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Author's Response by **T.V. Paul**, James McGill Professor of International Relations & Director, Center for International Peace and Security Studies (CIPSS), McGill University, Montreal

{Editor's Note: These reviews were featured as part of a book launch sponsored by McGill University's Research Group in International Security {now the Centre for International Peace and Security Studies}. *The Tradition of Non-use of Nuclear Weapons* has recently been selected by the Nobel Peace Center for inclusion in the Peace Prize Laureate exhibition honouring President Obama}

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Review by Richard Ned Lebow, James O. Freedman Presidential Professor of Government, Dartmouth; Centennial Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science (2008-2011)

There has been good work done by historians (McGeorge Bundy) and political scientists (Tannenwald) on the non-use of nuclear weapons and non-proliferation more generally (Hymans, Solingen). Much of this literature concerns the U.S. or both superpowers in the context of the Cold War. Prof. Paul is familiar with these works and the U.S. case more generally. The strength of his book is two-fold: it develops a two-step political-historical argument to account for non-use, and examines non-use in a wide range of cases, many of them non-Western.

Prof. Paul rejects the use of the term taboo as an inappropriate borrowing from anthropology because it refers to a ritual prohibition. Non-use of nuclear weapons is better described as a tradition because it is “an informal social norm,” and one not based on religious or cultural proscriptions. Framing the problem this way allows Paul to ask how such a regularity could develop, and here he relies initially on a material explanation. The perceived cost of nuclear war made it unattractive to leaders, or they rejected it because they did not believe nuclear weapons could accomplish their political-military goals. Over time, non-use became coupled with reputation and the expectation that a state’s reputation would be seriously eroded if it used a weapon in anything other than a last resort situation. Conversely, non-use made a state appear responsible and could gain allies or placate existing ones. The non-use of later proliferators has strengthened the tradition and its reputational implications. However, current U.S. nuclear policy threatens the tradition, and use of nuclear weapons by the U.S. or other powers would seriously undermine it.

All but historical accounts of non-use tend to downplay agency. I believe a good case can be made for the importance of political leaders, especially Dwight Eisenhower and his refusal to countenance the use of atomic bombs in Korea or Indochina. Eisenhower’s “nyet” raised the political costs of nuclear use for his successors and their non-use raised the bar higher. Agency and path dependence are critical components of tradition. Consider too, the willingness of Nixon to consider the use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam, although later he seems to have come around to the idea that the political costs of use at home and abroad would have been high (pp. 74-75). Nixon and Kissinger also appear willing to have tolerated, even encouraged, the Soviet Union to launch a preemptive strike against Chinese nuclear facilities (Burr and Richelson). If Nixon, or someone like him, had been president in the early 1950s, history might have been very different.

We must also recognize that non-use is not an unalloyed blessing. When leaders know that their adversaries are as committed as they are to non-use, they know they can provoke them more than they could otherwise. Henry Kissinger acted on this belief in the 1970 Middle East War, where he sought to shake Egypt loose from the Soviet sphere of influence and was willing to pump for a nuclear alert in the superpower crisis arising from that war (Lebow and Stein, chs. 10, 11, 14). The crisis was resolved not because of any agreement or

any success of compellence but because the fighting stopped and Soviet intelligence, up to 72 hours delayed because of satellite problems, finally recognized this situation.

The worse-case scenario is escalation of this kind in an adversarial relationship in which nuclear command and control systems are not well-managed and tightly coupled. It could lead to an inadvertent use of nuclear weapons, even a mutual nuclear exchange. Such a horrendous event could undermine or reinforce non-use – it's not clear which – but either way, millions of people might have been killed.

Much of the nuclear literature is based on rational arguments and assumes rational behavior on the part of policymakers. The logic here is that nuclear weapons are so deadly that even dimwitted leaders are likely to understand and respect the constraints against nuclear use. I find this kind of argument unpersuasive because nuclear use would only be considered seriously – or come about without central authorization – in the most serious and perilous of situations. We know from history that these are precisely the situations in which emotions often trump reason. For this reason especially, the Paul book serves a useful function. It is accessible to policymakers due to its length and style and can only have the effect of reinforcing the tradition of non-use to the extent that those in power come away impressed by its logic and lessons and behave more responsibly in a crisis.

