



# WORKING WITH THE ADVERSARY: GREAT POWER COOPERATION AND NUCLEAR RISK MANAGEMENT

THIS REPORT EXPLORES WHY AND HOW GREAT POWERS CAN COOPERATIVELY MANAGE THE RISK ASSOCIATED WITH NUCLEAR USE AND PROLIFERATION.

## THE STUDY LAYS OUT THREE COLD WAR CASES

1

Eisenhower's 1955 Open Skies proposal



2

The 1958–61 nuclear test moratorium



3

1964–66 US-Soviet agreement on NATO nuclear sharing



### KEY FINDING

Risk-reducing **great power nuclear cooperation** is more likely to develop and endure when:

1. Relative **material gains** are not perceived as relevant.
2. Policymakers' **time horizons** are long.
3. **Cheating** is difficult to conceal.

### CORE RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend the following to U.S. policymakers seeking to manage nuclear risk through cooperation with adversaries:

- **Identify areas** in which neither side (the U.S. nor its rival(s)) would gain unequal benefits from cooperation. Non-proliferation and nuclear safety and security agreements are good historical examples.
- **Decline short-term advantages** during the pursuit of long-term agreements to cooperatively manage nuclear risks—and encourage others to do the same.
- **Tailor agreements** and any corresponding verification regimes so that they are invasive enough to detect cheating in a timely fashion but not so invasive that they become intelligence collection activities that generate relative advantage.

“Although near-term prospects for US cooperation with either Russia or China—let alone both—in the nuclear field appear very dim, there is no reason to assume that this will remain true forever.”

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

This project also offers two additional sets of recommendations—one at the **strategic level** and the other focused on **tactical-level diplomacy**—that bookend these core recommendations.

### Helping policy-makers evaluate options and frame decisions:

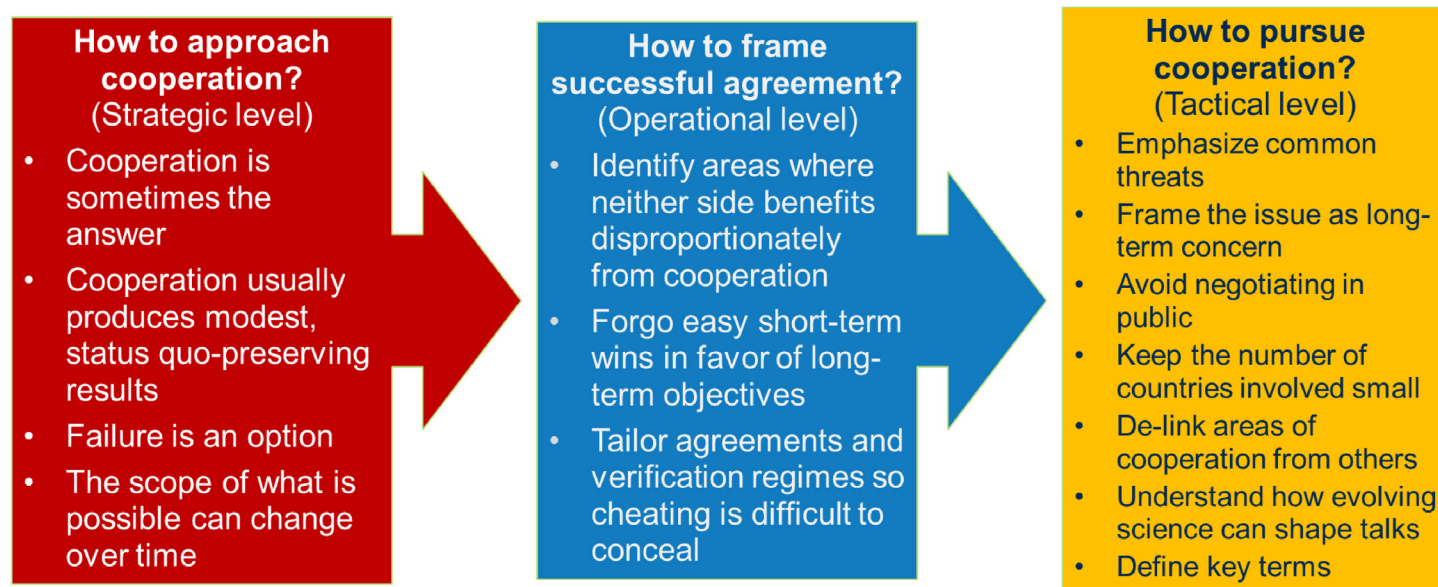
- Cooperation is sometimes the answer.
- Cooperation usually produces modest results by preserving the status quo balance of advantage.
- Failure is an option.
- The scope of what is possible can change over time.

### Helping policy-makers improve their odds of achieving a meaningful and enduring agreement:

- Emphasize common threats.
- Frame the issue as a long-term problem.
- Avoid negotiating in public.
- Keep the number of countries involved small.
- De-link areas of possible cooperation from other issues.
- Understand how scientific uncertainty or evolving science can shape negotiations.
- Define key terms to clarify positions and limit misunderstandings.

To read the full report, *Working With the Adversary: Great Power Cooperation And Nuclear Risk Management*, visit [www.cna.org/nuclear](http://www.cna.org/nuclear)

## RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY



## ABOUT CNA

CNA is a nonprofit research and analysis organization dedicated to the safety and security of the nation. It operates the Center for Naval Analyses — the federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) of the Department of the Navy — as well as the Institute for Public Research. CNA develops actionable solutions to complex problems of national importance.

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