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The Domestic Sources of Regional Regimes: The Evolution of Nuclear Ambiguity in the Middle East

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A major task of the literature on international regimes is the attempt to identify the conditions under which regimes are likely to emerge. The article evaluates the contribution of this literature to understanding the absence of a nuclear regime in the Middle East and the likely paths which may lead to one in the future. I identify four possible stylized outcomes: overt deterrence, regional "opaqueness," controlled proliferation, and a nuclear-weapons-free-zone; only the last two fulfill the definitional requirements of a regime. I explore how the three major theoretical thrusts in regime theory—neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism, and reflectivism—explain why regional opaqueness—rather than overt deterrence or a regime—has been the outcome so far. I then suggest that analyzing the domestic consequences of each regional outcome appears more useful than its conceptual alternatives in explaining why opaqueness was maintained, and why it may be abandoned. The article ends with some lessons from this case for the study of regional and international regimes.

A major task of the literature on international regimes is the attempt to identify the conditions under which regimes are likely to emerge. This article evaluates the contribution of this literature to understanding the absence of a nuclear regime in the Middle East, and to foreseeing the likely paths that may lead to one in the future. This appears to be a most auspicious time to address the possibility of such a regime, because international regimes often emerge in the aftermath of major upheavals in international relations, historically, after wars. Both the peaceful but nonetheless radical transition away from the Cold War and the consequences of the hot Gulf War have precipitated regional and domestic changes in the Middle East. These changes have led to the momentous agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in

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September 1993 and to a new set of relations between Israel and the Arab world. An eventual nuclear-weapons-free-zone is far more plausible today than it has ever been before.

I begin by identifying four possible stylized outcomes: overt deterrence, controlled proliferation, regional "opaqueness," and a nuclear-weapons-free-zone (NWFZ henceforth). I specify one particular institutional form of cooperation—regimes—from a broader repertoire. Only controlled proliferation and a NWFZ fulfill the definitional requirements of a regime, which implies ***mutual policy adjustments by each participating state, geared to improve the position of all sides, through a joint policy process of coordination and collaboration, generally underpinned by an institutional foundation of principles, rules, and decisionmaking procedures.***[1] I then explain why opaqueness (no open acknowledgment of nuclear capabilities or intentions)—rather than overt deterrence—has been the outcome, and why a regime never materialized, using specific propositions distilled from three major theoretical thrusts.[2] Although the topical literature has rarely related the case study at hand to these theoretical constructs, it has implicitly relied on structural approaches of a neorealist, neoliberal institutionalist, or reflective-interpretive bent to explain opaqueness. However, the first section finds these three perspectives underdetermining. Any of the outcomes could have obtained, building on the logical foundations of neorealism. Nor does a neoliberal perspective go very far in explaining why, despite some demands for a regional regime, the available global institutional structure of nonproliferation norms and injunctions failed to supply one. A reflective approach could posit the existence of common preferences for opaqueness among decisionmakers, but—assuming these preferences are researchable—we still do not know why they prevailed or, for that matter, what could replace them and when.

Here I advance the proposition that the study of regional arrangements regarding nuclear weapons in the Middle East has all but ignored the impact of domestic processes and institutions and the ways in which these filter different outcomes. However, I stop short of arguing that this is always the most fruitful analytical path, or the sole determinant of choice. Rather, in this article I attempt to redress the minimal attention paid to domestic politics both in descriptive studies of nuclear strategy in the region and in the analysis of security regimes more generally. I then explore the potential implications of a domestic focus for the future. The article is not designed to evaluate the intrinsic merits of different outcomes for the individual strategies of countries in the region.[3] I examine paths and outcomes mostly in terms of their implications for regime theory and for the latter's ability to yield fruitful guideposts for the analysis of potential future cooperation.

On the one hand, the nonproliferation community often understates the value of international relations theory to their subject matter, is largely oriented toward "problem solving," and tends to view the "problem" itself from a U.S. or Western perspective. On the other hand, international theorists have generally treated nonproliferation—implicitly or explicitly—as poor ground for theorizing, a puzzling fact in itself considering the voluminous efforts devoted to theories of superpower nuclear interaction.[4] The article attempts to bridge

[1]On definitional issues see Krasner (1983), Keohane (1984), Axelrod (1984), Kratochwil and Ruggie (1986), Haggard and Simmons (1987), Young (1989a), Ruggie (1992), and Milner (1992).

[2]On the importance of casting substantive debates across disciplinary paradigms see Alker and Biersteker (1984). My first attempt to do so in this context was in a presentation at a workshop on nuclear "opaqueness" sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (Cambridge, Mass.) in 1988.

[3]This explains my relative inattention to mostly prescriptive sources and to partial, rather than regional, perspectives.

[4]For a few exceptions studying the relationship between proliferation and stability see Hoffman (1966), Waltz

that gap by pointing to a conceptual venue that may shed light on real-life (and death) processes while contributing to the theoretical enterprise itself. In this last regard, the study reinforces the need to improve our understanding of security regimes, which have been largely underrepresented relative to a prolific output on economic and environmental regimes.[5] It also extends the regime literature to an empirical domain neglected in the past, both thematically (nuclear issues at the regional level) and geographically (the Middle East), and points to possible implications of the findings for other regions and for the future study of international regimes.

A Stylized Range of Outcomes

States can be placed along a continuum ranging from zero (or close to zero) to full-blown nuclear capabilities and intentions (Quester, 1991). The latter two define a region's nuclear status. I identify four fundamental scenarios covering the full spectrum of possible outcomes at discrete points. They range from an all-out nuclear arms race to a NWFZ:

- ***Overt deterrence*** points to a full-blown nuclear arms race (à la U.S.–Soviet Union during the Cold War), with efforts to develop delivery systems and deployment doctrines. The Middle East is often considered to host elements of an overt deterrence model, although the following scenario seems to have characterized the region better in the past two decades.
- ***Opaqueness*** refers both to a policy and to a systemic outcome characterized by no open acknowledgment of existing nuclear military capabilities or of intentions to acquire a nuclear weapon, while refusing to commit fully and *effectively* to mutual or multilateral full-scope safeguards.[6] This posture, often labeled "ambiguous," prevails among those often referred to as "threshold" countries (such as Iraq, Libya, Israel, North Korea), some of which are Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) signatories, and none of which has been proven to have openly tested a nuclear device. Opaqueness (or ambiguity) may include the use of compellence by actively preventing an adversary from achieving a nuclear capability. Egypt, Israel, Iran, and Iraq have relied on such compellence.[7] Opaqueness, of course, is a matter of degree—it was not absent altogether in the global nuclear balance–and has largely defined the Middle East nuclear status so far.
- ***Controlled proliferation*** implies a situation where countries acknowledge nuclear capabilities—overtly, either through a nuclear test, a technical equivalent, or verbal communications—but do not develop an arsenal by common agreement of all parties, and with different degrees of external (extra-regional) inducement. This option implies, by definition, a rejection of NPT principles (Scheinman, 1990). It requires, at a minimum, arrangements to ensure compliance with nondeployment; perhaps also a comprehensive test ban, an agreement not to attack each other's nuclear facilities, and other

(1981), Nye (1981), and Quester (1983). Intriligator and Brito (1981) and Bueno de Mesquita and Riker (1982) developed formal models. Smith (1987) analyzed hegemonic stability theory and nonproliferation.

[5]Pioneer contributions include Jervis (1982, 1986), Lipson (1984), Stein (1985), Van Evera (1986), Downs, Rocke, and Siverson, (1986), and Nye (1987).

