Nuclear Dominoes, US Nonproliferation Policy, and the NPT

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Abstract: What explains why the United States abandoned liberal nuclear sharing schemes like the Multilateral Force in the 1960s, ultimately adopting a universalistic nonproliferation policy and the NPT? This paper argues that increased fears of nuclear domino effects caused by the 1964 Chinese nuclear tests were a crucial motivating factor, convincing policymakers that proliferation could not be contained to allied states and therefore had to be opposed across the board. As evidence for this claim, I draw heavily on archival evidence from the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations. The paper demonstrates that when nuclear domino effects were perceived to be relatively weak in the 1950s and early 1960s, the United States favored expanding nuclear sharing arrangements; when fears of nuclear domino effects increased post-1964, this caused policymakers to turn away from these policies and conclude the NPT.

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What explains why the United States developed a significantly stronger nonproliferation policy between 1964 and 1968, abandoning nuclear sharing schemes such as the Multilateral Force (MLF) and concluding the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), an international agreement that sought to enforce nonproliferation across the board? According to two recent, sophisticated works in political science, the NPT emerged out of the superpowers' desire to (1) limit the autonomy of their allies,[1] or (2) as a façade to prevent proliferation by particular countries of concern, namely West Germany and India.[2]

This paper identifies a distinct stimulus for the strengthening of US nonproliferation policy in this period: namely, the fears of nuclear domino effects spurred by the Chinese nuclear test of 1964. Specifically, I argue that the consequences of proliferation for the United States and the costs of enforcing nonproliferation differ from case to case as a function of whether the potential proliferator is an enemy, ally, or unaligned, making nonproliferation efforts inherently most attractive against adversaries and least attractive against allied states. As a result, an across-the-board nonproliferation policy (such as the NPT) makes the most sense when nuclear domino effects are perceived to be strong: in other words, when policymakers believe proliferation cannot be contained to individual cases of allied states. Fears of nuclear domino effects caused by the Chinese nuclear test consequently are crucial to explaining why the United States shifted from a selective nonproliferation policy to a universalistic approach between 1964 and 1968.

The paper begins by reviewing two recent explanations for the NPT from the political science literature. Next, I offer a theoretical argument for why fears of nuclear domino effects

[1] Andrew Coe and Jane Vaynman, "Superpower Collusion and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty," paper presented at the Nuclear Studies Research Initiative Conference, Cedar Creek, TX, October 17-19, 2013.
[2] Dane Swango, "The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty: Constrainer, Screener, or Enabler?" PhD dissertation, University of California Los Angeles, 2009.

are crucial for explaining support for a universalistic nonproliferation policy such as the NPT. To evaluate the argument, the paper then examines U.S. nonproliferation policy from the Eisenhower administration through the conclusion of the NPT in 1968. Drawing heavily on archival documents, I show that when nuclear domino effects were perceived to be relatively weak in the 1950s and early 1960s, US policy was more favorable toward nuclear sharing and selective proliferation and policymakers were unwilling to agree to a universalistic policy such as the NPT. With increased fears of nuclear domino effects in the wake of the 1964 Chinese nuclear test, however, policymakers adopted a stronger, across-the-board nonproliferation policy, ultimately producing the NPT. After evaluating evidence bearing on existing explanations, I conclude by identifying areas for future research.

Recent Explanations for the NPT

Two recent explanations for the NPT in the political science literature suggest that the superpowers were motivated to conclude the treaty to (1) maintain influence over their allies, or (2) constrain the nuclear capabilities of specific countries of concern, in particular West Germany and India.

The first explanation, offered by Coe and Vaynman, holds that the United States and Soviet Union became strongly committed to nonproliferation and the NPT in 1960s because of the realization that the acquisition of nuclear weapons would allow their allies to become more independent and autonomous in their foreign policy. This realization, they argue, was spurred by American and Soviet experiences with newly nuclear France and China, respectively.[3] As they put it, "the superpowers did not initially see the costs of [nonproliferation] enforcement as worth

[3] Coe and Vaynman, "Superpower Collusion and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty," 11-12

paying, because each saw the spread of nuclear weapons to certain of its own clients as a way to strengthen its side against the other's. In time, experience taught the superpowers that states could substitute nuclear weapons for their patronage, and subsequently gain autonomy. Realizing that nonproliferation was necessary to preserve their influence, the superpowers became willing to pay the costs of its enforcement, and so instituted the regime."[4]

The second explanation, advanced by Swango, argues that the NPT was established by the United States and Soviet Union as a means to prevent proliferation by West Germany and India: "The primary reason the superpowers negotiated an NPT was to prevent two states, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and India, from developing nuclear weapons. The advantage of using an NPT to target Germany and India was its egalitarian façade—all states that did not yet possess nuclear weapons were asked to accept the obligation not to produce or acquire nuclear weapons."[5] According to Swango, the United States was particularly concerned about a nuclear-capable India, while the Soviets were keen to prevent West Germany from going nuclear.[6] In contrast to Coe and Vaynman's argument, Swango suggests that the United States was not particularly concerned about their allies proliferating, nor about extensive proliferation in general: "The concessions made by the United States in 1966 show that for most U.S. officials, the emerging proliferation problem was not perceived as widespread and general. Instead, American officials were most concerned about states not allied to either of the superpowers. They did not believe the Soviet Union would allow its clients in Eastern Europe to develop nuclear weapons. They also felt that the United States had enough leverage to prevent allies in NATO and Asia from proliferating. By process of elimination, the nonaligned states

[4] Coe and Vaynman, "Superpower Collusion and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty," 3.
[5] Swango, 12.
[6] Ibid, 25.

were the most serious proliferation threat."[7] As the principal nonaligned state with nuclear ambitions, India became the prime target of U.S. nonproliferation efforts according to this narrative.

The Argument

The argument I offer in this paper does not reject the notion that the United States sought to prevent India and allied states from acquiring nuclear weapons, and this this helped to motivate the establishment of the NPT. Rather, it offers a new framework to help explain *why* the United States opposed proliferation in these cases, why the United States designed a treaty that sought to prevent proliferation across the board, and why the United States made these policy changes when they did. Specifically, I argue that the 1964 Chinese nuclear tests caused fears of nuclear domino effects that led the United States to abandon selective proliferation schemes—which were in fact quite accepting of forms of proliferation by India and nuclear sharing with allied states—and seek to enforce nonproliferation universally, an objective clearly expressed in the design of the NPT.

The logic that underlies this argument is simple: the consequences of proliferation for the United States, and the costs of enforcing nonproliferation, vary from state to state, largely as a function of whether a state is ally, unaligned, or enemy, with proliferation the most dangerous among enemy states and nonproliferation costliest to enforce against allied and unaligned states. Because the consequences of proliferation and costs of nonproliferation vary from state to state, an undifferentiated, across-the-board nonproliferation policy, as embedded in the NPT, only makes sense when nuclear domino effects are perceived to be strong—that is, when proliferation

[7] Ibid, 25.

in one state is expected to significantly increase the probability of proliferation in other states, meaning that proliferation cannot be contained to friendly or unaligned states.

This argument builds on existing work that argues that the United States opposes proliferation to maintain its favorable geopolitical position, whether to protect its unparalleled power projection capabilities,[8] retain influence over allies,[9] or reduce risks of nuclear war.[10] It departs by arguing that these motivations do not apply equally to all cases and therefore cannot adequately explain an undifferentiated application of nonproliferation policy. Nor can these slow-moving variables explain the sharp temporal shift in US policy that we observe after the Chinese nuclear test. The argument therefore is that nuclear domino fears explain the decision to apply nonproliferation policies *universally,* and explain significant temporal change in US policy, not that nuclear domino fears are the basic driver of US opposition to proliferation.[11]

I define a nuclear domino effect as a situation where proliferation in one state (state A) causes a significant increase in the probability of proliferation in a second state (state B). While the theory of nuclear domino effects has historically been associated with a realist, security-centered model of proliferation where states pursue nuclear weapons in response to a rival state's nuclearization, this is only one of several possible mechanisms by which the nuclear domino theory can operate.[12] A more exhaustive list of mechanisms compatible with the nuclear domino

[8] Matthew Kroenig, *Exporting the Bomb: Technology Transfer and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010). Also see Matthew Kroenig, "Force or Friendship? Explaining Great Power Nonproliferation Policy," *Security Studies* 23, No. 1 (2014): 1-32.
[9] Coe and Vaynman
[10] Henry Sokolski, *Best of Intentions: America's Campaign Against Strategic Weapons Proliferation* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001).
[11] To some extent, this argument would be tautological, in that the US opposes proliferation in order to prevent further proliferation.
[12] See Nicholas L. Miller, "Nuclear Dominoes: A Self-Defeating Prophecy?" *Security Studies* 23, No. 1 (2014): 33-73.

theory is below. These mechanisms are not meant to be mutually exclusive; indeed, several may operate simultaneously mutually reinforce one another:

1. *Security:* State A's proliferation causes its rival, State B, to pursue nuclear weapons to balance against State A's nuclear capabilities.
2. *Prestige:* State B pursues nuclear weapons to emulate the prestige garnered by State A's proliferation.
3. *Domestic:* State A's proliferation strengthens domestic actors in State B that were already pro-nuclear for bureaucratic reasons, tipping the decisionmaking balance in their favor.
4. *Supply-Side:* State A goes nuclear and then provides sensitive nuclear assistance to State B, easing the path to a nuclear arsenal or making proliferation seem more feasible.
5. *Political Viability:* State A's proliferation reduces the perceived political costs of proliferation to State B by showing that nonproliferation barriers are surmountable.
6. *Perceived Technical Feasibility:* State A's proliferation demonstrates that countries with a given threshold of economic and technological capacity can successfully acquire nuclear weapons, increasing the probability that states with equal or higher capacity proliferate due to an increased perception of technical feasibility.

