

The “Nuclear Threat,” and Other Mystical Approaches of Arms Control

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Abstract

This paper critiques inconsistencies and examples of avoidance in arms control policies and policy scholarship by approaching them as examples of mystification. Mystification serves to prevent critical inquiries into inequalities and forms of exploitation made possible through nuclearism, both within a nation state, and across the international system. It also serves to legitimate current policies by referring to unquestioned truths and assumptions. Demystification reveals how ideals and abstractions impede the attainment of critical consciousness and are barriers to the politicization of an issue. A reorientation of nonproliferation scholarship away from the state and elite foreign policy foundations and academic centers is proposed as a means of diversifying the study of human security in the nuclear age and making it relevant to broader constituencies.

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Introduction

“It would be dangerously wrong to suppose that the end of the Cold War means an end of nuclear danger, and it would be a grave error for our people or our government to let nuclear fear be replaced by nuclear complacency.”

- McGeorge Bundy, William Crowe, and Sidney Drell, *Reducing the Nuclear Danger*ⁱ

Every nuclear weapons state has its own stories to explain its rise as an atomic power. In the United States, the leading nuclearized state and society, there are predominant bomb mythologies that explain the weapon's origins in American scientific and industrial exceptionalism; the supposed need to drop the Little Boy and Fat Man on two Japanese cities; the subsequent arms race with an “evil empire” set on destroying liberal democracy; the protective umbrella of nuclear weapons that prevented the fall of Western Europe before a fictively innumerable Soviet army during the Cold War; the loss of “atomic secrets” from duplicitous spies; the untestable, unverifiable pseudo-theory of deterrence; and more.ⁱⁱ Each of these mythologies is told with ample references to fact. Holistically, however, they are incapable of explaining the historical origin and continuing existence of nuclear weapons. This is primarily due to those facts and features of nuclearized state power they omit and obscure.

The elaborate myths surrounding nuclear weapons are all the more apparent when we consider several of the dominant counter-narratives accounting for the nuclear age's origins and conditions. These counter-narratives appear frequently in many arms control journals, op-ed pages, and magazines. While countering some of the older myths such as the supposed need to incinerate Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the main counter-narratives being developed by mainstream nonproliferation intellectuals throw their own veils over the nuclear arsenal and the geopolitical and especially domestic political power relations that perpetuate that most mystified of concepts, “the nuclear threat,” a catchall phrase that subsumes the very specific threats of nuclearism, all within an abstract hyperbole; the end of “mankind,” or “civilization.”

Like the predominant mythologies, most counter-narratives are grounded in a political position

close to the established canons of nonproliferation scholarship and statecraft.ⁱⁱⁱ The aim of these new bomb mythologies is not to shatter past myths so much as to replace them with more believable and useful stories. Instead of fundamentally questioning the political systems that have created and used nuclear weapons, they merely criticize the hypothetical acquisition of nuclear weapons by specific (Islamic or Asiatic) political systems.^{iv} Their point is not to call for nuclear disarmament as a small step toward conventional disarmament and global justice, but to demand conventional re-armament, and propose preemptive war as a prerequisite to the distant rhetorical goal of nuclear disarmament. Above all, the new stories do not challenge the still prevailing bomb mythologies as forms of mystification. Rather, at their most critical, they challenge them as misguided and hubristic policies. They merely propose to replace the old ideologies with counter-myths, ones that might facilitate state power more smoothly, with less dissonance in the age of terror. These can serve only as counter, or neo-mythologies because they are based on the same principles of avoidance, shirking critical inquiry into power relations, imperialism, and state violence.

This paper will explore inconsistencies and avoidance in nuclear weapons policies and policy scholarship by approaching them specifically as examples of mystification. The function of mystification with respect to nuclear weapons is to avoid critical inquiries into the inequalities and forms of exploitation made possible through nuclearism, both within a nation state, and across the international system. In short, it is to prevent a political discussion about empire. Arms control and nonproliferation, as an intellectual project, is the search for the role of nuclear weapons in the US empire, and an expression of this role through mystical appeals to an abstract threat against “democracy,” and “security,” anything that is except empire.

My focus is on US political leadership and nonproliferation policy generated in the US context. This is not because the US has any kind of monopoly on mystical approaches to arms control. There is a fair amount among the other nuclear powers for similar reasons. Rather, the focus is the United States

because of its leading role in the global economic and military system, a role many uncritically call for an amplification of.^v

What is Mystification?

Although created in the forge of science and technology, few subjects have been more mythologically obscured than nuclear weapons. Mystification is a process whereby power relations and their patterned consequences become obscured by references to ideals and abstractions that have little relevance to the former, except as a veil. In the most radical sense, an analysis of mystification reveals how ideals and abstractions serve as an impediment toward critical consciousness and a barrier to the politicization of an issue. When a real thing or relationship is mystified, it not only becomes impossible to resolve the tensions manifested as epiphenomena, it is impossible to even acknowledge the real thing or relationship at the source of a problem. In this sense, mystical (non)explanations of nuclear weapons policy blatantly benefit the leading nuclear weapons states and penalize weaker non, or proto-nuclear states. They also empower anti-democratic interests within nuclear weapons states and preclude public participation in the politics of “national security.”

Mystification can be understood as several things. It can be viewed as an intentional-cynical representation of a mythological world reality in order to maintain hegemonic power by the nuclear weapons states. Relatedly, it can be understood as a strategy to maintain control over the national security state by certain interested parties within a nuclear weapons state. It can also be viewed as a subliminal ideology that serves the same functions but does not originate in conscious deliberations. Or, it can be thought of as a collective mistake, a shortcoming due to the limits of the human mind to comprehend the complexity and seriousness of nuclearism's existential stakes. Some political theorist define mystification only as deceit, excluding confusion, uncertainty, and forthright differences.^{vi}

This analysis approaches the problem of mystification as ideological deception, both purposefully and subconsciously developed in political discourse. Without denying the possibility of limits to our collective conscience, I emphasize forms of mystification as systematic and ever present deceptions because these are the most politically potent exercises in mystification to expose. If the leading discourses on nuclear weapons are limited in ways that veil the main functions of these weapons and the power-structures that perpetuate their existence, demystified understandings can be articulated and mobilized by non-nuclear states, and especially by social movements in order to further the political work from below that will lead to meaningful nuclear abolition.

Finally, I am not claiming to have laid out a comprehensive list of mystical approaches to arms control, nor an exhaustive critique in this essay. Far from it. Rather, I am making a small effort upon a preexisting tradition of critical theory, one that I hope will be reinvigorated and built upon by other dissatisfied arms control scholars, or a new generation of antinuclear, anti-imperial scholars.

Mystifying the Political: Are Nuclear Weapons Policies Democratic?

