WOULD NONPROLIFERATION COMMITMENTS ENDURE?:
CASE STUDIES OF SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN*

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ABSTRACT

Nonproliferation commitment is a dynamic issue. States make, honor or renege commitments in considering strategic, economic, institutional, and societal aspects associated with the global nuclear nonproliferation regime. These four considerations with relative importance have effects on the strength and durability of nonproliferation commitment made by non-nuclear states. From these, this article will assess these four dimensions to analyze why states are willing to internalize commitment and what factors drive change in commitment over time by closely examining the cases of South Korea and Japan.

Key words: global nonproliferation regime, nonproliferation commitment, multidimensional approach, South Korea, Japan

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Introduction

The global nuclear nonproliferation regime has persisted for nearly five decades anchored by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (or NPT), which entered into force in 1970 and extended indefinitely in 1995. Since the inception of the NPT, the nonproliferation regime has guided state behaviors by constraining proliferation (Walsh 2005). Rules and norms of nonproliferation have changed states’ perceptions regarding the utility and the costs of nuclear weapons. The nonproliferation regime has now enjoyed near-universal membership, minimizing the role of nuclear weapons in international security. Today, states with nuclear weapons programs are the smallest minority (Muller and Schmidt 2010). The current state hardly reflects the pessimism by the realist school which predicts proliferation as inevitable in the anarchic world order in pursuit of security needs.

Meanwhile, the North Korean case is repeatedly cited as a threat to regime endurance. North Korea’s nuclear breakout has undermined the durability of the nonproliferation regime. North Korea’s nuclear activities has reportedly started since the early 1990s. Once its plutonium-based nuclear program was suspended in 1994 when the United States and North Korea reached the Agreed Framework. But as the United States charged North Korea to develop uranium enrichment program in 2002, the Framework collapsed. In 2003, North Korea declared its withdrawal from the NPT and, in October of 2006, carried out its first nuclear test. Pyongyang has continued efforts to maximize the role of nuclear weapons and to reinforce the impact of its self-claimed nuclear status in regional
security. From these, North Korea becomes a presumed nuclear power that ignores or even opposes the global nonproliferation efforts to minimize the political effects of nuclear weapons in the international relations.

Under these circumstances, there are largely two perspectives prognosticating proliferation in Northeast Asia in light of the strength of the nonproliferation regime. For some, the North Korea’s nuclear breakout will not cause a cascade of proliferation in the region. Fields and Enia (2009) contend that “South Korea and Japan have maintained vigilance over the ongoing efforts to disarm North Korea, but there have been no indications of imminent intentions of either Seoul and Tokyo...to abandon the tenets of the nonproliferation regime (p. 188).” Any action to violate regime obligations will invite international sanctions in one form or another (Paul 2003, 150). Knopf (2017) also accepts optimistic view that these U.S. allies are likely to remain non-nuclear in order not to “harm their reputations with respect to keeping their NPT commitments” (p. 31). With archival materials and in-depth interviews, Fitzpatrick (2017) provides rich sociopolitical narratives in South Korea and Japan in which political leaders and publics are sufficiently aware of the nonproliferation obligations.

For others, North Korea’s provocations are likely to push South Korea and Japan to develop nuclear weapons for their acute security needs amid regional uncertainty. It is because North Korea’s persistent seeking of the indigenous nuclear capabilities has worsened regional security relations. Pyongyang’s nuclear tests would cause horizontal proliferation by South Korea and Japan to acquire independent nuclear deterrence that would cause vertical proliferation by China to expand its nuclear arsenal (Moltz 2006). If the
nonproliferation regime fails to mitigate security dilemma by reassuring states that their states will not possess nuclear weapons, as Perkovich (2006) assumes, states are tempted to think they need nuclear weapons too (p. 356). Perkovich’s account highlights that ‘if North Korea conducts more weapons tests or otherwise intensifies its threatening behavior, their neighbors will be increasingly tempted to hedge their nuclear bets’ (2006, p. 357). What is worse, U.S. President Donald Trump, during his presidential campaign, brought trouble, mentioning that “he would be open to Japan and South Korea building nuclear weapons to deter North Korea, and would consider withdrawing troops from its allies unless they paid more for their own defense” (Financial Times, 3/27/2016). Trump’s past statements was enough to fuel nuclear debates in both Seoul and Tokyo, signaling potential future action to renge U.S. security commitments in the region. In this sense, potential reactions by neighbors need to be reassessed when the North Korea’s provocations continue to increase.

