STRATEGIC STUDIES QUARTERLY

Nuclear Weapons and Political Behavior

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Abstract

Nuclear weapons are designed to deter and dissuade. While incapable of producing meaningful military effects, they are extremely capable of producing political ones. Arguments for a large US force have no meaning unless tied to a counterforce strategy or to risky guarantees that, in general, embolden leaders to take risks they would not ordinarily take if acting on their own. The slow, steady spread of nuclear weapons is likely to continue. Therefore, revitalizing the nuclear enterprise is a paramount concern. However, upgrading systems today need not equate to an increase in aggregate numbers. The United States would do well to keep its nuclear arsenal relatively small and in accordance with the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). Many of the ideas and arguments in this article have appeared in earlier versions of *SSQ* and have become even more relevant to the national security debate surrounding the current Nuclear Posture Review (NPR).[1]

> *The United States must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses.*
>
> —Donald Trump
> Twitter post, 22 December 2016

Nuclear weapons restrain the political behavior of nuclear leaders and reduce the likelihood of war among nuclear powers.[2] In this regard, they can be the most politically useful weapons a state can possess. Contrary to the tweet above, the United States does not need to expand its nuclear capabilities until the world comes to its senses. Rather, it needs

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to upgrade its existing arsenal while tacitly acknowledging that a small number of nuclear weapons is all one needs to produce dramatic political effects. To appreciate this argument, one must comprehend what nuclear weapons do: they deter and dissuade. Second, in today's nuclear game, large aggregate numbers do not matter. Both of these aspects have implications for today, especially as the US conducts its Nuclear Posture Review.

What Nuclear Weapons Do and How They Do It

Nuclear weapons, more so than any other weapon, "hold power at bay," as Bernard Brodie so aptly put it; they inhibit statesmen from "launching a career of aggression by socializing them to the dangers of nuclear war."[3] As Kenneth Waltz pointed out, statesmen do not want to be part of a system that constrains them; however, that is the kind of system that results among nuclear powers. Each is socialized to the capabilities of the other, and the relationship that emerges is one tempered by caution despite the composition, goals, or desires of its leaders.[4] In short, nuclear weapons deter and dissuade statesmen from behaving recklessly. Since deterrence and dissuasion play such critical roles in this line of reasoning, it is important to be clear about their meanings.

Deterrence puts the target state on notice: "don't do this, or else." It involves "setting the stage—by announcement, by rigging the trip-wire, by incurring the obligation—and *waiting*" (emphasis in original).[5] Dissuasion is not announced, nor does it put the target state on notice. There are no trip wires or obligations, no waiting or threats. Where deterrence is specific, dissuasion is general. For deterrence to work, "one must dig in or lay a mine field."[6] For dissuasion to take hold, one need only possess mines, albeit nuclear ones.[7] In either case, statesmen are not sensitive to the number of nuclear weapons a state might possess; they are sensitive to whether a state has them at all.

To explain this sensitivity, a brief discussion on the role of structure in international politics is warranted. Structural analysis addresses the positioning of actors in social and political systems, the properties and relations that make them parts of a system.[8] Within the field of international politics, most scholars accept Waltz's tripartite conception of structure (functional differentiation, ordering principles, and power distribution). In the standard Waltzian account, international systems are largely undifferentiated—and pretty much all the same. States are assumed to be "like units" made different only by their position among

other states—strong states being privileged over weak ones. Anarchy is the ordering principle of international systems, meaning there is no higher authority for states to appeal to reconcile differences or ensure their survival. Power is distributed unevenly throughout the system, so states are unequal—making international systems unequal. To say structural theory provides a positional picture of international politics is to say that states can be measured in terms of relative power and how they stack up against one another.

Few things affect this "stacking up" more than nuclear weapons, which is why statesmen pay attention to who has them and if they might be used against them. In this regard, nuclear weapons play a socialization role. Since socialization is important to this discussion, we must be clear about its meaning.[9] Socialization refers to a relationship between at least two parties where A influences B. B, affected by A's influence, then influences A. As Waltz explained, "Each is not just influencing the other; both are being influenced by the situation their interactions create." Moreover, the behavior of the pair cannot be "apprehended by taking a unilateral view of either member."[10] Each acts and reacts in accordance with the other.