All political systems rely on forms of mystical explanation. Monarchies mystify power relations in order to legitimate the rule of the king over all. The king is imbued with God-like qualities and said to possess a natural right to rule, granted by the deity. Therefore governance is not subject to debate.^{vii} By legitimating authority in this way the sovereign prevents his subjects from becoming a political agent (i.e. a demos) by excluding them from the political sphere which is marked as divine.

Democracies also rely on mystification. In fact, because modern democratic forms of governance are highly complex, and because of the sheer size of most nation states, increasingly complex and secular forms of mystical explanation are relied upon to legitimate rule. This is especially true in diminishing democracies like the United States. I use the qualifier *diminishing* because the self-

evidentiary notion that democracy exists—that specific states are clearly democracies while others are obviously not—at this historical juncture, is subject to debate.^{viii}

The overall lack of democracy on earth is especially visible in the contemporary United States where demotic forms of power are readily apparent but significantly overshadowed and overwhelmed by antidemocratic forces in government, the economy, and culture. America is a highly diminished democracy, according to many political theorists and sociologists.^{ix} This is especially apparent with respect to decisions bearing on US military spending, foreign policy, and global economic policy. The notion that the American people have much power over US foreign policy and especially plans for nuclear weapons is more than specious. Instead, it should be readily apparent that these policies are made by an insulated elite and are among the least democratically influenced.^x

Ironically, this is made most apparent when one scans the academic literature on US foreign policy formation. Numerous accounts written by, and even in praise of the oligarchic policy making elite (James Smith's *The Idea Brokers* is remarkably candid^{xi}) forwardly explain the roles of a handful of prestigious think tanks, academic centers, government offices, foundations, and corporations in determining the appropriate boundaries and forms of everything from foreign investment/aid to military interventions and the state's strategic posture. Conversely, the “public” or “citizenry” only tend to make appearances as conceptual objects of study. The population is a crowd of pliant, opinionated vessels to be polled in detailed statistical surveys on opinions and mass media effects.^{xii} As the founder of public relations science put it; “Those who manipulate the unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of.”^{xiii}

In diminishing democracies the mystification of political issues like the state's nuclear posture and budget occurs first and foremost when the government and its multitude of agencies is described in broad-brush strokes as being democratically run, the leadership as democratically elected, laws

democratically drafted and passed, and policies democratically deliberated. In fact, the dynamic powers influencing elections, legislation, policy production, and state bureaucratic labor emanate from highly unequal parties, some with vastly more wealth and time to “manage” the outcomes of electoral competition and governmental operations. This is especially true with respect to foreign policy and defense decisions which are so far removed from democratic control that some observers have dubbed this sphere of power the “iron triangle.”^{xiv} The fictively democratic and egalitarian US political system is nothing more than a myth considering the enormous sums of wealth it takes to campaign for office, the billions spent on lobbying, the 10,000 some odd lobbyist working for wealthy clients, only to scratch the surface of our dilemma.^{xv} As the eminent theorist of democracy Sheldon Wolin puts it;

“The fact that politically organized interest groups [especially corporations] with vast resources operate continuously, that they are coordinated with congressional procedures and calendars, that they occupy strategic points in the political process, is indicative of how the meaning of “representative” government has radically changed. The citizenry is being displaced, severed from a direct connection with the legislative institutions that are supposed to “stand in” for the people. If the main purpose of elections is to serve up pliant legislators for lobbyist to shape, such a system deserves to be called “misrepresentative or clientary government.” It is, at one and the same time, a powerful contributing factor to the depoliticization of the citizenry, as well as reason for characterizing the system as one of antidemocracy.”^{xvi}

In bluntly characterizing the US system of government as a democracy, and especially by lumping the policy process that governs military issues and nuclear weapons together with more decidedly “domestic” issues, some that are in fact much more under the influence of the public, the process governing nuclear weapons is thoroughly mystified. Although few Americans, probably well less than 1%, can explain how nuclear weapons policies are made (at least in theory^{xvii}), we are to believe that they are made democratically and in the best interest of the American people.

Around this presumptive democratic process appears a shell casing: repeated references to the military's role as the “defender” of democracy, and nuclear weapons as a central part of this defense.

Thus, not only is the largest discretionary budget item of government with the greatest independence from democratic structures and processes—the military—characterized as part and product of the whole democratic system, it is then wrapped in an aura of unquestionable goodness because it is said to protect the whole that somehow, some way determines it. Amazingly, this is then extended to include nonnuclear states within the US nuclear umbrella's deterrent/protective shadow, a shadow in which democracy is said to grow and thrive.

In contrast to the monarchical forms of mystification that close off the political sphere to “commoners” by appealing to higher powers beyond redoubt, our diminished democracy works toward similar ends, especially with respect to the quasi-sacred Pentagon budget and war fighting supplemental spending packages, but by using an opposite mytho-logic: a governing process insulated from meaningful democratic participation is legitimated by a contradictory appeal to its openness and sensitivity to “the will of the people.”

This myth's contradictions are plainly visible in the striking differences between the actual foreign policies that have been promoted by elites, and those that are most popular and resonant with the American public. We end up with invasions of Iraq and extended military occupation, torture memos, torture chambers and secret prisons, military assistance to human rights abusing regimes, noninterventions in genocides, seemingly unnecessary interventions, a bloated nuclear weapons arsenal, multi-billion dollar “black budgets,” and other longstanding state projects that have little public support.^{xviii} Quite often large majorities are vehemently opposed.^{xix} In some of these projects, like US intervention in parts of Latin America in the 1980s, the majority of the American people have been largely unaware and severely misinformed of elite policy maker's means and ends.^{xx} With nuclear weapons we find ourselves in a situation in which the American public favors abolition and has for quite some time, while the foreign policy elite, military, and corporate interests engaged in nuclear weapons contracting, are much more equivocal in their opinions, leaning almost always to the long-

term possession of a nuclear arsenal and even longer maintenance of a nuclear capacity.^{xxi} Furthermore, the public is mostly unaware of the detailed extent of US nuclear war planning, the continued existence and shape of the arsenal, and the fiscal and geographic footprint of the nuclear weapons complex.^{xxii} Few Americans know that more than \$6 billion is spent yearly on nuclear warhead R&D, and many billions more on their delivery systems, and given the extremely abstract and technocratic language surrounding these state objectives, how could they?^{xxiii} Political leaders and many arms control academics accept this situation as given, but since it reveals anti-democratic processes and a mystified forms of legitimation through non-explanation, should it not deserve attention by those of us seeking answers to the transforming threats of the nuclear age?^{xxiv}

The foreign policy elite's response to this collective-cognitive dissonance includes social science efforts to explain and better facilitate the shaping of public opinion through “education” and media, or else it focuses on straightforward attempts to justify elite-leadership. Elites in government, corporate, and academic spheres are lionized as possessing unique information—state secrets, expertise, disinterested vision, meritorious powers—and therefore said to be most capable of making the best decisions regarding foreign affairs. Vulgar democracy, left to its own devices would lead to inaction and defeat, or so this logic goes.^{xxv} Nevertheless, the concept of democracy is ultimately invoked not just as the process by which US foreign policy is made, but even as the *raison d'etre*, the objective of preservation using the US arsenal, when really this is no better than a *raison d'etat*.^{xxvi}

Further Bomb Mythologies

The Nuclear Threat

“Nearly 20 years ago, U.S. President Ronald Reagan asked an audience to imagine that “all of

us discovered that we were threatened by a power from outer space - from another planet.” The President then asked: “Wouldn't we come together to fight that particular threat?” After letting that image sink in for a moment, President Reagan came to his point: “We now have a weapon that can destroy the world—why don't we recognize that threat more clearly and then come together with one aim in mind: how safely, sanely, and quickly can we rid the world of this threat to our civilization and our existence.””

