Pakistani nuclear weapon(s) was (were) detonated on Indian formations that had crossed into Pakistani territory. In this way, Pakistan would not have used nuclear weapons on India, but rather to expel invading Indians from Pakistan’s own sovereign territory.

This is an alarming scenario for many reasons, not least because the spark that starts it is so likely to appear in real life. Unless and until the Pakistani military and intelligence services demonstrate that they are doing everything in their powers to prevent terrorist groups from operating on their soil and to cut off their sources of funding and recruitment, India (and the U.S. and others) will feel that Pakistan is largely responsible for terrorism that these groups conduct. The Pakistani government does not have to

succeed perfectly – everyone knows that perfection in counter-terrorism is unlikely – but it does have to demonstrate that it is not cultivating or indulging some terrorist groups while challenging others. If Pakistan does this, then it should be possible to contain the risks of escalation from sub-conventional attack to conventional counter-attack to nuclear use. If the Pakistani security services refuse to act fully against terrorist groups that threaten India, then these risks will grow.

In this environment, it is extremely unlikely that the Pakistani Army or Foreign Ministry will support an agreement to end production of fissile materials for military purposes. The Pakistani Army's obsessive fixation on the Indian threat makes it believe that as a result of the nuclear cooperation that India is receiving from the U.S., France, Russia and others, India's potential stockpile of nuclear arms will grow dramatically. Of greater concern, Pakistanis note that the U.S., France, Israel and other leading military suppliers are eager to sell India advanced conventional military capabilities, which Pakistan could not afford even if other states were willing to export them to Pakistan. Pakistani military leaders look out over a 30-year horizon and project the quantitative and qualitative growth in India's military power compared to Pakistan's. They conclude that Pakistan will need a lot more nuclear weapons. If Pakistani leaders had a bad conscience about this they make themselves feel better by blaming the U.S., France and other self-righteous Western powers for creating this situation by being so willing to sell India what it wants.

7. Iran.

Recent developments indicate that Iran's leadership is unwilling or internally too conflicted to decide to seek mutual compromise with the international community on the nuclear issue. The Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, would not allow the Khatami Administration to negotiate with the U.S. This was a "red line," according to a leading Iranian diplomat of the time. After the election of Ahmadinejad, whom the leader trusted, permission was given to seek dialogue with the U.S. But Ahmadinejad and those around him believed that defiance and the creation of facts on the ground – advancing Iran's nuclear program in response to each exertion of international pressure – were the best way to create conditions for negotiations. This was self-defeating in many ways. After the rigged 2009 election returned Ahmadinejad to the presidency, and triggered serious unrest and infighting, which was then repressed, Iranian politics have become so brutal that Ahmadinejad has been unable to win support for deal-making on the nuclear issue. This was seen in the aborted negotiation over the deal with the international community to supply fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor. Now the Leader has turned on Ahmadinejad in an internal struggle between the clerical

establishment and the Ahmadinejad-Revolutionary Guard nationalists. In this political environment, it will be extremely difficult to find terms for potential confidence-building deals that the international community and all of the necessary Iranian political factions would find acceptable.

As before, Iran is most concerned about the U.S. On the one hand, any accommodation that the U.S. does not embrace will be insufficient for Iran. Iran continues to find it impossible to believe that the U.S. will relieve pressure and threats on Iran as long as the current revolutionary theocratic regime remains in place. On the other hand, Iranian leaders know that the public wants an accommodation with the U.S., and that any leader that achieves it will gain politically. This motivates all the competing factions to sabotage their opponents who would try to make a deal.

Meanwhile, the presidential campaign in the U.S. makes the Obama Administration very wary of falling victim to militant Republican allegations that the president would appease Iran by seeking negotiations with it. The U.S. military and informed strategists understand that war with Iran would have extremely negative consequences throughout the region, without “solving” the nuclear problem. Paradoxically, the political calculation that emerges is that, in order to hold off mindless but politically troublesome bellicosity from Republicans, the president cannot be seen eager to engage Iran through deal-making diplomacy. This has a paralytic effect. The result is a hope that worse things can be avoided by muddling through.

