



## Article Review Forum 68

Rev. A (corrects “Cox” to “Coe” in the Introduction)

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Introduction by Thomas Maddux

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**“Nonproliferation and Proliferation: Strategies and Outcomes”** in *International Security* 40:1 (Summer 2015): 9-119, and **Andrew J. Coe and Jane Vaynman, “Collusion and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime,”** *Journal of Politics* 77:4 (October 2015): 983-997.

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### Introduction by Thomas Maddux, Emeritus California State University Northridge

Julia Macdonald begins her review for this forum by pointing out that nuclear security studies has in the past decade undergone a “renaissance” in both political science studies and international history. Macdonald proceeds to note some of the most influential earlier studies by leading scholars such as Robert Jervis and Kenneth Waltz before discussing the newer studies which include the articles under review. Frank Gavin is one of the authors of an article under review as well as the author of *Nuclear Statecraft; History and Strategy in America’s Atomic Age*, which has a broader focus than that of the forum but addresses the subject of proliferation and its role in U.S. grand strategy during the Cold War and into the Obama administration.<sup>1</sup> As Macdonald emphasizes, the new studies significantly challenge some of the leading earlier works by demonstrating the importance of non-proliferation as a central objective in U.S. Cold-War strategy and the degree to which mutually assured destruction (MAD) did not necessarily contribute to “caution and stability among states, but instead can actually facilitate a range of different behaviors from compromise to aggression.”

The reviewers agreed that the articles provide a number of positive contributions to the field. In commenting on Andrew Coe and Jane Vaynman’s article,<sup>2</sup> Elisabeth Roehrlich notes that the authors developed and tested “their theory of ‘superpower collusion’ based on historical evidence. This article is therefore an example of how the disciplines of political science and history can fruitfully team up in (re)writing nuclear history.” As one of the five key themes that Hal Brands pulled out of the articles, “deep historical work” in archives and published studies is highlighted as an “essential means of grappling with the puzzles and problems of the nuclear age.” Mark Bell, for example, “constructs a typology of ways in which the acquisitions of nuclear weapons can affect a state’s behavior” and evaluates the typology by evaluating British policy in the 1950s.<sup>3</sup> Leopoldo Nuti, who raises the most reservations about the articles, starts his review by emphasizing that the articles “offer insightful, rich, cross-disciplinary perspectives on the dilemmas of the nuclear age ...and are based on new and often very often original research, present a wealth of innovative documentary evidence, and display a fresh methodological approach by moving freely between history and theory.” Nuti concludes his review by advocating “a more historically-oriented perspective” to understand the importance of nuclear history for the evolution of the international system.

One of the important contributions of the articles is the highlighting of the different ways in which the United States pursued nonproliferation before and after other states developed a nuclear capability. Coe and Vaynman use multidisciplinary methods to demonstrate that the U.S. and the Soviet Union colluded to prevent further proliferation “not only to share the cost of enforcement but also to avoid exploitation by the

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<sup>1</sup> Frank J. Gavin, *Nuclear Statecraft; History and Strategy in America’s Atomic Age* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012). For the H-Diplo roundtable on Gavin’s book, see <https://issforum.org/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XV-1.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew J. Coe and Jane Vaynman, “Collusion and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime,” *Journal of Politics* 77:4 (October 2015): 983-997. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/682080>. This article was added to the H-Diplo/ISSF Forum.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Bell, “Beyond Emboldenment: How Acquiring Nuclear Weapons Can Change Foreign Policy,” *International Security* 40:1 (Summer 2015): 87-119. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00204](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00204).

other.” Or Rabinowitz and Nicholas Miller demonstrate the effort by the U.S. to deal with proliferation of nuclear weapons by Israel, South Africa, and Pakistan.<sup>4</sup> According to Macdonald, the U.S. attempted to prevent the development of nuclear weapons, and when the three states went ahead anyway, U.S. policymakers moved to persuade these states to conceal their nuclear status and refrain from any testing or use of the weapons. Gavin also discusses the wide range of tools that the U.S. used to limit proliferation. The authors have impressed Brands, who emphasizes “how relatively successful U.S. efforts to prevent or limit proliferation have been” despite the notable failure with North Korea.

The reviewers do express a range of reservations about the relative importance of nonproliferation in U.S. strategy. Gavin and Rabinowitz and Miller emphasize a continuity in the U.S. pursuit of nonproliferation, and Gavin suggests that it should be considered a third dimension of U.S. grand strategy along with containment of the Communist states and the promotion of liberal capitalism.<sup>5</sup> As Macdonald observes, in noting the U.S. efforts to restrain Israel, South Africa, and Pakistan on the development of nuclear weapons, Rabinowitz and Miller demonstrate that the United States “went further than is often thought to achieve its nonproliferation goals, but they have not completely overturned the view that the United States was less tough on its geopolitically valuable allies.” Roehrlich suggests that at times the “consistency of U.S. nonproliferation policies” is oversold. Brands also notes that sometimes the nonproliferation goal has to be set aside because of other considerations, such as in the example of Pakistan.

Nuti advances some dissent on a central theme of the role of nonproliferation in U.S. Cold-War strategy and on other issues in the four articles. Nuti appreciates the studies of Gavin and Rabinowitz and Miller, but suggests that the authors may have put “slightly too much emphasis on continuity rather than on exceptions” and notes a significant shift to nonproliferation from containment which Nuti attributes to the “gradual achievement of strategic parity by the Soviet Union” and the ensuing changes Washington made to deal with the consequences of this strategic reality. Nuti also suggests that Coe and Vaynman do not give sufficient attention to the broader context affecting proliferation when they attribute U.S.-Soviet collusion on nonproliferation to France’s policies on NATO and the Sino-Soviet conflict. Nuti gives more weight to the Soviet concern about West Germany and the nuclear issue: “the fact of the matter remains that strategic parity and mutual vulnerability between the USSR and the U.S. force the superpowers to come to terms with the status quo in the Cold War and to find a way to stabilize the situation in Europe.” Nuti calls for more attention to the “larger Cold War context” and suggests that Rabinowitz and Miller emphasize too much continuity in the U.S. approach when the “U.S. was trying to balance its nuclear inhibition strategy with the strategic requirements of the Cold War... When push came to shove, the overall strategic priority clearly trumped the non-proliferation one” in both the White House and the Kremlin.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Or Rabinowitz and Nicholas L. Miller, “Keeping the Bombs in the Basement: U.S. Nonproliferation Policy toward Israel, South Africa, and Pakistan.” *International Security* 40:1 (Summer 2015): 47-86. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00207](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00207).

<sup>5</sup> Francis J. Gavin, “Strategies of Inhibition: U.S. Grand Strategy, the Nuclear Revolution, and Nonproliferation.” *International Security* 40:1 (Summer 2015): 9-46. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00205](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00205).

<sup>6</sup> For Soviet policy, Nuti cites Balazs Szalontai’s *The Elephant in the Room: The Soviet Union and India’s Nuclear Program, 1967-1989* NPIHP Working Paper 1, November 2011.

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In conclusion, Brand offers five key themes in the articles and several authors note the Obama administration's negotiations with Iran. Gavin emphasizes that the negotiations with Iran confirm the overall emphasis of the forum articles on the strategic importance of pursuing the strategy that he and other authors consider central to the U.S. proliferation effort:

“This inhibition logic is at work in U.S. grand strategy today. The strategies of inhibition help explain not only the persistence of the United States' efforts to keep Iran from acquiring a bomb but also its motivation. Neither the geopolitical goals nor the ideological orientation of the regime in Tehran—no matter how troublesome to U.S. policymakers—is the primary driver of U.S. nonproliferation efforts vis-à-vis Iran. Nor are interest-driven U.S. inhibition strategies propelled by a desire to provide public goods and global security, though these may be welcome by-products.”<sup>7</sup>

### Participants:

**Hal Brands** is a Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). He is the author or editor of several books, including *Making the Unipolar Moment: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order* (2016), *What Good is Grand Strategy? Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush* (2014), *Latin America's Cold War* (2010), *From Berlin to Baghdad: America's Search for Purpose in the Post-Cold War World* (2008), and *The Power of the Past: History and Statecraft* (co-edited with Jeremi Suri, 2015). He received his BA from Stanford University (2005) and his PhD from Yale University (2009). He previously worked as an assistant and associate professor at Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy, and as a researcher at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

**Julia Macdonald** is a post-doctoral fellow at the Perry World House, University of Pennsylvania, and an Assistant Professor at the University of Denver's Korbel School of International Studies (on leave 2016-2017). Her research on state threat assessments, use of force decisions, and U.S. military strategy and effectiveness has appeared in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, *Armed Forces and Society*, as well as in various policy outlets. Julia holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the George Washington University and an M.A. in International Relations from the University of Chicago.

