



# Crisis Bargaining and Nuclear Blackmail

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# Introduction

- Authors discuss if nuclear weapons offer advantages in international crisis bargaining.
  - They distinguish between nuclear arms as an instrument of compellence not as a deterrent
  - Focus on compellence
    - Getting concessions from target country
- Sescher and Fuhrmann argue that nuclear weapons do not make good compellents
  - Nuclear Arms only destroy and cannot seize disputed territory or resources
  - The international backlash would be huge and not worth it if a country used a nuclear bomb for something other than self defense.

# Hypotheses 1A & 1B

H1A: Compellent threats from nuclear states are more likely to succeed, on average, than compellent threats from nonnuclear states.

H1B: Compellent threats from nuclear states are more likely to succeed, on average, than compellent threats from nonnuclear states only if they are issued against nonnuclear states.

# Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2: Compellent threats from nuclear states are no more effective, on average, than threats from nonnuclear states.

# Research Design

- Militarized Compellent Threats (MCT) Data Set
  - 242 Challenger-target dyads
  - Contains compellent threats where nuclear arms were and were not a threat
  - Threat is verbal or nonverbal i.e. troop mobilization
- Variables
  - Nuclear possession of both challenger and target
  - Control Variables
    - Capability Ratio- Conventional military capabilities
    - Stakes- High Stakes i.e. territory or leadership vs Low Stakes everything else
    - Resolve- threat credibility
    - History Dispute- how often have the countries had conflict in past

TABLE 2. Partially or completely unsuccessful compellent threats from nuclear-armed challengers, 1945–2001

Challenger	Target	Year	Demand
China	India	1965	Withdraw from outposts in Kashmir
China	India	1965	Destroy military structures along Chinese border
China	Vietnam	1979	End occupation of Cambodia
France	Serb Republic	1993	Accept Bosnian peace plan
France	Serbia	1998	Stop ethnic cleansing in Kosovo
Great Britain	Saudi Arabia	1952	Withdraw from Buraimi Oasis
Great Britain	Egypt	1956	Open Suez Canal
Great Britain	Argentina	1982	Withdraw from Falkland Islands
Great Britain	Iraq	1990	Withdraw troops from Kuwait
Great Britain	Serb Republic	1993	Accept Bosnian peace plan
Great Britain	Serbia	1998	Stop ethnic cleansing in Kosovo
Great Britain	Iraq	1998	Readmit weapons inspectors
Great Britain	Afghanistan	2001	Extradite al Qaeda leaders
India	Pakistan	2001	Suppress terrorist organizations
Israel	Lebanon	1972	Expel PLO guerrillas
Israel	Syria	1978	Stop shelling Beirut
South Africa	Mozambique	1980	Stop supporting ANC rebels
Israel	Syria	1981	Remove surface-to-air missile batteries
South Africa	Lesotho	1985	Stop supporting ANC rebels
South Africa	Botswana	1985(×2)	Stop supporting ANC rebels
South Africa	Zimbabwe	1985	Stop supporting ANC rebels
South Africa	Zambia	1985	Stop supporting ANC rebels
Soviet Union	Yugoslavia	1949	Stop repression of Soviet nationals
Soviet Union	Czechoslovakia*	1968	Reverse political reforms
Soviet Union	China	1969	Withdraw from Zhenbao Island
Soviet Union	China*	1969	Participate in territorial dispute negotiations
Soviet Union	China	1979	Withdraw from Vietnam
United States	Vietnam	1964	Stop supporting Viet Cong
United States	North Korea	1968	Release USS <i>Pyeiko</i>
United States	Cambodia	1975	Release USS <i>Mayaguez</i>
United States	Iran	1979	Release American embassy hostages
United States	Panama	1989	Remove Manuel Noriega from power
United States	Iraq	1990	Withdraw troops from Kuwait
United States	Serb Republic	1993	Accept Bosnian peace plan
United States	Serbia	1998	Stop ethnic cleansing in Kosovo
United States	Afghanistan	1998	Extradite Osama bin Laden
United States	Iraq	1998	Readmit weapons inspectors
United States	Afghanistan	2001	Extradite al Qaeda leaders

Note: Targets denoted with asterisks compiled after minor military combat. These cases are recorded as successful threats under a looser definition of COMPELLENCE SUCCESS.

issue successful compellent threats, even when we adjust for factors that explain the onset of crises in the first place.<sup>53</sup>