No one tells all the states in the world to behave themselves, yet most of them do most of the time. States are socialized to this idea by interacting with other states, particularly the great powers—whose role it is to set and enforce the rules of the game. In both instances, socialization is "a process of learning to conform one's behavior to societal expectations" and a "process of identity and interest-formation."[11] Socialization draws members of a group into conformity with its norms and also encourages similarities in behavior. Analogically speaking, political relationships among nuclear powers are like economic markets in that both are about self-help. They are also "individualist in origin, spontaneously generated, and [may even be] unintended."[12] However, unlike markets, which theoretically can be left to their own devices to self-correct in times of disequilibrium, nuclear relationships must be corrected by leaders in times of crisis. This can be explained in terms of structural theory and the socializing effect of the survival motive. Because no higher authority exists to protect states from the harmful intentions of others, statesmen must pay attention to survival. Nothing threatens survival more than the threat of nuclear war, which is why statesmen are so highly sensitive to it. China's behavior is instructive.

China's nuclear numbers remain small compared with those held by Russia and the United States. Yet despite these rather large nuclear inequities, China continues to extend its influence throughout the region. It reasoned that a small nuclear arsenal is sufficient to allow internal and external freedom of action and ensure survival, while socializing rivals to the dangers of war. Unless a rival is willing to significantly raise the stakes, there is little they can do, militarily, to prevent China from pursuing its strategy. But it might be a mistake to suggest China is actively deterring the United States or Russia with their nuclear weapons or vice versa. Instead, it might be more accurate to conclude that the three countries have tacitly entered into a period of mutual dissuasion. Although nothing official has been declared, all know the stakes are too high for anyone to engage the other militarily.[13]

Nuclear powers quarrel, threaten, and even fight proxy wars against one another. Yet they rarely, if ever, fight wars against one another, and when they do, those conflicts are restrained. Why? The risks of nuclear war compel statesmen to consider survival; they must act with deliberate restraint, devising their courses of action in terms of how others might react, even if they prefer not to.[14] From this, might we conclude that nuclear relations are law-like?

All human conduct is shaped in some measure by what individuals believe to be general laws. In science, laws establish relations between variables; however, in international politics, there are precious few laws that operate with Newtonian fidelity. Instead, there are softer, law-like relationships and such relationships are not based on a linkage that has been found, but on one that has been found repeatedly. To assert that democracies do not fight wars against one another is to make a law-like statement.[15] Moreover, states, like humans, respond to signals and interpret them by putting them into some general category thought to be law-like. As mathematician Jacob Bronowski noted, "We then assume that the future will have some general likeness with futures we have met before which followed this kind of signal, and this is the kind of future we prepare for."[16] It might be premature to assert nuclear relations are law-like, but nothing sends a stronger signal to nuclear statesmen than the threat of nuclear war.

Nuclear Weapons and Political Behavior

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy and Khrushchev sought solutions short of war, despite their sharp political, cultural, and economic differences. That the Soviets underestimated how the United States would react when confronted with missiles based off the coast of Florida is interesting, but not as telling as how both leaders behaved when they realized what was at stake. Secretary of State Dean Rusk's comment that "we were eyeball to eyeball" is illustrative for several reasons. First, the two sides were staring into the face of grave danger. Second, both quickly recognized that the outcome of the crisis depended as much on the moves of one side as it did the other. Last, during the entire crisis, the actual number of Soviet weapons on Cuban soil was never the focal point of US concern. In fact, the true number of these weapons—strategic and tactical—was not known until many decades later. War was the focal point—a threshold easily recognized, best not crossed, and worth avoiding. One quotation is representative of many others. In a meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, President Kennedy outlined what was on his mind.

