

Beyond Emboldenment

The Effects of Nuclear Weapons on State Foreign Policy

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Special National Intelligence Estimate, 1963

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between a simple detonation and a weapons capability and between having a small weapons capability and being a major nuclear power. Also the Chinese might well use a prototype MRBM, with one or more additional stages, to place a satellite into orbit. This could be accomplished some time before an MRBM was operable and well before such a system was nuclear armed. The purpose, of course, would be to give the impression of much greater strength than had actually been acquired and to persuade the people of neighboring countries that Peiping was riding the wave of the future which it was futile to resist. At the same time Peiping would work to persuade audiences in other underdeveloped countries that Chinese-style communism provides the most effective and rapid way to become a modern industrial, scientific, and military power.

24. A Chinese Communist nuclear detonation would increase the momentum of Peiping's drive for great-power status and acceptance in international councils. Peiping would argue that it is less dangerous to have a nation with nuclear arms in the UN and other international bodies than to keep it isolated, and would be in a position to claim persuasively that substantial progress toward world peace and disarmament was seriously hampered unless it participated in negotiations. Peiping has already gone on record as not being bound by any agreements made without its participation. It would demand international recognition, UN membership, or other prerequisites as the price of its participation. In any event, Communist China would reject a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

25. We do not believe that the explosion of a first device, or even the acquisition of a limited nuclear weapons capability, would produce major changes in Communist China's foreign policy in the sense that the Chinese would adopt a general policy of open military aggression, or even become willing to take significantly greater military risks. China's leaders would recognize that their limited capabilities had not altered the real power balance among the major states and could not do so in the foreseeable future. In particular, they would recognize that they remained unable either to remove or neutralize the US presence in Asia.

26. Nevertheless, the Chinese would feel very much stronger and this mood would doubtless be reflected in their approach to conflicts on their periphery. They would probably feel that the US would be more reluctant to intervene on the Asian mainland and thus the tone of Chinese policy would probably become more assertive.* Further, their

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2. Typology
3. Britain
4. Conclusions

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Research Question

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Despite its importance, not satisfactorily addressed in previous work, which:

- Focuses on outcomes other than foreign policy, such as interstate conflict
- Focuses on the effect of nuclear weapons on the calculations of *other* states
- Conflates distinct effects of nuclear weapons under catch all terms such as “emboldenment”

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So we need a typology of dyadic foreign policy behaviors that nuclear weapons may facilitate

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Aggression

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- Example: Pakistan

Expansion

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- Example: US

Independence

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Bolstering

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Compromise

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- Example: Israel?

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- Look at speech evidence and contemporary writings to see if nuclear acquisition caused the change

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- Secret internal history: “The nuclear dimension of defence...was seen as providing the opportunity for economies in defence...without any sacrifices in national security.” As a result, “little change in the objectives of British defence commitments”

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“No overseas commitments had been dropped but reductions in the level of military support were in prospect and the RAF was seen as having a major part to play in offsetting their effect”

Steadfastness Independence & Compromise, pre-1955

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British responses characterized by deference to US preferences

Steadfastness, Independence & Compromise, post-1955

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Did nuclear weapons cause the change? Desire for independence a core driver of British nuclear acquisition.

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- Moving beyond “emboldenment” is helpful - we can identify more fine-grained responses to nuclear acquisition
- Nuclear weapons are not simply “weapons of the weak”

Thank you!

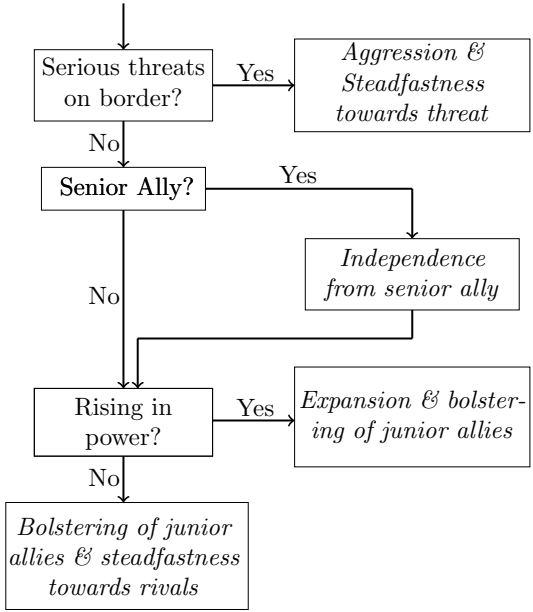
Working paper available at:

<http://ssrn.com/abstract=2453155>

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Spare slides

Theory



Theory applied to Britain