[6]For alternative conceptualizations of opaqueness see, *inter alia*, Evron (1974), Harkavy (1977), and Frankel (1991). A formal commitment, such as ratifying the Nonproliferation Treaty, differs from an effective commitment. Clearly, Iraq is no Mexico.

[7]On Israel's 1981 attack on Osirak and Egypt's threats to Dimona see Feldman (1982). On the Iranian–Iraqi exchange see Barnaby (1989).

confidence-building measures. Controlled proliferation is thus a form of arms control or negotiated mutual restraint designed to increase transparency of intentions and capabilities. The closest—albeit far from perfect—empirical referent is South Asia, a region that appears to stop short of overt weaponization, although India and Pakistan have not yet institutionalized a joint procedure to verify it.[8] India exploded a nuclear device in 1974, and Pakistan's foreign minister has publicly acknowledged the country's ability to assemble a nuclear weapon. In 1988 they signed an agreement not to attack their respective nuclear facilities, but India still opposes a NWFZ.

- ***A nuclear-weapons-free-zone*** amounts to a complete ban on the production, purchase, test, use, or presence of nuclear weapons.[9] Denuclearization can be sustained by a combination of bilateral, regional, and international inspections, and presumes a process of negotiation among all parties, even where external inducements play an important role. The closest empirical referents—the South Pacific (Rarotonga Treaty) and Latin America (Tlatelolco Treaty)—were largely the result of an internal demand for a regime by countries in the region. Similarly, Brazil and Argentina agreed in 1992 to a complete ban—a *de facto* NWFZ in the Southern Cone—guaranteed by mutual inspections and comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. The Koreas took preliminary steps to create such a regime in 1991, but North Korea's rejection of IAEA inspections of all its facilities and its wavering in negotiations with South Korea have derailed this process.

Figure 1 arranges these four outcomes according to their form and content. The horizontal axis classifies them according to whether or not they constitute a regime; the vertical axis according to whether or not they sanction an overt nuclear posture. Only cells I (controlled proliferation) and III (NWFZ) fulfill the definitional requirements of an international regime adopted here (see above). This definition facilitates the operationalization of what has been certainly a contestable concept (Kratochwil and Ruggie, 1986), incorporates elements of regimes that have gained widespread acceptance, and helps us move beyond legitimate terminological debates which, nonetheless, can create barriers to the development of hypotheses. The requirement of a joint policy process fences in international regimes from the broader phenomenon of international cooperation, of which it is a part. Thus, opaqueness could arguably reflect elements of cooperation; although tacit, it may come about as a result of converging expectations (nobody escalates by acknowledging an overt deterrence). Yet, opaqueness is not the result of a joint policy process. Moreover, transparency of behavior, intentions, and expectations is a core requirement for the existence of an international regime.[10] Similarly, a full-fledged nuclear race rooted in deterrence theory may contain certain principles, but is not, at heart, geared to improve the position of all, but of one's own side. In other words, overt deterrence and opaqueness do not preclude self-restraint, but such restraint obtains from possible unilateral advantages rather than from the objective of cooperating. It may be in the state's immediate self-interest to act with restraint, as Saddam Hussein did during the Gulf War when he avoided the use of chemical weapons. Similarly, Israel's proclaimed principle "not to be the first to introduce

[8]On South Asia see Chellaney (1991) and Kapur (1994).

[9]A nuclear-*weapons*-free-zone—unlike a nuclear-free-zone—is one that does not exclude civilian-oriented nuclear uses.

[10]On the advantages of studying explicit processes see Milner (1992).

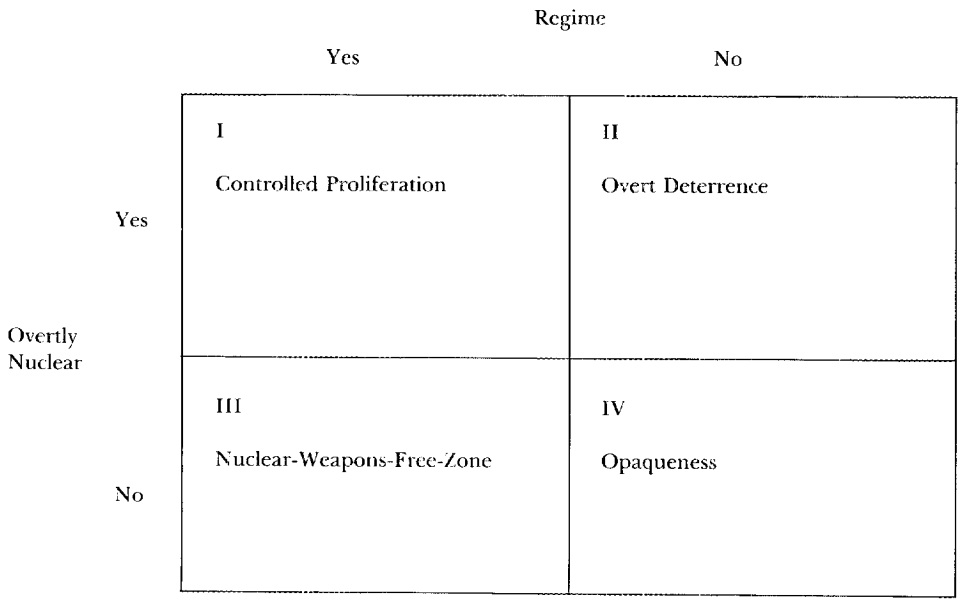

FIG. 1. A stylized range of regional outcomes.

atomic weapons into the Middle East" can be thought of as a self-binding commitment designed to reassure its neighbors.[11] Although such commitments are embedded in an expectation of reciprocity, they are still a unilateral strategy and thus do not amount to a regime in the sense used here.

The core principles of a type I regime are twofold: (1) the mutual recognition of nuclear property rights by all sides, albeit limited to testing or an equivalent show of capability; and (2) the mutual prohibition of developing an actual nuclear arsenal, let alone deploying it. Implicit in these principles is the norm that activities that could lead to a latent nuclear capability—uranium enrichment or plutonium production—are accepted as legitimate. Rules and decisionmaking procedures include various forms of bilateral and multilateral monitoring of compliance, and the stipulation of sanctions. This is close to what the literature (Stein, 1985; Nye, 1987) labels a "limited security regime." The core principle of a type III (NWFZ) regime is the mutual and complete renunciation of nuclear weapons, monitored and enforced through bilateral, regional, or international mechanisms. This is an extensive security regime.

Several clarifications are required. First, this is a stylized range of outcomes facilitating conceptualization and, therefore, settling for models—rather than replicas—of reality. I used concrete examples only to illustrate the abstract types, but, in the real world, there is greater empirical variation and overlapping. Second, my characterization of the Middle East takes into account all possible rivalries, including inter-Arab, Arab–Israeli, Arab–Iranian, and Israeli–Iranian relations. Finally, most of the major actors in the region are assumed to have chemical weapons and to have strenuously pursued biological and/or ballistic missile capabilities (Platt, 1992). A NWFZ is likely to require a comprehensive ban of all weapons of mass destruction.

[11]The principle is often attributed to Prime Minister Levy Eshkol and was formulated by former Foreign Minister Yigal Allon in 1965 (Horowitz, 1993:53).