- Sam Nunn, American Academy of Berlin, June 2008^{xxvii}

The Nuclear Threat Initiative describes itself as “a place of common ground where people with different ideological views are working together to close the gap between the global threats from nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and the global response.”^{xxviii} Since its founding in 2001, NTI has focused on preventing the spread of weapons-grade fissile materials, especially from stockpiles leftover in the former Soviet satellites. The organization has had astounding success in this area. It has surely made the world safer.

However, the Nuclear Threat Initiative also exemplifies many of the antidemocratic forces and less-than common interests with respect to nuclear weapons. NTI is, after all, a non-governmental organization that has managed to leverage the US, Russia, and other states toward its preferred areas of action by the simple fact of its immense private wealth and the expertise and legitimacy it has literally purchased and assumed. To NTI's credit the organization stepped up its efforts in the aftermath of 9-11, when many expected a much larger official US program, but were disappointed in the Bush administration's plans. This does not justify its existence as a private-parallel government agency, un beholden to any common, public control, however.^{xxix}

The mystifying aspects of NTI's work (as well as most other leading arms control organizations) is best represented in its framing of the problems at hand. The issue set by NTI and other leaders is a singular “nuclear threat,” posed to a singular unified victim: “the whole world,” or “civilization,” or “global security.” The problem here is that the existence of nuclear weapons and radioactive materials cannot be said to pose only, or primarily a singular threat. Nor can the threat facing particular nation

states and different peoples in the nuclear age be subsumed in a globalizing unified abstract. The existence of nuclear weapons and nuclear materials creates a multiplicity of complex and different threats to each and every nation and community. Furthermore, the cataclysmic threat to all civilization most often and ominously posed by NTI and other arms controllers is the least likely form of violence resulting from the geopolitical power relations structured by the existence of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons amplify a whole spectrum of aggression and suffering. The specter of “a mushroom cloud” rising over Manhattan or Washington D.C. is still only a hypothetical nuclear threat, while the prospect of illegal preemptive war, invasion, and occupation, under the guise of nonproliferation, to use only one obvious example, is a proven threat to human security.^{xxx}

Given the enormous number of different and legitimate political differences and relationships that exist between states, and the innumerable identities that transcend the nation-state, there cannot be said to exist a singular “nuclear threat.” The tendency to emphasize the existential threat to “mankind” is both a holdover from the Cold War era when the superpowers' plans to fight and “win” a full-scale nuclear war made this extremist threat exceedingly likely. More so, it is a projection of the sole remaining superpower's preoccupations with its asymmetrical weaknesses and insecurities upon the majority of world's peoples who in fact do not share these insecurities. As a projection, it is a mystification in service of hegemony. As a mystification it is a direct deception and conceptual barrier to the articulation of other nuclear and especially anti-nuclear definitions of human security. It obscures the obvious fact of many different insecurities in the nuclear age and subsumes them into a singular “nuclear threat” as defined by the US and other powerful weapons states. This overbearing unification of real differences stands as a powerful legitimating force for making concrete threats and making real on them by the United States against nations that hypothetically threaten the singular mystical concept of “global security.”

Elaborating on Ronald Reagan's extra-terrestrial parable, former Senator Sam Nunn, co-chair

and CEO of NTI, has explained that, “when nuclear weapons are at the fingertips of individuals and groups who are eager to use them to inflict massive damage on humankind, President Reagan's question: "Wouldn't we come together to fight this threat?" should be front and center for the United States, for Europe, for Russia, China, Japan, South Korea, and indeed, for the whole world.^{xxxii} Language like this is very appealing because it appeals to our common humanity. However, this discourse is necessarily based on the alienation and demonization of some states, ethnic and religious groups, and communities. Reagan's quote is quite literal in this sense: “[what if] all of us discovered that we were threatened by *a power from outer space - from another planet* [emphasis added].”

The problem with breaking complex political issues down in this way is that humankind is not threatened by space aliens. We are instead a world of humans, all alike, but also profoundly different, flawed in our ways.^{xxxiii} In some sense we all have a common interest in preventing the use of nuclear weapons, just like we have a common interest in averting climatic disruption, but there are not so common interests in the nuclear age.^{xxxiii}

Nonnuclear states have a shared interest in total and verifiable disarmament. Nuclear weapons states, according to most of the international community, have demonstrated bad faith in this area for decades.^{xxxiv} Some states (e.g. Iran, North Korea) see their interests being best served in pursuing an independent nuclear capacity involving energy and weapons. These acquisitions may well provide those regimes with a deterrent power against US coercion (note that in these cases deterrence might be more than a myth), and understood in the historical context of US involvement in their domestic politics and regional security calculations, do they not seem rather logical? Their calculations defy the conceptual unity of the “nuclear threat” as do many other less demonized states. Some states are interested not only in the abolition of nuclear weapons, but the abolition of nuclearism, including atomic energy generation. Many more members of humanity, not necessarily represented by state power, share this total approach to nuclear abolition. Many “developing” nations express an interest in

acquiring parity in nuclear technological capacity with the EU and US. The EU and US meanwhile seem more interested in promoting the status quo of technological dependence by these nations.^{xxxv} These interests are by no means independent of the strategic military calculations of states, even if they do not aim at acquiring nuclear weapons. In short, the threats are innumerable, complex, specific, and range from the already proven death and destruction of conventional war under nuclearized pretenses to the possibility of nuclear terrorism, by either transnational criminal networks or states.

In a world in which two states (US and Russia) possess ~95% of nuclear weapons, four other states (UK, France, China, and Israel) possess smaller advanced nuclear weapons stockpiles, two states (India and Pakistan) have small but growing stockpiles and weapons technologies, and one (North Korea) has a rudimentary capability and handful of nuclear devices, while the rest of the world adjusts their conventional military force structures to these nuclear weapons states' larger commanding footprints, what is the efficacy of referring to a singular “nuclear threat”? Would it not make more sense to refer to the multitude of non-nuclear threats engendered by the complexity of the nuclear age, most of these threats not involving the detonation of atomic weapons, but rather the violence, war, and suffering constantly being caused in the presence of these “unusable” weapons and their failure to create security? Furthermore, after the unilateralist invasion of Iraq by the United States in 2003, based largely on the discredited claim that Saddam Hussein's regime was pursuing a “Saddamite bomb,” does it make any sense at all to prioritize “mankind's” interests in averring nuclear war?^{xxxvi} We have already seen devastating wars and mass human suffering either cynically or ignorantly in the name of nonproliferation.^{xxxvii} Does this not constitute a more realistic sort of nuclear threat, the threat of massive violence against a nonnuclear state by another state that claims it may, one day, somehow, go nuclear?