**Leopoldo Nuti** (Siena, 1958) is Professor of History of International Relations and Coordinator of the Ph.D. Program in Politics at Roma Tre University. He is co-Director of the Nuclear Proliferation International History Project, and since 2014 President of the Italian Association of International Historians. Nuti has been a Fulbright student at George Washington University (MA, class of 1986), *NATO Research Fellow*, Jean Monnet Fellow at the European University Institute, *Research Fellow* at the CSIA, Harvard University, *Research Fellow* for the *Nuclear History Program*, Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Nobel Institute, Visiting Professor at the *Institut d'Etudes Politiques* in Paris and Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center. He has published extensively in Italian, English and French on US-Italian relations and Italian foreign and security policy. His latest books are a history of nuclear weapons in Italy during the Cold War, *La sfida*

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<sup>7</sup> Gavin, 46.

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*nucleare. La politica estera italiana e le armi nucleari, 1945-1991* (2007) and, as a co-editor, *The Euromissiles Crisis and the End of the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

**Elisabeth Roehrlich** is a senior fellow at the Department of Contemporary History at the University of Vienna, Austria, and a Global Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. A historian, her research focuses on the evolution of the global nonproliferation regime. She is the director of the Vienna-based IAEA History Research Project, and her work on the IAEA has been published or is forthcoming in journals such as the *IAEA Bulletin*, *Cold War History*, and the *Journal of Cold War Studies*.

**Review by Hal Brands, Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies**

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The nuclear studies subfield has been undergoing a renaissance over the past decade, with a profusion of new and innovative scholarship produced by historians and political scientists alike. The three articles featured in the Summer 2015 issue of *International Security*, as well as a fourth article written by Andrew Coe and Jane Vaynman, are all admirable examples of this broader trend. Francis Gavin has written a broad and ambitious article, in which he argues that non-proliferation qualifies as a distinct American grand strategic aim of the postwar period, and describes the wide range of measures that the United States has employed in support of this goal.<sup>1</sup> Mark Bell fills what has long been a major gap in the literature on proliferation. He constructs a typology of ways in which the acquisition of nuclear weapons can affect a state's behavior, and then tests that typology against the case of Great Britain in the 1950s.<sup>2</sup> In their richly researched article, Or Rabinowitz and Nicholas Miller assess U.S. efforts to prevent states that have built (or allegedly built) nuclear weapons from bringing them “out of the basement,” and demonstrate that Washington has sought to limit proliferation and its consequences even when doing so has complicated its relations with key geopolitical partners.<sup>3</sup> Coe and Vaynman take a new look at the origins and persistence of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, focusing on the role of great-power collusion and how it shifts the incentives of potential proliferants. They argue that such collusion only really works if most states voluntarily comply “under a grand bargain,” and point out that the expectation that great powers will keep *other* nuclear aspirants from proliferating—in other words, that nuclear non-acquisition will not simply leave a country disadvantaged relative to its peers—is crucial to inducing nuclear restraint.<sup>4</sup>

All of these articles represent important contributions to debates on proliferation and non-proliferation, and in general, the arguments advanced are largely—although perhaps not entirely—persuasive. Rather than reviewing and critiquing each article in detail, then, this review briefly flags five key themes that cut across these articles, with the aim of illuminating their broader contributions to a vibrant nuclear studies literature.

First, all of these articles demonstrate the value of deep historical work as an essential means of grappling with the puzzles and problems of the nuclear age. Gavin's work draws on significant archival research in describing the inhibition mission, its logic, and its consequences; his article also rolls up, to a remarkable degree, a vast body of recent, historically informed scholarship on non-proliferation. Rabinowitz and Miller make terrific use of declassified documents to shed light on U.S. policy toward Pakistan, South Africa, and Israel, and to

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Gavin, “Strategies of Inhibition: U.S. Grand Strategy, the Nuclear Revolution, and Nonproliferation,” *International Security* 40:1 (Summer 2015): 9-46. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00205](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00205).

<sup>2</sup> Mark Bell, “Beyond Emboldenment: How Acquiring Nuclear Weapons Can Change Foreign Policy,” *International Security* 40:1 (Summer 2015): 87-119. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00204](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00204).

<sup>3</sup> Or Rabinowitz and Nicholas Miller, “Keeping the Bombs in the Basement: U.S. Nonproliferation Policy toward Israel, South Africa, and Pakistan,” *International Security* 40:1 (Summer 2015): 47-86. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00207](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00207).

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Coe and Jane Vaynman, “Collusion and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime,” *Journal of Politics* 77:4 (October 2015): 983-997. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/682080>.

explain how American policymakers sought to balance non-proliferation goals with other geopolitical equities. Bell's article features little archival material, but it does draw on deeply researched historical works to explain the logic and geopolitical effects of British nuclear acquisition in the 1950s. Coe and Vaynman's article uses some of the best recent scholarship on nuclear non-proliferation, as well as a modest but well-deployed array of archival materials, to illustrate the key dynamics of their argument. Understanding intricacies of nuclear politics often requires digging deeply into the historical and archival record; these articles all demonstrate the utility of this approach.

Second, these pieces—particularly those by Gavin and Rabinowitz and Miller—reveal the ways in which non-proliferation has been even more central to American policy and strategy than has often been realized. Gavin makes a compelling case that the inhibition mission has been integral to U.S. statecraft for decades, and makes a plausible case that this mission deserves to be considered as a third distinct American grand strategy (or, perhaps, a third pillar of American grand strategy) in the postwar era. There is room for debate here, of course, but Gavin certainly does illustrate how important non-proliferation has been to a range of American policies, from arms control treaties to security alliances to U.S. nuclear strategy. Likewise, Rabinowitz and Miller demonstrate that the United States has kept its non-proliferation objectives at the center of relationships even with close geopolitical allies and partners, and has mounted efforts to limit the consequences of proliferation even after countries like South Africa and Pakistan acquired a rudimentary nuclear capability. Coe and Vaynman note the ways in which America's early experience with nuclear proliferation and how it disrupted intra-alliance dynamics ensured that a robust non-proliferation posture subsequently became—and has remained—central to American strategy.

Third, these articles—again, particularly those by Gavin and Rabinowitz and Miller—underscore how relatively successful U.S. efforts to prevent or limit proliferation have been. It is the failures of American non-proliferation policy—North Korea, for instance—that tend to attract the most attention. Yet as Gavin points out, the fact that the United States has deployed such a broad and potent range of tools in service of non-proliferation surely goes some distance in explaining why the number of nuclear-weapons countries has remained so comparatively small since 1945. Similarly, as Miller and Rabinowitz demonstrate, even in those cases in which U.S. policy has failed to prevent a given country from acquiring nuclear weapons, it nonetheless has sometimes had a fair degree of success in limiting the consequences of proliferation. American pressure helped keep South Africa from truly unveiling its nuclear capability up until the time when Pretoria decided to do away with that capability altogether; it may also have helped prevent the more overt introduction of nuclear weapons into the Middle East, with all of the destabilizing dynamics that such an overt introduction might have entailed. These successes were perhaps not as brilliant as non-proliferation purists might have desired, but neither were they in any way trivial. Likewise, Coe and Vaynman contest arguments asserting the inefficacy of the non-proliferation regime, pointing out how comparatively limited nuclear proliferation has remained as a result of U.S. policy and great-power collusion.

Fourth, these articles—especially those by Bell and Rabinowitz and Miller—flag the importance of thinking of proliferation not simply as something that ends with the initial acquisition or even testing of a nuclear device. Rabinowitz and Miller argue that acquisition is just one step—albeit an enormously important one—to the substantive 'introduction' of nuclear weapons, and that non-proliferation policies that fail to prevent acquisition can still prevent states from introducing or unveiling those weapons (by testing, transferring, or using them in combat) in more disruptive and dangerous ways. Likewise, Miller points out that simply developing a nuclear device is one thing, but that it is the ability actually to deliver nuclear weapons in wartime—which can often lag a successful nuclear test by several years—that really represents the point at

which a nuclear capability may start significantly to influence policy. Even after a state tests a nuclear device, then, there may be a window of several years in which to pursue policies that can mitigate the effects that proliferation will have on the state's behavior. In sum, these articles illustrate that we need a nuanced view of what 'proliferation' actually means.