The Sources of Opaqueness and the Undersupply of Regimes

I have characterized the Middle East, in nuclear terms, as best described by opaqueness. What explains the emergence and evolution of a noncooperative solution with these characteristics, and the absence of a regime that, at one point or another, most regional actors—as well as the superpowers—preferred? One can marshal specific propositions from the literature on regime formation to explain such outcomes. For neorealists, the task is fairly easy since regimes are anomalies of international life and their occurrence ought not to be expected anyway. Where they emerge, they are no more than an epiphenomenon of deeper forces in world politics (i.e., of power distribution), or the "velvet glove of the iron fist."[12] In an anarchic world, self-help states strive to increase their power relative to that of other states, in a zero-sum context. This structure compels states to secure a balance-of-power equilibrium, and nuclear weapons, as Mearsheimer (1990) argues, can do the job by increasing security for all and by generating caution, rough equality, and a clarity of relative power. In their "individualistic pursuit of security" states seek to maximize their own power, taking advantage of others' vulnerabilities, not making more concessions than needed, and quickly threatening to use force (Jervis, 1982). On the basis of these fundamental assumptions, a neorealist perspective would advance:

> ***Proposition 1. Overt mutual deterrence is the most stable outcome of all and it requires no regime.***[13]

The expectations of proposition 1 have not been fulfilled in the Middle East thus far, since opaqueness—not overt mutual deterrence—has prevailed. Moreover, states *have* created regimes in areas where the egoistic pursuit of state objectives is supposed to prevail, most particularly, in the nonproliferation area, about which Nye (1988) eloquently argued that "most states adhere to a regime [NPT] in which they foreswear the right to use the ultimate form of self-help in technological terms is quite an extraordinary situation." However, from a purely neorealist perspective, this phenomenon may not be as exceptional as it seems. Going back to the basics, states are expected to reduce their external vulnerability; yet, under a given structure, such an objective leaves room for a wide range of means.

The means stipulated in proposition 1 are perhaps the most widely accepted in neorealist formulations of nuclear postures. As Feldman (1982) argues, mutual deterrence provides credibility, prevents miscalculations, and clarifies doctrines and procedures to all. Yet the logic of neorealist theory does not lead solely to this outcome. The once-revolutionary idea that testing a nuclear explosive and/or openly acknowledging nuclear capabilities may not increase security is a powerful *neorealist* contender to proposition 1. According to this view, opaqueness might have been a better survival strategy, by arguably thwarting escalation and a reciprocal pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and by preventing the collapse of strategic relations with both superpowers.[14] Moreover, escalation and instability—which increase vulnerability—could have been minimized through "controlled proliferation" as well. Carried to its logical extreme, a neorealist perspective could accommodate the idea that a mutually

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[12] John Ruggie (UCLA seminar on International Relations, June 1990).

[13] The classical statement is in Waltz (1981). Variants can be found in Bueno de Mesquita and Riker (1982), and Mearsheimer (1990). For an application to the Israeli case see Tucker (1975), Rosen (1976), and Feldman (1982).

[14] For this interpretation see Beres (1986), Dowty (1978), Yaniv (1987), Mandelbaum (1988), Evron (1991), and Kemp (1991).

agreed total ban on nuclear weapons—although far from risk-free—was more likely to ensure the survival of each state than its alternatives. In other words, this solution—often associated with normative, peace-studies thinking—is quite compatible with a neorealist recognition that nuclear deterrence can exacerbate—rather than diminish—the security dilemma for any particular country (Yaniv, 1987; Harkabi, 1993). Cooperation can thus be less costly than the "individualistic pursuit of security," a precondition for security regimes (Jervis, 1982). A regime becomes part of a strategy of "reassurance" and confidence-building (Stein, 1991). In sum, the fact that neorealist assumptions can lead to the full range of possible outcomes weakens the theory's ability to explain why opaqueness, and none other, came about. It should be noted that our discussion of proposition 1 focuses on this inconclusiveness of neorealist logic rather than on the intrinsic merits of deterrence as increasing or decreasing security in the region for any one party.

Another application of neorealist thinking to regime theory—"modified structural realism" (Krasner, 1983; Keohane, 1984)—offers another window into why opaqueness, rather than a regime, might have prevailed, suggesting:

> ***Proposition 2. The absence of hegemonic pressures and/or inducements explains why a regime (of either type I or type III) never materialized, and why opaqueness emerged in its stead.***

In considering the global context, this proposition suggests the possibility that a nuclear regime might have come about if the superpowers—the U.S. and the former USSR—had defined it in their interest to organize one. Few scholars dispute the strong superpower agreement to prevent the nuclearization of regions (Potter, 1985; Nye, 1987). Yet both failed to achieve nuclear disarmament in regions of concern. The U.S. had seemingly succeeded in deactivating Taiwan's and South Korea's program in the 1970s, but not the alleged Pakistani and Israeli efforts, nor the Brazilian and Argentine ones, for that matter (Dunn, 1982; Smith, 1987). A theory of hegemony cannot explain why the two Southern Cone countries ignored U.S. pressures for three decades and embraced denuclearization in 1991 (Solingen, 1993). Similarly, Libya and Iraq relentlessly pursued a nuclear capability despite Soviet resistance. Explaining the sources of this variability in superpowers' strategy and effectiveness is a worthy task in itself, but one lying beyond the focus of this article. The existence of such variability, however, suggests two points: (1) that hegemony was neither necessary nor sufficient in shaping regional nuclear outcomes; and (2) that one cannot understand differences in hegemonic effectiveness without studying other regional and/or domestic political conditions that make certain states more receptive to external "persuasion" than others.

As to the potential impact of a local—rather than an external—regional hegemon in shaping outcomes, coercively if necessary, the difficulties involved in assessing the distribution of power and capabilities is often a major pitfall in this line of analysis, although few would dispute the overall power supremacy of Israel in the region, particularly since 1967. Yet Israeli military preponderance did not lead to the organization of cooperation on nuclear matters. Even a hegemon cannot organize the nuclear disarmament of its rivals. The recognition that states with higher levels of resources (economic, warheads, and other) often find it very difficult to translate them into the ability to shape collective outcomes is not new (Haggard and Simmons, 1987; Young, 1989b). Of course, the hegemon's lack of interest in such a regime would go a long way in explaining why it never emerged. This otherwise obvious possibility is not fully supported by empirical evidence if one considers indications that Israel was quite interested

in a NWFZ, and the fact that Israel was formally endorsing proposals by Egypt and Iran in 1974 at the U.N. (Karem, 1988), and more forcefully since 1980 (Freier, 1985). More on this later.

This discussion highlights the fact that in an antagonistic regional context, hegemonic theorizing may be even less promising than in the cooperative, major power, economic arenas which gave life to the "benign" form of the theory. Opaqueness prevailed *despite* the presence of hegemons interested in cooperation or in a regime of sorts. Paradoxically perhaps, at least from this particular theoretical perspective, the prospects for a regime may have increased—based on declarations and unilateral initiatives—precisely when the distribution of annihilating power in the region became more equal. The potential challenge to Israel's presumed regional nuclear superiority by the emerging chemical and biological arsenals of Arab states and Iran may have induced greater willingness on the part of most parties to consider some form of cooperation. Yet the relationship between hegemony versus symmetry in power distribution on the one hand and the emergence of a regional regime on the other remains inconclusive. Perhaps neither overall power structure nor issue structure takes us very far in exploring likely outcomes. The possibility that distributional characteristics of outcomes may be the key to understanding why one obtained and not another draws our attention to yet another neorealist formulation:

> ***Proposition 3. A regime (of either type I or type III) could have come about—replacing opaqueness—had the parties conceived of it as a balanced distribution of gains.***[15]