If however the evidence of the Iranian plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador in Washington as well as Israelis is persuasive – in the U.S. legal system and internationally – and if the highest level of the Iranian government does not take steps both to disavow it and hold accountable those who perpetrated it, the U.S. and others are likely to further punish Iran. If that does not occur, and Iran continues simply to rebuff the allegations, President Obama will be politically unable to explore Iran’s September offer seemingly to cap enrichment at five percent. On the other hand, if the U.S. case against Iran is unpersuasive, it will be much more difficult to rally international pressure on Iran, whether through the IAEA or the UN Security Council.

8. Turmoil in Arab states.

Since 2008, one of the most dramatic global changes obviously has been the political turmoil in the Arab world. The capacity of France, the EU, and the U.S. and other outside actors to influence the political-economic evolution of Egypt, Syria, Libya, Iraq, or Iran in predictably positive ways is less than many people expect. The U.S., France, the U.K. and other NATO allies (and Israel) are quite masterful at destroying targets with

weapons. But after this has been done, or where military action would be counter-productive, as in Syria and Iran, the West's capacities to cause desired political-economic developments must not be over-estimated. This is not a criticism. After all, Iranian political leaders themselves cannot predict how one set of moves will turn out in their own country. Neither Syria's government nor its opposition knows how their story will unfold, except there will be great strife. The difficulty Europe is having trying to save the Euro and the larger European unification project should disabuse anyone of the idea that outsiders can do much good in the Middle East. It is more feasible, and still important, to avoid actions that would make things worse. The importance of caution and, most of all, getting one's own house in order so as to model the values, the policies, and the discourse we would urge on Middle Eastern states should be emphasized.

9. Israel's myopia.

Israel's intransigence and growing isolation presents a great challenge to its leadership and population and to the U.S. This, too, was not easily predictable in 2008. Many outside observers – whether in government or out – can recognize that the Israeli leadership does not have a viable long-term strategy and also is working against the preferences of the rest of the world, but it is up to the Israeli people to choose their leadership, and there is relatively little others can do to change it. If current trends persist, the question may arise whether Western states that have traditionally defended Israel will continue to say they support it whether it is right or wrong. The U.S., for historical and political reasons, will be the last outside power to articulate this question and act on it, but if other states do lose their patience with the Israeli government, tensions could grow between them and the U.S. Given the strategic significance of the region, this would have large implications.

10. Russia.

Since 2009, the Obama Administration has sought to “reset” relations with Russia and to enhance cooperation on issues where Russia shares interests with the West. This includes preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. The New START Treaty was the most tangible expression of this intention to improve cooperation. However, Russian policy-makers remain wary and tough. There are many internal reasons for this, but one that must be recognized is the ongoing domination of Russian politics and policy by the “siloviki,” the alumni of the security and intelligence services. Vladimir Putin, a former KGB counter-intelligence officer literally and symbolically represents this domination, and the attitude and outlook of the “siloviki.” His expected return to the presidency suggests that Russia is unlikely to follow a different, more cooperative logic

and to be more forthcoming in cooperating with the West. Counter-intelligence professionals are trained to be skeptical, if not paranoid, about others. Russian siloviki, cultivated in the Soviet system, practice strong-arm politics, using coercion and intimidation as familiar tactics to accomplish their objectives. These circles tend to see the world as rough and highly competitive. They justify their own roles, privileges, and resources as necessary to protect Russia from the predators that surround it, seeing internal critics as enemies of the state, etc. They muster and wield power to protect themselves and Russia from enemies from within and without. They do not have an alternative, more cooperative narrative in which they can make themselves indispensable. Therefore it is difficult to see how Russia, led by Putin from 2013 to 2018, will change its approach to international affairs in ways that will increase integration and cooperation with the West. If the U.S. elects a Republican as president, the general disposition of the party's Senate and House of Representative delegations will combine to make the new administration clash with a Putin government and vice versa. Missile defenses and nuclear policy would be only one area of greater friction.