Fifth and finally, all of these pieces are valuable because they reach beyond the academy and speak to key policy challenges. Gavin helps us make sense of policies that might otherwise be difficult to explain—the pursuit of nuclear supremacy even in conditions of 'mutual assured destruction,' for instance, or the endurance of American alliances after the Cold War—and he illustrates the immense value of the inhibition mission over time. Miller and Rabinowitz illustrate that it is premature to conclude that nonproliferation has failed after a state builds its first nuclear device, and that there are still a range of policies that the United States or other countries can follow to mitigate the negative effects of nuclear acquisition. Bell gives us a more sophisticated way of thinking about the consequences of proliferation, which is essential to assessing the costs and benefits of various non-proliferation activities. Coe and Vaynman better specify the mechanisms by which great-power collusion limits proliferation, and thereby provide a way of thinking about how to sustain the success of the non-proliferation regime in the future. These articles are not merely examples of good scholarship; they show how such scholarship can shed light on key policy challenges, as well.

To be clear, none of this is to say that everything in these essays is persuasive, or that these essays answer every important question they raise. Bell argues that British nukes permitted greater geopolitical independence of the United States (and provides some general evidence that such independence was indeed a goal of the British nuclear program), but, as he admits, he does not provide evidence showing that the possession of nuclear weapons actually mattered in British policy in the specific cases he surveys. Gavin makes a good overall case for the role of security guarantees and alliances in retraining proliferation, but one wonders—for front-line states such as Cold War-era West Germany or South Korea in particular—how much importance to attribute to the security guarantee itself, and how much to attribute to the presence of the U.S. forces that help substantiate the guarantee. Rabinowitz and Miller make the case that U.S. opposition to the Pakistani nuclear program never fully receded, but one wonders whether they perhaps overstate this case. As President Jimmy Carter's Secretary of Defense, Harold Brown, candidly explained at the time, "Our big problem with Pakistan was their attempts to get a nuclear program," and "although we still object to their doing so, we will now set that aside for the time being."<sup>5</sup> These and other questions notwithstanding, however, the three essays stand out as important contributions to the study of nuclear politics, and they demonstrate many of the admirable qualities that have made that subfield so dynamic and exciting in recent years.

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<sup>5</sup> Extract of Memorandum of Conversation between Harold Brown and Deng Xiaping, 8 January 1988, Electronic Briefing Book 377, National Security Archive.

Review by Julia M. Macdonald, University of Pennsylvania/University of Denver

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*Revisiting Big Questions, Challenging Conventional Wisdoms*

Over the past ten years, the fields of political science and international history have experienced a so-called ‘renaissance’ in nuclear security studies after a period of relative neglect.<sup>1</sup> With the help of newly declassified documents, scholars of both disciplines are returning to big questions of the Cold War era and challenging conventional wisdoms about the effects of nuclear weapons on international politics. A number of these conventional wisdoms can be traced back to the theory of the nuclear revolution, articulated famously by Robert Jervis and advanced by a series of prominent nuclear strategists.<sup>2</sup> According to these scholars, the level of destruction promised by nuclear weapons makes them potent tools of deterrence, eliminates fear and uncertainty among states, and reduces the incentive for arms races, crises, and war.<sup>3</sup> The view that nuclear weapons can simultaneously induce caution while enhancing the security of states also makes nuclear proliferation less of a concern. Indeed, Kenneth Waltz’s famous quip that “more may be better” was grounded in his strong belief in the stabilizing effects of nuclear weapons.<sup>4</sup>

The sound logic of the theory of the nuclear revolution has made it a powerful force in international relations (IR), but the absence of data available during the Cold War made it difficult to test the theory’s various hypotheses. This lack of data may not have been so troubling were it not for the fact that the theory left a number of puzzling questions unanswered. Why, for example, did the United States and the Soviet Union continue to build such large arsenals of nuclear weapons after they had reached the stabilizing condition of mutually assured destruction (MAD)? And why did the superpowers go to such lengths to prevent proliferation if nuclear weapons had such peace-inducing effects?

The authors of this collection of articles build on a growing wave of scholarship that challenges the tenets of the nuclear revolution through multidisciplinary methods, building on a range of newly available historical materials. Three of the articles - those by Andrew Coe and Jane Vaynman, Or Rabinowitz and Nicholas Miller, and Frank Gavin – complement each other in challenging conventional wisdoms around U.S. non-proliferation policy during the Cold War. Mark Bell’s paper also undermines a central tenet of the theory of the nuclear revolution by showing that nuclear acquisition does not necessarily result in caution and stability among states, but instead can actually facilitate a range of different behaviors from compromise to aggression. Taken together, these papers do an important service not only in revising our history of nuclear non-

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<sup>1</sup> On the renaissance in nuclear security studies, see Scott D. Sagan, “Two Renaissances in Nuclear Security Studies,” in *H-Diplo/ISSF Forum* 2 (2014), 2-10, <https://issforum.org/ISSF/PDF/ISSF-Forum-2.pdf> (<https://issforum.org/forums/2-what-we-talk-about-when-we-talk-about-nuclear-weapons>).

<sup>2</sup> Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989). See also Kenneth Waltz, “Nuclear Myths and Political Realities,” *American Political Science Review* 84:5 (September 1990): 731-745.

<sup>3</sup> Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution*, 45.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Waltz, “The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better,” *Adelphi Papers* 171 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/05679328108457394>.

proliferation efforts, but also in forcing us to reevaluate the effects of nuclear weapons on international politics.

Coe and Vaynman's piece is unique among the group in its use of multidisciplinary methods—employing a game theoretic model and using newly available archival resources to test its various propositions.<sup>5</sup> Contrary to the expectations of the nuclear revolution, they argue convincingly that the perceived dangers of nuclear-armed allies motivated both the United States and the Soviet Union to collude in establishing and then enforcing the non-proliferation regime.<sup>6</sup> In making this argument, the two authors are able to merge two alternative, but incomplete theories of the origins of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)—those of the “grand bargain” and the “cartel.” They claim that while the majority of states voluntarily adhered to the nonproliferation regime because they preferred this outcome to a world full of nuclear states, a few still wanted nuclear weapons regardless of the broader consequences. These states were prevented from ‘spoiling’ the regime through the actions of the United States and the Soviet Union, which were willing to bear the cost of enforcement for the small number of states that had to be policed (984).

The argument advanced in the paper is convincing and the elegance of the model persuasive. The authors successfully bring together two seemingly contradictory theories and highlight the lengths to which the superpowers went to prevent further proliferation. Indeed, a central piece of Coe and Vaynman's story is collusion between the United States and the Soviet Union—something that was necessary not only to share the cost of enforcement but also to avoid exploitation by the other (983). The authors' model is thus designed to explain the origins and enforcement of the regime under conditions of bipolarity, with two superpowers at the helm. Given this scope, one wonders how and in what ways the argument might be extended to explain the activities of the United States since the end of the Cold War, and how shifting power structures might impact the future of the non-proliferation regime. The Iran nuclear deal shows the ways in which the United States is continuing to enforce non-proliferation in the post-Cold War era, but it is an increasingly costly enterprise for one superpower to bear. What will happen to the regime if the United States is no longer willing (or able) to enforce a policy of nonproliferation? And will other rising powers—such as China—share the same desire to collude with the United States, as did the Soviet Union during the Cold War? The authors leave these questions open for future research.

The articles by Rabinowitz and Miller, and Gavin, are the most closely aligned of the four in arguing that nuclear non-proliferation was a priority for the United States during the Cold War, and that the U.S. government employed a wide range of policies to bolster the non-proliferation regime. Rabinowitz and Miller build on newly available archival documents and interviews to demonstrate the lengths to which the United

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<sup>5</sup> Andrew J. Coe and Jane Vaynman, “Collusion and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime,” *The Journal of Politics* 77:4 (2015): 983-997. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/682080>.

<sup>6</sup> These findings fall in-line with recent historiography of the NPT, which documents the super powers' mutual interest in creating the non-proliferation regime. For a review of this literature, see *H-Diplo/ISSF Forum* No. 8 (2015) on Andreas Wenger, Roland Popp (eds.). “Special Issue: The Origins of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime,” *The International History Review* 36:2 (2014): 195-394. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2014.899263>.

States went to prevent nuclear proliferation in the cases of Israel, South Africa, and Pakistan.<sup>7</sup> In reexamining the history of U.S. non-proliferation policies towards these states, the authors aim to challenge the view that the United States sacrificed its non-proliferation goals for domestic or geopolitical reasons. Instead, they present detailed historical evidence to show that the United States continued to pursue its nonproliferation policy in each of these cases *despite* the geopolitical constraints that it faced in order to maintain the credibility of the nonproliferation regime and avoid nuclear domino effects (47-48).

