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JAPAN'S LEADING  
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# THE NIKKEI WEEKLY

## Japan has chance to scale back nuclear-weapons threat

### NATION SHOULD PUSH U.S. TO CUT ARSENAL TO DETERRENT MINIMUM

BY THOMAS GRAHAM JR.

Defense planners often sum up nuclear weapons with one surprising word: cheap. No citizen of Hiroshima or Nagasaki would agree. The people of Japan know more about the true cost of nuclear weapons than anyone else on Earth; many Japanese can remember what no one else can imagine.

Right now, Japan has a historic opportunity to play a leadership role in reducing the danger posed by nuclear weapons by, among other things, making clear to the world that it supports a "core deterrent" function requiring smaller numbers of U.S. nuclear weapons than the "nuclear umbrella" has been traditionally thought to require.

Business has learned that not all costs appear immediately on the balance sheet. Pollution by a factory can blanket an entire city in smog, foul rivers and lakes miles away or even contribute to global climatic change. Irresponsible exploitation of natural resources can result in future scarcity, environmental

degradation and, in some cases, species extinction. As telecommunications and global integration have made these displaced costs more clear, governments, industries and citizens have been obliged to modify their understanding of the costs of many practices.

#### Cost accounting

Nuclear weapons should not be immune from this broadened understanding of cost. In the U.S., we are just coming to understand that costs associated with the production of our nuclear arsenal and the efforts that will be necessary to clean up the U.S. nuclear-weapons complex are well into the multi-trillion-dollar range. But the costs of reliance on nuclear defense do not end there.

Each nuclear weapon in the world represents a risk that the horrors of the atomic bombings will be repeated. The principal security threat the world faces today is that a rogue state or a terrorist organization will detonate a nuclear weapon in a city; each nuclear weapon that remains in the world makes that threat more real.

Japan has built prosperity in peace. The quality of Japanese products and the industriousness and intelligence of

the Japanese people have made Japan a wealthy society and a world leader. Japan has long enjoyed the unusual luxury of spending less than 1% of its gross national product on defense and of allowing others to defend her security. But a hidden price is paid in that Japan's security and prosperity depend in large measure on the willingness of the U.S., in principle, to threaten to use nuclear weapons to defend Japan.

The mayor of Hiroshima recently called on the Japanese government to devise a security arrangement not dependent on the threat of nuclear explosive violence. This road, like that of global disarmament, will be a long one.

#### Important milestones

But there are important disarmament milestones that Japan can help lead the world to soon. Japan can begin by letting the U.S. know that its security would be enhanced, not threatened, by deeper reductions in the nuclear arsenals of the U.S. and Russia. A minimal U.S. nuclear arsenal, sufficient for core deterrence against nuclear attack, is all the nuclear umbrella Japan needs.

Further nuclear-weapons reductions and a pledge from each of the nuclear-

weapons states not to be the first to use them are essential next steps in the disarmament process that Japan should support in the interest of peace and stability. Most importantly, Japan needs to make it clear to the world that no amount of nuclear disarmament will cause Japan to seek its own nuclear-weapons option.

The lives destroyed in the atomic bombings of Japan in 1945 represent an enormous cost. Japan and the world have paid a tremendous price to learn that nuclear war is intolerable. Nuclear weapons are anything but cheap; each one has a price in unimaginable danger. They should only be allowed to exist to ensure that they will never be used. Japan should make clear that a U.S. move toward a minimal nuclear arsenal of a few hundred weapons for core deterrence, and adoption of a "no first use" policy, would enhance Japanese security and in no way prompt any sort of remilitarization by Japan.

*Thomas Graham Jr. is former special representative of U.S. President Bill Clinton for arms control, nonproliferation and disarmament. He is currently president of the Lawyers Alliance for World Security.*