Fears of nuclear domino effects are likely to be especially heightened when a state conducts its first nuclear test because this is likely to activate all six mechanisms outlined above. Acquiring a nuclear capability in the absence of testing (1) does not as gravely threaten security since the capabilities are not demonstrated, (2) garners uncertain prestige, (3) is less likely to influence other states' domestic politics because the capability is not on the public agenda, (4)

implies a lower capacity on the nuclear state's part to provide sensitive assistance on bomb design, (5) has a less overt effect on the perceived political viability of proliferation, and (6) leaves significant ambiguity about technical feasibility. The Chinese nuclear test was likely especially powerful, when compared to the prior tests by the Soviet Union, UK, and France, for two reasons: (1) it occurred in a region that was previously non-nuclear, meaning that many states in the neighborhood would be incentivized to go nuclear themselves for reasons of security, domestic politics, and prestige and (2) as a poor country, China dramatically increased the perceived technical feasibility of proliferation. By contrast, when the USSR, UK, and France tested, their main adversaries already had acquired nuclear weapons. Moreover, as great powers with well-established economic and technological capacity, their nuclear tests likely did not make proliferation appear feasible to the vast majority of weaker, poorer, states.

As for how these fears of domino effects affect US nonproliferation policy, I start from an assumption that builds on existing work: namely, that the US commitment to nonproliferation is driven by a desire to protect and strengthen its dominant geopolitical position. I depart by arguing that proliferation (and efforts at nonproliferation) have different potential effects on this goal depending on whether the nuclear aspirant is a friend of the United States (formal or informal ally), an adversary of the United States (a country with whom the prospect of military conflict is deemed real), or unaligned (neither of the above). The type of relationship the potential proliferator has with the United States not only plays a major role in determining the geopolitical *consequences* of proliferation for the United States, it also affects the geopolitical costs of *enforcing nonproliferation* vis-à-vis that state.

Given the assumption that the US aim is to maintain or strengthen its geopolitical position, it is easy to see that an unfriendly state acquiring nuclear weapons is a substantial and

unalloyed bad for the United States: it irreversibly limits the ability of the United States to use force against that country, raises the risk of the United States becoming directly involved in a nuclear war, and may embolden the newly nuclear state to act more aggressively. Regime change is likely to be entirely off the table as a policy option for the United States and costly additional commitments to US allies in the adversary's neighborhood are likely to be necessary as well. While efforts to enforce nonproliferation may be costly against adversary states (whether involving sanctions, military strikes, or inducements), these costs are likely to be outweighed by the potential benefits given the grave strategic consequences of proliferation in these cases. Moreover, given that the nuclear aspirant is already an adversary, coercive nonproliferation measures will not change the fundamental geopolitical dynamic (unlike in the case of allied or unaligned states, as discussed below).

However, in contrast to existing arguments, I argue that it is far less clear whether proliferation by a friendly state is a net negative for the United States geopolitically. While such proliferation may make the allied state more autonomous and could theoretically embroil the United States in an unwanted nuclear conflict, this risk is potentially balanced or outweighed by three factors: (1) strengthened deterrence against a shared adversary, (2) the ability for the United States to free up conventional or nuclear resources that were previously devoted to the ally's defense, which could in fact *reduce* the risk of the United States becoming involved in a conflict, and (3) the fact that the very act of enforcing nonproliferation against an ally is likely to be costly, perhaps significantly damaging the relationship between the United States and the potential proliferator and/or requiring the United States to extend costly new security commitments. The costs of enforcing nonproliferation are less likely to be outweighed by the strategic consequences of proliferation in these cases, given that these consequences are mixed.

Thus, while the United States may prefer to prevent proliferation even amongst allies in an ideal world, the costs of enforcing nonproliferation may make it unattractive.

It is similarly unclear what the optimal geopolitical response to an unaligned state pursuing nuclear weapons would be for the United States, for four reasons: (1) the state may directly threaten or come into conflict with the United States but is less likely to do so than an adversary, (2) its unaligned status means the United States is giving up little influence over the state when it acquires a nuclear arsenal, (3) the state may in fact share an adversary with the United States, as with India vis-à-vis China during the early part of the Cold War and in its aftermath, and (4) successful efforts to prevent the state from acquiring nuclear weapons are likely to require substantial US resources (such as security commitments) that may increase the probability of the United States becoming involved in unwanted conflicts. In sum, while it is clear that an adversary's pursuit of nuclear weapons should elicit strong opposition from the United States, it is far less clear for allies and unaligned states.

When nuclear domino effects are perceived to be weak or nonexistent, this argument would predict a tailored, case-by-case nonproliferation policy. The United States would oppose proliferation in enemy states consistently, but adopt a more varied approach toward allied or unaligned states: opposing in some cases and aiding or allowing in others, depending on the mix of the above factors that weigh for or against nonproliferation. When nuclear domino effects are perceived to be weak, this argument would not expect the United States to expend significant resources establishing international policies to restrict proliferation on a global scale such as the NPT, because it would prefer flexibility in responding to different countries' nuclear ambitions.

Conversely, when nuclear domino effects are perceived to be strong, this argument would predict that the United States would adopt a strict, across-the-board nonproliferation policy.

While proliferation in enemy states would be opposed regardless of expectations of nuclear domino effects, as would proliferation in friendly and unaligned states with a particularly dangerous balance of the factors identified above, the belief in nuclear domino effects would tip the balance in favor of nonproliferation in all other unaligned and friendly states: the potential benefits of proliferation and costs of nonproliferation efforts in these cases would be outweighed by the fact that allowing this state to acquire nuclear weapons could ultimately lead other states to acquire nuclear weapons that do pose great strategic risks to the United States. When nuclear domino effects are perceived to be strong, this argument predicts substantial US efforts to establish international policies that discourage proliferation across the board like the NPT.

To evaluate this argument, the remainder of this paper examines US nonproliferation policy from 1953-1968, establishing a baseline prior to the Chinese nuclear test and then exploring the shift in US policy in its aftermath. I show that prior to 1964, when nuclear domino effects were perceived to be relatively weak, US policy was in fact quite tolerant of nuclear sharing and forms of selective proliferation. In the aftermath of the Chinese test, however, fears of nuclear domino effects dramatically increased, leading US policymakers to abandon selective proliferation schemes and ultimately embrace the NPT.

1953-1963

From 1953 to 1963, US nonproliferation policy was relatively permissive, as the United States promoted liberal nuclear sharing schemes such as the MLF, offered to aid the British and French nuclear weapons programs, and was unwilling to make the compromises necessary to establish the NPT. During this period, many policymakers and the US intelligence community believed that nuclear domino effects were relatively weak, and therefore that proliferation could

be contained to individual cases. Although President Kennedy was more worried about proliferation than President Eisenhower, and took limited steps in favor of nonproliferation, he too was unwilling to give up the MLF and came to believe that proliferation could be contained.

Eisenhower Administration (1953-1960)

While official US policy has opposed horizontal nuclear proliferation since the immediate post-WWII era,[13] nonproliferation only started to command "sustained attention from US security planners in the early 1960s."[14] President Eisenhower felt that US allies in Europe should acquire their own nuclear weapons, which would ultimately facilitate US forces withdrawing from Europe.[15] In 1954, the US government amended the Atomic Energy Act in order to make it possible to cooperate in the nuclear field with Britain.[16] Soon thereafter, Britain was given access to American nuclear weapons.[17] At the same time, the Eisenhower administration also oversaw the initiation of the Atoms for Peace program. While in some sense this laid the foundation for the nonproliferation regime in that it offered nuclear technology contingent on the acceptance of safeguards (an idea that later undergirded the NPT), it was primarily motivated by a desire to restrain the Soviet nuclear buildup by diverting fissionable

[13] Early US efforts included the 1946 Baruch Plan to ban nuclear weapons via an international agreement and the McMahon Act of the same year, which forbade the US from sharing sensitive information on nuclear weapons development with other states. On the Baruch Plan, see Sokolski, 14-24. On the McMahon Act and its effect on relations with Britain, see S.J. Ball, "Military Nuclear Relations between the United States and Great Britain under the Terms of the McMahon Act, 1946-1958," *Historical Journal* 38, No. 2 (1995): 439-454.
[14] Hal Brands, "Non-Proliferation and the Dynamics of the Middle Cold War: The Superpowers, the MLF, and the NPT," *Cold War History* 7, No. 3 (2007): 391.
[15] See Marc Trachtenberg, *Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999): 146-200.
[16] Ball, "Military Nuclear Relations," 449.
[17] Ibid, 453.

material to peaceful purposes rather to prevent new states from acquiring nuclear weapons.[18] Indeed, by spreading nuclear technology, as Sokolski notes, this program "made the acquisition of such [nuclear] capabilities *more* likely."[19]