The article demonstrates the importance of carefully untangling the motivations behind state actions, showcases newly declassified documents, and presents importance evidence showing that the superpowers continued to pursue nonproliferation goals even after discovering nuclear weapons programs (47). Of course one is still left wondering whether the United States would have gone to greater lengths to limit their proliferation activities if these states had not been as geo-strategically important—for example linking the F-4 sales to Israel’s signing of the NPT or imposing heavier sanctions? One might suspect that the answer here is yes. The authors have thus successfully challenged conventional wisdom in showing that the United States went further than is often thought to achieve its nonproliferation goals, but they have not completely overturned the view that the United States was less tough on its geopolitically valuable allies.

Gavin’s article pairs nicely with Rabinowitz and Miller’s in proving a higher-level discussion of the motivations for, and policies that comprised, the United States’ “strategies of inhibition.”<sup>8</sup> Like these authors, Gavin presents a compelling case for the high priority of non-proliferation as part of U.S. grand strategy since 1945 (9), and details the broad array of actions taken by the United States in pursuit of these goals, including dissuading weaponization, the pursuit of a missile capabilities, and especially nuclear testing even after the point of nuclear acquisition (19). This article is especially valuable in providing a broader perspective of U.S. nonproliferation policy, documenting the full spectrum of inhibition strategies and showing how these have often been pursued independently of, and in combination with, other grand strategic missions over time. Gavin concludes that for better or worse, and absent these strategies of inhibition, we might live in a world with many more nuclear weapons states (11) – a claim that resonates with Coe and Vaynman’s finding that the non-proliferation regime has been effective in reducing the rate of nuclear proliferation (994-95).

One implication of both the Rabinowitz and Miller, and Gavin pieces, is that a much broader range of policies undertaken by the United States should be understood as part and parcel of these “strategies of inhibition.” Upon considering the list of policies, however—one that includes civilian nuclear cooperation, the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons to allied territory, as well as the consideration of nuclear-sharing arrangements like the Multilateral Force – one starts to wonder what falls outside of the scope of non-proliferation efforts. As it stands, all of the authors do a nice job of employing historical evidence to adjudicate the objectives behind these policies in order to rule out such criticism. As the range of behaviors cited as consistent with nonproliferation goals increases, however, this task will inevitably become more difficult. Gavin himself is quick to acknowledge that the growing complexity of U.S. nuclear history requires

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<sup>7</sup> Or Rabinowitz and Nicholas L. Miller, “Keeping the Bombs in the Basement: U.S. Nonproliferation Policy toward Israel, South Africa, and Pakistan,” *International Security* 40:1 (Summer 2015): 47-86. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00207](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00207).

<sup>8</sup> Frank J. Gavin, “Strategies of Inhibition: U.S. Grand Strategy, the Nuclear Revolution, and Nonproliferation,” *International Security* 40:1 (Summer 2015): 9-46. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00205](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00205).

scholars to dig a little deeper to make some of the connections between the U.S. non-proliferation mission and its grand strategic priorities (40-41). These scholars have risen to the challenge, but there is surely much left open for future research and debate.

Of course, the priority of nonproliferation as part of U.S. grand strategy and the amount of resources that should be devoted to achieving non-proliferation goals depends ultimately on how nuclear acquisition affects the behavior of states, and how dangerous these effects are perceived to be. Such questions motivate Bell's excellent paper.<sup>9</sup> To date, IR scholarship has tended to divide into two camps on these questions – those who believe in the stabilizing, peace-inducing qualities of nuclear weapons, and those who believe that nuclear acquisition leads to bolder and more aggressive state behavior.<sup>10</sup> Bell's article moves beyond this simple dichotomy by elucidating the broader range of foreign policy behaviors facilitated by nuclear weapon acquisition, including aggression, but also expansion, independence, bolstering, steadfastness, and compromise. He further identifies the types of states that might exhibit such behaviors and uses the typology to explain the effect of nuclear weapons on British foreign policy post-1955 (88).

The article is admirable in its clarity and does much to advance existing scholarship on the differing effects of nuclear weapons on state foreign policies – a topic of increasing relevance given Iran's recent behavior. Yet one question Bell leaves unanswered is how long the effects of nuclear acquisition will last. A decade? Longer? Or is the length of effect endogenous to the conditions that motivated the state to seek the bomb in the first place? These questions certainly go beyond what can reasonably be accomplished in a single paper, and indeed may require a different theory altogether. Nevertheless it is an important topic for future research given the implications of different types of behavior for the formulation of U.S. and other states' non-proliferation policies.

In sum, all of the articles in this collection are excellent examples of the new and exciting research taking place in the field of nuclear security studies. All four pieces challenge the theory of the nuclear revolution in different ways – by highlighting the priority of nuclear non-proliferation for the United States, the broad array of policies that fall under this mission, as well as detailing the varied behaviors that result from nuclear acquisition, some of which are far from stabilizing. For those interested in IR theory, it is perhaps worth noting that many of the behaviors documented in these articles tend to accord with the expectations of offensive realism – a point acknowledged by Gavin and echoed in a number of recent articles (44).<sup>11</sup> Although fleshing out the full implications of these findings for IR is beyond the scope of this review, these papers have set an example of the benefits that can arise from reevaluating our understanding of nuclear politics.

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<sup>9</sup> Mark S. Bell, "Beyond Emboldenment: How Acquiring Nuclear Weapons Can Change Foreign Policy," *International Security* 40:1 (Summer 2015): 87-119. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00204](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00204).

<sup>10</sup> The difference in view between these two camps in their sanguine versus alarmist assessments of the effects of nuclear weapons may go some way towards explaining the variation in the pursuit of nonproliferation across time (and U.S. presidents) acknowledged by Gavin (34).

<sup>11</sup> See also Austin Long and Brendan Rittenhouse Green, "Stalking the Secure Second Strike: Intelligence, Counterforce, and Nuclear Strategy," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38:1-2 (2015): 38-73. The two authors provide evidence of U.S. efforts to achieve nuclear primacy during the Cold War by developing the intelligence capability to track and target submarines and mobile missiles.

**Review by Leopoldo Nuti, Roma Tre University**

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If there is any doubt that nuclear studies are undergoing a veritable renaissance, as Scott Sagan pointed out, these essays are here to dispel it.<sup>1</sup> All of them offer insightful, rich, cross-disciplinary perspectives on the dilemmas of the nuclear age, and more specifically on the problems of nuclear proliferation. All of them are based on new and often very original research, present a wealth of innovative documentary evidence, and display a fresh methodological approach by moving freely between history and theory.

Frank Gavin's essay is perhaps the most provocative in outlining not just a new approach to the study of non-proliferation but indeed in proposing what amounts to a bold reinterpretation of U.S. foreign policy.<sup>2</sup> Gavin argues that we should move beyond containment and the expansion of liberal capitalism, the two mainstream perspectives that are regularly used to analyze U.S. diplomacy during and after the Cold war. There is a third neglected dimension in U.S. grand strategy, Gavin writes, which is as consistent as the other two and perhaps even more so, namely the strenuous, systematic effort to inhibit the diffusion of nuclear technologies to friends and foes alike. According to the author, this was a goal that was unrelated with, and sometimes in contrast to, the other two strategies of containment and expansion. Gavin suggests that scholars should seriously take it into account for a number of reasons: it provides a better insight in the international history of the Cold War and post-Cold War era, it offers a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of nuclear proliferation, and it adds a most useful contribution to the debate about the future posture that U.S. foreign policy should adopt. Gavin's tight argumentation, as well as the relevant historical evidence he offers, forces us to question a number of consolidated assumptions and to rethink our understanding of U.S. foreign policy in the nuclear age. His basic conclusion, namely that the U.S. systematically tried to prevent the diffusion of atomic weapons to other countries and/or to limit the consequences of such a diffusion when it could not altogether be prevented, is a no-nonsense, sound argument. It is not entirely a new one, perhaps, as Shane Maddock had already argued along similar lines,<sup>3</sup> but it is presented with a host of new insights—particularly relying on the work of Or Rabinowitz which will be discussed below—and the remarkable clarity which is one of this scholar's trademarks. Gavin is also most convincing in trying to explain the rationale of U.S. non-proliferation policies as deeply grounded in a realistic defense of strategic national interests rather than in a somewhat fuzzy idealistic adherence to vague international norms (18).