53. These results are reported in the online appendix for this article.

TABLE 1. Probit estimates of compellent threat success

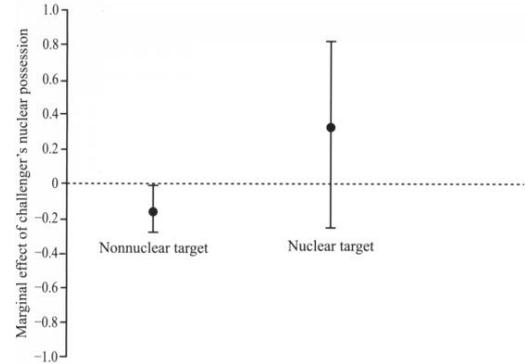
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
NUCLEAR CHALLENGER	-0.290 (0.252)	-0.459 <sup>†</sup> (0.253)					-0.758 <sup>†</sup> (0.398)
NUCLEAR TARGET		-0.505 (0.840)					
NUCLEAR CHALLENGER × NUCLEAR TARGET		1.547 (1.146)					
CHALLENGER ARSENAL SIZE			0.002 (0.035)				
NUCLEAR SUPERIORITY				-0.274 (0.251)			
NUCLEAR RATIO					-0.537 (0.464)		
DIFFERENCE IN ARSENAL SIZE						0.001 (0.035)	
STAKES	0.022 (0.200)	0.002 (0.203)	0.037 (0.202)	0.019 (0.200)	0.024 (0.200)	0.036 (0.202)	-0.112 (0.226)
NUCLEAR CHALLENGER × STAKES							0.693 (0.436)
CAPABILITY RATIO	-0.311 (0.397)	-0.374 (0.398)	-0.476 (0.393)	-0.322 (0.396)	-0.304 (0.398)	-0.473 (0.393)	-0.281 (0.399)
DISPUTE HISTORY	-0.032 (0.023)	-0.044* (0.022)	-0.038 <sup>†</sup> (0.022)	-0.032 (0.024)	-0.032 (0.024)	-0.038 <sup>†</sup> (0.022)	-0.029 (0.024)
RESOLVE	1.108** (0.250)	1.110** (0.254)	1.073** (0.254)	1.101** (0.249)	1.096** (0.250)	1.074** (0.254)	1.111** (0.252)
Constant	-1.029** (0.399)	-0.919* (0.395)	-0.932* (0.399)	-1.018* (0.399)	-0.766 <sup>†</sup> (0.441)	-0.935* (0.399)	-0.966* (0.406)
N	236	236	236	236	236	236	236
Wald $\chi^2$	23.78**	30.31**	21.34**	23.99**	24.18**	21.34**	24.82**
Log pseudolikelihood	-128.675	-126.800	-129.304	-128.749	-128.731	-129.305	-127.731

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered by dyad. \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; <sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ .

# Conclusion

- Nuclear arms do not serve as a tool for compellence
- Military resolve is a better explanation
- Nuclear and nonnuclear states get concessions at similar rates
- Countries like Iran would not be able to coerce more than now

get (Model 6).<sup>45</sup> None of these alternate measures of nuclear status achieve conventional levels of statistical significance, reaffirming our theory that nuclear weapons are not credible tools of compellence.<sup>46</sup>



**FIGURE 1.** The marginal effect of  $\text{NUCLEAR\_CHALLENGER}_{0-31}$  on the probability of successful compellent threats (Model 2 estimates; 90% confidence intervals shown)

We also repeated all six regressions using more lenient measures of compellence success. We employed two such measures. First, whereas our original coding scheme defined a successful threat as one that achieved compliance with no military force, we created a new dependent variable that reclassified compellent threats as successful even if the challenger used limited military force, as long as the target suffered fewer than 100 fatalities. A second reclassification adopted this

45. The variables  $\text{CHALLENGER\_ARSENAL\_SIZE}$  and  $\text{DIFFERENCE\_IN\_ARSENAL\_SIZE}$  are logged because their distributions are highly skewed.

46. One might suspect that nuclear weapons make compellent threats more effective only if it is widely known that the challenger possesses them. Countries that create ambiguities about their nuclear capabilities (such as Israel and South Africa) may have a harder time coercing adversaries than states that have publicly declared their nuclear capabilities (such as France and Russia). To address this possibility, we recoded the nuclear status variables to exclude states that had not publicly tested nuclear weapons. The core findings were largely unchanged.

# Criticisms

- Limitations listed by authors
  - Intrawar applications
- ICB vs MID
- Low confidence interval



**The Perils of Proliferation:  
Organization Theory, Deterrence  
Theory, and the Spread of Nuclear  
Weapons**

Scott D. Sagan



# Introduction

Sagan contrasts Rational Deterrence Theory and Organization Theory

- Rational Deterrence
  - No preventative war while a country develops a weapon
  - Second Strike ability
  - Nuclear weapons not prone to accidental or unauthorized use
- Organization
  - Individuals inside may have incomplete information
  - Individuals have different goals

# Introduction

- Sagan rejects rational nuclear deterrence theory
  - Military and political leaders lack competence to uphold rational nuclear deterrence
  - Non-civilian run governments cannot uphold rational nuclear deterrence because their interests are different from that of the state

# Preventative War

Sagan claims that leaders might not come to the conclusion that preventative warfare is irrational

- Preventative war was an option during Korean War and while USSR was developing arms
- Pakistan's military has parochial goals and large influence over the government
- Situation in Ukraine is novel. What would be rational if Ukraine had seized the Nuclear weapons
- Civilians will not be in control of all proliferating states and militaries have a preventative war bias

# Second Strike Capability

Sagan criticizes the view that countries can achieve rational deterrence quickly

- The US and USSR believed large numbers of nuclear weapons were necessary to maintain deterrence
  - US and USSR being rational actors is not consistent with a small number of nuclear weapons being sufficient
- Competing views and resources within an organization could cause large arsenals with little security
  - US and China as cases

# Arsenals safe from accidental or unauthorized use

Sagan dismisses that organizations always are very protective around unwanted usage or accidents

- High risk organizations have accidents all the time
  - Oil companies, nuclear plants, etc.
- Competing interests can make unwise decisions for personal gain
  - Overproduction, redundancy, blaming someone instead of fixing expensive system
    - Numerous near accidents that were not fixed during cold war

# New nuclear states may face more risk for accidents

- Some potential states like Iraq lack resources for minimal safety mechanisms
- Nuclear production is done clandestinely meaning more military control and less public debate on safety
- New states likely to be more militarized meaning they are less casualty conscious
- There is less time to determine threats than in the past because of ICBMs
- States that inherit nuclear weapons may not have the same safeguards because they did not put them in place during development
- New proliferents may experience social unrest adding to the possibility of unauthorized use

# Conclusion & Criticisms

- States cannot always be rational actors due to organizational biases
- What is rational can sometimes be objective
- Lack of empirical evidence
- Are we less or more safe today