To some extent, the unequal distribution of rights and benefits within the global nonproliferation regime (granting nuclear status to some and not others) could challenge this proposition empirically at the outset, but additional logical and methodological problems emerge. First, neorealist assumptions about the concern of states with relative—rather than absolute—gains would arguably lead one to foresee Israeli reluctance to join either regime. A state presumed to be better endowed in the pertinent resources to be foregone will resist giving them up, because doing so would imply increasing its rivals' relative gains. In this brand of neorealism, states are defensive positionalists and do not give up leadership. Yet Israel's support for NWFZ proposals implies a willingness to surrender its alleged nuclear supremacy, albeit in exchange for normalization of relations and full-proof safeguards (Karem, 1988; Barnaby, 1989:158). Second, even if one might consider the latter a balanced exchange of concessions, the fact that the possibility of such an exchange failed to produce a regime after all questions the validity of proposition 3. The mere existence of a solution involving a balanced distribution of gains is thus not sufficient to induce a regime. The equal possibility that the proposal may not "classify" as a balanced exchange raises a serious methodological problem, stemming from the need to define clearly what a balanced exchange is. That requirement invites the question of who defines what is balanced and on what basis. It demands a theory about how states draw equivalences across nuclear and conventional, political and psychological trade-offs. What might have appeared to be a balanced exchange—the Israeli proposals for a NWFZ through direct negotiations—was not so considered by Israel's adversaries, who pushed for immediate universal accession to the NPT, without negotiations. Moreover, canceling nuclear "property rights" for all parties could be regarded as a balanced exchange if one's vantage

[15]Grieco (1990) discusses balanced exchanges. On absolute and relative gains from cooperation see also Snidal (1991) and Powell (1991).

point is that of a conventional military institution foreseeing a favorable or stable conventional equilibrium. Not quite so for a sophisticated and powerful nuclear establishment aware of its superiority vis-à-vis its counterparts in other countries. In other words, different domestic actors vary in their sensitivity coefficient to gaps in gains, that is, in their susceptibility to relative gains. That may explain why the same structural context can lead to different definitions, by each party, of what constitutes a balanced exchange over time.

As an alternative to neorealism and its focus on relative power capabilities, neoliberal institutionalism (NI) views international relations as sustained by the existence of at least some mutual interests among rational-egoist states, willing to cooperate for the sake of joint gains. States can go beyond the individualistic pursuit of security when the latter cannot ensure Pareto-optimal outcomes; they may accept the other side's demand for security and agree to create a regime in order to increase their own security as well. According to NI, state preferences are not merely given exogenously; they are affected by international institutions. The latter influence and constrain state behavior by broadening the flow of information and opportunities to negotiate, by improving the ability to make credible commitments and monitor compliance, and by strengthening expectations about the solidity of international agreements (Keohane, 1984; Lipson, 1984; Oye, 1986). On the basis of this functionalist theory tracing the emergence of regimes to information imperfections, we could infer:

> ***Proposition 4. Opaqueness would have been replaced by a regime (of either type I or type III) if the latter could have: reduced transaction costs, improved information to all parties, monitored compliance effectively, and punished violations.***

All major parties in the Middle East have, for some time, expressed interest in a regime able to reduce "the twin perils of detection and defection" (Stein, 1985). Despite differences on the modalities, there have been no opposition or abstention votes on U.N. resolutions advancing a NWFZ since 1980 (Karem, 1988:94; Kemp, 1990). Moreover, institutions designed to lower transaction costs, improve information, and secure compliance existed at the global level (NPT, IAEA). In principle, therefore, the basic conditions identified by a functional theory—on both the demand and the supply side—were there, yet they failed to generate a regime. One can impute such failure to institutional imperfections such as the questionable effectiveness of monitoring functions (an Israeli concern vindicated by the widespread Iraqi violations of NPT rules) or the arguably weak effective sanctioning authority of the IAEA.[16] Notwithstanding the tractability and cogency of this functionalist *a posteriori* interpretation, clearly the demand for a regime, and the presence of institutions capable of fulfilling at least some of the required functions do not guarantee the emergence of a regime. Institutions may be unwilling to extend and perfect their operations. The parties' sensitivity and commitment to increase information and transparency may vary over time and across states. What triggers a change in states' ability to discern opportunities for cooperation? Why might a regime emerge in 1996 but did not in 1980? Perhaps no less important than the ability of institutions to deliver is the actors' expectations of the future, another major theme of NI, which suggests:

[16]On IAEA procedures see Freier (1985) and Scheinman (1987). Israel's conception of a NWFZ was inspired by certain facets of the Tlatelolco Treaty.

Proposition 5. A regime (of either type) to replace opaqueness did not emerge because the parties did not discount the future at a low rate, that is, did not care a great deal about potential future gains from cooperation.

On the one hand, the "shadow of the future" (Axelrod, 1984; Lipson, 1984; Oye, 1986; and Snidal, 1991) has not been considered traditionally to weigh heavily on Arab states, confident that, like the short-lived Crusaders' kingdom, Israel too would eventually wither away. Yet this perception—of preponderant future gains from the unilateral pursuit of security in the present—has weakened incrementally, partly due to growing certainty about Israel's nuclear capabilities (Jabber, 1977). There is significant evidence that, since the 1970s, some Egyptian and Palestinian leaders have replaced the old perception that time was inexorably on their side with a recognition that greater future gains (perhaps even a regime-bound Israeli capability) could be accrued by cooperating.[17] Such evidence includes Sadat's momentous trip to Jerusalem and the historical shift within sectors of the Palestinian leadership that led to the recognition of Israel by the PLO in the late 1980s and eventually to the September 1993 Declaration of Principles.

On the other hand, given its adversaries' commitment to the obliteration of Israel for many years, Israeli governments had a tendency to discount the potential gains from self-restraint for encouraging future cooperation by the other side. Concessions and restraints were considered, perhaps accurately, to convey weakness and wavering. However, the changes in the Arab world just described strengthened segments of the Israeli public and leadership calling for a negotiated territorial compromise. This flexible position was fueled, among other things, by a growing understanding of the fact that Arab states could develop nonconventional capabilities if they so desired, within or outside the NPT, and unaffected by export restrictions from supplier states. Thus, the recognition that Israel's supremacy could erode led these segments in Israeli politics to endorse negotiated agreements sooner rather than later. The only problem was, of course, that the leadership advocating this solution had been out of power since 1977. Hence, proposition 5 overlooks the variable calculus—across different domestic actors—regarding the utility of cooperating now for the sake of future gains. Whose vision of future payoffs counts? The future, as the present, takes place in a multidimensional space where foreign aid and investment, technological change, electoral cycles (or their equivalent), and conventional military balances intersect in often unpredictable ways. What may be construed as an unpromising future in the nuclear area can be offset by expectations of bonanza in others.

Propositions 4 and 5 highlight deficiencies in NI's ability to explain why no regime emerged to replace opaqueness. They leave out important clues relevant to our understanding of why, when, and how we might expect a leap from conflict-based solutions (opaqueness) to truly cooperative ones. Why do institutions fail to extend and perfect their operations despite a demand for their functions? What explains changing dispositions toward transparency over time and across states? Whose "shadow of the future" counts?

An interesting contractarian extension of the functional approach focuses on institutional bargaining as a much finer tool to understand regime building, suggesting:

[17] On changes in Arab positions see Fahmy (1983), Harkabi (1988), and Muslih (1992).

Proposition 6. No regime has replaced opaqueness because the "veil of uncertainty" about the effects of different outcomes (cells I and III in Figure 1) was not sufficiently thick.