The mystical “nuclear threat” constructs a seemingly universal threat source by directly and monopolistically associating proliferation with would-be nuclear states and dark terrorists forces. Both

are presented almost always as non-white, Muslim or Asian.^{xxxviii} What's not obvious here is the definition of threat, a word that we are left to accept within these extremely constricted cases. The dominant definition of threat in the contemporary arms control scholarship uncritically follows that which is provided by the US political leadership: a *source of potential* danger, injury, or death. The meaning “threat” cannot and should not be restricted to this curious definition. Another definition of threat is that it is an *expression of an intention to inflict* pain, injury, violence, and punishment. I have emphasized the differences here in italics. The prevailing definition locates potential threat source, while the latter identifies concrete, verifiable threat statements and actions. The latter definition is more in agreement with prevailing legal interpretations of “threat.”

Accepting that two possible threats among many in a nuclear armed and energized world is the proliferation of nuclear materials into the hands of transnational criminal networks, and also further horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons among states, there is also the threat of use of nuclear weapons against nonnuclear states. This definition of threat conforms more to the pre-established legalistic definition: spoken or written words to intimidate others. A “nuclear threat” in this sense would be intimidation and menace by state officials indicating that they are considering using nuclear weapons against another state or party.

The United States has been implicated in several cases of threatened and planned first use of nuclear weapons against nonnuclear states. In one episode, the Nixon administration, under the guidance of Henry Kissinger and Anthony Lake, made plans to use nuclear weapons against the North Vietnamese. Nuclear war planning was incorporated into a broader plan to escalate the war and inflict enormous suffering through non-nuclear attacks, harbor mining, bombing, etc., backed with atomic weapons. According to a declassified memo written by Lake, then a special assistant to Kissinger, and fellow National Security Council staffer Roger Morris, “The President would have to decide beforehand, the fateful question of how far we will go. He cannot, for example, confront the issue of

using tactical nuclear weapons in the midst of the exercise. He must be prepared to play our whatever string necessary in this case.”^{xxxix} If one were to systematically document the planned and threatened use of nuclear weapons by the US and USSR over the past six decades against nonnuclear states, would not the historical evidence firmly establish that the gravest “nuclear threat” to the security of different nations and peoples has been a demonstrably plural sum of specific threats instead of this rarified, abstract, totalizing concept, “the nuclear threat”?

That Henry Kissinger has recently joined Sam Nunn and others in calling for a “world free of nuclear weapons” makes this episode in the history of nuclear threats particularly troubling, as does Anthony Lake's advisory role in the Obama administration, but this turn of face goes a long way in explaining the mystified approach to nuclear weapons that prevails among US political leadership and their academic advisors.

The crucial point in this provisional discussion of “the nuclear threat” is that the concept, as it is used by political leaders, scholars, and many NGO activists in the nuclear weapons states, lacks any kind of critical specificity. It is an encompassing and simplifying term used in a world of terrifying complexity and legitimate, if troubling differences. As a mystical approach to arms control, “the nuclear threat” serves to reduce and erase legitimate differences and specific threats in the name of “humankind” or “global security” which is coded speech referring to American hegemony. It sets up the problem of nonproliferation and disarmament in very constricted terms that obviously favor the established nuclear powers, especially the US with its world-straddling military bases and unparalleled power projection.

Critical examination of these concepts and what they mean to the established powers acting through them reveals that these tropes stand to serve certain interests, to secure certain states, enrich certain sectors of capital, and make others less secure, more impoverished. In some ways then, “the nuclear threat” is itself a threat mechanism. It not only does what it purports to do—identifying sources

of potential threat—it serves to threaten the identified sources and anything associated with them as antithetical to humanity or civilization. The singular conception of “the nuclear threat” furthermore serves to wash away meaningful differences between states and peoples, threatening the fundamental right and necessity for self-determination and self-definition of vital concepts like “security” and “liberty” among the community of nations, and more importantly within and beyond the state system.^{xi}

Deterrence theory, the still accepted justification that the US and other nuclear weapons states possess “stockpiles” in order to deter and dissuade attacks against them, is at the root of the mystifying “nuclear threat” concept. Instead of seeing deterrence as a mistake or misguided theory based on a failure of our defense establishment to be honest with itself in its deliberations, if we instead understand deterrence as an ideology used to legitimate a range of other less noble, more imperially inspired goals, then the function of the “nuclear threat” concept becomes clear. Nuclear weapons have never solely or primarily been about deterring attacks. Instead, they have always first and foremost been about projecting aggression through a spectrum of power, moving from conventional “limited war” all the way to the logical extension of total war, nuclear war.^{xii} US nuclear weapons must be framed in the context of US military conquest and the establishment of a kind of American empire over the last sixty years, and as Bruce G. Blair makes clear;

“the idea of military conquest is alien to deterrence. Instead, deterrence theorists value the capacity for violence, particularly nuclear violence, for its implied bargaining power. The ability to hurt the enemy forms the basis of a nuclear diplomacy oriented to influencing behavior rather than overcoming strength. Cast in this role, strategic forces are instruments of threat, coercion, and intimidation rather than of military victory.”^{xiii}

Nonproliferation

“The evolving nature of the nuclear threat requires a more comprehensive and robust global nonproliferation strategy than the work in progress outlined by Bush. In the end, it requires

more than just pressure on a few of the nuclear “have-nots”—it requires greater restraint and leadership from the nuclear “haves.””

-Daryl Kimball, Executive Director, Arms Control Association

The post-1991 revision of the “nuclear threat” concept so that it now implies the specter of “Saddams with a bomb” or nuclear terrorism is further proof of nonproliferation's ascent as the prevailing arms control trope.^{xliii} But what is nonproliferation as defined by US foreign policy makers and arms control researchers? What are we to make of the shift away from “deterrence” to “nonproliferation” as the prevailing ideological framework to explain nuclear weapons while avoiding a discussion of empire?