> If we attack Cuban missiles, or Cuba, in any way, it gives them a clear line to take Berlin, as they were able to do in Hungary under the Anglo war in Egypt. . . . We would be regarded as the trigger-happy Americans who lost Berlin. We would have no support among our allies. We would affect the West Germans' attitude toward us. And [people would believe] that we let Berlin go because we didn't have the guts to endure Cuba. . . .
>
> If we go in and take them out in an air strike . . . we increase the chance greatly, as I think—there's bound to be a reprisal from the Soviet Union, there always is—[of] their just going in and taking Berlin by force. Which leaves me one alternative, which is to fire nuclear weapons—which is a hell of an alternative—and begin a nuclear exchange, with all this happening.[17]

As early as 1962, the superpowers understood they could race to the brink, but no further, lest they run the risk of nuclear war, a risk that neither side would willingly take. Following the crisis, both sides took steps to reduce uncertainty and improve crisis stability.

As Kennedy and Khrushchev became increasingly socialized to the possibilities of nuclear war, the relationship that emerged was tempered by fear of annihilation. The Kargil crisis between India and Pakistan shared a similar set of circumstances. Prior to the arrival of nuclear weapons on the subcontinent, India and Pakistan fought three times. In the summer of 1999, one year after nuclear tests were conducted successfully within

both countries, another war erupted in the mountains along the line of control in Kashmir. Yet the war in Kargil did not escalate beyond small-scale fighting. Why? Nuclear optimists stress the pacifying effect nuclear weapons played in resolving the crisis; pessimists claim both sides got lucky by avoiding nuclear war. Reality might be somewhere in between, which is why Kargil should be considered a close call. Even in a close call like that one, both sides opted for something other than nuclear war, which says something important about the behavior of nuclear-armed states. Today, with both parties possessing nuclear forces, the sharp differences that separate India and Pakistan apparently are not substantial enough to drive either side to war.[18] While the two sides actively engage in a game of tit-for-tat, nuclear weapons have socialized leaders to the dangers of nuclear war and, as a result, the relationship between them has steadied. Far from perfect, relations between India and Pakistan can be summarized as tense but stable.[19]

More recently, the socialization effects of nuclear weapons were on display between North Korea and the United States, and despite the rhetoric from both sides, each took steps to clarify positions and prevent war. The United States' willingness to seek help from its rival China only underscores how far states are willing to go to avoid a nuclear confrontation.[20] From the perspective of socialization, this was understandable if not predictable. The political behavior of nuclear states cannot be resolved into a simple set of two-way interactions; making that assumption only obscures the socialization effects produced by their interactions. "Each acts and reacts to the other," Waltz explains. "Stimulus and response are part of the story. But also the two of them act together in the game, which—no less because they have 'devised' it—motivates and shapes their behavior. Each is playing a game, *and* they are playing a game together. They react to each other and to the tensions their interactions produce" (emphasis in original).[21] In the game of international politics, few things create more tension among states than the fear of annihilation. Because nuclear weapons produce this fear faster than anything else on the planet does, they "motivate and shape" state behavior or draw members of a group into conformity with "the tensions their interactions produce."[22] In this sense, nuclear weapons restrain the behavior of nuclear leaders, making them cautious, regardless of which states we are talking about or how many weapons they might possess.

Yet in the anarchic world of international politics, caution is not always a good thing. When formulating his gamble in the Crimea, for example, President Putin bet correctly that the West would remain cautious and not respond militarily, thus running the risk of a nuclear confrontation. This implies nuclear-armed leaders have something of a free hand when dealing with nonnuclear powers, especially if they also possess capable conventional forces. There was little the West could do militarily in the Crimea to halt Russia. That said, if Ukraine had possessed a small number of nuclear weapons, their deterrent and dissuasive effects would have been felt by all, including Russia, making the risk (perhaps) not worth the gamble.

Critics will contend that the kind of restraint noted above rests on a level of rationality not found in the real world. In fact, the opposite is the case: it is more difficult to find an example of an irrational state leader in the real world than a rational one. What is an irrational actor? Is it a state that violently disagrees with the policies of the United States? If that is the case, there are precious few. Perhaps North Korea fits this description. On the other hand, it could be someone who fits the literal meaning of the word irrational. An actor is said to be irrational if he or she demonstrates an inability to reason; however, as previously mentioned, in international politics those actors are hard to find. Instead, what we find "out there" are fairly reasonable actors who formulate decisions based on their interpretation of the world around them. Nothing shapes the world around them more than nuclear weapons, which is why nuclear-armed leaders behave cautiously when staring into the face of another nuclear-armed leader.[23] It should be noted that policies based on that sort of reasoning are neither rational nor irrational, but merely reasonable.