Among other conditions, this approach advances that regimes are more likely to emerge as the "veil of uncertainty" (Young, 1989b) about all possible effects of bargaining alternatives on one's country's position gets thicker, that is, as it becomes harder to assess such effects. This is so because, not knowing what role actors would occupy at a given outcome, they would have an incentive to secure "fair" arrangements for all. Few would dispute the thickness of the "veil of uncertainty" surrounding solutions I and III (particularly in connection with compliance), from the vantage point of unitary states. A focus on the possible impact of each outcome on domestic actors, however, may explain why these conditions did not induce a regime. As I explain in the next section, either regime would have curtailed the ability of relevant domestic groups to pursue their own political agendas, while opaqueness increased their latitude to do so. Young's institutional bargaining perspective acknowledges the impact of influential domestic interest groups and transcends the rationalistic assumptions of previous hypotheses that all logical alternatives or strategies for every state are fully specified, that all the outcomes associated with these strategies are known, and that it is possible to identify a stable preference ordering of outcomes. At every step we have found such assumptions—ignoring the origin, ordering, and intensity of preferences—to hinder our understanding of why opaqueness persisted despite revealed preferences for regimes and transparency.

Against the rationalistic and utilitarian underpinnings of neorealism and NI, a reflectivist strand in international relations theory provides an alternative institutional interpretation for the emergence of regimes. This interpretive, sociological approach aims at understanding how decisionmakers think about institutions and norms and how those patterns of thought shape their discourse and behavior (Keohane, 1988); it requires the identification of constitutive and regulative rules or normative structures, knowledge about the historical context, and/or an understanding of actors' beliefs.[18] Assessing actors' attempts to maximize transparency or to pursue cooperative outcomes requires us to identify common purposes, shared meanings, and learning processes. On the basis of such epistemological foundations it might be possible to endorse:

Proposition 7. Opaqueness prevailed over a regime either because all sides shared an intersubjective agreement over the former's utility, or because they lacked a common understanding of the logical pitfalls or the normatively repugnant implications of nuclear deterrence, in its open or veiled (opaque) form.

The argument that all sides might have shared a preference for opaqueness is quite widespread and often traced to the force of international norms regarding the illegitimacy of nuclear weapons. In effect, such norms might have arguably precluded states from embracing overt deterrence *formally*, although they have not averted covert activities aimed at acquiring a nuclear deterrent.[19] The proposition raises a more fundamental problem, however. Systematic empirical research on the sources of preferences—normative and practical—of

[18]This discussion aggregates an ecclectic school where some are more receptive to a positivist epistemology than others (Haas, 1992). Only the former, therefore, can provide the basis for a propositional alternative to the ones suggested so far.

[19]On norms embodied in the NPT see Scheinman (1990) and Quester (1991).

relevant decisionmakers is sparse. The very attempt to probe into such preferences might have been thwarted—and its validity questioned—by the secrecy and ambiguity that were at the heart of opaqueness, and that inhibited the open-style discourse on nuclear deterrence characteristic of the superpowers' relationship. Hence, studies on whether or not shared meanings played any role in shaping outcomes on this issue may have to await the withering away of opaqueness. But even then, certain methodological difficulties will remain with this, and with other potential propositions that could be formulated on the basis of interpretive approaches. First, whose meanings are to be considered relevant to the intersubjective "convergence" or consensual knowledge: the negotiators'? The policy networks which back them? The analysts and "spin-doctors"? Second, how do we trace outcomes to this convergence, if it indeed existed? Third, what conditions allowed consensual knowledge to play any role? In sum, knowledge about ideological and psychological processes might help us understand the absence of shared norms and understandings about the effects of nuclear deterrence and/or the existence of common preferences for opaqueness, but not necessarily why the latter prevailed.

Beyond these generic problems with a reflective approach, the fact that opaqueness as an outcome is congruent with an interest-based explanation weakens our confidence in the independent effect of intersubjective agreement (either over cause–effect relations or over norms). With the consolidation of the Limited Test Ban Treaty and the nonproliferation regime in the 1960s and 1970s, the political costs of openly declaring possession of, or testing, a nuclear weapon, were raised. Later, what was originally a unilateral response to a perceived external constraint became a powerful instrument in the management of domestic, regional, and international policy.[20] This was indeed a case of "nuclear learning" (Nye, 1987) geared to avoid the constraining effects that an overt nuclear posture would impose. Neither can norms effectively explain Saddam Hussein's reluctance to attack Israel with chemical weapons during the Gulf War; had norms mattered, they should have precluded an Iraqi chemical weapons attack on defenseless Kurds, or a similar Egyptian attack on Yemen in the 1960s. Deterrence may have a slightly better chance to explain these events, although the effectiveness of deterrence can never be really proved (reasons other than fear of retaliation could have operated). Such reasons may include domestic political considerations, which reflective analysis recognizes but often underexplores.

The payoffs involved in tracing outcomes to meanings and beliefs can be limited if one searches for strictly causal explanations (Kratochwil and Ruggie, 1986). What is the operational meaning—in nuclear terms—of the Holocaust trauma in the case of Israel? Is it vowing not to ever allow a repetition of gas chambers or their equivalent (Segev, 1993)? Is it learning about the value of absolute self-reliance (in light of Allied inaction vis-à-vis Auschwitz)? Or is it a humanistic resistance to weapons of mass destruction on any side (Flapan, 1974)? All three interpretations have become part of public debates in Israel. What is the operational meaning of "jihad" (holy war) for Arab or Islamic positions on the nuclear question? That no level of retributive punishment is high enough to deter a *jihad,* an inference that would shatter the logical foundations of deterrence theory (Beres, 1986)? Or is it a healthy respect for pragmatism (Rosen, 1976), and the conservation of the Islamic state? At the same time, it is important to recognize—even while striving to unveil causal connections—that accepting wholeheartedly positivistic concerns with the inconclusiveness of in-

[20]On the utility of ambiguity in international relations see Jervis (1970).

terpretive approaches can blind us to the importance of symbols, transnational ideologies, identities, and allegiances that influence behavior.

Domestic Politics and Nuclear Outcomes

The propositions discussed so far fail to account satisfactorily for the entrenchment of opaqueness and/or for the nonemergence of a nuclear regime in the Middle East. In this section I propose that the utility of some of the concepts on which these propositions are grounded increases when we are able to relate them to domestic considerations. The importance of such considerations has risen with the growing worldwide recognition of the complex and indeterminate relationship between nuclear weapons and genuine security. The intractability of this relationship has reinforced the natural tendency of domestic groups to frame their attitudes toward issues on the basis of political and institutional—rather than "national"—interests.

The call for incorporating domestic politics into the study of regimes is not new but, with few exceptions, has been rarely followed by an actual application.[21] More recently, the relationship between liberal democracy and cooperation has gained increased scrutiny (Doyle, 1986). However, the applicability of this argument to understanding nuclear cooperation in the regions is limited on logical and empirical grounds (Solingen, 1993). A more disaggregated analysis of domestic politics—beyond regime type—is required. Putnam (1988) developed a formal framework to integrate domestic politics into the study of cooperative bargaining. His analysis of major power diplomacy in economic cooperation can be extended analytically to understand the emergence of regimes, and empirically to smaller states and military rivals. Identifying domestic win-sets (all possible international agreements acceptable to domestic constituencies), as well as the impact of international processes on such sets, may be as critical for the study of security regimes as they are for economic cooperation, for which applications of "second-image-reversed" concepts (Gourevitch, 1978) is more common. Surely the political sensitivity of the nuclear issue (which inhibits ample public expressions on the topic) places a methodological burden on the effort to understand regional nuclear arrangements on the basis of the domestic political implications of each outcome. However, although evidence is far from abundant, more than what one routinely assumes is known about positions and preferences and about the political processes that underlie them.