In its broadest interpretive meaning, nonproliferation is unquestionably an important goal. Even would be proliferators who might trade nuclear technologies or acquire weapons capabilities fear the prospect of general mass proliferation. However, mainstream nonproliferation politics and scholarship in the US is heavily weighted to dealing with horizontal instead of vertical proliferation. The desire to separate the question of horizontal from vertical proliferation when it benefits the nuclear states, but to claim they are inseparably linked when it facilitates the exercise of superpower, is obviously contradictory and cynical. As it is interpreted by the United States and four other recognized nuclear weapons states that have signed the NPT, the treaty is quite obviously biased against horizontal proliferation and provides no teeth against vertical forms. The CTBT Organization has become a tool used to detect and dissuade horizontal proliferation via nuclear testing, but its mechanisms do little to effectively dissuade weapons development programs within established nuclear powers, especially the US, which has built a virtual design and testing infrastructure.^{xliv} These biases which allow vertical proliferation to continue are more than the result of good faith concessions made decades ago by nonnuclear nations in hopes that one day the nuclear states would fulfill Article VI of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Nuclear nations have been more than recklessly derelict in demonstrating

good faith. They have purposefully sought to manage a prolonged state of “nuclear apartheid.”^{xlv} Under these circumstances, nonproliferation politics have come to reflect the unresolved ideological contradictions facing nuclear weapons states: the need to appear to seek eventual disarmament while maintaining nuclear superiority and exclusivity.

The conceptual splitting of horizontal and vertical proliferation, as though they are distinct happenings in the world system, is synonymous with a contradiction that severely affects the geopolitical goals of the United States, and to a lesser extent the other major nuclear powers. The contradiction is simple: the United States, because of its imperial goals, cannot accept the possibility of certain states acquiring nuclear weapons. A nuclear Iran would undermine the power projection capabilities of the US and its allies in the Persian Gulf, the single most important reservoir of hydrocarbon energy.^{xlvi} It would be a serious blow to the US imperial project in that region. This single reason may very well be necessary and sufficient to explain the US nuclear posture.^{xlvii} The same can be said with the prospect of a nuclearized North Korea and the impediments this would create for further consolidation of Asia within US and Japanese spheres of control.

To prevent the emergence of these and other nascent deterrent conditions against superpower's extension, the US has threatened (and in some cases used) preemptive war, economic sanctions, covert action, diplomacy, “democracy promotion,” and more.^{xlviii} So far these have proven insufficient. One of the key stumbling blocks for the US is that it cannot square this nonproliferation goal with its continuing reliance on its own nuclear arsenal which it needs to project imperial power (the nuclear threat statement). Thus, the US must, to some extent, actually carry out limited arms reductions initiatives and constrain its immense nuclear weapons complex from pursuing obviously provocative programs. It must deemphasize its own nuclear powers, while at the same time maintaining its nuclear weapons arsenal, perhaps even enhancing some of its capabilities, all the while disarming other nations of nuclear weapons in the name of nonproliferation and against the singular nuclear threat.

The United States is now almost two decades into this crisis and it is not clear if a solution can be smoothly formulated. The pitfalls are many. Most arms control scholars are hard at work assisting in the ideological formulation of a nonproliferation regime that will neutralize this contradiction and find a way forward for the US neo-imperial project. As the Arms Control Association's executive director puts it; "In the age of terrorism, nuclear weapons are more of a liability than an asset."^{xlix} Figuring out the balance where nuclear weapons remain a net asset, while preventing horizontal proliferation is the goal.

What is mystifying about nonproliferation politics and scholarship are the various forms of avoidance practiced while seeking an ideologically acceptable solution to this contradiction. There is a conspicuous lack of political analysis of US weapons programs and especially developments within the US nuclear weapons complex as its various institutional members attempt to constitute a new, post-Cold War weapons research and design regime. At the same time there is a great deal of technocratic and managerial attention being paid to the US weapons complex and arsenal by some of the senior-most leaders of the military establishment, nuclear labs, and the foreign policy elite.¹

There is also a lack of attention on the fragmented political forces in the United States that create pressures for vertical proliferation. For example, the institutional interests and lobbying power of the two US nuclear warhead design laboratories does not appear to be an acceptable research subject. When issues like these do receive any critical attention, they are rarely linked to the forms of horizontal proliferation at the international level, except insofar as the political leadership and its academic advisers consider how to present an image of US restraint so as to legitimate aggressive nonproliferation policies and avoid the appearance of hypocrisy.

As an academic and journalistic subject, the proliferation networks of Pakistan and North Korea are over-examined. Anthropological research and political science have been utilized in very critical and enlightening ways to examine the causes of inter-agency and inter-personal power struggles within

Pakistan leading to the proliferation of technologies through atomic brokers. Numerous studies have illuminated the competing political factions, self-interested institutions, entrepreneurial scientists, engineers and corporations within these nations that have subverted centralized control of atomic weapons. The centripetal dynamics within Pakistan are well studied.

Relatedly, there seems to be little legitimacy to studies which would turn the same critical lens on centripetal forces operating in the US. Surely the United States nuclear weapons complex is not magically free of similar fragmented political forces, institutional struggles, corruption and subversion as we see in other regimes?ⁱⁱ The absence of scholarship examining this would imply so, however. Research into the various corporate, state, university, and military agencies with often differing political and economic interests in the US nuclear weapons programs would shed immense amounts of light on the US policy formation process, for example. Insofar as this type of research would illuminate the sociological forces influencing US nuclear posture, the composition of the weapons complex, and civil-military relations, it would provide solutions to the problem of vertical proliferation and offer new solutions to the problem of horizontal proliferation. Of course this would all require engagement with the most avoided subject of research in arms control scholarship: empire. Almost entirely to avoid candid discussions of empire, politicians and scholars have elaborated a constricted discourse on nonproliferation. Nonproliferation, in this sense, is the mystified stand-in for what should otherwise be a forthright conversation on the foreign relations of nations in a highly unequal capitalist world system, dominated by the US, a state whose military budget is approximately as large as the rest of the world's combined.ⁱⁱⁱ

Conclusion

The most important power relationship with respect to nuclear weapons is also that which is

most obscured and omitted from political and academic discourse: empire. A recent and notable exception to this avoidance is Joseph Gerson's *Empire and the Bomb*. However, Gerson is somewhat of an outsider in nonproliferation and arms control circles, as is his co-author Walden Bello.^{liii} Although studies like Gerson's do an excellent job in contextualizing nuclear weapons as useful battlefield weapons, useful threatened first strike weapons, and as weapons to dissuade any attempt at unconventional parity with US forces through chemical or bio-weapons (and only came to be tools of “deterrence” as one of many functions through the Cold War), these imperial utilities do not inform much mainstream nonproliferation scholarship. They certainly do not inform the political rhetoric of the US foreign policy establishment. Instead, they stand counterposed to the predominant bomb mythologies that currently legitimate US nuclear posture and therefore cannot be uttered in public.

Any reference to “empire” is unheard of today in political speeches with respect to nuclear weapons. Prior to 1991 it was more commonly uttered by presidents, prime ministers, party secretary's and generals on all sides of the Cold War, but always as an slander against the enemy. The Soviets referred to American capitalist empire, and Ronald Reagan famously shot back branding them the “evil empire.” George W. Bush's identification of the “axis of evil” represents the shift from nuclear armed confrontation with a competing empire to superpower's global policing against rogue states which stand to upset the wildly imbalanced geopolitical order.