In October 1957, when Treasury Department officials suggested that the United States threaten to cut military aid to France if it persisted with its nuclear weapons program, Eisenhower responded that, "Such a course of action would constitute a very grave mistake. We should certainly try to persuade the French not to embark on a course of action to fabricate nuclear weapons; but we should not exert force on the French to prevent them from doing this. If we did so we would sacrifice everything that we had built up in NATO." As an alternative, Eisenhower suggested further loosening Congressional restrictions to provide for greater sharing of nuclear information and materials with France.[20] Later that month, U.S. Army Chief of Staff Maxwell Taylor wrote that "the Joint Chiefs of Staff have…stated that there may be advantages for the US in an independent nuclear production capability in France." Concurring with the U.S. policy position, however, Taylor wrote that, "for the present, it is to the US advantage for France to forego such production. I do not agree, however, that achievement of this objective would justify utilizing military assistance as a lever to prevent French production of the weapons as the Department of Treasury proposes."[21]

This trend toward nuclear sharing was broadened by the end of 1957 with the introduction of the NATO stockpile plan, which promised to provide European allies with access to U.S. nuclear weapons in the event of a crisis. Although this plan retained an American veto

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[18] Sokolski, *The Best of Intentions*, 25-29.
[19] Sokolski, *The Best of Intentions*, 33.
[20] Memorandum of Discussion at the 340th Meeting of the National Security Council, 17 October 1957, Eisenhower Administration, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. xxvii, doc. 54.
[21] U.S. Policy on France (NSC 5721), 29 October 1957, *Digital National Security Archive* (hereafter *DNSA*), NP00347.

over the use of nuclear weapons and was intended by some officials to be a substitute for independent European nuclear weapons programs, Trachtenberg notes that the ultimate outcome was that "NATO allies were given effective control over American nuclear weapons" in Europe.[22] Eisenhower also supported the provision of ballistic missile designs to NATO allies, which could serve as delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons.[23] US policymakers under Eisenhower were even comfortable with providing Germany with de facto physical control over American nuclear weapons.[24] Emblematic of the increased executive enthusiasm for sharing nuclear information with allies, in February 1958, a group of French nuclear officials was invited to the Nevada Testing Site, after which a French General on the visit remarked, "that what he had learned would save France many millions of dollars. On many details it would be possible for France to follow procedures established by the United States and thus to avoid expensive trial and error methods" in its own nuclear testing.[25]

In July 1958, the legal restrictions on sharing nuclear technology in the Atomic Energy Act were further weakened in order to allow greater cooperation with the British nuclear program. The President was now given the authority to aid other countries' nuclear weapons programs "provided that such nation has made substantial progress in the development of atomic weapons."[26] As Wohlstetter observed three years later, this amendment perversely "seem[ed] to offer incentives to our other allies to demonstrate a nuclear capability of their own, and so to become eligible for help."[27] That same month, Secretary of State Dulles went so far as to inform

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[22] Trachtenberg, *Constructed Peace*, 194.
[23] Ibid, 207.
[24] Ibid, 209-210.
[25] Memorandum of Conversation, 21 February 1958, Eisenhower Administration, *FRUS,* 1958-1960, vol. vii, part 2, doc. 3.
[26] An Act to Amend the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, Public Law # 85-479, 85th Congress, 2nd Session (2 July 1958), http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-72/pdf/STATUTE-72-Pg276-2.pdf
[27] Wohlstetter, "Nuclear Sharing," 356.

French President Charles de Gaulle that, "he was in a position to say that the United States Government would be willing to explore this matter with the French Government in order to ensure that in the event of a major attack on French or United States forces in Europe, nuclear weapons available to NATO would be used immediately without having to depend on a United States political decision, concerning which the French might have some doubts. In this connection, the Secretary stated, we would be prepared to see French forces fully trained in the use of such weapons and French equipment adapted to deliver them."[28]

One year later, Eisenhower explicitly expressed his selective approach to nonproliferation at a National Security Council meeting:

> The President said he found himself in a difficult position. In 1945 he had advocated making our nuclear knowledge available to the U.K. because he did not see how two close allies could continue their cooperation unless they had similar forces in the nuclear field. He felt there was a great difference between NATO countries and other countries. He could conceive of nothing worse than permitting Israel and Egypt to have a nuclear capability, as they might easily set out to destroy one another. He could go along with the views of the Secretary of State until NATO countries came into the picture, at which point he found himself agreeing with the JCS… The President said our policy might be to give nuclear information to allies who can afford to make nuclear weapons, but not give such information to allies who cannot afford to make such weapons… The President said that if we were better protected by making nuclear weapons available to our allies, we should consider making them available…The President said we would not necessarily have to make public the policy of giving nuclear information to our allies. We might consider giving Germany nuclear information thus enabling the Germans to develop nuclear capabilities for themselves. Secretary McElroy said that during the 1900's Germany had been rather an unstable member of the international community. The President observed Germany had been his enemy in the past, but on the principle of having only one main enemy at a time, only the U.S.S.R. was now his enemy.[29]

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[28] Memorandum of Conversation, 5 July 1958, Eisenhower Administration, *FRUS*, 1958-1960, vol. vii, part 2, doc. 34.

[29] Memorandum of Discussion at the 415th Meeting of the National Security Council, 30 July 1959, Eisenhower Administration, *FRUS*, 1958-1960, vol. iii, doc. 69.

Eisenhower's views ultimately led to a change in the U.S. government's internal statement of "Basic National Security Policy," which was amended to include the following clause: "Whenever the President determines it is in the U.S. security interests to do so, however, the United States should enhance the nuclear weapons capability of selected allies by the exchange with them or provision to them as appropriate of (1) information; (2) materials; or (3) nuclear weapons, under arrangements for control of weapons to be determined."[30]

In the closing days of his presidency, Eisenhower unveiled a plan for a sea-based Mutilateral Force (MLF) for NATO, whereby European allies would have joint control over nuclear weapons. Although initially this plan would include a U.S. veto on nuclear use, from Eisenhower's perspective, this was meant to pave the way for "an independent and ultimately purely European nuclear force, whose use would not be subject to an American veto."[31]

Intelligence estimates produced during the Eisenhower administration reflected these relatively optimistic views of proliferation, in which domino effects were not perceived to be strong and the geopolitical effects of nuclear proliferation expected to be modest. A 1957 National Intelligence Estimate concluded that only France, Sweden, and Canada had the capability to build nuclear weapons in the near future, that "no individual fourth country will be able within the next 10 years to develop more than a limited nuclear capability," and that "fourth power production of nuclear weapons over the next 10 years is not likely to reduce their dependence on military alliances, or materially increase the likelihood of general war." Moreover, "the chances of these countries precipitating local conflicts would probably not increase materially, and there will be substantial political and psychological barriers to the use of

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[30] National Security Council Report, 5 August 1959, Eisenhower Administration, *FRUS*, 1958-1960, vol. iii, doc. 70.
[31] Trachtenberg, *Constructed Peace*, 215.

nuclear weapons in local situations." With respect to domino effects, the estimate judged that a nuclear France would cause West Germany to be interested in nuclear weapons as well, but that the Germans would find a NATO nuclear force preferable to an independent nuclear capability. Moreover, China and Japan would probably consider nuclear weapons ultimately regardless of developments in Europe. Likewise, a nuclear Sweden "would not necessarily spark immediate nuclear weapons production efforts in other Western European states." Even if West Germany did decide to develop nuclear weapons, this "would not of itself lead the USSR to attack."[32]

After an intelligence estimate the following year came to similar conclusions,[33] a September 1960 estimate coming on the heels of France's first nuclear test likewise concluded that future proliferation would be limited. Noting that only France and China appeared to have ongoing nuclear weapons programs, the estimate judged that, "West Germany, Sweden, Japan, and India could initiate such programs but are unlikely to do so in the next several years unless there is a dramatic shift in the international situation." Even with a nuclear France now an established international fact, West Germany would be reluctant to pursue an independent nuclear capability, preferring a joint approach with the US or NATO. While further proliferation "could raise the chances that nuclear weapons would be used" and increase the risk of miscalculation, it could also "engender greater restraint," potentially reducing the likelihood of

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[32] National Intelligence Estimate 100-6-57, "Nuclear Weapons Production in Fourth Countries – Likelihood and Consequences," doc. 2, 18 June 1957, in William Burr, "National Intelligence Estimates of the Nuclear Proliferation Problem," *NSA, EBB no. 155*.