Making Numbers Count

As scholar Stephen Walt has remarked, American policymakers clearly understand the relationship between nuclear weapons and political behavior or "they wouldn't be so worried when states like North Korea or (maybe) Iran seek to join the nuclear club."[24] They freely recognize that a small number of nuclear weapons in the hands of one state restrains what another state can do.

Strategists have long recognized that throwing more men into battle may increase the carnage but not necessarily procure victory. The same holds true for nuclear weapons states. With nuclear weapons, state

power tops out quickly. Simply put, large arsenals buy statesmen little. The fact that a state may have a nuclear weapon or seek to acquire one is enough to condition statesmen to act cautiously. This begs the question: how many nuclear weapons does a state need? That is a big question for which there is, theoretically speaking, a small solution: one an adversary might be able to take out with a first strike and one that it knows it cannot. Since deterrence and dissuasion hold as a result of a viable second-strike capability, the number of aggregate weapons need not be large.

This cannot be overstated: one 300-kiloton weapon is more than enough to destroy a city the size of London. If a bomb of that size were detonated above Trafalgar Square on a workday, approximately 240,000 people would die instantly and 410,000 casualties would be sustained. Nearly everything within a 3 km radius would be destroyed, with burn victims reaching out as far as Victoria Park. The same bomb detonated above Mumbai on a workday would kill over one million people and produce more than two million casualties.[25] Even if one were to assume the worst, a "bolt from the blue" where a state loses 50 percent of its nuclear capability to a first strike, a reasonably small force of several hundred weapons would allow that state to strike back over 100 times before it had to negotiate. No state on the planet could withstand that sort of punishment, and no sane leader would run that sort of risk.[26]

Yet suppose an adversary were contemplating a first strike. What do you think the second question put to the leader would be? It would have to be: and which city of ours are you willing to give up in exchange? The example is illustrative for two reasons. First, strategy is not contingent upon the first move but on the following ones.[27] Second, in high-stakes games like nuclear war, there are no viable second or third moves. Everything turns on preventing the first move, which makes the game relatively easy to understand. Moreover, leaders—socialized to the dangers of nuclear weapons—understand that while numbers count, a small number of nuclear weapons is more than enough to dissuade the staunchest of rivals, even ones with comparably large numbers. Again, China's behavior is instructive.

For illustrative purposes, let us assume that China has approximately 260 nuclear warheads for delivery by nearly 150 land-based ballistic missiles, 48 sea-based ballistic missiles, and bombers.[28] In contrast, the United States possesses 450 operational ICBM silos with 400 missiles deployed, each capable of carrying up to three warheads; 14 Trident

submarines, each equipped with 20 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) that are capable of carrying as many as eight warheads each, and roughly 60 nuclear bombers each capable of carrying a variety of payloads to include air-launched cruise missiles (ALCM).[29] It is assumed Russia has a similar mix. Yet, despite these rather large nuclear inequities, China continues to modernize its military capabilities and extend its influence throughout the region. How does one explain this?

Apparently, China is confident its small nuclear arsenal is sufficient to restrain the actions of other nuclear powers. Shrewd states recognize this. There is little the United States or Russia can do, militarily, to prevent China from pursuing its interests. This is not the same as saying that nothing can be done to influence China's policies. China's economic, diplomatic, and military policies can be influenced by the coordinated economic, diplomatic, and military policies of the United States and its allies, but China's strategic designs are secured by its relatively small nuclear arsenal.[30]

Yet there are those who insist the United States must maintain a nuclear arsenal large enough to cover all of its contingencies. In other words, while China has to contend with the United States and Russia, the United States has a greater number of potential contenders and needs a larger number of weapons for it to create a larger number of options. There is logic in that line of reasoning, but it rests heavily on the outdated thinking of the Cold War where each side actively deterred the other weapon for weapon. In fact, the United States and Russia are already restrained by China, even if that was not China's original intention. Presumably, if China's relatively small nuclear force is capable of restraining the United States and Russia, it is also capable of restraining India and Pakistan. In other words, China's relatively small nuclear arsenal creates enough options for it to restrain three regional nuclear powers as well as the United States. Unless one assumes America must guard against something more dangerous than what China faces, it is reasonable to conclude that a relatively small nuclear force is all the United States needs to meet its security needs.