Nevertheless, the disappearance of USSR by no means should imply that empire is less salient a political subject. Instead, the fact is that the United States is today the only truly global imperial power. Thus, for US leaders to speak about empire would mean turning the critical gaze upon their own project. Mystical approaches to the conduct of government, the use of military force, and the practice of international relations then proceed, especially with respect to the military and economic cornerstones of American empire, which most certainly includes nuclear weapons.

The scholarly community that studies nuclear weapons avoids the subject of empire as if on cue

from the political leaders who they closely associate with and seek a visceral and proximate sense of power from. The major academic centers and think tanks housing a critical mass of arms control intellectuals are in fact closely tied to the financial and bureaucratic interests of the nuclear weapons establishment and foreign policy elite. From bases of operation like the Hoover Institute and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, or from smaller university affiliated and think tank organized centers and even some of the larger NGOs, reams of policy analysis, historical investigation, opinion essays and other media are produced to shift debate within narrow, predetermined courses of action.

This is obvious even in the pages of the *Nonproliferation Review*. By my own count (conducted using the search tool on NPR's web site) the word "empire" is mentioned in only 27 articles in the publication's 15 year history. An explicit reference to American empire appears only once in the text of an article published in the NPR, and once more in the footnotes of another article. As if to affirm the ideological justification of American power, the footnoted reference is to one of Robert Kagan's non-apologist toasts to the "security," and "prosperity" that American empire brings for the entire world.^{liv} Interestingly, numerous other empires are mentioned in the text and footnotes of other articles. The Soviet empire is most often mentioned with the British empire coming in a close second. Mentions of the German and Japanese empires round out the most common explicit references to national empires.^{lv} Curiously, contributors have found it relevant to write about the Mongol, Holy Roman, Byzantine, Spanish, Portuguese, and even Khwarazmian empires in their discussions of nuclear weapons and international security.^{lvi}

Under the present institutional structure and career prestige system, to write critically about American empire and the central role of nuclear weapons in it would relegate most nonproliferation intellectuals outside of the boardrooms and situation rooms, and make them worse than useless for the political leaders whose job it is to conduct the policies of state that maintain imperial power relations. There is not really any independent structure for scholars of nuclearism and foreign policy to produce

critical work. The profound level of dependence and overlap between those who wield nuclear weapons as tools of empire, and those whose job it is to study nuclearism and war should be cause for concern. In the absence of alternatives, mystical approaches to the study of power relations under an imperial, nuclearized global proceed ahead.

What might it take to lift the veil and openly discuss nuclear weapons as instruments of imperial power projection, or at least to approach the diversity of threats facing communities in the nuclear age from a more grounded, less abstracted and projectional perspective? What would a thoroughly demystified scholarly debate and political discourse look like? With respect to US political leadership it would take nothing less than a very radical process of democratization and a drastic reprisal of the US military's role in the world.^{lvii} This is a very unlikely development for reasons that cannot be explained here. However, the likelihood that nonproliferation scholarship can change is much greater. The biggest impediment as it stands today is the close dependency of academics, think tank staff, and NGO professionals on the prestige system and technocratic career structures fostered by the state and elite foreign policy foundations. Finding this independence to pursue critical studies of nuclear weapons must become a priority if disarmament politics is ever to be anything more than a perennially receding distant mountaintop, if it is to become a relevant source of knowledge creation for democracy.

- i Bundy, McGeorge, William J. Crowe, Jr., and Sidney D. Drell. *Reducing the Nuclear Danger: The Road Away from the Brink*. Council on Foreign Relations, 1993.
- ii For a refutation of American scientific exceptionalism see Rotter, Andrew J. *Hiroshima: The World's Bomb*. Oxford University Press, 2008. Numerous works have explained the geopolitical strategy behind the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Archival research has shown that the Japanese surrendered in fear Russian occupation, not further atomic bombings. There are excellent earlier books and articles explaining this, such as Gar Alperovitz's work, but these were ignored until recently. The end of the Cold War seems to have opened up the debate. See Tsuyoshi Hasegawa *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan*. Harvard University Press, 2005. For a re-examination of the US leadership's projection and displacement of some of its own "evil" imperial qualities onto the USSR see Johnson, Chalmers. *Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy and the End of the Republic*. Verso, 2004. On the notion that there were "atomic secrets" see Herken, Gregg. "A Most Deadly Illusion": The Atomic Secret and American Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1945-1950." *Pacific Historical Review* 49 (Feb. 1980). On deterrence see last year's Doreen and Jim McElvany Nonproliferation Challenge Essay Contest winner, Wilson, Ward. "The Myth of Nuclear Deterrence." *The Nonproliferation Review*. Vol. 15, No. 3, (Nov. 2008), and also Marullo, Sam. "The Ideological Nature of Nuclear Deterrence: Some Causes and Consequences." *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 3, Special Feature: The Sociology of Nuclear Threat (Autumn, 1985), pp. 311-330.
- iii I use the terms "arms control" and "nonproliferation interchangeably in reference to a field of scholarly research.
- iv For examples of the obsession with the "Islamic bomb" see Armstrong, David. *America and the Islamic Bomb: The Deadly Compromise*. Steerforth Press, 2007; Venter, Al J. *Allah's Bomb: The Islamic Quest for Nuclear Weapons*. Lyons Press, 2007. There are dozens of titles and countless articles like these portraying Islam as a worldview that is somehow more likely to lead Islamic states to use nuclear weapons. The "Islamic bomb" therefore is said to constitute a unique threat to responsible Judeo-Christian civilization.
- v The most recent demand is the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's (and Arms Control Association) "Appeal to President Obama," calling for "US Leadership for a Nuclear Weapons-Free World." The appeal uses bizarre language that seems to impart a kind of agency on nuclear weapons themselves, or else paints them as evil totem-like objects that threaten all of humanity: "Nuclear weapons were created by humans, and it is our responsibility to eliminate them before *they* eliminate us [emphasis added]." http://www.wagingpeace.org/menu/action/urgent-actions/appeal_to_next_pres/
- vi Campbell, David. "Beyond Choice: The Ontopolitics of Critique." *International Relations*. Vol. 19, No. 1 (2005).
- vii Deploige, Jeroen and Gita Deneckere. *Mystifying the Monarch: Studies on Discourse, Power and History*. Amsterdam University Press, 2006.
- viii For two key texts that bookend the debate about democratic practices and potentials with respect to the United States see Beard, Charles A. *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*. MacMillan Company, 1935; and Phillips, Kevin. *Wealth and Democracy: A Political History of the American Rich*. Broadway, 2003.
- ix I borrow and extend the phrase "diminished democracy" from Skocpol whose claims that the United States has transformed from a once thriving civically centered society into a highly managed society: "A civil society once centered in nationally active voluntary membership federations [...] went the way of the once popular television program *Leave It to Beaver*. There may still be reruns, but they seem rather quaint." Skocpol, Theda. *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2004.
- x Dye, Thomas R. "Oligarchic Tendencies in National Policy-Making: the Role of the Private Policy-Planning Organizations." *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (May, 1978), pp. 309-331
- xi Smith, James A. *The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite*. Free Press, 1993.
- xii On the manipulation of public opinion see Zaller, John. "Elite Leadership of Mass Opinion: New Evidence from the Gulf War," in *Taken By Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*. Bennet, W. Lance, David L. Paletz (Eds.). University of Chicago Press, 1994; Grunig, James E. "Public Relations and International Affairs: Effects, Ethics and Responsibility." *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 47, 1993; Entman, Robert M. *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy*. University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- xiii On PR's development through the 20th century see Bernays, Edward (with Introduction by Mark Crispin Miller). *Propaganda*. Ig Publishing, 2004.
- xiv Adams, G. *The Politics of Defense Contracting: The Iron Triangle*. Transaction Books, 1981.
- xv Debra Mayberry, publisher of the *Directory Washington Representatives* estimates there are 11,500 D.C. lobbyist. Mayberry, Debra. "37,000? 39,402? 11,500?" *Washington Post*. January 29, 2006, p. B3.
- xvi Wolin, Sheldon. *Democracy, Inc.: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism*. Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 59.
- xvii In theory, nuclear policy is formulated by Congress and the President. The Nuclear Weapons Council provides technical and strategic input, subservient to civilian leadership. The DOE weapons labs are drawn on to provide scientific advice. However, this clean hierarchy belies the actual process of policy formation which is much muddier. The key centers of power are decidedly not restricted the White House and Congress. The inertia of the military establishment, its industrial corporate contractors, and the DOE weapons labs, as well as their corollaries in academia and the defense think tank