[33] National Intelligence Estimate 100-2-58, "Nuclear Weapons Production in Fourth Countries – Likelihood and Consequences," doc. 3A, 1 July 1958, in "National Intelligence Estimates of the Nuclear Proliferation Problem," *NSA, EBB no. 155*.

conflict. Acquiring a nuclear arsenal nevertheless was expected to improve a state's relative power within an alliance and cause them to act more independently.[34]

Kennedy Administration (1961-1963)

When John F. Kennedy entered the White House in January 1961, he became the first US president to be personally committed to nonproliferation. According to the former head of the US Atomic Energy Commission, Glenn Seaborg, nuclear proliferation was President Kennedy's "private nightmare."[35] Kennedy understood that the increasing availability of nuclear technology made the problem of nonproliferation more urgent,[36] was concerned about the potential effects of a looming Chinese nuclear capability,[37] and was also convinced that West Germany should not have nuclear weapons because of the potential for increased instability on the front lines of the Cold War.[38] In 1963, Kennedy famously warned that without preventive action, the United States would soon face a world with up to twenty-five nuclear powers.[39]

This high-level commitment was translated into several important policy shifts in favor of nonproliferation. In April 1961, Kennedy approved recommendations from Dean Acheson that called for a break from Eisenhower's policies. Under the new policy, "National nuclear forces were to be avoided and control was to be concentrated in American hands," even to the point of

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[34] NIE 100-4-60, "Likelihood and Consequences of the Development of Nuclear Capabilities by Additional Countries" doc. 5, 9 September 1960, in "National Intelligence Estimates of the Nuclear Proliferation Problem," *NSA, EBB no. 155*.
[35] Quoted in Avner Cohen, "Israel and the Evolution of US Nonproliferation Policy: The Critical Decade (1958-1968)," *Nonproliferation Review* 5, No. 2 (1998): 5.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Rachel Whitlark, "All Options on the Table? Nuclear Proliferation, Preventive War, and a Leader's Decision to Intervene," Paper presented at the Nuclear Studies Research Initiative Conference, Cedar Creek, TX, October 17-19, 2013.
[38] Trachtenberg, *Constructed Peace,* 284.
[39] William Potter, "Divining Nuclear Intentions," 160.

opposing independent British and French arsenals.[40] Kennedy sought to rein in the Eisenhower policies that had given Europeans effective control over American nuclear weapons, ordering that permissive action links (PALs) be installed on all US nuclear weapons deployed in Europe.[41] Moreover, the MLF plan was transformed: rather than serving as a precursor to an independent European nuclear force, as Eisenhower intended, the MLF would now have a firm American veto and would be aimed at preventing national proliferation, particularly in West Germany.[42] In September 1961, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), the first government agency solely devoted to arms control, was established via congressional legislation.

Kennedy's most notable nonproliferation accomplishment occurred in late 1963 when the US and USSR concluded and ratified the Limited Test Ban Treaty, which prohibited all nuclear tests except for those underground. The treaty was at least partially meant to prevent additional states from acquiring nuclear weapons. As Kennedy put it during negotiations with Khruschev in June 1961, "If no agreement is reached, then in a few years there might be ten or even fifteen nuclear powers."[43] Nevertheless, as Trachtenberg notes, Kennedy's nonproliferation policy was not "applied to all prospective nuclear powers in a more or less undifferentiated way," but was focused on preventing China and West Germany from going nuclear.[44]

Moreover, these accomplishments notwithstanding, the price the Kennedy administration was willing to pay for a broader nonproliferation agreement was limited. While the administration did commence negotiations with the Soviets on what would eventually become

[40] Trachtenberg, *Constructed Peace,* 305.
[41] Trachtenberg, *Constructed Peace,* 299, 309. The PAL decision was formalized in National Security Action Memorandum 160, 6 June 1962, https://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsam-jfk/nsam160.htm.
[42] Trachtenberg, *Constructed Peace,* 312-314.
[43] Memorandum of Conversation, 4 June 1961, Kennedy Administration, *FRUS*, vol. vii, doc. 31.
[44] Trachtenberg, *Constructed Peace,* 384.

the NPT,[45] American officials from 1961-1963 refused to give up plans for the MLF, which the Soviets repeatedly made clear was the critical obstacle preventing them from agreeing to a treaty. The Soviets were particularly concerned that the MLF would give West Germany control over nuclear weapons. As Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin told Secretary of State Dean Rusk in August 1962, "Germany is the number one problem" for the USSR with respect to the MLF and a nonproliferation treaty.[46] Even more pointedly, in February 1963 Dobrynin informed Rusk:

> [T]he transfer of nuclear weapons to the West German armed forces irrespective of the manner in which this is carried out would greatly complicate and aggravate the situation in Europe.…It is quite obvious that all these plans and actions of the US and other nuclear powers—whether it is creation of multilateral nuclear forces of NATO or bilateral agreements on nuclear armaments—lead in the long run to one end—to proliferation of nuclear weapons which not only does not facilitate but, on the contrary, hampers, if not makes altogether impossible, reaching an agreement on nonproliferation of nuclear weapons… The Soviet Government deems it necessary to state that if the US Government actually proceeds with proliferating nuclear weapons to other states participating in NATO and the number of states possessing nuclear weapons is increased the Government of the Soviet Union will be compelled to draw from this necessary conclusions and will respond in kind, that is, will see to it that appropriate countries friendly towards the USSR will receive nuclear weapons.[47]

Despite these strong protestations and the impossibility of reaching a non-proliferation agreement while the MLF plan persisted, the American position from 1961-63 did not budge. In November 1961, the State Department recommended voting against a non-proliferation resolution introduced by the Swedes at the UN because it would undermine the US ability to share nuclear weapons with its allies.[48] In April 1962, Kennedy approved National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 147, which authorized US officials to communicate "willingness" to establish an MLF. With respect to control of these nuclear forces, the NSAM

[45] Brands, "Non-Proliferation and the Dynamics of the Middle Cold War," 391.
[46] Memorandum of Conversation, 8 August 1962, Kennedy Administration, *FRUS*, vol. vii, doc. 216.
[47] Memorandum of Conversation, 7 February 1963, Kennedy Administration, *FRUS*, vol. vii, doc. 261.
[48] Telegram From the Department of State to the Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and European Regional Organizations, 21 November 1961, Kennedy Administration, *FRUS*, vol. vii, doc. 97.

directed officials to "make plain that transfer of nuclear warheads or procedures for using the force without United States concurrence would require amending existing United States law" but to nonetheless communicate that that the United States "is willing to consider any proposal [for control] which is put to us by a clear majority of the alliance."[49] In November 1962, Rusk recommended to Kennedy that the United States make another approach to the Soviets but should "reserve the right" to establish the MLF.[50]

By May of 1963, Rusk sought to convince Dobrynin that, "the Soviet Union ought not to let the MLF discussion in NATO get in the way" of a nonproliferation treaty.[51] That same month, NSAM 240 ordered that MLF negotiations with Britain be commenced and directed the State Department to "prepare the political case for the MLF."[52] As the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, W. Averell Harriman, prepared to leave for negotiations in Moscow in July 1963, Rusk emphasized that support for the MLF must be maintained because "If we did not maintain this position, we would cause great confusion among our allies and wreck NATO." At the same time, President Kennedy told Harriman he "wished to avoid any clause which would prohibit us from giving weapons to France if we so desired."[53] Even though Kennedy believed that the MLF was "a façade" and of little military value, he deemed it crucial for maintaining Germany's non-nuclear status.[54]

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[49] National Security Action Memorandum No. 147, 18 April 1962, Kennedy Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xiii, doc. 135.
[50] Memorandum From Secretary of State Rusk to President Kennedy, 27 November 1962, Kennedy Administration, *FRUS*, vol. vii, doc. 247.
[51] Memorandum of Conversation Between Secretary of State Rusk and the Soviet Ambassador (Dobrynin), 18 May 1963, Kennedy Administration, *FRUS*, vol. vii, doc. 287.
[52] National Security Action Memorandum 240, 7 May 1963, https://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsam-jfk/nsam240.jpg
[53] Summary Record of the 515th Meeting of the National Security Council, 9 July 1963, Kennedy Administration, *FRUS*, vol. vii, doc. 318.
[54] Trachtenberg, *Constructed Peace*, 314. On the MLF being partially conceived as a nonproliferation measure, see Itsuki Kurashina, " 'Let the MLF Sink Out of Sight': The Cold War and the Atlantic

Even outside Europe and the MLF, a variety of US policymakers in the Kennedy administration saw benefits in selective proliferation, as Eisenhower had previously. A February 1961 Air Force study on US strategy toward a future nuclear-armed China suggested US nuclear sharing in Asia to contain the Chinese threat. Once China had achieved the capability to directly threaten the United States, the study recommended efforts "to persuade selected Asian nations, particularly Japan and India, to consider equipping themselves with defensive nuclear weapons… Negotiations should be commenced to indicate US willingness to provide Australia with an offensive nuclear capability."[55] The following month, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) recommended to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara that the United States should abstain from supporting the "Irish Resolution" in the United Nations General Assembly, which later laid the groundwork for the NPT, on the grounds that it would impede nuclear sharing.[56] In September 1961, George McGhee, then Director of Policy Planning for the State Department, recommended to Rusk that the United States help India develop its own nuclear weapons since "it would be desirable if a friendly Asian power beat Communist China to the punch."[57] A year later, the JCS opposed a non-proliferation agreement that forbade the transfer of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear states partially because "the measure prohibits transfers which the US itself may wish to make."[58]

Alliance during the Johnson Administration," *Japanese Journal of American Studies* No. 24 (2013): 165-183.

[55] Long-Range Threat of Communist China, 8 February 1961, *DNSA*, CH00003.

[56] Memorandum From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense McNamara, 23 March 1961, Kennedy Administration, *FRUS*, vol. vii, doc. 9. The US ultimately voted in favor of the resolution, in spite of the JCS objections.

[57] George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 52-53.