Sometimes, however, despite the flexibility of the interpretive paradigm, the arguments push a bit too far. Gavin does state, for instance, that the importance of the strategy of inhibition must be assessed by looking at its interconnection with the other two main strains of U.S. foreign policy, in order to identify “trade-offs with the openness and containment missions, and the changing preferences of new presidential administrations” (18). He also looks at the vast arrays of policies in the non-proliferation toolkit and he identifies three main

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<sup>1</sup> Scott D. Sagan, “Two Renaissances in Nuclear Security Studies,” in *H-Diplo/ISSF Forum 2* (2014): 2-10, <https://issforum.org/ISSF/PDF/ISSF-Forum-2.pdf> (<https://issforum.org/forums/2-what-we-talk-about-when-we-talk-about-nuclear-weapons>).

<sup>2</sup> Francis J. Gavin, “Strategies of Inhibition: U.S. Grand Strategy, the Nuclear Revolution, and Nonproliferation,” *International Security* 40:1 (Summer 2015): 9-46. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00205](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00205).

<sup>3</sup> Shane Maddock, *Nuclear Apartheid: The Quest for American Atomic Supremacy from World War II to the Present* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

sets of strategies—legal, coercive, and assurance—which were used alternatively or in any combination of the three. Yet it seems to me that as flexible and comprehensive as his paradigm might be, there is slightly too much emphasis on continuity rather than on the exceptions, which are far more interesting to investigate and more difficult to explain.

In particular, a crucial linkage that needs a deeper explanation is what explains the changing priority assigned to fighting proliferation at the beginning of the 1960s. Up to a certain moment in time, the U.S. had to balance two different priorities, namely, reinforcing the Atlantic alliance to contain the Soviet Union and colluding with Moscow to stop the diffusion of atomic weapons. It tried to do both, as demonstrated by the repeated efforts to prevent the nuclearization of Western Europe in the 1950s by preventing the circulation not just of weapons but also of atomic knowledge and technology among its European allies. The attempts to stop the European Atomic Energy community (EURATOM) from developing its own separation plant, for instance, is a case in point. And yet after the crises of 1956-1957 that almost rocked NATO, the Eisenhower administration seemed to find it inevitable to begin to share some of its nuclear wizardry within NATO. One could argue that such a sharing was indeed a continuation of the U.S. non-proliferation policy, as indeed it was, in order to prevent a fully independent Western European deterrent—but the objective result was to stimulate even more interest in Western Europe and to lead to a number of situations where U.S. control over its own weapons became dangerously thin, as the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy (JCAE) found out in its inspection of U.S. bases in Europe in 1960. In short, even if such a policy can be construed as a non-proliferation policy, the fact remains that the U.S. chose a limited sharing of its nuclear arsenal with the allies rather than colluding with its main opponent, the Soviet Union, in order to stop the diffusion of atomic weapons.

Why did this change? The policy of nuclear sharing, Gavin argues in footnote 93, was “dropped *in part* because of fears [it] encouraged proliferation.” (34) Later on he adds that “A dramatic shift took place in the mid-1960s, as several issues—including the fears over China’s nuclearization and West Germany’s interest in nuclear weapons—elevated the importance of inhibition in U.S. grand strategy and convinced American policymakers to pay a high price to achieve it.” (38)

This might as well have been the case, but it would have been important to discuss the other relevant issues that “elevated the importance of inhibition in U.S. grand strategy” and therefore in part led to the abandonment of the previous nuclear sharing schemes. Why did the U.S. move from a strategy that prioritized containment at the expenses of proliferation to one which reversed this order? There seems to be an implication in the article, that non-proliferation might be the key variable to explain this shift: it became so important that a certain degree of collusion with the adversary turned out to be the only way to prevent it. I disagree. I do not think that fighting proliferation was the key variable that explains the rapprochement with Moscow, détente and everything else that followed. More traditionally, I stick to the old argument that it was the gradual achievement of strategic parity by the Soviet Union that forced the U.S. to reassess its previous policies: the combination of the new vulnerability which the Kennedy administration had to face with the chances of having to deal with a growing number of nuclear enemies as well as with a number of nuclear friends that could not be trusted, like France, exerted an irresistible pressure for the U.S. to change course. I would argue, therefore, that it was both the rapid spreading of technology—particularly among non-Western countries such as China and India—and the need to stabilize the arms race with the USSR that exerted a powerful influence on the U.S. strategic posture. The bold policy of nuclear sharing with the Allies became riskier and riskier in an age of mutual strategic vulnerability, and it became imperative for the U.S. to restrain and limit the dangers of a nuclear holocaust. If until the early 1960s the U.S. could consider strengthening

the alliance so important that it had to twist its non-proliferation stance, this was no longer the case once technological changes made crucial the avoidance of a Soviet strike. The Berlin and Cuban crises drove home—at least in Washington and in Moscow—the lesson of how dangerous a place the world was fast becoming, and how important it was to centralize the command and control of the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

Some of the European strategists like French Air Force General Pierre Gallois had seen this coming all along. As long as the U.S. had a clear strategic superiority, it made sense to deploy American Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBM) and Medium Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBM) on the territory of the European allies to strengthen the alliance and keep the Soviet Union in check: the U.S. was invulnerable anyway. It might even make sense to allow the Allies a certain degree of control over these weapons. Once the USSR became able to strike the U.S., however, there was a sudden shift of priorities and war prevention became crucial—at the expense of the alliance. The alternative that Gallois suggested—that the U.S. should actually *encourage* proliferation among the European allies in order to continue to keep the Soviet Union under pressure—was too risky to be considered. But if this is the case, a strategy of non-proliferation cannot be considered the independent variable: Gavin says that it was “often” so—but it would be important to qualify this statement a bit further and specify what “often” means exactly. He writes that “understanding the strategies of inhibition, however, reveals that a key—if not the key—variable in determining many proliferation outcomes since 1945 may have been the grand strategy of the United States” (43). This might indeed have been the case, but in the crucial shift of the 1960s, when indeed non-proliferation took center stage in U.S. foreign policy, it was not as independent a variable as Gavin argues.

The crucial issue of when and why the superpowers decided to switch from a nuclear sharing mode to a non-proliferation one is also discussed in depth by Andrew Coe and Jane Vaynman, even though it is not the main focus of their article, which intends mostly to describe the nature, rather than the origins, of the non-proliferation regime.<sup>4</sup> Their main goal, in fact, is to demonstrate how the whole regime can be effective: the superpower collusion worked, the authors argue, because many states adhered voluntarily to the setting up of the regime and there were “relatively few spoilers,” i.e., states that needed to be coerced into giving up their nuclear ambitions. Nevertheless the rationale of the *collusion* between the U.S. and the USSR is an important part of the story and the authors dedicate quite some time to explaining it. Their approach bears a strict resemblance to Gavin’s, but they more forcefully place non-proliferation at the center of the evolution of the international system. They plainly state that “The experience of dealing with newly nuclear—and newly obstreperous—allies led the superpowers to reassess the intra-alliance effects of proliferation [...] With both superpowers weighing the intra-alliance effects of proliferation more heavily, both became more willing to pay the costs of enforcement under a nonproliferation regime, and so the NPT [Non-Proliferation Treaty] was agreed”.<sup>5</sup> Even more than by Gavin’s assessment, I am perplexed by this explanation as it looks at proliferation as a self-contained phenomenon, neglecting the broader context in which these events took place

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<sup>4</sup> Andrew J. Coe and Jane Vaynman, “Collusion and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime,” *The Journal of Politics* 77:4 (2015): 983-997. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/682080>.