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Certain subjects are so well-researched and so extensively written about that it is surprising to find people who have something new and interesting to say about them. This year, however, has seen the publication of two excellent books with a great deal new and interesting to say on the topics of nuclear weapons and nuclear non-proliferation: T. V. Paul's *The Tradition of Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons*, which is the subject of this forum; and John Mueller's *Atomic Obsession: Nuclear Alarmism from Hiroshima to Al-Qaeda*.¹ Both are works by political scientists, and are therefore more than simply historical. However, both have a great deal to say about history and use it deftly. The two are productively read in juxtaposition, something about which I will have a few words to say at the end.

A good book is clearly written, methodically laid out, carefully researched, appropriately nuanced, and has interesting and important things to say. On these dimensions, T. V. Paul has written a very good book indeed. Paul's most important claim, reflected in the title of the book, is that, while nuclear weapons clearly inspire a nearly-universal moral horror of the kind that would trigger widespread outrage and condemnation should they ever be used in anger, the constraint that this represents on policy should be thought of as a "tradition" of nuclear non-use, not a genuine "taboo"—a term favored by many.² Sociologically speaking, a taboo is a categorical prohibition so powerful that violations are treated as disgusting, sacrilegious, or sick, and they are so well-internalized that violations typically never cross most people's minds. The distinction between a taboo and a tradition is not merely one of degree (although there is such a distinction to be made), but also one of kind. Paul argues convincingly against the view that, strictly speaking, there is, or ever has been, a taboo against the use of nuclear weapons (pp. 4-13). After all, nuclear weapons states (NWSs) do plan for nuclear war. They have procedures in place for deployment, release, and use. No one makes contingency plans for incest or cannibalism. Paul prefers to call the tradition of nuclear non-use an "informal social norm" (p. 9).³ Much weaker than a taboo, an informal social norm can, and often does, erode.

Paul argues that the tradition of nuclear non-use is valuable and important, not merely for the obvious reason that its erosion could open a Pandora's Box of proliferation and nuclear war, but also because it plays a valuable role nurturing international community and "depreciating the value of nuclear weapons as a currency of power in the international system" (p. 211). Thus it is important to keep the tradition in good repair. From this perspective, nuclear modernization programs in the United States, Russia, and China are all worrisome, indicating as they seem to do a willingness on the part of national leaders to

¹ John Mueller, *Atomic Obsession: Nuclear Alarmism from Hiroshima to Al-Qaeda* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

² See the works cited by Paul, p. 218 n. 6.

³ See also Maria Rost Rublee, "Taking Stock of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime: Using Social Psychology to Understand Regime Effectiveness," *International Studies Review*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (September 2008), pp. 420-450.

contemplate military roles for new, more “useable” nuclear weapons. As we await the imminent release of the Obama administration’s Nuclear Posture Review, we should hope that it will represent a step back from the Bush administration’s 2002 NPR, which signalled a weakening of the U.S. government’s commitment to this vital social norm.⁴

For those interested in International Relations theory, Paul also has a great deal to say. He argues against a style of analysis that attempts to shoehorn empirics into specific paradigmatic boxes, or that understands the world as a runoff between competing theories. He prefers, and makes a strong case for, problem-driven theory. Paul suggests that we can best understand what has happened in the nuclear age if we combine insights from realism and constructivism. Realism provides the better entrée, as calculations of material self-interest, in his view, fairly consistently set the stage for deliberations about the use or acquisition of nuclear weapons. But constructivism fills in many of the blanks. Without taking note of social attitudes toward nuclear weapons, and in particular the moral revulsion that the thought of their use inspires, it is difficult to understand (a) why leaders of NWSs have been so reluctant to employ the ultimate weapon even when they have enjoyed significant advantages over nuclear (and monopolies vis-à-vis non-nuclear) adversaries; and (b) why more states have not actively pursued nuclear programs. Paul argues that moral/ideational considerations reinforce the “rational” dimensions of nuclear non-use: leaders who appreciate their citizens’ or their allies’ moral horror of nuclear weapons will also appreciate the political costs of using them.

The Tradition of Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons clearly has a great deal to offer to a variety of audiences. It speaks to an obviously important issue; it nicely balances theory and history; and it corrects a number of important misconceptions. Moreover, it accomplishes all this remarkably efficiently—in just over 200 pages of text.