- network wield considerable power.
- xviii For a fascinating comparison of the politics of nuclear weapons and torture see Lichterman, Andrew. "Deterrence, Torture, Power." *DisarmamentActivist.org*. April 7, 2009. <http://disarmamentactivist.org/2009/04/07/deterrence-torture-power/>
- xix There is some evidence that their opposition, when expressed in mass demonstrations, rarely influences policymakers with respect to key votes. For example, see McAdam, Doug and Yang Su. "The War at Home: Antiwar Protests and Congressional Voting, 1965 to 1973." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 67, No. 5 (Oct., 2002), pp. 696-721
- xx Sobel's detailed study of US public opinions on the Reagan era foray's and funding of right wing paramilitaries in El Salvador and Nicaragua concluded that most Americans were not well informed on the goals and details. Most Americans opposed US funding of paramilitaries or more direct forms of involvement. Sobel, Richard. "The Polls - A Report: Public Opinion About United States Intervention in El Salvador and Nicaragua." *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (Spring, 1989), pp. 114-128.
- xxi One recent poll found that 80% of Americans feel the world is a more dangerous place with nuclear weapons possessed by any state. Only 47% of these same survey respondents felt that US possession of nuclear weapons makes them safer. See Regehr, Ernie. "Nuclear Disarmament or Nuclear Ambivalence?" *Project Ploughshares*. April, 2007. <http://www.ploughshares.ca/libraries/Briefings/brf074.pdf>.
- xxii Compare this to Cold War collective dissonance: "To the extent the public accepts continued participation in the nuclear arms race, it is to "keep up with the Russians," not to prevail in a nuclear war. Furthermore, the public sees the only legitimate use of nuclear weapons as retaliation, to deter Soviet attacks against the U.S., not as a response to a Soviet conventional attack in Europe (Yankelovich and Doble, 1984). The question that arises is how do we explain the discrepancy between the public view of deterrence, which vaguely resembles the minimal deterrent or parity type, and the force employment policy of extended deterrence." See Marullo, Sam. "The Ideological Nature of Nuclear Deterrence: Some Causes and Consequences." *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 3, Special Feature: The Sociology of Nuclear Threat (Autumn, 1985), pp. 311-330.
- xxiii Tobias, Sheila. "Demystifying defense: closing the knowledge gap." *Social Policy* (Winter, 1983).
- xxiv Or to quote the philosopher Herbert Marcuse, "does not the threat of an atomic catastrophe which could wipe out the human race also serve to protect the very forces which perpetuate this danger? The efforts to prevent such a catastrophe overshadow the search for its potential causes in contemporary industrial society." Marcuse, Herbert. *One Dimensional Man*. Beacon Press, 1964.
- xxv The most classic justification of elitism is Plato's Allegory of the Cave. Almost every recent US administration has invoked elitism as a justification for foreign policy decisions. The Kennedy White House was famously composed of "whiz kids," while George W. Bush's administration was well known for its Straussian members.
- xxvi Grant, David. *The Mythological State and Its Empire*. Routledge, 2008.
- xxvii Nunn, Sam. "Regarding the Joint Statement from Presidents Obama and Medvedev." April 1, 2009. <http://www.nti.org>
- xxviii NTI. "About NTI." http://www.nti.org/b_aboutnti/b_index.html
- xxix For an introduction to the role of foundations and NGOs as private-parallel state agencies see Tittle, D. *Rebuilding Cleveland: The Cleveland Foundation and its evolving urban strategy*. Ohio State University Press, 1992. Very little research exists on the role of major arms control foundations and NGOs as tools of elite private government.
- xxx Bush's Sec. of State Rice told a national television audience on Sept. 8, 2002 that "we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud." A conservative appraisal of the US reasons for invading Iraq, the US Senate's intelligence report, concluded that; "Most of the major key judgments in the Intelligence Community's October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), *Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction*, either overstated, or were not supported by, the underlying intelligence reporting. A series of failures, particularly in analytic trade craft, led to the mischaracterization of the intelligence." See "Congressional Reports: Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence on the U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq." Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence on the U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq. July 7, 2004. <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/serialset/creports/iraq.html>.
- xxxi NTI. "Nature of the Threats." http://www.nti.org/j_features/j4_threats.html
- xxxii Erik Erikson tells us that; "indoctrinated with the conviction that his 'species' alone was planned by an all-wise deity, created in a special cosmic event, and appointed by history to guard the only genuine version of humanity ... man once possessed by this combination of lethal weaponry, moral hypocrisy, and identity panic is not only apt to lose all sense of species, but also to turn on another subgroup with a ferocity generally alien to the 'social' animal world." See Smith, Tony. "Social Violence and Conservative Social Psychology: The Case of Erik Erikson." *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (1976).
- xxxiii William Walker's discussion of the post-Cold War project to build a new international order based on "sameness" and "togetherness" is an excellent example of hegemonic imposition of the superpower's interests on the rest of the world through the elaboration of ideology. See Walker, William. "Nuclear Order and Disorder." *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 76, No. 4 (Oct., 2000), pp. 703-724. The world is clearly not the same, nor