[58] Memorandum From Secretary of State Rusk to President Kennedy, 21 September 1962, Kennedy Administration, *FRUS*, vol. vii, doc. 230.

By the end of 1962, Kennedy himself had overturned a key element of Acheson's nonproliferation's recommendations, deciding that the United States should help Britain and France develop their nuclear capabilities.[59] This was facilitated by his belief that nuclear domino effects could be contained in this case, and that French and British nuclear forces would not inevitably lead West Germany to follow.[60] In other words, in line with the theoretical argument, reduced fears of nuclear domino effects facilitated the adoption of selective rather than across-the-board nonproliferation policies, in spite of Kennedy's personal inclinations in favor of nonproliferation. Specifically, as part of the Nassau Agreement of December 1962, Kennedy offered to provide Britain with Polaris missiles that would become the basis of the British nuclear deterrent. Kennedy then authorized US officials to make the same offer to France, overturning years of American refusal to aid the French program. In January 1963, Secretary Rusk instructed the US ambassador to France to "impress on the French that the decision to offer them the Nassau proposals represents a major turning point in United States policy. It implies a willingness to recognize France as a nuclear power and to bring substantially to an end the exclusive quality of the US-UK relationship."[61] This offer, which was conditioned on France committing these missiles to a future MLF, was rejected by De Gaulle, even after he was assured that "for the future there could be absolutely no certainty that it had to be an American commander" in control of the MLF.[62]

Meanwhile, like under Eisenhower, intelligence officials during the Kennedy administration were relatively sanguine about the likely extent and dangers of proliferation. For

[59] Trachtenberg, *Constructed Peace*, 356-366.
[60] Ibid, 356.
[61] Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in France, 1 January 1963, Kennedy Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xiii, doc. 262.
[62] Telegram From the Embassy in France to the Department of State, 4 January 1963, Kennedy Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xiii, doc. 263.

example, in 1962 the CIA notified the director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), William Foster, that existing government reports, "exaggerated both the imminence and the probable scale of nuclear diffusion."[63] In June 1963, a National Intelligence Estimate came to similarly optimistic conclusions about proliferation. The report identified eight countries with the technical means to build nuclear weapons but noted that only China seemed to be working to do so. Moreover, China's acquisition of a nuclear capability would likely have quite limited effects: "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," although it would "reinforce their efforts to achieve Asian hegemony through political pressures and the indirect support of local 'wars of liberation.'" Regardless of whether China detonated a nuclear device, the report concluded that proliferation would remain rare: "India probably would not embark on a nuclear weapons program on the basis of a Chinese detonation of a nuclear device… Japan also would feel an increased sense of pressure, but would be more reluctant than most other countries to develop a weapons capability." Likewise, Germany was expected to remain non-nuclear.[64]

The geopolitical effects of further proliferation were also judged to be quite limited: "In strictly military terms, the nuclear proliferation likely to occur over the next 10 years will almost certainly not upset global power relations nor do we believe it will produce major realignments in the relations of states." While the report acknowledged "political and psychological effects" of proliferation and the possibility that a new nuclear state could spark "a local crisis," this was

[63] Letter From the Deputy Director for Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency (Cline) to the Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (Foster), 1 October 1962, Kennedy Administration, *FRUS*, vol. vii, doc. 234.
[64] National Intelligence Estimate, 28 June 1963, Kennedy Administration, *FRUS*, vol. vii, doc. 301.

balanced out by the fact that nuclear weapons "will almost certainly introduce a strong element of prudence into the calculations of regional enemies." Likewise, while the risk of accidental nuclear use would increase with additional proliferation, "the major nuclear powers would react cautiously to such an accident."[65] In sum, the estimate suggested that proliferation was likely to be limited, domino effects weak, and the geopolitical effects of proliferation highly restricted. These relatively optimistic views of proliferation would soon be altered as a nuclear-capable Communist China became more imminent.

1964-1968

In the wake of the Chinese test, US nonproliferation from 1964 to 1968 shifted strongly in favor of an across-the-board nonproliferation policy, with the Gilpatric Committee report endorsing a major US policy effort and the subsequent scrapping of the MLF and conclusion of the NPT. Moreover, there is strong evidence that these policy decisions were crucially influenced by increased fears of nuclear domino effects. As US policymakers came to believe that proliferation could not be contained to friendly or unaligned states, they moved decisively in favor of a universalistic nonproliferation policy.

Johnson Administration (1964-1968)

As 1964 began, US nonproliferation policy under the newly inaugurated Johnson administration remained much the same as it had been under Kennedy. In fact, Johnson was more committed to the MLF than Kennedy, which put a major roadblock in the way of a

[65] Ibid.

nonproliferation treaty.[66] Illustrating the continued ambivalence toward nonproliferation at the outset of the Johnson administration, in June 1964 Rusk inquired in a meeting of top defense and foreign policy officials, "whether the Government has seriously looked at the problem of giving India nuclear weapons in the event that China had such a weapon…He pointed out that no Government position exists as to whether we would oppose other nations having nuclear weapons once China obtains them."[67] However, partly in anticipation of China's first nuclear test, and particularly in its aftermath, US policymakers began advocating much more serious steps in favor of a universalistic nonproliferation policy, a shift that was largely based on the fears of nuclear domino effects that the Chinese test stimulated.

In April 1964, Johnson overturned Kennedy's policy on aiding France's nuclear program, ordering in NSAM 294 that "effective controls be established immediately" to ensure that the United States not "contribute to or assist in the development of a French nuclear warhead capability or a French national strategic nuclear delivery capacity."[68] By August, the ACDA completed a position paper that argued an imminent Chinese nuclear test demanded a stronger nonproliferation policy. In contrast to the 1963 National Intelligence Estimate, this paper took a gloomy view and explicitly focused on the likelihood of domino effects:

> There are today at least three or four states in addition to the nuclear powers which could make a national decision to produce nuclear weapons with assurance that they have the national capability to support this decision…The detonation of a nuclear device by the Chinese Communists will place great pressure on these countries to make a national decision to develop nuclear weapons in some cases for reasons of security, and in other cases for reasons of prestige. Because of regional rivalries a national decision by any of these countries may force other countries perhaps technically less qualified to make a similar national decision to engage in an all-out effort to acquire nuclear weapons either by development or by other means. Once this process starts it may be impossible to halt…If we do

[66] Brands, "Non-Proliferation and the Dynamics of the Middle Cold War," 399.
[67] Memorandum of Conversation, 16 June 1964, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 36.
[68] National Security Action Memorandum No. 294, 20 April 1964, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xii, doc. 30.

> not solve this problem—either because of mistake or because of delay—we will soon be faced with a world in which there are ten and then possibly twenty states having national nuclear capabilities. This would be a world of the greatest danger and insecurity.[69]

In view of these dangers, the paper recommended that the United States strengthen its efforts to prevent further proliferation. In terms of specific actions, the report suggested (1) bilateral efforts to dissuade states from pursuing nuclear weapons, (2) restrictions on the export of sensitive nuclear technology, (3) concluding a nonproliferation treaty with the USSR, and (4) seeking to gain widespread political support for such an agreement so that states would be deterred from pursuing nuclear weapons even before a treaty was concluded. With respect to the MLF, the paper recommended providing the Soviets with a letter assuring that the MLF would not result in additional states having independent control of nuclear weapons and that the United States would work to obtain commitments from NATO allies that they would not acquire their own nuclear weapons.[70] Even though China had not yet gone nuclear, it was the *anticipation* that this would soon occur and would cause domino effects that drove the policy recommendations.

In late August, Rusk established a committee headed by Llewellyn Thompson to produce a nonproliferation program in anticipation of an imminent Chinese nuclear test.[71] The day after the committee was commissioned, Thompson sent a memo to Rusk noting his disagreement with key portions of the ACDA paper. While admitting that, "The ACDA draft position paper marks a substantial step forward," he raised three problems, most notably, the "decision now to place sharp constraints and conditions on the MLF, and so to inform the Soviet leaders."[72] In other

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[69] Draft Position Paper, 14 August 1964, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 44.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Editorial Note, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 45.
[72] Memorandum From the Acting Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Thompson) to Secretary of State Rusk, 25 August 1964, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 46.

words, there remained disagreement on whether aspects of the MLF should be sacrificed in favor of a broad nonproliferation agreement.

The first Chinese nuclear test of October 16, 1964 greatly increased the perceived urgency of nonproliferation, particularly for President Johnson, who suggested to National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, "we should get a higher-level, harder look at the problem of nuclear spread." The result was the creation of the Task Force on Nuclear Proliferation, headed by former Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric, which became better known as the Gilpatric Committee.[73] Two days before the Committee was officially appointed, Secretary of State Rusk again noted that the United States should favor nonproliferation but that, "He could conceive of situations where the Japanese or Indians might desirably have their own nuclear weapons" and stated that "he had asked a committee to investigate inter-Asian security problems, giving consideration to a US-supplied Far Eastern nuclear stockpile."[74] On November 25, the White House issued NSAM 320, which announced the creation of the Gilpatric Committee, to whose work, "The President assigns great importance."[75]

Three days later, Thompson reiterated his opposition to the ACDA position on the MLF in a memo to the ACDA director, citing Rusk's idea of providing nuclear weapons to Asian states as partial justification: "I do not think that such an assurance would change the attitude of the Soviets at this time and it would block any possibility of an Asiatic MLF before such an institution has been seriously examined."[76] Indeed, in the opening meeting of the committee,

[73] Editorial Note, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 49.
[74] Memorandum of Conversation, 23 November 1964, Johnson Administration, vol. xi, doc. 50.
[75] National Security Action Memorandum No. 320, 25 November 1964, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 51.
[76] Memorandum From the Ambassador at Large (Thompson) to the Acting Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (Fisher), 28 November 1964, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 52.