Domestic groups weigh different international outcomes according to the latter's potential effect on their own political and institutional payoffs. In particular: (1) Payoffs can be affected by different mixes of side-payments. As straightforward as this may seem, side-payments are rarely discussed in the security-regimes literature beyond the aggregate level of the state, despite the ability of domestic groups to determine which issue-linkages are acceptable and which are not.[22] A classical example of side-payments is the transfer of conventional arms to induce nuclear restraint, a phenomenon known as the "dove's dilemma" (Dunn, 1981). (2) Domestic actors rank their preferences according to the rate at which they discount the future, their degree of receptivity to transparency, their sensitivity coefficients to gaps in gains, and/or their definition of a "balanced exchange." These four, of course, are influenced by the extent to

[21]On the inattention to domestic politics see Lipson (1984), Axelrod and Keohane (1986), Haggard and Simmons (1987), and Milner (1992). For a pioneering effort see Jervis (1986). On domestic determinants of cooperation—rather than regimes—see Conybeare, Van Evera, Lipson, and Oye (all in the 1986 Oye volume).

[22]On issue-linkages see Haas (1980).

which actors are concerned with short-term political/electoral gains or with longer-term institutional and bureaucratic survival. Thus, the conventional military establishment may be open to absolute (mutual) gains and transparency at the nuclear level while resisting anything other than relative gains in conventional weaponry. A powerful domestic group may be reluctant to ratify an agreement that does not make its own positional gains clear, that is, an agreement characterized by a thick "veil of uncertainty." This possibility stands the relationship between the thickness of the "veil of uncertainty" and the probability of cooperation on its head. These two considerations suggest:

> ***Proposition 8. Opaqueness prevailed in the region for many years because it served the parochial political and institutional concerns of most relevant actors well.***

Israel

The following historical analysis of the domestic politics of Israel's nuclear postures reveals weak domestic support for an open deterrent on the one hand, and why opaqueness increased the latitude of powerful political groups and institutions to pursue their respective agendas on the other.

Coalitional Politics and Electoral Considerations. Support for a nuclear deterrent was stronger among Ben-Gurion and his followers, some of whom—notably Moshe Dayan—came close to declaring the existence of such a deterrent (Yaniv, 1987; Dunn, 1982). Ben-Gurion's secretive style—he avoided discussing nuclear policy in full cabinet meetings—can be interpreted as geared to protect the program from his own leftist coalition partners (particularly the pro-Soviet Mapam and Ahdut Haavoda) and even from his mainstream Mapai opponents, as it was concerned with national security.[23] In fact, Ben-Gurion started construction of the Dimona nuclear complex—through private fundraising—in 1957 without the knowledge of the *Knesset*'s Foreign Affairs and Security Committee or the approval of its Finance Committee.[24] Clearly, Ben-Gurion's faction could find ample political ammunition to fuel the country's nuclear program in Arab calls for the obliteration of Israel, and in active Arab procurement of nonconventional capabilities by the 1950s, including missile and chemical weapons technology (Steinberg, 1994). Yet, the 1957 decision was not made public until December 1960, when Ben-Gurion addressed the Israeli *Knesset* on this topic, in response to an inquiry from U.S. Secretary of State Herter (Flapan, 1974). The timing of the disclosure, and its venue, revealed the interplay of domestic and external considerations.

The fragile nature of Israeli ruling coalitions stemmed from the inability of any single party to command a clear majority of votes, which granted small parties the power to impose their view on the basis of their coalitional "value." Mapam's and Ahdut Haavoda's influence within Israel's politically powerful General Federation of Labor (*Histadrut*), for instance, enabled these parties to extract concessions from their coalition partners.[25] The leadership of these two parties,

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[23]On the low enthusiasm for Ben-Gurion's nuclear project among his cabinet ministers and their concerns with cost considerations see Raviv and Melman (1990:69). On the central role played by Ben-Gurion's enmity to Mapam in his political choices, and on his recognition of Mapam's electoral strength see Bialer (1991).

[24]Bar-Joseph (1982:211). The nuclear program was even placed exclusively under a new intelligence agency created for that purpose (*Lakam*), apparently behind the back of the official intelligence community (Raviv and Melman, 1990:69).

[25]Shalev (1992). Ben-Gurion often attacked the *Histadrut* as a "state within a state" and advocated a more statist alternative (*Mamlachtiut*).

including the influential Yigal Allon, rejected an overt deterrent that would inflame the anti-nuclear feelings of pro-Soviet constituencies within their parties on the one hand, and exacerbate Soviet sensitivity to Israeli nuclear activities on the other.[26] They consequently opposed then Deputy Defense Minister Shimon Peres's efforts to seek French and West German technical and defense cooperation (Flapan, 1974; Segev, 1993). Popular opposition to closer relations (particularly military cooperation!) with West Germany was not confined to Mapam and Ahdut Haavoda, and had the potential of igniting a cabinet crisis, as it did in 1957 and 1959.[27] Eventually, Ben-Gurion's German policy accelerated his political exit. Coalition and party politics thus played a very important role in propelling opaqueness as a "solution" in the early years; different parties had different associations with external actors and different receptivities to transparency. This is far from arguing that policy preferences could be completely reduced to pure political calculi. Ben-Gurion led Israel into statehood out of the ashes of concentration camps, and regarded the survival of the state as his life's historical mission. Such was the goal of other Israeli leaders as well, however, many of whom were not persuaded that a nuclearized Middle East would either guarantee Israel's existence or command extensive domestic support.[28]

Opponents of a nuclear deterrent in the 1950s and 1960s included not only leaders of Ahdut Haavoda (Yigal Allon, Israel Gallili) and Mapam (Yaacov Hazan, Yair Zaban), but also leading members of Mapai (such as Prime Ministers Levy Eshkol and Golda Meir, Defense Minister and later *Histadrut* secretary-general Pinhas Lavon, Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir, and Foreign Minister Abba Eban) (Yaniv, 1987; Pry, 1984). Eshkol (formerly a finance minister as well) and Sapir were the architects of an incipient policy of economic liberalization, adjustment, and privatization, conceived in the early 1960s, aimed at attracting foreign investment and promoting exports. Moving away from a statist, mercantilist strategy and toward economic solvency implied greater reliance on international markets and new political alliances. Eshkol thus opposed nuclear expenditures and was willing to effect some changes in the nuclear program, which also made him appear more responsive to U.S. concerns (Inbar, 1986:62; Raviv and Melman, 1990:195; Steinberg, 1994:250). The U.S. commitment to supply Israel with conventional weapons is often interpreted as a trade-off accepted by Eshkol (in exchange for nuclear restraint), but can also be regarded as useful ammunition for Eshkol—in domestic terms—to pursue a policy he favored anyway. Another prominent *Knesset* member from Mapai, Eliezer Livne, founded the Committee for Denuclearization of the Middle East in 1961—including prestigious Israeli scientists—which enjoyed wide access to high-level Labor figures (Cohen, 1993). Mapam adopted the committee's program—invoking international guarantees—in its official platform. Ben-Gurion's tensions with his own Mapai party can be traced to the bitter Lavon Affair of 1955, arguably Israel's foremost political scandal to this day. This affair, involving accountability for a botched espionage operation in Egypt, ultimately led to Ben-Gurion's departure from Mapai, and the creation, before the 1965 elections, of a new party, Rafi, known to a few as "the atomic party." Ben-Gurion's political foe Pinhas Lavon (close to the Ahdut Haavoda and Mapam leadership) ridiculed the group around Ben-Gurion as the self-appointed "defense avant-garde," and

[26]"If our hypothetical choice would be between a symmetrical ownership of nuclear weapons and a symmetrical absence of such weapons, *our choice should be a conventional balance over a nuclear one*" (Allon, 1990). On debates within Allon's party on the nuclear question see *Ha'aretz* (3/14/1962). See also Evron (1974:1330).