- together owing to severe and deepening inequalities within states and between states, among other causes.
- xxxivLeslie, Russel. "The Good Faith Assumption: Different Paradigmatic Approaches to Nonproliferation Issues." *The Nonproliferation Review*. Vol. 15, No. 3 (Nov. 2008).
- xxxvFor a broad critique of dependency and underdevelopment see Wallerstein, Immanuel. *The Modern World System I-III*. Academic Press, 1980; 1980; 1988. Some speculate that scientific/technological domination has become the leading form of domination for advanced capitalist nations over underdeveloped peripheral and semiperipheral nations. See Francisco R. Sagasti. "Underdevelopment, Science and Technology: The Point of View of the Underdeveloped Countries." *Science Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Review Issue (Jan., 1973), pp. 47-59. Having achieved uranium enrichment capabilities, Brazil recently declared itself a "civil nuclear power," free from the undesirable and retarding relationship of technological dependence on the United States. See Flandes, Daniel. "Brazil's Nuclear Policy: From Technological Dependence to Civil Nuclear Power." GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies Working Paper No. 23 (June 2006).
- xxxvii borrow this phrase from an influential Council on Foreign Relations book written by three esteemed members of the foreign policy elite. See Bundy, McGeorge, William J. Crow and Sidney D. Drell. *Reducing the Nuclear Danger*. Council on Foreign Relations, 1993.
- xxxviiiFischer, Hannah. "Iraq Civilian Deaths Estimates." Congressional Research Service. Order Code RS22537 Updated August 27, 2008.
- xxxixFor an historical analysis of muslims depicted as an irrational threat to Christian civilization in the American political imagination see Gottschalk, Peter and Gabriel Greenberg. *Islamophobia: Making Muslims the Enemy*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2007.
- xxxix"Memorandum from Tony Lake and Roger Morris, NSC Staff, to Captain [Rembrandt] Robinson, Subject: Draft Memorandum to the President on Contingency Study, 29 September 1969, Top Secret/Sensitive." Folder 4: VIETNAM: (General Files), Sep 69-Nov 69, box 74, National Security Council Files: Subject Files, Nixon Presidential Materials Project, National Archives.
- xl For a useful discussion of competing definitions of "national security" see Masco, Joseph. *The Nuclear Borderlands: The Manhattan Project in Post-Cold War New Mexico*. Princeton University Press, 2006.
- xli Kissinger, Henry A. *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*. Council on Foreign Relations and Harper Brothers, 1957.
- xliiBlair, Bruce G. *Strategic Command and Control: Redefining the Nuclear Threat*. Brookings Institution Press, 1985.
- xliii"Saddams with a bomb" is another phrase borrowed from Bundy, McGeorge, William J. Crowe, Jr., and Sidney D. Drell, *Reducing the Nuclear Danger*.
- xlivThe Stockpile Stewardship and Management Program funded the construction of several important facilities including the National Ignition Facility, the Dual Axis Radiographic Hydrotest Facility, the Advanced Simulation and Computing Program, and other items have allowed the US to virtually test weapons components and model explosions so as to make the US less dependent on full scale testing than any other nation. For the best critique of the SSMP as an "anti-disarmament program" see Lichterman, Andrew & Jacqueline Cabasso. "Faustian Bargain 2000: Why 'Stockpile Stewardship' is Fundamentally Incompatible With the Process of Nuclear Disarmament." *Western States Legal Foundation*. May, 2000. <http://www.wslfweb.org/docs/fb2000.pdf>
- xlviSingh, Jaswant. "Against Nuclear Apartheid." *Foreign Affairs*. September/October, 1998.
- xlviFor a qualification and defense of American empire (particularly in the Middle East) see Boot, Max. *The "American Empire" in the Middle East*. Berkeley Public Policy Press, 2004. For a less apologetic perspective see Colas, Alejandro and Richard Saull (Eds.) *The War on Terrorism and the American 'Empire' after the Cold War*. Routledge, 2005.
- xlviThis is not to say there are no other pro-nuclear calculations, but simply that empire is the most important factor.
- xlviRobinson, William I. *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, US Intervention and Hegemony*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- xlixACA. "Arms Control Association Praises Obama's Commitment to a Nuclear Weapons Free World." *Arms Control Association*. Press Release. April 5, 2009.
- l The most recent example would be the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States. Perry, William S., James R. Schlesinger et al. "America's Strategic Posture: The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States." US Institute of Peace, May 2009. Since the early 1990s there have been several desperate high level commissions established to fix the dysfunctional weapons complex. See "The Commission On Maintaining United States Nuclear Weapons Expertise." Report to the Congress and Secretary of Energy Pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Acts of 1997 and 1998. March 1, 1999; Foster, John et al. "The Panel to Assess the Reliability, Safety, and Security of the United States Nuclear Stockpile." March, 2002; "Recommendations for the Nuclear Weapons Complex of the Future: Report of the Secretary of Energy Advisory Board Nuclear Weapons Complex Infrastructure Task Force." Sec. of Energy Advisory Board, US DOE. July, 2005.
- li A rich source of anthropological and political insights into the weapons complex are the LANL blogs; LANL The Real Story (Dec. 2005 - Jun. 2006) <http://www.parrot-farm.net/lanl-the-real-story/>; LANL the Corporate Story (Dec. 2006 - Dec. 2008) <http://lanl-the-corporate-story.blogspot.com/>; and LANL the Rest of the Story (Apr. 2007 -) <http://lanl-the->

rest-of-the-story.blogspot.com/

- lii This approximation is for 2005. For an introduction to world systems theory see Wallerstein, Immanuel. *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction*. Duke University Press, 2004.
- liiii Gerson, Joseph and Walden Bello. *Empire and the Bomb: How the U.S. Uses Nuclear Weapons to Dominate the World*. Pluto Press, 2007. Another outstanding example is Andrew Lichterman's *Missiles of Empire: America's 21st Century Global Legions*. WSLF information Bulletin, Fall 2003. www.wslfweb.org/doclib.htm
- liv Kagan, Robert. "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy." *Foreign Affairs*. August, 1996.
- lv The Russian/Soviet empire is explicitly referred to five times, the British four, German and Japanese two times.
- lvi Other "empires" mentioned in articles appearing in the *Nonproliferation Review* include the "Brazilian empire," the Baathist "Iraqi empire," North Korean empire, "China as vader's empire," the "invisible empire of Pennsylvania Klu Klux Klan," "A. Q. Khan's procurement empire," and even the CTBTO's "inspection empire."
- lvii Perhaps something at least on the order of what Andrew Bacevich has explained as necessary for the re-establishment of democracy and true security. See Bacevich, Andrew. *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism*. Macmillan, 2008.