Gilpatric noted, "The question has been raised within the Government whether nuclear proliferation may not be inevitable and in some cases even desirable."[77]

As Gavin has documented, the Gilpatric Committee considered four broad options for US nonproliferation policy: (1) "permissive or selective proliferation," which assumed further nuclear capabilities were either impossible to halt or beneficial in certain cases; (2) the currently existing "prudent" policy which opposed proliferation when it was relatively cheap to do so; (3) an enhanced nonproliferation policy that involved accepting "substantial costs and risks" for the sake of preventing proliferation; and (4) a radical shift that would make nonproliferation the highest priority of US foreign policy, including efforts to roll back existing arsenals.[78]

Three days later, Gilpatric sent a memo to several members of the committee describing his initial thoughts on the topic. The memo made a forceful argument against the United States aiding or allowing proliferation in any country because of the likelihood of nuclear domino effects, with Gilpatric contending, "To make exceptions in special cases would frustrate the entire objective of such a policy." Gilpatric warned that that allowing India to proliferate could cause Pakistan to do the same, which in turn could spur Egyptian and then Israeli proliferation. Permitting a Japanese arsenal, meanwhile, could cause Germany and Italy to go nuclear. On the problem of the MLF, Gilpatric noted that, "to make any headway against the further spread of nuclear arms, the MLF must either become a fait accompli, be abandoned or be shelved indefinitely." Gauging the possible reaction to abandoning the MLF, Gilpatric argued that extreme German dependence on the United States would allow US policymakers to deter a West German nuclear weapons program.[79]

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[77] Committee on Nuclear Proliferation, Minutes of Discussion, First Meeting, 1 December 1964, DNSA, NP1064.
[78] Gavin, "Blasts from the Past," 109.
[79] Tentative Thoughts on Certain Proliferation Problems, 4 December 1964, *DNSA*, NP01058.

Soon thereafter, a State Department position paper directly challenged the argument that proliferation was inevitable and highlighted the probability of domino effects. The paper contended, "proliferation may not now be inevitable but soon will be if we do not act promptly," that "even a small chance of halting proliferation may be worth a dozen MLFs," and that, "a nuclear decision taken somewhere is necessarily felt everywhere." Echoing Gilpatric, the paper predicted that an Indian bomb would cause a Pakistani program, while Indian and Japanese arsenals would lead to Indonesian and Australian bomb programs. These decisions would then reverberate and cause proliferation in the Middle East and Europe.[80] In December, President Johnson expressed his newfound commitment to nonproliferation to the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, remarking, "we were anxious to avoid a situation where others might follow in the footsteps of the Chinese. We were doing all we could to discourage others from embarking upon a nuclear weapons program."[81]

In contrast to this position, Under Secretary of State George Ball backed the ideas of Secretary Rusk when he met with Gilpatric on December 14, strongly supporting the MLF and suggesting a similar arrangement for Asia. Ball was skeptical of the overall value of a nonproliferation treaty, did not believe the MLF would threaten nonproliferation, and raised the possibility of a "pool of nuclear weapons which could be drawn upon by India or Japan for use by their dual purpose delivery vehicles." In supporting the importance of the MLF, Ball argued, "We cannot make the Germans into second-class citizens. We cannot subject them to a discriminatory state of original sin."[82] While less enthusiastic about the MLF, Secretary McNamara also expressed support to Gilpatric for an Asian multilateral nuclear force.[83] John

[80] Problems of Nuclear Proliferation Outside Europe, 7 December 1964, *DNSA*, NP01063.
[81] Memorandum of Conversation, 9 December 1964, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 54.
[82] Quoted in Gavin, "Blasts from the Past," 113.
[83] Ibid, 114.

McCloy, a member of the Committee and chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations, likewise warned that abandoning the MLF could cause the West Germans, "to look East and deal with the Soviets on their own," and argued that the MLF was necessary for the strength of NATO and to prevent national proliferation.[84] Walt Rostow, the director of the State Department's Policy Planning staff, joined the pro-MLF chorus, advocating to the Gilpatric Committee, "a country-by-country approach to nonproliferation, including a renewed push for the MLF, an increased commitment to the defense of Southeast Asia, and possibly even an Asian MLF designed to satisfy nuclear ambitions among US allies in the Pacific."[85]

By mid-December, Johnson had begun to move toward the position of the nonproliferation advocates with respect to the MLF, directing in NSAM 322 that, "I do not wish any American official…to press for a binding agreement at this time," that "Any agreement we support must be a reinforcement to our basic policy of non-dissemination of nuclear weapons" and that any MLF arrangement "must provide for United States' consent to the firing of the nuclear weapons." Ideally, the MLF would be designed in order to "lead the U.K. out of the field of strategic deterrence…greatly reduce the danger of any separate nuclear adventure by the Germans; and…advance the principle and practice of collective strategic defense, as against the proliferation of separate nuclear deterrents."[86]

In early January, a Gilpatric Committee internal paper outlined a "philosophical framework" for the third policy option: the significantly enhanced nonproliferation policy that the Committee would ultimately recommend. The paper warned that, "a multipolar nuclear-armed world will be both more complex and less stable politically and militarily, fragmenting the

[84] Hal Brands, "Rethinking Nonproliferation: LBJ, the Gilpatric Committee, US National Security Policy," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, No. 2 (2006): 94-95.
[85] Ibid, 95.
[86] National Security Action Memorandum No. 322, 17 December 1964, Johnson Library. http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/NSAMs/nsam322.asp.

massive US-Soviet confrontation that has hitherto inhibited violent and revolutionary change. Ambitious and insecure nations will be tempted to play off each other and the major powers, in the hope of expanding their influence while escaping retaliation." Highlighting the risk of nuclear dominoes, the paper continued, "When Nation A (India) gets nuclear weapons, its neighbor (Pakistan), will feel it must get them; Nation C (Germany) will be unable to exist without them. As political restraints on acquisition evaporate, the ability of the US to provide security for nations now under its umbrella will decline, aggressive new nationalisms will assert themselves, and we will live in a volatile, unrestrained world, ripe to indulge its hostilities against the US and its allies and ultimately capable of doing so." Noting that the United States and USSR both have "much to lose" from further proliferation, the paper proposed a "Twentieth Century version of the 'The Concert of Europe'…in which the US, Europe, and the USSR reach agreement on a limited objective—their common interest in preventing the turmoil of the non-European world from threatening their security." The Soviets, according to the paper, had a strong interest in avoiding "simultaneous encirclement" by a nuclear-armed China and West Germany, while the United States "needs a way to strengthen its deterrent of China and maintain European stability."[87]

A few days later, Secretary Rusk and several other high-ranking officials met with the Gilpatric Committee to discuss policy options. Rusk held firm to his position that nonproliferation was best served by providing other countries with access to US nuclear weapons. As he put it, "it is easy for the US to speak out against proliferation, but the Prime Minister of India or Japan must look on the question quite differently. The problem of alternatives to national nuclear proliferation arises…An Asian nuclear defense community,

[87] A Philosophical Framework for Course III, 4 January 1965, *DNSA*, NP01091.

perhaps with a US nuclear stockpile available for it to draw upon, may be one solution." In response to a question from Gilpatric, Rusk—backed by George Ball—argued that in the absence of the MLF, Germany would likely seek its own nuclear arsenal, or a joint Franco-German nuclear force. Making his point more forcefully later in the meeting, Rusk stated that, "Non-proliferation is not the overriding element in US relations with the rest of the world. In individual cases—e.g., the UAR/Israel—it could become dominant." Raising the problem of nuclear domino effects, Gilpatric responded by questioning, "how we can approach the problem on a case-by-case basis when each case has so much impact on others."[88]

Breaking ranks with Rusk, Ball, and his own previous position, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara gave a briefing on the same day that strongly endorsed Gilpatric's strict nonproliferation stance, calling for "a broad nonproliferation agreement, a comprehensive nuclear test ban, possible reductions or freezes in the size of the US strategic arsenal, and security guarantees to potential proliferators."[89] Like Gilpatric, McNamara's position was largely based on fears of nuclear domino effects: he had determined "that 'selective proliferation,' as he characterized the MLF, would prove impossible to control," as "others would follow the example" of a German nuclear capability, multinational or otherwise.[90] The following day, Gilpatric reiterated his "preference for a world with a limited number of nuclear powers, finding it implausible that additional proliferation could be compartmentalized, quarantined, or regionalized and comparing the consequences for the world of the Sarajevo incident." Gilpatric worried that proliferation in Asia could ultimately lead the US to become involved in nuclear war involving China, Japan, or India.[91]

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[88] Memorandum of Conversation, 7 January 1965, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 59.
[89] Brands, "Rethinking Nonproliferation," 98.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Minutes of Discussion, 7-8 January 1965, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 60.

