**Executive Summary**

With the long-term goal of disarmament and elimination of nuclear weapons, as stated by the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the United States must have modern, flexible, and resilient nuclear capabilities and therefore policies that pursue the achievement of these traits and goals while having national security as a priority. But as other countries seek and/or move in the opposite direction, situational awareness and strategic stability have taken an impact and therefore enhancing and strengthening both has become pivotal. Accordingly, present and future policy recommendation must seek to strengthen these two aspects.

Even in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, North Korea continuing pursue of nuclear weapons shows us that action is necessary to more effectively deter North Korea final goal of becoming a nuclear weapon state. So far, in 2017, North Korea made unprecedented advances in its nuclear weapons program including the effective testing of a thermonuclear weapon and various detonations in conjunction with a series of ballistic missiles tests. The United States has publicly implied the use of military action to show its disapproval of such behavior. However, US allies, such as South Korea and Japan, have urged non-military measures to avoid a conflict that would lead to series of consequences including enormous casualties and the substantial declined in constructive engagement with China and Russia and potentially other countries like Iran. Alongside, the U.S. is concerned that both, South Korea and Japan, will begin to consider their own nuclear programs to deter action against North Korea. It is well known that nuclear forces serve not only as deterrence of nuclear but also from non-nuclear attacks and thus to assure allies and partners security. It is clear then that if this situation is not managed correctly, South Korea and Japan might end up seeking their own nuclear program on fear that the U.S. cannot assure its safety.

In January 2018, President Trump has requested recommendations on how to manage the situation to more effectively deter not only North Korea but also compel Japan and South Korea from pursuing a nuclear program. In response to this request, several strategy-driven recommendations have been evaluated and further broken down into four major categories. First, monitoring technologies and policies are analyzed. These are further divided into pre- and post-detonation technologies and policies. Secondly, we inspect the U.S. relationship with North Korea focusing in diplomatic and therefore negotiation strategies. Thirdly, defense proliferation deterrence strategies topics were evaluated. Policies dealing with efforts to maintain current defense treaties, responses to the detection of weapons development and responses to a weapon test or submission of an NPT withdrawal request were recommended. Finally, we thoroughly evaluated the consequences to withdrawing from the NPT. We included different recommended actions and policies with the goal of keeping Japan and South Korean aligned with the UN and NPT goals but also include recommended measures to take in response to violations of these resolutions and treaties (for example, response to a weapon test from Japan or South Korea).

For better guidance, each of the sections in this proposal is broken down into a three-tier approach. Tier 1 focuses on actions that should be taken if the US believes that both countries are considering the development of a nuclear weapon, Tier 2 will focus on an approach that both countries are confirmed to be in the development of a nuclear weapon, and Tier 3 focuses on a proposal that suggests that both countries have nuclear weapon capabilities. This document also provides valuable information that supports the reasoning of such recommendations.