Although none of pessimistic predictions were fully realized, the assessment of the current status has been mixed. The uncertainty of South Korea and Japan about North Korea’s future actions defines the strategic setting they are facing today. Under such security environment, it is less clear-cut to fully assess the extent to which South Korea and Japan sustain their nonproliferation commitments. Under the rational choice assumption, states are more likely to sustain commitments when the others honor; at the same time, states are less likely to sustain commitments when the others renege. In this respect, the author raises question: will do states with technical capacity to develop nuclear weapons—the so-called ‘nuclear threshold’ states—sustain their nonproliferation commitments when they face existential security threats with the emergence of a presumed nuclear neighbor?
This article provides a disaggregated analysis of the sources of nonproliferation commitments across issue-areas to better understand the strengthen of commitment as a whole. There are multiple dimensions of commitment that varies vis-à-vis issue-areas. If commitment is what a state is willing to internalize, assessing multiple aspects of commitment are crucial to understand the overall commitment the individual state honors. Such multidimensional approach also helps in explaining why and how commitments are likely to remain the status quo despite changes in strategic environments states face.

This article assesses the state of evidence on nonproliferation commitments observed from South Korea and Japan. There are three reasons for doing so. First, nonproliferation commitments hardly remain static. Morrow (1999) affirms that “commitment is a dynamic issue (p. 91).” There are dynamics in which diverse state interests are colliding and converging with each other. Second, the pessimistic arguments that the weakening commitments would undermine regional security relations, possibly leading to proliferation cascade from South Korea to Japan and vice versa reflect a security aspect of nonproliferation commitments. To address a comprehensive account on nonproliferation efforts, we should discuss the strength of commitment with more specificity in economic, institutional, and societal aspects. Third, recent development of nuclear debates in Seoul and Tokyo suggests that nonproliferation commitments are perceived as weak. Disaggregating the overall commitments by multiple dimensions helps in identifying dimension-specific policy preferences political leaders possess. This is important to assess the propensity for future policy actions South Korea and Japan’s national-security elites take for managing the contingent nuclear threats.
Commitment and International Regime

Commitment states make, honor, or renege is a critical dimension in the international relations (Gaubatz 1996, p. 110). First, states make commitments to further their interests and to preserve their good standing in the international community (Simmons 2000). Gourevitch (1999) points that “commitment to (the international) institutions requires a belief that it will bring benefits that outweigh the costs of membership (p. 141).” Over time, state interests change. Less clear-cut is the extent to which states sustain commitments. Uncertainty about state’s future action causes the others’ doubt on its commitment to cooperation in the short run. But if states care about their reputation for respecting international rules and norms, they would avoid reneging commitments and adhere to keep these rules and norms in the long run.

Second, commitments—whether legally binding or voluntarily assumed—have to be credible to others (Morrow 1999, pp. 91-92). States are sensitive to balance benefits for sustaining commitments and costs for reneging. Honoring commitments means to show the individual state’s willingness to carry out promised policy actions in a predictable way. If a state worries that the others will not honor commitments, international regime as a whole will not work. Rogowiski (1999) correctly points that “commitments are harder to make but also harder to break” (p. 127). Put more simply, states who are interested in advantageous policy outcomes through international cooperation have good reasons to make credible commitments in the long run.

Given the importance of commitment, realist and institutional schools disagree to
extent to which states are able to make credible commitments in the anarchic international system (Mearsheimer 1994-95; Keohane and Martin 1995). For realists, security commitments are critical to function alliance politics tying by defense treaties. Most realists refer the distribution of power as a source for state behavior, assuming that state preferences are fixed. Their account is on security needs for great powers rather than those of lesser powers because they consider international regime as being irrelevant to state behaviors. For them, individual states are likely to sustain commitment to constrain their behavior because “this is the order provided by the dominant state” (Brown 2016, p. 599).

For liberal institutionalists, commitments increase cooperate behavior among states. Commitments are the necessary component of international institutionalization. When it comes to trade, environment, and human rights, states are likely to honor their commitments to overcome the collective action problem. They commit themselves to international cooperation in believing that compliance with regime obligations would increase mutually advantageous outcomes (Keohane 1984). For example, with respect to the IMF Articles of Agreement, commitment shows the reciprocal dynamic because states are more likely to make and honor commitment if neighbors are doing so (Simmons 2000, p. 2000).

