

Browbeating Nonproliferation:

SUPERPOWER COERCION AND NUCLEAR ABANDONMENT

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The Puzzle

- Nuclear weapons guarantee survival
- More “bang for your buck”
- Dozens of states explored nuclear weapons, but only 10 acquired
- What explains this low incidence?

Coercion: misunderstood

- Policymakers vs. Theorists
- Narrow focus on:
 - Economic sanctions
 - Military threats (“coercive diplomacy”)
- Both tend to fail
- Needed: broader view of manipulation

Sources of vulnerability

- Alliance benefits
 - Existential defense
 - Military aid
 - Sovereignty
- Aid at moments of dire need
- Domestic Weakness

Role of Nuclear Umbrellas

- Few costs outweigh benefits of nukes
- Nuclear umbrellas insufficient alone
- Need both:
 - Nuclear umbrella to offset risk of non-armament
 - Coercion to raise cost of attempted armament

Policy Implications

- Coercion fails without vulnerabilities
 - Tends to work better with allies than rivals.
- Vulnerabilities must be extreme for coercion to succeed without nuclear guarantees
- Nuclear guarantees alone tend to fail
- Implications for Middle East proliferation