

## STRATEGIC STABILITY

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In his classic treatise, *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz said: "In war, the will is directed at an animate object that reacts," and that "war is the continuation of politics by other means". Action and reaction lies at the heart of strategic stability, and one of the objectives of strategic stability is the prevention of war (i.e. the continuation of politics as normal). The interaction between history's two greatest proliferators of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) – the United States and the Soviet Union – during the Cold War was based on different formulations of strategic stability that eventually achieved convergence.

Since the end of the Cold War, the concept of "strategic stability" has been used or invoked increasingly in discussions on the future international security architecture. In such discussions, however, strategic stability has meant different things to different players.<sup>46</sup> In many respects, the discourse on bipolar strategic stability in the nuclear context can be traced back to the early 1950s. Indeed, the arms control literature from the 1960s through to the present time is replete with references to stability in the context of crisis management, arms races, security dilemmas, parity, and strategic stability. Following the end of the Cold War, a series of US-Russian presidential communiqués<sup>47</sup> have focused on strategic stability and enumerated measures to preserve and strengthen it. Furthermore, in May 2000, the parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) formally endorsed the continuation of strategic stability as a precondition for further reductions in the nuclear arsenals of the five declared nuclear-weapon states.<sup>48</sup> As US interest in deploying ballistic missile defences (BMD) gathered domestic political momentum in the mid-1990s, it evoked strong responses from the Russian Federation and China, as well as concern by several other states with respect to the preservation of strategic stability. The election of George W. Bush as US president and statements and moves by his administration favouring unilateral action over multilateral engagement, commitment to proceed with BMD, to abandon the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), together with stated positions regarding flexible nuclear forces at lower numbers

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<sup>46</sup> See, for example: Yuriy Kapralov, "Effects of National Missile Defence on Arms Control and Strategic Stability," and Thérèse Delpech, "Ballistic Missile Defence and Strategic Stability," in *Missile Threats and Ballistic Missile Defense: Technology, Strategic Stability and Impact on Global Security*, (Landau Network-Centro Volta, Italy: 2001); and Camille Grand, "Ballistic Missile Threats, Missile Defences, Deterrence, and Strategic Stability," and John Simpson, "Current Issues Concerning the Control of Ballistic Missile Proliferation and Ballistic Missile Defences," in *International Perspectives on Missile Proliferation and Defences*, Occasional Paper No. 5 (Monterey Institute of International Studies and Mountbatten Centre for International Studies: March 2001).

<sup>47</sup> Statements and agreements on strategic stability agreed between the United States and the Russian Federation include the following: Strategic Stability Cooperation Initiative (New York: September 6, 2000); Joint Statement on Strategic Stability (Okinawa: July 21, 2000); Joint Statement on Strategic Stability (Moscow: June 4, 2000); Joint Statement Concerning Strategic Offensive and Defensive Arms and Further Strengthening of Strategic Stability (Cologne: June 20, 1999); Joint Statement on Parameters on Future Reductions in Nuclear Forces (Helsinki: March 21, 1997); and Joint Statement on Strategic Stability and Nuclear Security (Washington: September 28, 1994).

<sup>48</sup> United Nations: Final Document adopted by the Parties to the NPT, NPT/CONF.2000/28 (Vol. I, Part I and II), 25 May 2000 – see the section, "Article VI and preambular paragraphs 8 to 12".