From these theoretical discussions, how do we account for commitment as a critical part to understand the global nuclear nonproliferation regime? In changing strategic circumstances, why do states commit to nonproliferation rules and norms in changing strategic circumstances, and under what conditions states sustain their nonproliferation commitments?
Commitment and Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime

Jeffrey Fields (2014) defines the nonproliferation regimes as “the totality of efforts to prevent the transnational spread of nuclear weapons and material, including restrictions on and regulation of states with civilian or military nuclear program” (p. 2). The regime influences how states construct and perceive their interests in light of norms and treaties of nonproliferation. States are willing to make and honor commitments guided by the fundamental principle that “the spread of nuclear weapons into many hands would further jeopardize prospects for international peace and security” (Smith 1987, p. 257). At the same time, states expect others to carry out policy actions that respects nonproliferation norms and rules. Since intent to proliferate is difficult to assess, states have to demonstrate that their intentions are benign so as to declare their nuclear facilities and activities (Acton 2009, pp. 119-120). In this sense, nonproliferation commitments prove to be self-enforcing.

Generally, international treaties make the individual states’ commitment legally binding as they sign and ratify them through domestic procedures. Once ratified, the treaty works to make state commitment more credible. When it comes to the nonproliferation regime, the NPT is the chief institutional component in constraining and screening state behavior. For the non-nuclear members of the regime, the treaty provides limited assurance in two ways: first, states committing themselves to forgo nuclear possession develop reciprocity that their neighbors will not develop nuclear weapons; second, states expect the commitment of the nuclear members that they will not use their nuclear weapons against the non-nuclear ones (Paul 2003, p. 144).
As Table 1 indicates, there are at least four substantive topics with regard to the institutional boundaries of the treaty. First is the issue of security assurance. Article I and II represents two categories of states—the nuclear-weapons and the non-nuclear-weapons—with regard to obligations and responsibilities. In so doing, the regime expects the two types of membership to have two different policy actions of commitments and compliances (Paul 2003, p. 136). On the one hand, the nuclear powers have to make credible commitments to minimize the negative security, political, and economic consequences of forging nuclear possessions by the non-nuclear members. On the other hand, the non-nuclear members have to commit themselves to show their benign intentions by declaring their nuclear facilities and activities. In turn, they expect the nonproliferation regime helps reduce
security dilemma and guarantee qualified security assurance by the nuclear powers.

Second is the issue of inspection. The International Atomic Energy Agency is the main institutional agency applies the safeguard rules in the all non-nuclear members of the treaty to enhance verifications on civilian nuclear facilities and activities. The IAEA in the late 1990s has strengthened its safeguards implementations encompassing both declared and undeclared nuclear material and activities by enacting the Additional Protocol contained in INFCIRC/540. As we seen from the two categories of states, only the non-nuclear members are subject to receive comprehensive safeguards measures taken by the IAEA inspectors. The nuclear powers are free to chose among or limit the application of the IAEA safeguards measures.

Third, the non-nuclear members are expected to be assured by Article IV and V. Specifically, Article IV guarantees the rights for peaceful use of nuclear energy in expense to forge nuclear possessions. They are expected to enjoy their full access to the knowledge and technology of nuclear materials, while the nuclear states make commitments to supply technology and to assist nuclear activities necessary for civilian applications (Smith 1987). For those who consider nuclear energy development as part of economic security and technical development, Article IV is the most beneficial inducements by committing themselves not to acquire nuclear weapons (Koremenos 2001).

Fourth is the issue of disarmament. Article VI commits the nuclear states to pursue nuclear disarmament in good faith. The non-nuclear members demand viable measures to reduce nuclear arsenals in the foreseeable future. Paradoxically, however, meaningful implementation on nuclear disarmament would cause the weakness of the nonproliferation
regime. Koremenos (2001) correctly argues that if the nuclear states make progress on reducing nuclear stockpiles according to Article VI, “the extended deterrence they provide to their non-nuclear allies would become less credible” that in return “these states would have a stronger incentive” to reconsider their adherence to the regime (p. 306).