The following day, John McCloy sent a letter to Gilpatric expressing his support for the positions of Rusk and Ball. He argued that the United States would have to pay a stiff price if it abandoned the MLF and that "the risks we run on that score, at least equal, if they do not exceed, those that we risk with the proliferation of nuclear weapons." Asserting that the US government, "has lost sight of the deep significance of the [NATO] Alliance and of the concept of collective security for the Atlantic World," McCloy argued that the increasingly lukewarm US attitude toward the MLF had reinforced De Gaulle's independent stance, undermined German resolve, increased the risks of a German nuclear arsenal, with the ultimate result that, "The possibility of confronting the Soviets and the Chinese with a convincingly solid Western front…is diminishing with every day that goes by." Echoing Ball, McCloy warned, "The Germans must be given a position of equality with the other Western powers if they are not, in due course, to go off on another nationalist adventure." The letter concluded that the United States should finalize the MLF or else it risked "losing both the essence of the Alliance and non-proliferation."[92]

On January 21, 1965 the Gilpatric Committee completed its report and presented its findings to President Johnson and his close advisers. In contrast to the positions of Rusk, Ball, and McCloy, the report strongly endorsed a strict US nonproliferation policy. As Bundy wrote to President Johnson, "The committee comes down hard on one side of this tough question, and at least one of your advisers—Dean Rusk—has real doubts about its recommendations."[93] According to Brands, the late briefing by McNamara proved decisive in convincing the committee to adopt this position.[94] The core thrust of the Committee's findings, stated in the report's second paragraph, was as follows:

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[92] Memorandum for the Chairman, 8 January 1965, *DNSA*, NP01094.
[93] Editorial Note, Johnson Administration, *FRUS,* vol. xi, doc. 63.
[94] Brands, "Rethinking Nonproliferation," 98.

> As a result of our study…the Committee is now unanimous in its view that preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons is clearly in the national interest despite the difficult decisions that will be required. We have concluded, therefore, that the United States must, as a matter of great urgency, substantially increase the scope and intensity of our efforts if we are to have any hope of success. Necessarily, these efforts must be of three kinds: (a) negotiation of formal multilateral agreements; (b) the application of influence on individual nations considering nuclear weapons acquisition, by ourselves and in conjunction with others; and (c) example by our own policies and actions.[95]

The specific policies the Gilpatric Committee recommended included a nonproliferation treaty negotiated with the Soviets, a comprehensive test ban treaty, regional nuclear-free zones, efforts to limit the spread of sensitive nuclear technologies, and the use of security guarantees and sanctions to influence the calculus of states considering nuclear weapons development. Perhaps more controversially, the committee recommended that the United States oppose the independent French arsenal, limit the MLF plan to ensure a US veto over any firing of nuclear weapons, emphasize to the Soviets that the MLF would preclude proliferation amongst NATO members and may result in the UK giving up its independent deterrent, and communicate to West Germany that a decision to go nuclear would lead the United States to withdraw its troop commitments. The committee also recommended that the United States downgrade the role of nuclear weapons in its own defense posture—in stark contradiction to Rusk's preferences—on the grounds that this would decrease the perceived importance of nuclear weapons and thereby reduce the incentives for additional countries to acquire them.[96]

The rationale for the Gilpatric Committee's strong stance on nonproliferation was threefold: (1) nuclear proliferation threatened the United States geopolitically, (2) the increased likelihood of nuclear domino effects emanating from the Chinese nuclear test made it essential to

[95] Report by the Committee on Nuclear Proliferation, 21 January 1965, Johnson Administration, *FRUS,* vol. xi, doc. 64.
[96] Ibid.

act quickly and apply nonproliferation policies evenly to all countries, and (3) a strong US effort was necessary to limit proliferation and had a good chance of succeeding, particularly with the cooperation of the Soviet Union and other countries.

On the first count, the committee judged that, "New nuclear capabilities, however primitive and regardless of whether they are held by nations currently friendly to the United States, will add complexity and instability to the deterrent balance between the United States and the Soviet Union, aggravate suspicions and hostility among states neighboring new nuclear powers, place a wasteful economic burden on the aspirations of developing nations, impede the vital task of controlling and reducing weapons around the world, and eventually constitute direct military threats to the United States." It was expected that, "As additional nations obtained nuclear weapons, our diplomatic and military influence would wane, and strong pressures would arise to retreat to isolation to avoid the risk of involvement in nuclear war."

Second, and perhaps most importantly, the committee determined that the risk of nuclear domino effects following the Chinese test made it essential act quickly and prevent proliferation even in countries that were allies or shared enemies with the United States. In discussing these dangers, the report identified multiple mechanisms by which these domino effects could occur:

> The world is fast approaching a point of no return in the prospects of controlling the spread of nuclear weapons…The recent Chinese Communist nuclear explosion has reinforced the belief, increasingly prevalent throughout the world, that nuclear weapons are a distinguishing mark of a world leader, are essential to national security, and are feasible even with modest industrial resources. The Chinese Communist nuclear weapons program has brought particular pressure on India and Japan, which may both be approaching decisions to undertake nuclear weapons programs. Although one might be tempted to accept Indian or Japanese nuclear weapons to counterbalance those of China, we do not believe the spread of nuclear weapons would or could be stopped there. An Indian or Japanese decision to build nuclear weapons would probably produce a chain reaction of similar decisions by other countries, such as Pakistan, Israel and the UAR. In these circumstances, it is unrealistic to hope that Germany and other European

> countries would not decide to develop their own nuclear weapons. We are convinced, therefore, that energetic and comprehensive steps must be taken in the near future to discourage further acquisition of nuclear weapons capabilities or an accelerating increase in the number of nations engaged in nuclear weapons programs will occur—possibly beginning within a matter of months.[97]

Finally, the committee determined that strong US efforts stood a good chance of success, in no small part because the Soviet Union and other states similarly were threatened by proliferation. This justified a major US effort since, "The rewards of long-term success would be enormous; and even partial success would be worth the costs we can expect to incur."[98]

Although there has been debate among historians about whether President Johnson accepted the conclusions of the Gilpatric Committee,[99] recent research suggests he did, in deeds if not in words. After some initial delay, in June 1965 Johnson approved NSAM 335, which ordered the ACDA to develop a "program for preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons."[100] The NSAM was significant not only because it explicitly asked for a plan to prevent proliferation, but also because it put the ACDA in charge of nonproliferation, an agency known to favor the conclusions of the Gilpatric Committee; indeed, Bundy and Johnson went to the effort of revising the original NSAM draft to give the ACDA a stronger role.[101]

By 1966, the US government had down-weighted the MLF plan, convinced West Germany to accept an increased role in nuclear planning in lieu of multilateral control of nuclear weapons, and made clear to the Soviet Union that it was willing to compromise in order to conclude a nonproliferation treaty—shifts that were largely spurred by the fact that it "appeared

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[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.
[99] See Gavin, "Blasts from the Past," 130.
[100] National Security Action Memorandum No. 335, 28 June 1965, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 84.
[101] Brands, "Rethinking Nonproliferation," 106.

that the 'chain reaction' predicted by Gilpatric had begun. India seemed headed toward a nuclear capability, stoking fears that Pakistan, Israel…and eventually West Germany would follow."[102]

For example, in discussions over a nonproliferation treaty in August 1965, the Deputy Director of ACDA, Adrian Fisher, observed, "our most immediate problem was with India," an opinion that McGeorge Bundy echoed.[103] In October, during negotiations with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, Rusk suggested coordinating policies with the USSR to prevent Egyptian and Israeli proliferation and expressed concern over India's response to the Chinese nuclear test, as well as the possibility that China would deliberately encourage other states to go nuclear, perhaps by providing technical support to countries like Indonesia.[104] By November, with the FRG leadership sensing that the MLF was going nowhere, McGeorge Bundy wrote to President Johnson identifying "an opportunity for a real Johnson break-through here…the way might be open toward a non-proliferation treaty and toward a new collective arrangement for command control and consultation in NATO."[105]

A January 1966 National Intelligence Estimate concluded that India was the only state likely to pursue nuclear weapons in the near future but noted that Israel and Sweden were possible contenders as well. Explicitly discussing the probability of domino effects, the report judged that, "In the longer run…Indian or Israeli possession of nuclear weapons would cause Pakistan and the UAR to seek them. It would also increase doubts in other nations about the

[102] Brands, "Non-Proliferation and the Dynamics of the Middle Cold War," 404-408.
[103] Minutes of Meeting of the Committee of Principals, 25 August 1965, Johnson Administration, *FRUS,* vol. xi, doc 93.
[104] Memorandum of Conversation, 1 October 1965, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 97.
[105] Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to President Johnson, 25 November 1965, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 102.

feasibility of non-proliferation or comprehensive test ban treaties. This in turn would tend to weaken some of the restraints presently operating in other countries such as Sweden."[106]