<sup>5</sup> I will not deal with the theoretical part of the chapter that looks at the construction of the model. I must say, however, that I am perplexed by its fundamental assumption that “the superpowers—and only the superpowers—are capable of stopping a state that has chosen to seek nuclear weapons from getting them,” [985] as it seems to ignore that mid-level powers can do that too, as demonstrated by Israel’s attacks against the Iraqi (7 June 1981) and Syrian (6 September 2007) reactors.

and by the fact that sometimes decision-makers change their mind independently from the superpowers' actions. I remain unconvinced that the French 'ructions' within NATO or the Chinese tensions with Moscow were the cause of the shift from nuclear sharing to superpower collusion – they might have been influential, but neither were the key variable: for the Soviets, the main concern was Germany all along, not China—and the more the situation deteriorated in Asia, the more the Kremlin felt it necessary to stabilize the situation in Europe. The fact of the matter remains that strategic parity and mutual vulnerability between the USSR and the U.S. forced the superpowers to come to terms with the status quo in the Cold War and to find a way to stabilizing the situation in Europe. Preventing further spreading of nuclear weapons, and particularly to Germany, the country whose division lay at the heart of the Cold War, was the crux of the matter. Non-proliferation was partly an off-spring, not the cause, of this change of hearts. There is no doubt that once they agreed upon the most crucial aspect of the negotiations—the wording of Article 1—both superpowers colluded, as the authors repeatedly point out. Coe and Vaynman rightly offer the reader abundant evidence of such a collusion in “responding to suspicious nuclear activity by another state” (991), putting pressure on non-nuclear states to accept the regime, and in not trying to “provide assistance, reassurance, or any support for” nuclear aspirants (994). They offer a reasonable argument but it somehow falls short of an adequate representation of the proliferation puzzle by 1) casting the world into binary terms of nuclear and non-nuclear states, thereby neglecting all the gray areas in between and 2) by framing the issue in a-historical terms, as different states did different things in different historical moments.<sup>6</sup> Once again, by removing the analysis of proliferation from its historical context, it becomes harder to explain why both the U.S. and the USSR took an attitude of benign neglect in certain cases and did not at other times, or why they switched attitudes toward the same countries at different times

Understanding the interconnection between different priorities in U.S. foreign policy is also at the center of the fascinating essay by Or Rabinowitz and Nicholas Miller.<sup>7</sup> Expounding one of the central themes of

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<sup>6</sup> Incidentally, I find myself in the unpleasant position of pedantically commenting that the authors that they have not read my work,—one of the most unpleasant things a reviewer can do—but I am afraid that indeed they have not. In Table 1 they cast Italy as a country that expressed early support for the NPT, requiring no pressure from the U.S. but only some diplomatic attention. This is plainly wrong. I have repeatedly described [L. Nuti, *La sfida nucleare. La politica estera italiana e le armi atomiche, 1945-1991* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007); L. Nuti, “Negotiating with the Enemy and Having Problems with the Allies: The impact of the Non-Proliferation Treaty on Transatlantic Relations”, in Jussi Hanhimaki, Georges-Henri Soutou and Basil Germond, *The Routledge Handbook of Transatlantic Security* (London: Routledge, 2010), 89-102; L. Nuti, “Italy’s Nuclear Choices”, in *UNISCI Discussion Papers* 25 (January 2011), 167-181] how Italy put up an obstreperous fight against the NPT, surprising the U.S. by the intensity of this reaction, and finally giving up its resistance only in 1975, the last of the Western European countries (except France) to ratify the treaty. I would also argue with their statement that neither superpower tried to interfere with the nuclear status of the countries in the opponent’s bloc: as the work of Eliza Gheorghe demonstrates, the U.S. did just that, and used the prospect of exporting nuclear technology to reinforce Rumania’s maverick stance inside the Soviet bloc. See Eliza Gheorghe, “Atomic Maverick: Romania’s negotiations for nuclear technology, 1964-1970,” *Cold War History* 13:3 (2013): 373-392. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2013.776542>.

<sup>7</sup> Or Rabinowitz and Nicholas L. Miller, “Keeping the Bombs in the Basement: U.S. Nonproliferation Policy toward Israel, South Africa, and Pakistan,” *International Security* 40:1 (2015): 47-86. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00207](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00207).

Rabinowitz' highly illuminating book,<sup>8</sup> the essay explains how the U.S. tried to limit the negative impact of the nuclear choices it could not restrain—namely those of Israel, South Africa, and Pakistan. In each of these cases the U.S. tried as best as it could to prevent the friendly government of an allied country to develop its own nuclear arsenal—and failed. Such a failure forced Washington to adopt a 'second best' strategy which would limit the negative consequences of its impotence, by asking each countries not to openly reveal its nuclear status and refrain from testing its newly acquired capacities. In her book, Rabinowitz persuasively used a rich mix of archival evidence and some very interesting oral history recollections to tell a very important story, demonstrating that Washington's non-proliferation policies actually *continued* even after a country had decided to cross the nuclear threshold. It is also a very nuanced story, in which different U.S. administrations held different priorities: some, like Jimmy Carter's, were very supportive of the NPT and more reluctant to make compromises. Others, like that of Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, were more indifferent to the value of the regime and more inclined to strike bargains with potential proliferators: Reagan "saw America's global campaign against Soviet expansion as Washington's top foreign policy priority, giving primacy to improving and strengthening ties with friendly states which might aid this battle against the Soviets, like South Africa and Pakistan, over perceived less relevant entities like the NPT. It was clear from the early days of the administration that NPT adherence would not be at the top of the agenda; Reagan did not share the same qualms Carter had on damaging American non-proliferation policy by making more exceptions and he chose the road formerly taken by Nixon, concluding the two deals with Pakistan and South Africa and taking Kissinger's assertion to the extreme."<sup>9</sup>

The joint article with Miller, however, removes all nuance and overstretches the argument that Rabinowitz offers in her book, and tries to demonstrate that non-proliferation was always and consistently a central priority of U.S. foreign policy. In the book the emphasis is on the bargaining between non-proliferation and Cold-War priorities, and on the willingness of a number of administrations to adjust and compromise. In the article, on the other hand, there is a perceptible shift towards emphasizing the continuity of the U.S. approach, thus presenting the U.S. attempts at mitigating the negative consequences of nuclear acquisitions as the consistent extension of America's non-proliferation policy. I find this different approach less satisfactory and less persuasive, as it leaves out the larger Cold-War context. In all the cases chosen by the authors, as a matter of fact, the U.S. was trying to balance its nuclear inhibition strategy with the strategic requirements of the Cold War—be they the strengthening of its allies, or the necessity of avoiding embarrassing confrontations with them at a time of renewed Soviet activism in a number of key regions (the Middle East in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Southern Africa in the early 1980s, Pakistan after the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan). Preventing any further diffusion of nuclear weapons was clearly an important goal for U.S. foreign policy. Nevertheless it seems that the reason why Washington adapted the Israeli precedent to these other cases was because there were higher priorities in the international arena that forced it to come to terms with the nuclear ambitions of their clients/partners. The Nixon-Golda Meir deal between President Nixon and Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, therefore, turned out to be a useful Cold-War tool to disentangle the U.S. from some rather knotty situations. When push came to shove, the overall strategic priority clearly trumped the non-proliferation one.

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<sup>8</sup> Or Rabinowitz, *Bargaining on Nuclear Tests. Washington and its Cold War Deals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>9</sup> Rabinowitz, *Bargaining on Nuclear Tests*, 201.

This conclusion seems to be supported by a case study that provides some fresh documentary evidence on Soviet policy towards the Indian nuclear program, which unfortunately is not cited by any of the essays under discussion here. Balazs Szalontai's 2011 "The Elephant in the Room" offers a series of examples which almost symmetrically match the U.S. pattern of alternating between hostility and benign neglect towards the nuclear ambitions of a client state according to its own strategic priorities.<sup>10</sup> By 1967-1968 the Soviet Union was irritated by the Indian criticism of the NPT because it might have had a negative impact on the future of the treaty, which for Moscow was crucial for restraining any West German aspirations: "Moscow had good reason to fear that New Delhi's opposition would encourage similar opposition in Bonn."<sup>11</sup> In a key document that Szalontai quotes, the Soviet priorities are presented rather explicitly by a Soviet diplomat at the UN: "The treaty is directed against the FRG, and even if we suppose, just for the sake of debate, that India or Pakistan or another neutral country might manage to obtain nuclear weapons, this would not cause any serious international tension. In contrast, the FRG's nuclear weapons would definitely evoke the danger of World War III [emphasis in the original]." On the contrary, when India carried out its first test in May 1974, the Soviet Union "refrained from criticizing it" because West Germany had already signed and ratified the NPT, and because a nuclear India might be useful to balance China.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the deterioration in Soviet-Pakistani relations, Moscow was willing to tolerate the prospect of an Indian attack against Pakistani nuclear facilities.<sup>13</sup> "Moscow's views about India's nuclear program, concludes Szalontai, seem to have been more decisively shaped by the Kremlin's specific strategic objectives than by the general principles of non-proliferation."<sup>14</sup> When comparing this behavior with that of the U.S., there seems to be a remarkable symmetry: the non-proliferation policies of both superpowers seem to be a luxury they could afford only when there were no other more urgent strategic priorities. In times of crisis, however, it was a lot harder to estrange critical allies.