Overall, states’ policy actions to commit themselves in the nonproliferation regime have implications for their strategic interests, economic concerns, and normative reasons associated with nuclear weapons. For example, states have as many reasons to reneg nonproliferation commitments as they do to honor them. Security concerns about regional uncertainties can create disincentives as well as incentives to sustain commitments. The economic interests vested in nonproliferation policies would benefit some constituencies, burdening others. Normative factors may make states to endorse nonproliferation rules and norms domestically. At the same times, states who perceive the current status of NPT obligations as inherently discriminatory may have a normative interest in reneging commitments. Put more simply, the nonproliferation commitment states make and honor has multiple and interacting aspects across issue-areas. Therefore, it would be a mistake that the nonproliferation commitment is one dimensional to shape policy actions between nuclear weapons possession and abstention.

A Multidimensional Approach

Seen from above, the nonproliferation regime has diffuse, multiple issues ranging from security assurance, inspection, peaceful use of nuclear energy to disarmament. At the
same time, states have multiple perspectives across issue-areas within the regime, and the level of commitment will appear differently to the extent to which they are willing to honor. Under these circumstances, this article utilizes a multidimensional approach to understand comprehensive assessment of the nonproliferation commitments by regional nuclear threshold state. This approach is echoed by the work of Fields and Enia (2009) who modify a multidimensional framework to assess the health of the nuclear nonproliferation regime. This approach expects to provide a comprehensive, but yet more fine-grained, assessment of the regime commitments to understand the regime as a whole (Fields and Enia 2009; Haggard and Simmons 1987).

**Level of commitment** Assessing the level of commitment that states are willing to make and honor is particularly important to understand the regime strength. The more credible states commit themselves in rules and norms of the regime, the more likely the regime remain the status quo.

**The change in commitment over time** States’ interests change over time in tandem with chance in strategic environment (Morrow 1999, p. 92). States’ interests alter commitment that in turn may not be fixed. Since honoring commitment is costly, short-term or myopic interests are likely to provide disincentives to carrying out the initial commitment. Unless states gain the beneficial effects of carrying the initial commitment, they are less likely to tie their future actions within regime rules. This time inconsistency may create a vulnerability in regime. Therefore, when states hold constant interests in regime rules despite changing
strategic environment, they will make credible commitment.

**Dimensionality in commitment** In order to understand the nonproliferation commitment, at least four dimensions—strategic, economic, institutional, and societal—need to be taken into account adequately. The different dimensions provide incentives as well as disincentives states judge to make and honor commitments within the regime. State’s nonproliferation commitment represents the convergence of interests rooted in these four dimensions. As Figure 1 indicates, I assume that each dimension covers single, specific issue: security needs for strategic consideration; energy security for economic consideration; bureaucratic interests for institutional consideration; and civil movements for societal consideration. Through cross-case comparison, I expect this variance will result in disparities of the status of nonproliferation commitments among non-nuclear states in the nonproliferation regime.

![Figure 1 Dimensions in Commitment](image-url)
Across issue-areas and change over time, one dimension may dominate over the others for different reasons. For example, those who face an acute security threats prioritize strategic concerns, while those who are in pursuit of nuclear energy carry out the commitments due to economic and technological interests. Those who are good standing in the international community cares about societal norms or interests to hold nonproliferation reputation high.

South Korea

**Strategic dimension** South Korea sustain its nonproliferation commitment in line with the robustness of the U.S. nuclear deterrence. The U.S. security guarantee based on the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty has worked to assure South Korea’s security concerns regarding the North Korea’s nuclear breakout. Past experience shows that the U.S. commitment with force deployment (United States Forces Korea, USFK) is vital to dissuade nuclear weapons efforts. In the late 1970s, the South Korean government secretly authorized a ground work for a nuclear weapons program in respond to the U.S. plans for troop withdrawals. That is why South Korea and the United States consolidate their confidence-building measures to provide transparency and develop reciprocity through regular military exercises, the annual Security Consultative Meetings, the Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group meetings, and name a few. These measures make the US security commitment more credible to quell South Korea’s interests in developing independent nuclear deterrence (Huntley 2013).

**Economic dimension** South Korea’s nuclear engineers, pro-nuclear industry, and nuclear
bureaucracy work together to push the government for further nuclear energy development and exports of nuclear plant design, technologies, and capabilities (Snyder 2016, p. 124). They have poured national resources into technology indigenization for nuclear energy development since the first Kori nuclear power plant began to operate in 1977. Through learning and persuasion, the industry and technocratic constituency are more likely to uphold nonproliferation rules and norms to prevent spread of sensitive nuclear materials and technologies. Given the pride as the world’s fifth-largest nuclear energy producer, they tend to consider nonproliferation commitments as incentives rather than burdensome tasks in order to take a dominancy in the nuclear plant export market. However, the negotiation of the ROK-US civil nuclear cooperation agreements uncovered converging interests in shared commitment to nonproliferation but also drew potential for political and diplomatic conflicts with regard to the future nuclear fuel cycle issue.