[27]On the sharp 1963 debates in connection with German scientists' presumed participation in Egyptian development of missiles and chemical and bacteriological weapons see Segev (1993:374–376).

[28]On the possibility that domestic opposition to an open (rather than a covert) deterrent might be strong see Rosen (1976).

Allon accused the same group of "defense demagoguery" (Allon, 1990). In effect, important sections of Rafi's constituency valued their leaders' image of reliability and technological sophistication regarding matters of national survival, an image carefully promoted through public events such as the 1961 launching of the *Shavit* 2 rocket.

With Ben-Gurion's resignation in 1963 (in the midst of debates over relations with West Germany), his own influence over nuclear policy declined (his Rafi followers merged into the Labor Alignment in 1969). Opaqueness continued to provide an equilibrium solution, particularly when Dayan became defense minister in 1967 under Prime Minister Eshkol, in a cabinet where Ahdut Haavoda's Allon had been most influential on defense matters. The policy found its institutionalization in the formula articulated by Eshkol, which has since become the country's only declared—and highly ambiguous—policy on the nuclear issue, namely, that Israel would "not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons to the Middle East." This delphic statement had the advantage of providing reassurance to Israelis "in times of gloom" (Freier, 1993) without compelling them to take a definitive stand on the matter. Dayan's occasional references—as defense minister—to the advantages of an open deterrent did not prevail within the cabinet headed by Golda Meir in the early 1970s either. It is hardly surprising, given our discussion so far, that Israel's endorsement of a NWFZ in 1975 was formally submitted to the U.N. General Assembly by no other than Foreign Minister Allon, with considerable support from most political leaders and the Israeli public (Karem, 1988:95; Barnaby, 1989:158). By that time, supporters of an open deterrent were becoming marginalized (but far from irrelevant, given the impact of an intractable Arab position on Israeli public opinion). Former Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin declared in 1974, in response to former Defense Minister Moshe Dayan's call for nuclear weapons: "Attempts to rely on mystical weapons are negative trends" (Inbar, 1986:64). Moshe Dayan eventually joined Labor's main competitor, Likud, and served as its foreign minister.

A Likud-led coalition defeated Labor in 1977, backed by forces opposed to Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Golan Heights, partly on the basis of their conventional strategic significance. Likud's rejection of a territorial compromise on the basis of the security requirement for strategic depth could have weakened the party's ability to claim the additional need for a nuclear deterrent.[29] The continuation of opaqueness also prevented any further deterioration in Likud's troubled relationship with the United States. The policy was upheld in spite of apparent shifts among some prominent Likud leaders. Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, traditionally associated with the "conventional" school of thought, declared that "Israel cannot cope with the conventional arms race with the Arabs who have superiority in manpower and capital."[30] This statement echoed earlier statements by Dayan (Yaniv, 1987:195).

The two classical coalitions in Israeli politics have responded differently to mixes of outside pressures and inducements. Labor-centered coalitions have used external carrots and sticks (political and economic) to build domestic consensus favoring territorial compromise and a comprehensive political settlement. They have been more receptive than Likud-centered coalitions to use of effective international tools (United Nations peacekeeping forces, U.S. diplomacy) to induce trust in regional agreements and compromises among its constituents.[31]

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[29]See statement by Binyamin Natanyahu in *Yediot Ahronot* (7/15/1988).

[30]Quoted in Hewedi (1989:21). For the evolution of Sharon's thinking on nuclear deterrence in the region see Bar-Joseph (1982:222) and Inbar (1986:65). According to Nimrod (1991:16), Sharon opposes an open deterrent *as well as* a NWFZ.

[31]In his memoirs, Allon (1990:191) went as far as favoring a coercive prevention of nuclear proliferation by nuclear powers.

A recent statement by Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin summarizes the aims of Labor diplomacy: "to use the new situation in order to become a more welcome member of the international club."[32] Likud-led coalitions have generally used external pressures to coalesce forces opposed to a territorial settlement on the West Bank or to a withdrawal from the Golan Heights. It is not clear whether these differences between the two coalitions also implied different receptivity to "intrusive" (external) verification measures and to international inducements for denuclearization of the region. However, influential former Likud ministers like Ariel Sharon, Yuval Ne'eman, and Rafel Eitan are known to oppose a NWFZ (Nimrod, 1991). Moreover, Likud refused to rely on the International Atomic Energy Agency to neutralize Iraq's pursuit of nuclear weapons; in 1981 the Begin government launched an attack on Iraq's Osirak reactor (three weeks before general elections and with Likud lagging in the polls) enunciating the Begin Doctrine, while Labor opposed the strike.[33] Such cleavages, however, did not always easily carry over into a clear-cut party-based partisanship favoring or opposing overt deterrence, as evidenced by (Likud's) Prime Minister Shamir's receptivity to a regional settlement on weapons of mass destruction.

Beyond coalitional and other domestic political considerations, most relevant groups and institutions converged in their evaluation of the utility of opaqueness in accommodating conflictive political interests.

The Conventional Military Establishment. The influential Israeli military establishment (and its associated military-industrial complex) fundamentally resisted reliance on a nuclear deterrent.[34] Maintaining conventional superiority has been a long-standing objective of the Israeli Defense Forces.[35] Supporters of an open, full-fledged deterrent often invoked its value as a means to reduce the need for conventional forces (Yaniv, 1987; Evron, 1991). Such claims represented a potential institutional threat to the conventional military. First, they might have exacerbated competition for dwindling budgetary resources. The military budget was about 20 percent of Israel's GNP by the late 1980s (Yaniv, 1987). Second, an open deterrent could have threatened the external network of procurement of conventional weaponry (high-performance combat aircraft in particular) and of sourcing for locally produced equipment.[36] The military establishment was particularly sensitive to the fact that about 50 percent of the defense budget was covered by U.S. military aid. Third, Israel's defense forces would have been required to maintain their conventional deterrent and fighting missions even in light of diminished capabilities, at potentially much higher human costs.

Israel's nuclear industrial infrastructure (private and public) is estimated to be relatively small, particularly compared to the extensive network of conventional arms producers (Steinberg, 1990). The autonomy of the Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC) was largely reduced with Ben-Gurion's departure; in 1966 it was transferred from the Ministry of Defense to the Prime Minister's office (Levy Eshkol). The composition of the IAEC was then broadened to include representatives of civilian sectors, including energy, medical, and agricultural

[32]Eric Silver, *Financial Times* (12/7/1992).

[33]Inbar (1991:105); Perlmutter, Handel, and Bar-Joseph (1982). On Likud's forerunner Gahal's support for a nuclear option see Flapan (1974:52).

[34]Inbar (1986:66); Horowitz (1993:45). Some military hard-liners resisted reliance on nuclear weapons, including Chiefs of Staff Yigal Yadin and Yitzhak Rabin (Rosen, 1976:8; Inbar, 1986). On the military-industrial complex see Mintz (1989) and Barnett (1992).

[35]On the domestic context of Israeli conventional strategy see Mandelbaum (1988) and Barnett (1992).