Finally, Mark Bell's essay addresses another important issue in the proliferation puzzle, namely how does the acquisition of nuclear weapons affect the behavior of a state.<sup>15</sup> His purpose is to fill a serious vacuum in the literature by dispelling some of the clichés that are often used to describe the conduct of a state after its crossing of the nuclear threshold. He does so by first describing the different attitudes a government can adopt after acquiring a full-fledged operational capacity and then by testing his categories against the specific case of Great Britain in the mid-fifties. He then looks at British policies towards its allies and in the broader Middle East to find out whether there was any perceptible shift in the attitude of the government in London, searching for "discontinuities in British foreign policy behavior caused by nuclear acquisition." Bell is aware that proving his point is particularly irksome, and that finding a "smoking gun" would be almost impossible

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<sup>10</sup> Balazs Szalontai, *The Elephant in the Room: The Soviet Union and India's Nuclear Program, 1967-1989*, NPIHP Working Paper 1, November 2011.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-18.

<sup>15</sup> Mark S. Bell, "Beyond Emboldenment. How Acquiring Nuclear Weapons Can Change Foreign Policy," *International Security* 40:1 (Summer 2015): 87-119. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00204](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00204).

(101). Thus he also looks for indirect evidence by examining “speeches, writings, and internal deliberations.” Eventually, Bell finds indeed a discontinuity which might have been caused by a newly acquired sense of security. This led the British government to “bolster its junior allies” and to “to respond to challenges more steadfastly and independently of [...] the United States” (103).

The argument is sound and the evidence that Bell provides is persuasive, but in my opinion it is stronger in the case of bolstering than in the case of acting independently from the U.S. My perplexity here comes from the rather limited empirical evidence available: in the case of bolstering, Bell’s argumentation is quite convincing as he looks at British behavior across a very ample spectrum, examining shifting attitudes in Asia, the Middle East, and in Europe. In the case of acting with more steadfastness and independently from the U.S., however, he focuses on British policy in the Middle East. Bell argues that “because U.S. and British preferences diverged most dramatically in the Middle East, focusing on challenges in that region sheds light on changes in the level of British independence from the United States, while holding a range of factors constant across the cases.” (109) The examples he offers are very interesting and they provide persuasive evidence of a more self-assured behavior in London after the acquisition of a new nuclear capacity. But can one infer from the behavior of one government in a specific region at a given moment in time that its political attitude had been changed for all regions and for all times? Important as the Middle East was for Britain’s self-perception as a great power, can one argue that the British government would have followed a similar approach everywhere else, for instance in Europe, which after all remained at the core of the Cold War?

All of the above considerations, in my mind, point in one direction, namely, the question as to what is nuclear history and why do we need to study it. My answer is that it is not just about nuclear weapons, terrifyingly important as they are: it is a fundamental conceptual tool to understand and investigate the broader contours of the evolution of the international system since 1945. If we narrow it down to a self-contained field with its own logic, rules, and jargon, there is a serious risk that we may reduce it to the kind of niche history—*à la* history of European integration—that would sacrifice the tremendous explicative power that it can offer. Nuclear history is at its most useful when it sheds an unexpected light on the larger evolution of the international system—that is, when it is used as history. Showing a decision-maker the complexity of history is in my mind much more policy relevant than providing him with a theoretical matrix of dubious applicability to the world out there. A second advantage of adopting a more historically-oriented perspective is that it shows why U.S. non-proliferation policies took center stage after the end of the Cold War, when there were no other urgent priorities to deal with—or, on the contrary, why after 9/11 the Bush administration decided to cut a deal with India when there actually was such an urgent priority that required tweaking its non-proliferation stance. Stressing the compromises rather than the continuity leads to a further conclusion that may be of some relevance for our understanding of the whole regime of non-proliferation, namely that it should not be conceived as a binary, black and white, yes-or-no kind of formula. Because non-proliferation is just one of the many variables that the great powers have to grapple with, the regime is based on a series of compromises and ambiguities, which include such hard-to-define concepts as hedging or latency. This is probably why it is so difficult to come up with a comprehensive, parsimonious theory of non-proliferation: as Scott Sagan wrote many years ago, “nuclear weapons proliferation and nuclear restraint have occurred in the

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past, and can occur in the future, for more than one reason: *different historical cases are best explained by different causal models.*<sup>16</sup> [my emphasis]

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<sup>16</sup> Scott D. Sagan, “Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb,” *International Security* 21 (Winter 1996/1997): 85; see also Tanya Ogilvie-White, “Is There a Theory of Nuclear Proliferation?” *Nonproliferation Review* 4:1 (Fall 1996): 43–60. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10736709608436652>.

## Review by Elisabeth Roehrlich, University of Vienna and Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

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In February 1956, delegates from twelve countries came together in Washington D.C. to negotiate the statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).<sup>1</sup> Shortly before these negotiations began, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles met with senior officials from the Atomic Energy Commission and the Department of Defense to discuss the U.S. position on this new international organization. What should be the main goals of the United States? The most explicit answer was given by President Dwight D. Eisenhower's special assistant on disarmament, Harold Stassen. He argued that the priority of U.S. foreign policy was to "prevent, retard, or minimize the development of nuclear weapons programs in other countries."<sup>2</sup> The verbs "prevent, retard, or minimize" were underlined in the memorandum of the conversation.

In recent years, historians and political scientists have paid new attention to matters of nuclear proliferation and nonproliferation—yet Stassen's nuance is often missed. The debate on Iran's nuclear program has reinforced the scholarly preoccupation with how states can be prevented from developing nuclear weapons capabilities and what we can learn from past examples.<sup>3</sup> Less attention, however, has been paid to the question of how existing nuclear weapons programs have been retarded or minimized in the past, and which role all this plays in nonproliferation policies. The four articles under review here, by contrast, remind their readers of an important fact: that we talk about different things when we talk about nonproliferation. Nuclear proliferation and nonproliferation are metaphors, not analytical terms, and they only entered the policy lexicon in the late 1950s and early 1960s. For instance, the official records of the Conference of the IAEA statute in 1956, hundreds of pages long and covering several weeks of discussion, mention the term "proliferation" only once, and not even in the context of nuclear weapons, but in a warning of the "proliferation of paper" that the huge bureaucracy of a new international organization might cause.<sup>4</sup>

That we talk about different things when we talk about nonproliferation becomes particularly clear in Or Rabinowitz and Nicholas Miller's enlightening article on U.S. nonproliferation policies toward Israel, South

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<sup>1</sup> This twelve-nation group included representatives from the United States, the Soviet Union, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, India, Portugal, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group 59, Records Relating to Disarmament, 1943-1962, Box 142, Folder: IAEA Policy Position Proposal, Part 2 of 3, "Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation: International Atomic Energy Agency," 3 February 1956.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Gene Gerzhoy, "Alliance Coercion and Nuclear Restraint: How the United States Thwarted West Germany's Nuclear Ambitions," *International Security* 39:4 (Spring 2015): 91-129, DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00198](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00198); Rebecca K.C. Hersman and Robert Peters, "Nuclear U-Turns: Learning from South Korean and Taiwanese Rollbacks," *Nonproliferation Review* 13:3 (November 2006): 539-553. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10736700601071629>.

<sup>4</sup> IAEA Archives, Records of the Conference of the Statute, Sir Alec Randall (United Kingdom) at the Conference on the Statute, Verbatim Record of the First Meeting of the Committee of the Whole, CS/OR.14, 3 October 1956.

Africa, and Pakistan during the Cold War.<sup>5</sup> The three countries had two things in common: they were U.S. allies or friendly nations and they developed independent nuclear capabilities. Rabinowitz and Miller challenge the conventional wisdom that, in dealing with these three countries, the United States abandoned its nonproliferation policies for geostrategic or domestic political reasons. The authors argue that quite the opposite was the case. The United States realized that more nuclear weapons states were not in the national interest, and it therefore tried to prevent Israel, South Africa, and Pakistan from going nuclear. When these initial efforts failed, the United States brokered deals with each country not to test a nuclear device and not to openly declare the nuclear capability. According to Rabinowitz and Miller, this was not an alternative to, but an integral part of U.S. nonproliferation policy. They conclude: “Nonproliferation policy does not end when a state develops a capability to develop a nuclear device.” (48)

To what extent is a secret understanding on non-testing a nonproliferation tool? According to Rabinowitz and Miller, such an arrangement can minimize at least some of the destabilizing effects that new nuclear powers can have on international security. An open test might undermine the credibility of U.S. nonproliferation efforts, provoke further states to develop nuclear capabilities, and lead to a nuclear domino effect. Rabinowitz and Miller’s article is based on archival research as well as a number of interviews with decision-makers. Much of this material was assembled by Rabinowitz for her path-breaking book, *Bargaining on Nuclear Tests*.<sup>6</sup> The article is rich in fascinating detail that makes it not only an insightful but also a most enjoyable read.