**Institutional dimension** South Korean policymakers—mostly in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—make and honor their nonproliferation commitments through specific policy actions and institutionalization. They believe that the more South Korea commits itself to global nonproliferation efforts, the more it enhances its diplomatic influence in the international affairs. First, the MOFA created a new bureau in 2015 to comprehensively deal with the issue of peaceful use of nuclear energy and that of disarmament and nonproliferation in accordance with the international nonproliferation rules and norms. This creation of “Nonproliferation and Nuclear Affairs Bureau” represents the absolute level of commitment South Korea is willing to carry out that would contribute to fulfil its middle power aspiration.
The bureau consists of two divisions: the Nuclear Affairs division which deals with civil nuclear cooperation and the Disarmament and Nonproliferation division which was initially subsumed within the International Organizational Bureau (Yonhap news 2015/9/2). Second, South Korea increases its engagement with the international society by hosting a number of nonproliferation events. These events raise public awareness regarding nonproliferation since the issue of nonproliferation and disarmament has been a low profile in the South Korean society. Seoul has hosted the Nuclear Security Summit in March 2012, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Group of Eminent Persons Meeting in June 2015, and the Plenary Meeting of the Missile Technology Control regime in October 2016 (2016 Diplomatic White Paper).

*Societal dimension* It is difficult to find any influential Non-Profit organizations in South Korea to support nuclear weapons elimination and nuclear disarmament. The main cause is the unique strategic setting over the Korean Peninsula—divided countries under the armistice agreement since 1953. Moreover, South Korean publics are more likely to support, rather than oppose, proliferation decision for nuclear weapons possession according to the survey conducted by the Asan Institute for Policy Studies (Issue Brief 2017). Survey results shows that over 60% of respondents agree to develop nuclear weapons while 30% are opposing it. What is intriguing about the responses is the change in the percentage of support that gradually, but yet slightly decreases over time. It shows that if the public awareness regarding global nonproliferation efforts increases, there would be a space for discussions to make greater consensus on South Korea’s nuclear forbearance.
Japan

*Strategic dimension* the U.S. extended deterrence to its regional ally works to make Japan’s nonproliferation commitment more credible. Few years ago, scholars and policy analysts point that the weakening of the U.S. security commitment to Japan or assertive rise of China were a major concern for Japan’s national security (Hughes 2007; Mochizuki 2007). But, as the prospect of North Korea targeting the U.S. homeland becomes more viable and realistic, North Korea’s nuclear breakout is now a primary source of external threats for Japan (Samuels and Schoff 2015, p. 487). When North Korea conducted its fifth nuclear tests in September 2016, Prime Minister Abe strongly condemned its provocation as “a grave challenge to the international disarmament and nonproliferation regime centered on the
NPT” (Kantei 2016/9/9). Also, there are changes in Japan’s commitment to nonproliferation efforts. The North Korea’s first nuclear tests in 2006 inflamed Japanese advocates of the nuclear option. They thought the nonproliferation regime was ill-equipped to respond North Korea’s provocation so that Japan will reconsider its own nuclearization. Along with the acquisition of more advanced missile defense system, they argued that Japan should open its nuclear option so as to pressure the United States and China to cope with the North Korean crisis more seriously (Mochizuki 2007, p. 314). However, as North Korea’s nuclear and missile tests intensify, the Abe cabinet commits to increase the effectiveness of the US extended deterrence, reinterpreting its constitution for exercising the right of collective self-defense. Rather than developing the independent deterrence, some insist that Japan should relax the non-introducing clause of the three non-nuclear principles (Sankei News 2017/3/30). In so doing, they expect to permit the transition of US nuclear-armed warship to reaffirm US commitments. Abe’s policy actions show that Japan’s commitment to nonproliferation is likely to remain the status quo.