Unvarnished praise is dull in a review, so in the space remaining let me flag four issues on which I believe there is room for disagreement or on which more might be said. These are: (1) the role of material vs. moral/ideational considerations in maintaining the tradition of nuclear non-use; (2) the relationship between the tradition and deterrence; (3) the role of crisis dynamics; and (4) considerations of perversity.

1. The role of material vs. moral/ideational considerations. Paul clearly considers the material bases of the tradition primary and the moral/ideational bases secondary. In this sense it is tempting (though I would like to suggest misleading) to think of Paul’s analysis as first and foremost “realist.”

Now, it is hard to see why we should understand moral/ideational considerations as secondary when there are contexts in which, from a strictly military perspective, the use of nuclear weapons might be very attractive, and yet decision makers either opt against it or never seriously consider it for reasons ultimately traceable to moral horror (their own, or that of their citizens and/or allies). The clinching argument against using tactical nuclear weapons to relieve besieged French forces at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, for example, was not

⁴ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/policy/dod/npr.htm>; see also Paul, p. 244 n. 94.

that they would be militarily ineffective (two Army studies thought they would be effective; one Air Force intelligence study thought they would not), but that the reputational and psychological costs would simply be too great (pp. 52-53). No more than six, and possibly as few as two nuclear weapons could have completely neutralized Argentine land-based air power during the Falklands War of 1982, and yet the Thatcher government never even considered using them, despite the fact that sorties from Argentine bases on the mainland represented by far the greatest threat to the British task force and efforts to retake the islands from the Argentine garrison.⁵ The military arguments in favor of using BLU-82 “Daisy Cutter” conventional bombs in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001 would have spoken *a fortiori* in favour of using tactical nuclear weapons, and yet there is no evidence whatsoever that the White House contemplated using them. The circumstances under which nuclear weapons could be useful militarily may be very few (Mueller argues that there are virtually none), but if material considerations do more of the heavy lifting than do moral/ideational considerations in support of the tradition of nuclear non-use, presumably we ought not to find the latter trumping the former at every single turn. Certainly leaders of non-nuclear weapons states (NNWSs) appear to believe in the efficacy of moral/ideational constraints; Paul himself does an excellent job of detailing the intensity of their desire to legalize prohibitions, which would only be so much effort and political capital wasted if social constraints were relatively weak. Recognizing the primacy of moral/ideational constraints, I submit, is the mark of a true realism.

2. *Implications of and for deterrence.* Paul spends a great deal of time carefully exploring the relationship between the tradition of nuclear non-use and the concept of deterrence. Indeed, the concluding chapter’s first heading is “Implications for Deterrence,” and the subjects of deterrence and compellence occupy almost half of it.

Paul argues that the tradition of nuclear non-use works at cross purposes with deterrence, fostering perverse incentives, commitment traps, and misperceptions. For the most part these are a function of the tradition’s self-deterrent effects (pp. 203-206). While self-deterrence is on balance a good thing, representing as it does a constraint on the willingness of nuclear powers to risk or escalate conflict, it erodes the credibility of deterrent threats. When states build their security strategies around such threats, they can invite challenges of the kind that the threats themselves are designed to forestall, because challengers will not consider these threats plausible.

In my view, rational deterrence theory has been eviscerated empirically.⁶ If deterrence works at all, it works through emotional action channels, not cognitive ones. This ought to

⁵ Lawrence Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign*, Vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 59-64. The only Argentine airfields within operational range of the Falklands/Malvinas were Trelew, Comodoro Rivadavia, Puerto San Julián, Río Gallegos, and Río Grande; of these, only the last two hosted front-line combat aircraft.

⁶ Robert Jervis, “Rational Deterrence Theory,” *World Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (January 1989), pp. 183-207; Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, *Psychology & Deterrence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, “Deterrence: The Elusive Dependent Variable,” *World Politics*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (April 1990), pp. 336-369; Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, “Rational Deterrence Theory: I Think, Therefore I Deter,” *World Politics*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (January

come as no surprise, since the very word “deterrence” rests etymologically on fear. So what, then, is the relationship between deterrence and the tradition of nuclear non-use?