There are those who will wonder about the remotest of possibilities: the United States awakens one day to discover that all the nuclear powers in the world, including some of its staunchest allies like England, France, and Israel, have united against it. What then? To ensure our security, the United States would presumably need at least one more nuclear weapon

than all the nuclear powers on earth combined. But again, even in this most bizarre of worlds, the socialization effects of a small nuclear arsenal would be felt by all because challengers could never be sure who the United States would strike first, which is something its leaders would have to threaten to do to ward off attack.

Along those lines, some will insist that the United States should maintain a large arsenal so it can extend security guarantees to others. While security guarantees might have played an important role in the past, the United States ought to avoid becoming the nuclear lender of last resort because guarantees, in general, are risky endeavors. Henry Kissinger made this plain when he counseled European allies not to keep "asking us to multiply strategic assurances that we cannot possibly mean or if we do mean, we should not want to execute, because if we execute, we risk the destruction of civilization."[31] They can also create moral hazards emboldening leaders to take risks they would not ordinarily take if acting on their own. Lastly, guarantees are complicated by the dilemma of adverse selection: lenders rarely know in advance if they have guaranteed a worker or a shirker.[32]

In fact, arguments for a large force have no meaning unless tied to a counterforce strategy, which, when judging by the political behaviors of nuclear armed leaders, is not necessary.[33] During the Cold War, the superpowers raced to increase their numbers in an attempt to prevent one from acquiring a numerical advantage over the other. All the while, leaders on both sides lost sight of the fact that nuclear weapons, while incapable of producing meaningful military effects, are extremely capable of producing political ones—which makes them foundational to national security. If leaders in China, Russia, and the United States understand this, others do too, which is why the slow, steady spread of nuclear weapons is likely to continue.

Implications for Today

Nuclear weapons make statesmen cautious in the face of grave danger and reduce the likelihood of war among nuclear powers. Furthermore, statesmen are not sensitive to the number of nuclear weapons a state might possess; they are sensitive to whether a state has them at all. As policymakers await the release of the administration's Nuclear Posture Review, the broader question remains: what size force does the United States need?

The United States would do well to keep its nuclear arsenal relatively small and in accordance with the New START treaty. As small arsenals become the norm, the number of nuclear states in the world might rise but the actual number of weapons in the world should remain comparatively low or at least not rise to levels seen during the Cold War. As states acquire new nuclear weapons, the demand to modernize old ones will also increase. This will have a profound effect on the United States. As it stands today, the United States has not modernized its nuclear force since the 1980s. Revitalizing the nuclear enterprise is a paramount concern. But unlike force modernization efforts of the 1980s, which led to the deployment of one new ICBM system, an SLBM, a new bomber, and cruise missiles, upgrading systems today need not equate to an increase in aggregate numbers. The United States needs a modern, reliable nuclear arsenal, but it need not be large. A small "upgraded" arsenal is one we can all live with. SSQ

Notes

1. Portions of this article can be found in James W. Forsyth Jr., "The Common Sense of Small Nuclear Arsenals," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 6, no. 2 (Summer 2012): 93–111, http://www.airuniversity.af.mil/Portals/10/SSQ/documents/Volume-06_Issue-2/06-Forsyth.pdf; James W. Forsyth Jr., B. Chance Saltzman, and Gary Schaub Jr., "Remembrance of Things Past: The Enduring Value of Nuclear Weapons," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 74–90, http://www.airuniversity.af.mil/Portals/10/SSQ/documents/Volume-04_Issue-1/ForsythSaltzmanSchaub.pdf; and James W. Forsyth Jr., B. Chance Saltzman, and Gary Schaub Jr., "Minimum Deterrence and Its Critics," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 3–12, http://www.airuniversity.af.mil/Portals/10/SSQ/documents/Volume-04_Issue-4/ForsythSaltzmanSchaub.pdf.