11. The nuclear weapons agenda.

This is a huge topic and area of policy. President Obama's Prague speech prompted more enthusiasm and opposition than was actually warranted by the policies he was able and intending to pursue. There is no need to review all of this here. A few large points are worth making, however.

Any agenda to lower the salience, numbers, and instabilities associated with nuclear weapons will depend first and foremost on cooperation between the U.S., Russia and China. The first two of these states possess 95 percent of the world's nuclear weapons and remain uniquely poised to conduct rapid nuclear operations against each other. China is the only one of the five original nuclear-weapon states to be enhancing its arsenal both quantitatively and qualitatively. Moreover, the triangular competition between the U.S., Russia, and China in turn affects the nuclear competition of a second triangle involving China, India, and Pakistan. The latter cannot be regulated without better regulation of the first triangle.

While the U.S. and Russia did complete the New START Treaty, they still have not engendered sufficient cooperation to leave behind the basic assumptions and practices of Cold War deterrence. There are many reasons for this, some having to do with institutional habits and interests, some with domestic politics, some with personalities. Two important problems relate to ballistic missile defenses and U.S. potential plans to develop non-nuclear strategic strike capabilities. Russian worst-case defense planners perceive that both of these capabilities would threaten Russia's strategic deterrent. The

U.S. remains unwilling, in part due to ideological attachments of the Republican party, to consider any decisions to limit the development of these capabilities. Instead, they tell Russia that the U.S. will be unable to develop and deploy capabilities that could threaten Russia's deterrent. This assumes that both sides will retain large nuclear forces, which in turn indicates that the U.S. political system does not imagine reductions to a point where Russia's deterrent would be small enough that U.S. missile defenses and prompt global strike conventional forces could threaten it.

China is even more concerned than Russia about U.S. ballistic missile defense plans and conventional strategic strike programs because its nuclear deterrent is now small enough to allow perceptions (in China and in the U.S.) that the U.S. could negate it through a combination of defenses and conventional strike systems. U.S. defense officials are unwilling to state, even privately to other Americans, that the U.S. will accept as a matter of policy that strategic stability requires that China retain a second-strike nuclear deterrent vis a vis whatever capabilities the U.S. could deploy. Washington will not say anything this reassuring to the Chinese, and even if, say, a second Obama Administration were prepared to risk Republican wrath by saying this, Beijing would seek proof in the form of agreements to limit potential national missile defense programs and ambitious conventional strategic strike capabilities. The U.S. is unlikely to do this, for political reasons if not strategic ones. In this situation, China is extremely reluctant to say if and under what conditions it would be willing to declare limits on its future nuclear forces.

Taken together, U.S. policies towards Russia and China, and Moscow's and Beijing's wariness toward Washington, mean that global nuclear reductions will remain a distant prospect.

All of this somewhat affects the willingness of the U.S., Russia, and China to cooperate in strengthening the global nonproliferation regime and its enforcement. As demonstrated vividly in UN Security Council diplomacy toward Iran, cooperation amongst these three states is necessary for an effective nonproliferation regime. Little improvement in this dynamic is imaginable before the new leaderships are installed in Washington, Moscow, and Beijing in the next two years. If a Republican gains power in Washington, or even if Obama is retained but with a stronger, more conservative Republican delegation in the Senate and/or House of Representatives, the U.S. will be even less likely to take steps that would motivate greater Russian and Chinese cooperation.

There is therefore little prospect of effective negotiations on a fissile material production cut off treaty, due in large part to Pakistani intransigence, and perhaps similar, albeit quieter, reluctance in China.

Similarly, there is little hope that the U.S. will ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and thereby create pressure on China and India and Pakistan to follow suit. Even if Obama is re-elected, a strong Democratic push to ratify the Treaty could have unintended consequences that would vitiate potential benefits of the Treaty in the context of NPT diplomacy. Republicans and other stalwarts of the nuclear weapon complex would insist as a price for ratification that the U.S. should devote still more resources to upgrade the nuclear weapons complex and delivery systems. This would anger many non-nuclear-weapon states who fixate on the U.S. while paying less attention to Russian, Chinese, Indian and Pakistani nuclear programs.