By the middle of 1966, growing evidence that India was going nuclear—a direct domino effect spurred by the Chinese test—convinced high level policymakers to make a final push to conclude a nonproliferation treaty. In June, Secretary McNamara wrote to Rusk arguing that, "the growing pressures for proliferation in India indicates that we should reconsider our position on the nonproliferation treaty. I suggest that we consider language in our draft treaty which would make clear that the United States and other nuclear powers would each maintain a veto over its weapons."[107] Two days later, at a National Security Council Meeting, President Johnson opened the discussion by echoing McNamara's opinion and emphasizing "the urgency of some action in connection with the possibility of India making a decision to go nuclear… this had great significance for the United States and the world and might, if India made such a decision, promote great instability in view of the fact that others would undoubtedly follow."[108] In September 1966, Rusk argued to Gromyko that, "The longer we delayed the more difficult it would become to get other countries to join in the [nonproliferation] treaty. The Secretary was not thinking so much of the FRG in this respect as of other non-nuclear-weapon states such as Japan, India, Israel and others. It was important and urgent to act now, before the horse escaped the stable; then it would be too late to close the door."[109]

As a replacement for the MLF, the United States spearheaded the creation of the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) in NATO, which McNamara approvingly noted in December 1966 "will

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[106] National Intelligence Estimate, "The Likelihood of Further Nuclear Proliferation," NIE 4-66, doc. 1, 20 January 1966, in William Burr, "China May Have Helped Pakistan Nuclear Weapons Design, Newly Declassified Intelligence Indicates," *NSA, EBB no. 423*.
[107] Letter From Secretary of Defense McNamara to Secretary of State Rusk, 7 June 1966, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 135.
[108] Memorandum for the Files, 9 June 1966, Johnson Administration, *FRUS,* vol. xi, doc. 136.
[109] Memorandum of Conversation, 24 September 1966, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 153.

end talk of the Multilateral Force."[110] Formally established in 1967, the NPG "marked an important turning point in the politics of alliance nuclear policy-making," as a "system of allied ownership and control of nuclear weapons was effectively abandoned in favour of a consultative approach to allied nuclear policy."[111] In April 1967, Secretary McNamara assured Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin that the NPG would preclude NATO allies from having independent control over nuclear weapons and also "emphasized the steps we had taken to prevent…unauthorized use of such weapons."[112]

As Brands summarizes, "In intellectual terms, nonproliferation policy from June 1965 through the end of Johnson's presidency bore a close resemblance to the basic tenets of the Gilpatric Report. Operating on the premise that the spread of nuclear weapons was uncontrollable once started, the administration took an aggressive position on the issue."[113] By the end of 1966, a tentative agreement on the NPT was reached with the Soviets,[114] and by 1968 the treaty was opened for signature, laying the groundwork for the nonproliferation regime.

The Role of Nuclear Domino Fears vs. Existing Explanations

The evidence presented above strongly suggests that nuclear domino fears inspired by the Chinese nuclear test were crucial to the shift in US policy from 1964-1968, specifically in that it convinced the US government to adopt an across-the-board nonproliferation policy rather than the previous selective approach. The bureaucratic actors that most strongly supported the

[110] Summary Notes of the 566th Meeting of the National Security Council, 13 December 1966, Johnson Administration, *FRUS,* vol. xiii, doc. 226.
[111] Paul Buteux, *The Politics of Nuclear Consultation in NATO, 1965-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 60.
[112] Telegram from the President's Special Assistant (Rostow) to President Johnson, in Texas, 15 April 1967, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xi, doc. 195.
[113] Brands, "Rethinking Nonproliferation," 107-108.
[114] Brands, "Non-Proliferation and the Dynamics of the Middle Cold War," 408.

tightened US policy—the Gilpatric Committee, the ACDA, and Secretary of Defense McNamara—were all clearly motivated by these fears, each making explicit statements to the effect that domino effects made a selective approach untenable. Moreover, evidence that the domino effect was beginning in India reinforced the American commitment to the NPT. While officials like Rusk, Ball, and McCloy felt that the MLF and other forms of selective proliferation were crucial to strengthening US alliances and could be contained, the argument that ultimately won the day—made most forcefully by Gilpatric himself, as well as McNamara—held that selective proliferation could not be contained precisely because of the likelihood of domino effects. As described above, Gilpatric argued, "to make exceptions in special cases would frustrate the entire objective of such a policy," and found it "implausible that additional proliferation could be compartmentalized, quarantined, or regionalized." Indeed, the Gilpatric Committee's final report explicitly stated that, "Although one might be tempted to accept Indian or Japanese nuclear weapons to counterbalance those of China, we do not believe the spread of nuclear weapons would or could be stopped there." This conclusion is consistent with McNamara's eventual belief that selective proliferation could not be controlled, which helped sway the Committee as a whole. The key role of nuclear domino fears is also evidenced by the fact that India's nascent nuclear weapons program—which showed that the nuclear domino effect had begun—helped accelerate US nonproliferation efforts in 1965-66.

There is also evidence in favor of existing explanations. First, in line with the argument that stresses the US desire to maintain influence over allies, the Gilpatric Committee report concluded that, "As additional nations obtained nuclear weapons, our diplomatic and military influence would wane." Moreover, a Gilpatric Committee paper that warned that nuclear proliferation would reduce, "the ability of the US to provide security for nations now under its

umbrella" and allow, "ambitious and insecure nations…to play off each other and the major powers, in the hope of expanding their influence while escaping retaliation." The Committee deliberations and final report also made clear that both French and British nuclear arsenals were viewed by some as undesirable impediments to firm US control in NATO. In spite of these risks, however, many US policymakers were willing to entertain the idea of selective proliferation vis-à-vis allies well into the 1960s. Indeed, some of those favorable to selective proliferation schemes believed that a *failure* to provide allied states like Germany with access to nuclear weapons would make them less loyal to the United States and more autonomous in their foreign policy. The evidence suggests that what turned the tide against these selective proliferation options was not so much the fear that proliferation would make allies more autonomous, but that their acquisition could in turn lead other, more dangerous states, to go nuclear.

Turning to Swango's argument, there is in fact strong evidence that constraining India's nuclear capabilities was a significant motivation for the final push toward the NPT. However, this begs a question: why was the US so concerned about Indian proliferation? As Johnson himself put it (quoted above), concluding the NPT was critical, "in connection with the possibility of India making a decision to go nuclear… this had great significance for the United States and the world and might, if India made such a decision, promote great instability in view of the fact that others would undoubtedly follow." In other words, it was not India going nuclear per se that was the biggest threat, but rather that this would lead other states to follow. Or, as Undersecretary of State George Ball put it in a memo to President Johnson in June 1966, "Unless there is some new development, India almost certainly will go nuclear. Such a decision could start a nuclear proliferation chain reaction. This would be contrary to basic US national interest. It is therefore imperative that we take all possible promising actions to prevent it." The results of

a full-fledged Indian nuclear weapons program would include "great damage to Indian development prospects," Pakistani alarm that would likely lead them to "turn to the US, Communist China, or the Soviet Union either for assistance in acquiring nuclear weapons or for support in deterring India," an increase in the probability of proliferation in states like Israel, Japan, and Germany, and in general less Indian reliance on the United States and the USSR for support against China.[115]

There is also clear evidence from the Gilpatric Committee deliberations and report, and from statements and actions in its aftermath, that the United States was not solely focused on India going nuclear, but was also worried about Israel, Japan, Egypt, Pakistan, and others doing the same. Indeed, during this same period (1965-1966), the United States provided strengthened security assurances to Japan as part of an effort to prevent them from proliferating,[116] and warned Israel that if they did not accept IAEA safeguards and instead went nuclear, they should "forget US support."[117] In sum, while US policymakers did indeed hope the NPT could keep India non-nuclear, this was largely because of fears that this would lead other states to follow; moreover, India was not the only country of serious proliferation concern.

Conclusion

The evidence presented above suggests fears of nuclear domino effects were a core US motivation for the decision to abandon selective proliferation and embrace the NPT. Because policymakers came to believe that proliferation could not be contained, they ultimately decided

[115] State Department Memorandum for the President, "NSC Meeting, June 9, 1966," doc. 10, 7 June 1966, in "India and Pakistan—On the Nuclear Threshold," *NSA, EBB no. 6*.
[116] See Miller, "Nuclear Dominoes."
[117] Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel, 28 July 1966, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. xviii, doc. 312.

that a universalistic policy such as the NPT was essential to further US interests. The findings in this paper suggest at least two avenues for future research.

First, one avenue would examine empirically the multiple different mechanisms through which nuclear domino effects can operate and analyze the strength of each and the conditions under which they are likely to occur. As discussed above, there are a wide variety of pathways through which domino effects can conceivably function, yet the extant literature has largely overlooked this, tending to focus solely on the security mechanism whereby domino effects occur when a rival proliferates.[118] To what extent does reactive proliferation occur simply because it seems more politically or technically feasible once there is a new entrant to a nuclear club? How big of a role does technological assistance from new nuclear states play? Do new nuclear states that refrain from testing spur weaker domino effects by minimizing the strength of prestige and domestic political motives to reactively proliferate?

A second research question would explore the extent to which the motives for US nonproliferation policy are mirrored in Soviet policy during the Cold War. Was Soviet nonproliferation policy similarly motivated by fears of nuclear domino effects and did the Chinese nuclear test have similar effects on Soviet policy? Did the Soviet Union seriously consider selective proliferation schemes like the United States? Examination of these questions could offer important policy implications, bearing on the likely impact of a potential Iranian nuclear capability on the nuclear ambitions of other states and the nonproliferation policies of major powers such as the United States.

[118] Most recently, see Bleek, "Does Proliferation Beget Proliferation?"