2. This has been a recurring theme in contemporary international politics. Perhaps its etiology can best be seen in Kenneth Waltz, "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better," *Adelphi Papers* no. 171 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981), http://doi.org/fqdjhg.

3. What follows is a standard structural explanation. For the definitive account, see Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979).

4. Ibid., 99. As Waltz put it, when thinking in structural terms,

> We take states with whatever traditions, habits, desires, and forms of government they may have. We do not ask whether states are revolutionary or legitimate, authoritarian or democratic, ideological or pragmatic. We abstract from every attribute of states except their capabilities. Nor in thinking about structure do we ask about the relations of states—their feelings of friendship and hostility, their diplomatic exchanges, the alliances they form, and extent of contacts and exchanges among them. We ask what range of expectations arises merely from looking at the type of

> order that prevails among them and the distribution of capabilities within that order. We abstract from any particular qualities of states and from all of their concrete connections. What emerges is a positional picture, a general description of the ordered arrangement of a society written in terms of the placement of units rather than in terms of their qualities.

5. *See* Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 70–71.
6. Ibid., 72.
7. My use of the term here stems from the work of Patrick Morgan, whose thoughts on general deterrence are particularly useful. Dissuasion and general deterrence share many common elements. Both are rooted in deterrence theory and share an emphasis on uncertainty and ambiguity. Because it is ambiguous, theorizing on general deterrence has been difficult. The same can be said for dissuasion. *See* Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
8. Jack Donnelly, "The Differentiation of International Societies: An Approach to Structural International Theory," *European Journal of International Relations* 18, no. 1 (March 2012): 151–76, http://doi.org/c6z7mw. As Donnelly suggests, Waltz's neorealism may have become passé but structural theorizing has not. Also see Barry Buzan and Mathias Albert, "Differentiation: A Sociological Approach to International Relations Theory," *European Journal of International Relations* 16, no. 3 (September 2010): 315–37, http://doi.org/dn7kf3.
9. A significant element of structural theory, which is often overlooked, is the concept of socialization. For an account of how socialization works on material concerns, see Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, chapter four and 74–76. For the same regarding ideational concerns, see Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
10. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 74–75.
11. Wendt, *Social Theory*, 170.
12. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 91.
13. Exact numbers are difficult to find. According to one article, Russia has approximately 12,000; the United States 9,400; France 300; China 240; Britain 225; Israel 60–80; Pakistan 70–90; India 60–80; and North Korea fewer than 10. Robert S. Norris and Hans M. Kristensen, "Global Nuclear Inventories 1945–2010," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* 66, no. 4 (October 2010): 77–83, http://doi.org/cc2d67. Other estimates put the US number closer to 5,000, placing the total inventory between Russia and the United States closer to 17,000.
14. Analogically speaking, they may behave like firms in an oligopolistic market, where the actions of one have a profound effect on the others. This is an essential Waltzian claim. See *Theory of International Politics*, chaps. 7–8.
15. On the law-like nature of the democratic peace, see Jack Levy, "The Causes of War: A Review of the Evidence," in *Behavior, Society and Nuclear War*, ed. Phillip E. Tetlock, Jo L. Husbands, Robert Jervis, and Charles Tilly (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 209–333. For the philosophical argument, see Michael Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12, no. 3 (Summer 1983): 205–35, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2265298; and Michael Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs Part 2," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12, no. 4 (Autumn 1983): 323–53, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2265377. For a quantitative account, see Rudolph J. Rummel, "Libertarianism and International Violence," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 27, no. 1 (March 1983): 27–71, http://www.jstor.org/stable/173842. For an example of the structural account, see Clifton T. Morgan and Sally Campbell, "Domestic Structure, Decisional Constraints, and War: So Why

Kant Democracies Fight?," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35, no. 2 (June 1991): 187–221, http://www.jstor.org/stable/174144.

16. Jacob Bronowski, *The Common Sense of Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 114.

17. *See* Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 175–76.