**Economic dimension** Japan has the most advanced civilian nuclear power program with a focus on reprocessing plutonium and fast breeder reactors. Japan’s possession of plutonium has been the main point of concern regionally and globally due to its security risk, as it was seen as a potential source of material if the country decides to initiate a nuclear weapons program. In pursuit of industrialization and economic growth, Japan started nuclear research in the mid-1950s and its first nuclear power plant began operating in 1966. The government underscored nuclear energy as a national strategic priority and sought to develop a nuclear
fuel cycle project, which reuses plutonium as a fuel for nuclear reactors. In a coalition with electrical utilities, Japan has strengthened its efforts to harness plutonium for civilian nuclear development as a way to secure energy independence until the Fukushima nuclear disaster in March 2011. However, in order to meet national energy needs while limiting carbon emission, the Abe cabinet has retained nuclear power as a key energy source, calling for a restart of nuclear reactors. Those who see strong commercial interests in nuclear energy development continue to support Japan’s nuclear fuel cycle program at Rokkasho since Japan’s nuclear activities and facilities are under stringent inspections by the IAEA. To deal with the problem of nuclear waste among Asian countries, Japan will contribute to provide a regional nuclear fuel cycle center screening by tight IAEA safeguards (Mochizuki 2016, p. 91).

*Institutional dimension* First, Article II of the Atomic Energy Basic Law consolidates Japan’s nonproliferation commitment, allowing research, development and utilization of nuclear energy only to demanding the peaceful purposes. But, the Abe cabinet revised the law, adding “national security” as one of its aims, saying that the fundamental principle for peaceful use will not be shaken and there is no idea of pursuing civilian nuclear program for military purposes (Mainichi Shinbum 2012/6/23). Still, the term of national security is more likely to bring misleading impressions regarding the underlying intentions. Second, the Three Non-Nuclear Principles (TNNP) has provided a strong normative foundation in Japan’s security policy, expressing that Japan will “not possess, not manufacture, or introduce nuclear weapons into the country” pledged by Prime Minister Sato Eisaku in 1967. With
changes in strategic environment Japan faces, the Japanese national security elites and lawmakers reaffirm the fundamental values that the TNNP endorses. Nevertheless, the TNNP are not enshrined in law. There have been several attempts to enshrine three principles in law by progressive parties respectively with different reasons—the Japan Sociality Party in 1970s and the Democratic Party of Japan in 2000s. However, these attempts were repeatedly unsuccessful as opposed to the ruling party of the Liberal Democratic Party.

**Societal dimension** There are at least three societal actors who advocate nonproliferation and disarmament in Japan. First, there is a number of non-governmental organizations engaging in the anti-nuclear-weapons movement. They are the Japan Council Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs (*Gensuikyo*), the Japan Congress Against A-Bomb and H-Bomb (*Gensuikin*), the Japan Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, Hiroshima and Nagasaki Citizen’s Groups for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, Pugwash Japan to name a few (Tonoue and DiFilippo 2009). Second is the Science Council of Japan (*Nihon Gakujutsu Kyokai*) who represents the Japan’s largest and most influential group of scientists and engineers. The SCJ has been deeply and sincerely committed to nonproliferation efforts by vowing “never to engage in scientific research to be used in war”. Article II of the Atomic Energy Basic Law was first initiated and promoted by this special organization. More recently, the SCJ decided to refuse any research fund to conduct joint research with Defense Ministry-affiliated agencies due to the concerns for utilization of dual-use technologies (Japan Times 2016/5/30). While the Abe Cabinet adopted a new National Defense Program
Guidelines that include the government plans to “actively utilize dual-use technologies” in the development of weapons technology. Since the development of dual-use technology can be used for both civilian and military purposes, the SCJ maintains their strong position to “never engage in military research” against the government request. The commitment the science community sustain is likely to remain the status quo despite the changing strategic interests of the government. Third, the City of Hiroshima plays a significant role to keep breathing the memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki abroad and at home. The Major of Hiroshima has conveyed the Peace Declaration annually on August 6 since 1947. Most recently, in 2016, right after the G7 foreign ministerial meeting at Hiroshima, the Mayor, Matsui Kazumi urged further efforts in nonproliferation and disarmament, saying “A nuclear-weapon-free-world would manifest the noble pacifism of the Japanese constitutions, and to ensure progress a legal framework banning nuclear weapons is indispensable.” The city itself works as a unique space to raise the awareness of individuals, societies, and international communities about the destructive consequences of nuclear weapons use.

**Conclusion**

This paper offered a multidimensional approach to assess different sources of commitment to understand the extent to which states sustain commitment in supporting regime. The cases of South Korea and Japan illustrated the four dimensions of the nonproliferation commitments to respectively support global nonproliferation efforts.
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