Like Rabinowitz and Miller, Francis Gavin looks at the history of U.S. nonproliferation policy toward other states, but he is interested both in a wider time frame and a broader geography.<sup>7</sup> Gavin’s article examines the global level and covers the years from 1945 to the recent debate about the so-called Iran deal. He argues that nuclear nonproliferation and counter-proliferation have been key pillars of U.S. grand strategy ever since the end of World War II, equally important as the containment of the Soviet Union and the belief in free trade and open markets.

Interestingly and importantly, Gavin introduces the notion of “inhibition,” which includes both nonproliferation and counter-proliferation policies (9). In light of the definitional blurriness that surrounds the terms nonproliferation and counter-proliferation, this is a helpful and compelling concept. “Nonproliferation” is usually associated with policies to prevent the emergence of new nuclear weapon states, often pursued in international contexts, for example through the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). “Counter-proliferation” is used to describe measures taken after a state has (or is believed to have) developed a nuclear weapons capability, often based on actions of individual states (such as the Israeli attack on the Osirak reactor in Iraq in 1981) or groups of states (such as the so-called “coalition of the willing” in the 2003

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<sup>5</sup> Or Rabinowitz and Nicholas L. Miller, “Keeping the Bombs in the Basement: U.S. Nonproliferation Policy toward Israel, South Africa, and Pakistan,” *International Security* 40:1 (Summer 2015): 47-86. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00207](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00207).

<sup>6</sup> Or Rabinowitz, *Bargaining on Nuclear Tests: Washington and its Cold War Deals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Francis J. Gavin, “Strategies of Inhibition: U.S. Grand Strategy, the Nuclear Revolution, and Nonproliferation,” *International Security* 40:1 (Summer 2015): 9-46. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00205](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00205).

invasion of Iraq).<sup>8</sup> As Rabinowitz and Miller demonstrate in their article, reality does not always show these clear distinctions. Similar to Stassen's words from the mid-1950s, Gavin's definition of "inhibition" covers different levels of U.S. action: "slow, halt, and reverse" (10). He concludes: "The objective of the United States' strategies of inhibition was and remains simple: to prevent other states ... from developing or acquiring independent nuclear forces, and when this effort fails, to reverse or mitigate the consequences of proliferation" (19).

In many historical examples, Gavin demonstrates the revolutionary impact that nuclear weapons had on international peace and security. Because of this, he argues, the United States applied strategies of inhibition to friends and enemies, and at times was even willing to cooperate with its Cold War rival, the Soviet Union, to pursue this aim.

While both articles sharpen our understanding of U.S. nonproliferation policies considerably, they miss the opportunity to explain why we have this discussion on the history of U.S. nonproliferation policies in the first place. One could argue that there has been (and still is) a tendency to oversell the consistency of U.S. nonproliferation policies at times that this message is politically wanted. When the Lyndon B. Johnson administration decided to pursue a global nonproliferation agreement—the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)—political background papers claimed boldly that "it has been the policy of every American national administration since the end of World War II to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons."<sup>9</sup> Significantly, the American "Atoms for Peace" program, which is often interpreted as a facilitator rather than a preventer of nuclear proliferation, was missing in this narrative. A similar tendency can be observed in the scholarly debates that surrounded the 2015 Iran deal—the time at which the articles under review were published. Rabinowitz and Miller also published an op-ed in the Washington Post's *Monkey Cage* entitled "Why the Iran deal is a logical extension of U.S. nonproliferation policy."<sup>10</sup> It would be interesting to historicize these debates.

The question of superpower cooperation on nonproliferation is at the heart of Andrew Coe and Jane Vaynman's article in the *Journal of Politics*.<sup>11</sup> While Gavin as well as Rabinowitz and Miller focus primarily on U.S. nonproliferation policies, Coe and Vaynman reveal how important America's Cold War enemy, the Soviet Union, was as a partner in this mission. In doing so, the two authors challenge the two dominant theories about the emergence of the NPT. The treaty is mostly interpreted either as a cartel, in which the superpowers imposed a discriminatory regime on other states, or as a grand bargain, in which the nuclear have-nots gave up their right to build nuclear weapons in exchange for peaceful nuclear assistance and the promise of eventual disarmament. Coe and Vaynman develop and test their theory of "superpower collusion"

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<sup>8</sup> For proliferation and nonproliferation see a most recent edited volume: Joseph F. Pilat and Nathan E. Bush, *Routledge Handbook of Nuclear Proliferation and Policy* (Oxford: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>9</sup> Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, LBJ Papers, President, 1963-1969, National Security File, Subject File, "Background Paper on Nonproliferation," Box 26.

<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Miller and Or Rabinowitz, "Why the Iran deal is a logical extension of U.S. nonproliferation policies," *The Washington Post: Monkey Cage*, 21 April 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew J. Coe and Jane Vaynman, "Collusion and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime," *Journal of Politics* 77:4 (October 2015): 983-997. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/682080>.

based on historical evidence. Their article is therefore an example of how the disciplines of political science and history can fruitfully team up in (re)writing nuclear history.

Coe and Vaynman speak of “superpower collusion” rather than “cooperation,” because “the superpowers came to this understanding in private and sometimes acted to disguise it, and their cooperation came at the expense of certain states” (983). According to the authors, “the superpowers could have pushed the NPT forward as early as the 1950s ... however, until well into the 1960s, each superpower instead saw substantial advantages to be gained from selective proliferation to certain of their clients” (989). Here the reader would like to learn more about the rupture identified by Coe and Vaynman. How do earlier forms of superpower cooperation fit into the story of collusion—for example the creation of the IAEA (1953-1957) or the conclusion of the Partial Test Ban Treaty (1963)? Coe’s and Vaynman’s article is a stimulating contribution that asks important questions. Because of the mathematical models used in this article, historians might be hesitant to read it—but Coe and Vaynman’s work will be of interest not only to political science departments but also to historians of the Cold War and the nuclear age.

This is equally true for Mark Bell’s engaging article on “how acquiring nuclear weapons can change foreign policy.”<sup>12</sup> In answering this as-yet understudied question, Bell, like his colleagues, provides new nuance to the scholarly debate on matters of proliferation and nonproliferation. Bell debunks the dominant perception that nuclear weapons “embolden” a state as too simple. Rather, the acquisition of nuclear weapons can change a states’ foreign policy in six distinct but often overlapping ways: it can lead to aggression, expansion, independence, bolstering, steadfastness, and compromise. To underline his argument, Bell offers a number of historical examples for each behavior. While he often refers to Pakistan, Great Britain, and—too a lesser extent—France, the DPRK, China, the Soviet Union and the United States, the reader would like to read more about the three other nuclear weapons states—Israel, South Africa, and India. Bell neither explains how these countries fit in the typology, nor how he has developed this typology.

In order to test his theory, Bell offers an in-depth account of the United Kingdom’s early nuclear history, with a focus on the 1950s. Bell’s analytical distinction between six foreign policy behaviors of nuclear powers adds important precision to the scholarly debate. It is also policy relevant, as he exemplifies with the Iran case: “a nuclear Iran that displays greater steadfastness is likely less concerning than an Iran that pursues aggression” (118). Like Rabinowitz and Miller, Bell also contributes to our understanding of nuclear tests. Bell shows that in the British case it was not the first nuclear test in 1952 that changed the country’s foreign policy behavior, but the development of delivery capabilities in 1955. However, Bell’s argumentative distinction between the “acquisition of nuclear weapons” and the “foreign policy of states” remains somewhat vague. Is the decision to acquire nuclear weapons not an act of foreign policy in and of itself?

“The nuclear revolution has been with us for so long and has become so enmeshed in world politics that one sometimes forgets the profound and unprecedented challenge it presented,” explains Gavin (42). The four articles under review here remind us of the revolutionary impact of nuclear weapons on world affairs, and they significantly enhance our understanding of these important matters. They also demonstrate something else:

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<sup>12</sup> Mark Bell, “Beyond Emboldenment: How Acquiring Nuclear Weapons Can Change Foreign Policy,” *International Security* 40:1 (Summer 2015): 87-119. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00204](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00204).

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how fruitful the exchange between political scientists and historians can be in the study of the nuclear age. This is a powerful and welcome “superpower collusion” of its own kind.