18. The Kargil conflict is the case often cited as the exception to the rule. The conflict began in May 1999 and ended in July of that year. During this time, Indian army units attacked Pakistani forces, and Indian jets bombed their bases high in the Himalaya Mountains. Although Indian forces carefully stayed on their side of the line of control in Kashmir, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee informed the US government that he might have to order an invasion into Pakistan. Eventually, President Clinton got involved and assured both sides he would take an interest in resolving the dispute. Although at least 1,000 Indian and Pakistani soldiers were killed during this crisis, I do not agree with those who think of Kargil as a war. If one unquestionably accepts Singer and Small's definition of war (see J. David Singer and Melvin Small, *The Wages of War 1816–1965: A Statistical Handbook* [New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1972], which defines war as a conflict that involves one member of the interstate system on each side in which the battle-connected deaths totaled at least 1,000), the Kargil crisis was a war. However, if one thinks of war in terms of the ordinary sense of the word, its conduct more closely resembled a "nasty skirmish." For a full account see Kenneth Waltz and Mark Sagan, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons* (Norton and Co.: New York, 2003).

19. For interesting perspectives, see Sumit Ganguly, "Nuclear Stability in South Asia," *International Security* 33, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 45–70, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40207131; and S. Paul Kapur, "Ten Years of Nuclear Instability in Nuclear South Asia," *International Security* 33, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 71–94, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40207132.

20. Clearly, this is an evolving situation. All I am suggesting is the socialization effects of nuclear weapons are at work. As to the final outcome, I make no predictions.

21. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 75.

22. Ibid., 75–76.

23. On the face of it, this might appear to be contradictory, especially when considering the actions of Mr. Putin. However, from the other side, it does appear to explain the cautious reactions of President Obama.

24. Stephen M. Walt, "All the Nukes That You Can Use," *Foreign Policy* Voices (blog), 24 May 2010, http://foreignpolicy.com/2010/05/24/all-the-nukes-that-you-can-use/.

25. Forsyth, Saltzman, and Schaub, "Minimum Deterrence and its Critics."

26. Along these lines, national security advisor McGeorge Bundy concluded, "A decision that would bring even one hydrogen bomb on one city of one's own country would be recognized in advance as a catastrophic blunder; ten bombs on ten cities would be a disaster beyond history, and a hundred bombs on a hundred cities are [sic] unthinkable." See McGeorge Bundy, "Cap the Volcano," Foreign Affairs 48, no. 1 (October 1969): 9–10, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20039419.

27. I thank Everett Dolman for tutoring me on this.

28. *See* Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, "Chinese Nuclear Forces, 2016," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* 72, no. 4 (2016): 205–11, http://doi.org/f8xpvx. These authors estimate that, in total, China has a stockpile of approximately 260 nuclear warheads for delivery by nearly 150 land-based ballistic missiles, 48 sea-based ballistic missiles, and bombers. The Chinese intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) force will probably continue to grow slowly, such that the number of ICBM warheads primarily targeted against the United States may exceed 100

a decade from now. Also see William J. Perry and James R. Schlesinger, *America's Strategic Posture: The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2009), 10–11, https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/America's_Strategic_Posture_Auth_Ed.pdf.

29. These numbers are reflective of the New START that went into effect in 2011 with all limits being reached by 2018.

30. If, as some suggest, China feels encircled by the American presence in the region, the United States must devise a strategy that does several things. First, it must recognize that China has legitimate interests in the region and find ways to accommodate China as it pursues them. Second, it must assure allies in the region that the growth of China's power does not threaten them. Third, it must not take actions to provoke the Chinese. In getting at all three, basing becomes a major concern.

31. Quoted in Kenneth Waltz, "Nuclear Myths and Political Realities," *American Political Science Review* 84, no. 3 (September 1990): 731–45, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1962764.

32. That said, I do not think the United States should step away from its guarantees, but it is important to examine the value of such guarantees. Under what conditions are they most stabilizing and beneficial? *See* Jurgen Brauer and Hubert Van Tuyall, *Castles, Battles and Bombs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 261–65.

33. Counterforce arguments are making a comeback. *See* Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press, "The New Era of Counterforce: Technological Change and the Future of Nuclear Deterrence," *International Security* 41, no. 4 (Spring 2017): 9–50, http://doi.org/f96z7c.

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