I submit that there is no way to tell, for three reasons. First, fear can cut two ways: it can provoke irrational acts, or it can dissuade them. Second, there are no systematic empirical investigations of the phenomenon of credibility. Anecdotal evidence suggests that it is extremely difficult to spin others’ beliefs about one’s own willingness to carry out one’s threats or follow through on one’s commitments, because others’ beliefs are shaped more powerfully by *their* cultural contexts and *their* particular psychological perspectives than by one’s own intentions (witness the great lengths to which the Johnson and Nixon administrations went to bolster U.S. credibility by escalating their commitments to a losing course of action in Vietnam, only succeeding, as far as we can tell, in cultivating among friends and foes alike a reputation for poor judgment).⁷ Third, the self-deterrent aspect of the tradition could equally plausibly reinforce or erode it. To the extent that it dissuaded one’s own uses of nuclear weapons, it would be self-reinforcing; to the extent that it liberated challengers from the fear of NWSs by undermining the credibility of their deterrent threats, it would be self-weakening. In sum, there is little that we can say about the relationship between the tradition of nuclear non-use and the theory or practice of deterrence because the causal relationships are underspecified and underexplored.

2. *The role of crisis dynamics.* If our chief concern is avoiding nuclear war, we should be especially interested in understanding crisis dynamics—for it is only in the context of a serious international crisis that the danger of a significant nuclear war is plausible. Decades of study now suggest that the chief dangers of nuclear war in crisis arise from misunderstandings, misperceptions, inadvertence, breakdowns in command and control, and accidents of various kinds. How does the tradition of nuclear non-use affect these particular risks? Does it affect them at all?

On this subject, Paul is not explicit, although his own careful examinations of specific international crises demonstrate that he is aware of these risks. His explicit discussion of the role of self-deterrence in undermining credibility suggests that he thinks the tradition might increase the risks of international crises occurring in the first place, but decrease the risks that they would escalate. If I am correct that there is no clear relationship between the tradition of nuclear non-use and deterrence, the plausibility of this claim would be

1989), pp. 208-234; Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *When Does Deterrence Succeed and How Do We Know?* (Ottawa: Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, 1990); Jack S. Levy, “Prospect Theory, Rational Choice, and International Relations,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (March 1997), pp. 87-112; Scott D. Sagan, “The Perils of Proliferation: Organization Theory, Deterrence Theory, and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons,” *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Spring 1994), pp. 66-107; Gary Schaub, Jr., “Deterrence, Compellence, and Prospect Theory,” *Political Psychology*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (June 2004), pp. 389-412; Janice Gross Stein, “Deterrence and Compellence in the Gulf, 1990-91: A Failed or Impossible Task?,” *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Fall 1992), pp. 147-179.

⁷ See, *inter alia*, George McTurnan Kahin, *Intervention: How America Became Involved in Vietnam* (New York: Knopf, 1986); Jeffrey Kimball, *Nixon’s Vietnam War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998); Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Times Books, 1995).

difficult to assess—but on this matter I should let Paul speak for himself. What I can say is that my own study of international crises (most prominently the Cuban missile crisis) suggests that when leaders internalize a moral horror of nuclear war, they do what they can to put the brakes on escalation. At the same time, however, leaders do not and cannot exercise a degree of control over the judgments and actions of subordinates that would give us confidence in their ability under any and all circumstances to prevent escalation to nuclear war.⁸ Put another way, I am inclined to think that nuclear crises resemble the game of Russian roulette: no matter how much leaders might wish to avoid the worst possible outcome, there is always some chance that it will occur. If this is so, one can only hope that the tradition of nuclear non-use does not, on balance, increase the risks of unforeseen international crises.

3. *Perversity.* Does the existence of a tradition of nuclear non-use make breaking it all the more appealing to non-pro-social actors? Would a hypothetical future Adolf Hitler, for example, be more interested in provoking a nuclear war precisely because of the moral horror that attends it? Will the tradition itself generate acute reputational costs for NWSs that are unwilling to embrace full nuclear disarmament? Might these reputational costs lead to the irony that NNWSs will acquire nuclear weapons precisely in reaction to NWS hypocrisy, thereby joining the Club of Hypocrites who ultimately pay exactly these reputational costs?

I submit that these are not purely academic questions. It may well be harder these days for madmen and sociopaths to seize control of technologically-advanced states as Hitler did in the 1930s, thanks to gradually spreading democratic norms and our collective heightened sensitivity to dangers of precisely this kind (owing in large part to Hitler's precedent). But surely this is not yet entirely out of the question. Arguably, India's decision to go nuclear in 1998 had a great deal to do with the failure of the P5 (the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China) to live up to their obligations to denuclearize under the terms of the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—and, equally arguably, India is now paying the same kind of reputational costs that the P5 have paid.⁹

It would be perverse indeed if the tradition of nuclear non-use were to increase the risks of nuclear war, either directly (by incenting madmen) or indirectly (by encouraging irresponsible proliferation)—but humanity is nothing if not occasionally perverse. What, if anything, can be done to ameliorate these dangers? Is there anything inherent to the tradition itself that increases or decreases them? Are there ways of attempting to

⁸ E.g., James G. Blight and David A. Welch, "Risking 'the Destruction of Nations': Lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis for New and Aspiring Nuclear States," *Security Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Summer 1995), pp. 811-850; Don Munton and David A. Welch, *The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Concise History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); David A. Welch, "Lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis for Nuclear Crisis Management and Their Implications for U.S.-Chinese Relations," in Christopher Twomey, ed., *Perspectives on Sino-American Strategic Nuclear Issues* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 13-38. See also Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Knopf, 2008).

⁹ Cf. Rajesh Rajagopalan and Varun Sahni, "India and the Great Powers: Strategic Imperatives, Normative Necessities," *South Asian Survey*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (January/June 2008), pp. 5-32.

perversity-proof the tradition? These are questions about which I would have been interested to hear Paul say more.

It is particularly with this last issue in mind, but in fact with respect to all of four, that I believe it is useful to read Paul's book alongside Mueller's *Atomic Obsession*, which perhaps one day will be the subject of an H-Diplo forum of its own. There are many points on which Paul and Mueller agree, and many on which they disagree. Paul's is the more cautious book, and Mueller's the more provocative, but on many issues they are in dialogue with each other.

There is, however, one dimension on which Paul and Mueller are in fundamental disagreement. Mueller's view is that nuclear weapons have never been useful and have no prospect of ever being useful; that the destructiveness of nuclear weapons and the dangers of nuclear war have been consistently exaggerated; that efforts to combat the proliferation of nuclear weapons by and large have been either unsuccessful or counterproductive; and that the world should essentially just relax and forget about it. Paul thinks that the tradition of nuclear non-use is important and in need of keeping in good repair. They cannot both be right, and a great deal hangs on who is wrong.

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In the preceding pages, two prominent International Relations (IR) scholars, Professors Richard Ned Lebow and David Welch have offered excellent reviews of my book, the *Tradition of Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons*. They summarize the gist of the book and offer brief commentaries on its positive aspects that I myself have not thought through. The book was my somewhat ambitious effort to explain the puzzle of non-use of nuclear weapons, especially against non-nuclear states during the past six decades since Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In that effort, I believe I offered a comprehensive treatment of the subject and the different implications of the tradition in the areas of crisis/conflict behavior, non-proliferation regimes and the attitude of the non-nuclear states toward the policies of nuclear powers. These policies in general are characterized by efforts at maintaining their monopoly rights as well as unwillingness to offer unqualified negative security guarantees in the form of explicit no-first use commitments. The book is also an example of eclectic reasoning and puzzle-driven IR scholarship by bringing forth the elements of instrumental and normative considerations and how they interact in developing a tradition which in turn affects the choices that states make in the area of nuclear use. I believe the book goes beyond the question of the tradition of non-use and has much to offer on the general question of the politics of nuclear weapons, spanning more than half a century. It also offers some pointers on where we are heading and where we should be and the need for concrete actions to preserve this valuable tradition in world politics.

Both the reviewers in general praise the work (for which I am grateful), but do offer a few criticisms which now I will turn my attention to. They, especially Prof. Ned Lebow, make the criticism that the decision-makers' moral calculations should be given more importance than I allow for as these could affect their choices. I sympathize with this criticism up to a point, but during my exhaustive search of sources, including archival materials, I did indeed keep an eye for the morality factor. I could not find much explicit references on morality especially in the U.S. case for which much National Security Council discussions are now available. Moral concerns do come up occasionally in discussions among decision-makers. I give allowance to this factor by including it in the reputation considerations that leaders often have, in both personal and national terms. However, beyond that in order to make a valid case, I needed lot more information. It may well be possible that leaders do not usually talk about their moral convictions openly and that for deterrence purposes they needed to be much more circumspect on their moral views on nuclear weapons given that national security policies would require a leader to use them under certain conditions. A future work on this subject may be necessary to establish the links more clearly. I am reticent to make a strong case based on limited information or hand-picked statements here and there. We need to look at a pattern and that requires more than episodic references to morality. But this is not an outright rejection of morality.

David Welch offers a few other criticisms and comments. Let me take them up one by one. First, like Ned Lobow he argues that morality and ethical considerations are more important than I give credit for in several cases such as Dien Bien Phu, Falklands, and

Afghanistan where nuclear weapons were not considered for use due to moral/ethical constraints. I discuss these cases in various chapters and the evidence I could gather does not allow me to make a morality-dominant argument for non-use of nuclear weapons, although I give morality some significance. A leader's belief system may be affected by the tradition of non-use which may have been formed by both the 'logic of appropriateness' and 'logic of consequences' and in the former, the moral consideration do enter. As I mentioned previously, unless we can unearth much more evidence in favor of a moral argument, I am reluctant to privilege it, even though I sympathize with the perspective. One big challenge for scholars who privilege moral/ethical or legal arguments is the tendency to project a desirable conclusion on to the actual event which sometimes need lot more evidence than provided.

A second criticism that Welch offers concerns the connections I make between the tradition of non-use and deterrence. I am not too sure deterrence operates only at the emotional and not cognitive realm as Welch contends. I believe it is a phenomenon resting on perceptions (which may be shaped by emotions) but here again I am uneasy to privilege the emotional side too much. The logic of deterrence- i.e., rationality, reputation, credibility of threat etc. -- has much to do with cognitions, especially how actors perceive each other's threats and their willingness or unwillingness to cross a certain threshold of violence. I think my effort in this book is not to make deterrence look totally baseless, but to point out the multiple challenges that the theory and policy have to face, especially in the realm of nuclear weapons. There is a tendency to treat deterrence as a straightforward rational phenomenon among some scholars, while critics do the opposite, i.e. they highlight the irrational aspects of deterrence. What I am arguing is that social traditions and normative elements can enter into the picture of deterrence calculations and they cannot be ignored. I believe the other major contribution I make is on the self-deterrence aspect which is rarely discussed in the literature.

A third related criticism of Welch's is that there may be no explicit relationship between deterrence and the tradition of non-use, based on some instances of crisis behavior. I believe the examples I provide on non-nuclear states initiating wars with nuclear states (in chapter 7) offer fairly strongly evidence that the tradition was an element in the calculations of the former in that they expected no nuclear retaliation if the war remained one for limited aims. This 'designing around' deterrence (as Alexander George puts it) is often not given much importance in the literature. Here the linkages are more nuanced but they are there as is evident in several case studies I offer. Again much more work is needed to extrapolate some of my findings. The lack of archival evidence from the countries concerned makes the task harder.

Finally, Welch contends that the perversity impact of the tradition needs to be addressed. Do non-nuclear weapon states acquire such weapons to break the hypocrisy of the nuclear weapons states and even potentially use them to prove their point? I am reticent to make a strong claim in this regard, despite the example of India that Welch offers. As the Indian nuclear choices have been affected by a number of variables, including domestic politics, it is hard to see how we can make a connection here. In the chapter dealing with India I contend that perhaps it was the perceived unreliability of

the tradition and the unwillingness of nuclear weapon states to offer unambiguous non-use pledges that encouraged New Delhi to go nuclear. Evidence I show is that the tradition is reasonably pervasive although new actors may take a bit longer to learn and internalize it. I am not sure how relevant the tradition is for cataclysmic terrorist groups and their potential for nuclear use (if they get hold of such weapons). There are indeed multiple dangers involved in nuclear proliferation and I think socializing new and older nuclear actors as to the need to maintain this tradition is perhaps the best immediate thing that the global community interested in peace can do in the nuclear realm. Developing usable mini nukes or expanding nuclear targets to non-nuclear states will not accomplish this as the more Western countries privilege the value of nuclear weapons the less they are able to convince others of the virtue of not possessing them. I am more confident that states are less likely to use nuclear weapons (due to fear of breaking the tradition and their reputations) than non-state actors as normative prohibitions have less value for the latter, especially if they are keen on challenging prevailing socio-political orders violently.

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