[36]On the expressed link between an Israeli promise not to develop nuclear weapons and the U.S. commitment to supply conventional weapons in the early 1960s see Evron (1974:1338) and Bundy (1988).

research, as well as the Ministry of Finance (Flapan, 1974:52; Dowty, 1978:110). This diversification might have been intended to prevent the nuclear program from being locked into military objectives. A policy of opaqueness not only facilitated the program's continuity but allowed nucleocrats with divergent agendas (civilian vs. military uses of nuclear energy) to cohabit the IAEC. Moreover, such policy could sidestep the budgetary transparency of an open program, weaken oversight by financial agencies, and avoid bureaucratic hurdles.

Economic Forces. The Israeli economy has been highly dependent on Western financial flows that supported a vast network of state agencies and powerful *Histadrut* enterprises, as well as the growing private sector. Mapai, Mapam, and Ahdut Haavoda enjoyed high support within *Histadrut,* unlike Ben-Gurion's followers. Political constraints precluded ruling coalitions from reducing external dependence by shifting the burden of financing economic development, welfare, and defense to Israeli society (Barnett, 1992). Important and increasingly concentrated financial and economic institutions subsidized by the state resisted any prospects of upsetting their lifeline dependence on foreign (mostly U.S.) capital, investment, and technology. If there was one single item that had the highest potential of concatenating an economic severance from external sources of economic support, the open embrace of a nuclear deterrent was *it.* Western powers had developed a regime with formal and informal injunctions, designed to persuade would-be newcomers to the nuclear club that such intentions would carry costly consequences in the economic arena, among others.[37] No Israeli ruling coalition could have survived the *domestic* political fallout of economic sanctions. Democratic leaders facing electoral approval are far more constrained in distributing the punishing costs of sanctions than was, for instance, the Iraqi leadership. Finally, the financial agencies of the state (Treasury in particular) have had a long-standing, at times very bitter, dispute with defense agencies over the military budget. Although the size of Israeli nuclear investments is not publicly known, the added defense burden of a large-scale program had the potential of exacerbating such tensions.[38]

The Scientific Community. Prominent scientists opposed the nuclear program and six out of seven members of IAEC had resigned by 1957, on the basis of their rejection of nuclear weapons and of the opportunity costs of nuclear industrial activities for the advancement of basic research (Steinberg, 1994:250). Only professor Ernst David Bergman—a prominent member of Rafi, founder of the science corps within the Israeli military, and principal advisor to Ben-Gurion on nuclear matters—remained, until Eshkol replaced him in 1966, arguably as part of an effort to "freeze" the development of the Dimona facilities (Dowty, 1978). Eshkol, as argued, was highly sensitive to cost considerations. The incident with the IAEC and its scientists had more of a symbolic than a practical impact (the program required technology more than science). In light of the social valuation of scientists in Israeli society, too much attention on the incident had the potential for weakening popular support. From the point of view of the general argument advanced here, it is interesting to highlight the

[37]By 1976 the U.S. Congress had passed the Symington Amendment, mandating a cut-off of military or economic aid to a country importing a reprocessing plant (Nye, 1981; Scheinman, 1987). By 1979 the U.S. Nonproliferation Act formally precluded the U.S. government from providing economic assistance to a country acquiring nuclear weapons. Whether or not the U.S. would have actually applied such sanctions on Israel may be debatable, but the risk was quite concrete in the eyes of Israeli leaders.

[38]For a refreshing perspective that helps debunk the conventional wisdom that nuclear weapons in industrializing countries are cheap see Miller (1993).

role that maximizing institutional support for basic science played in shaping the position of this prestigious group of scientists.

Public Opinion, Technological Fixes, and an Emerging Win-Set. Three considerations may be invoked in arguing that, after decades of opaqueness, a NWFZ is possibly making it into Israel's win-set. First, there has been no popular debate in Israel over the merits of each option for most of the period under consideration, although, as argued, Allon's NWFZ proposal enjoyed considerable public support. By 1986 almost 66 percent of the public explicitly rejected basing Israel's security on nuclear weapons or their use, under any circumstances (Arian, Talmud, and Hermann, 1988; Evron, 1991:281). Following Saddam Hussein's threats to "incinerate half of Israel" with chemical weapons, 88 percent of Israelis responded in 1991 that the use of nuclear weapons could be "justified in principle" (Arian, 1993). That percentage fell to 66 percent only two years after. In 1993 72 percent of the sample also supported the idea of abandoning all nonconventional weapons if the other countries in the region did so as well. These responses not only render themselves to ambiguous interpretations but, like other surveys in other countries, reveal some volatility (and perhaps flexibility) in popular attitudes regarding nuclear deterrence. Second, the secular decline in the political influence of domestic institutions emphasizing technological fixes—such as a nuclear deterrent—as the solution to Israel's security dilemma has been reinforced by three developments: (1) The *intifada* has sensitized the Israeli public to the inability of "ultimate" weapons to prevent a potentially devastating civil war; (2) the unprovoked scud attacks by Iraq during the Gulf War—and their threatened chemical payload—has similarly transformed public perceptions of the country's vulnerability;[39] (3) the exigencies of economic survival and competitiveness are shrinking the rents of military-industrial groups dramatically and expanding civilian-oriented private entrepreneurship. Finally, Labor's electoral comeback in 1992 resulted in a new tripartite coalition, this time with dovish left-of-center partners united in Meretz, and with Shas, a religious party with a relatively moderate leadership in foreign policy. In light of these three considerations, an *effectively verified* regime to free the region from weapons of mass destruction is now part of Israel's domestic win-set, more than ever before.[40] Such a regime will have to be far more robust than what current NPT procedures can guarantee, and will have to include all the countries in the region that Israel regards as a threat.

The Arab World and Iran

Just as opaqueness reflected an equilibrium among Israeli political forces, it was more expedient for successive coalitions in the Middle East to maintain domestic consensus over opaqueness than to embrace overt deterrence. In particular, ambiguity about Israel's—and other Arab states' or Iran's—capabilities helped stem popular challenges and allayed the concerns of both the conventional military establishment and economic groups inside and outside the state.

Hedging Popular Demand for Matching Capabilities. The formal recognition that Israel had nuclear weapons would have forced ruling coalitions to counter that

[39]On the impact of the *intifada* on strategic thinking see Arian (1989:218). On responses to scud attacks see Leonard (1991).

[40]See Foreign Minister Peres's statement at the chemical weapons conference (see *PPNN Newsbrief* no. 21, first quarter 1993:2) and his statement in Bonn, in response to Chancellor Kohl's question on Israel's willingness to join the NPT.

capability, in response to popular dissatisfaction with the idea of an Israeli nuclear monopoly (Jabber, 1977; Karem, 1988). What Jabber labels the imperative of "deterrent emulation" is evident from statements like "It must be made clear that we cannot possibly stand idly by if Israel introduces atomic weapons into the area" (President Sadat) and "We in Syria have a counterplan, in the event that Israel gets nuclear weapons" (President Asad) (quoted in Feldman, 1982:11). Those who were most forceful in declaring that Israel in fact *had* such weapons without a shred of doubt—Iraq and Libya—also embarked on the most extensive efforts in the Arab world to acquire nuclear weapons (Jabber, 1977; Dunn, 1982). Opaqueness, instead, offered at least a partial fig leaf for resisting domestic pressures, and made it possible for Sadat and other Egyptian officials to argue that, although they believed Israel was capable of manufacturing a nuclear bomb, it [Israel] "does not have nuclear weapons."[41] President Asad and King Faisal pronounced similar statements imputing to Israel a potential, rather than an actual weapon. Opaqueness thus mitigated the immediate political pressure to match Israeli capabilities and, at least in some instances, helped buy time off for efforts to achieve nuclear parity.[42]

The following statement by Mohamed Hasanayn Heikal strengthens the argument that the drive to measure up with Israeli nuclear endowments was less of a response to strategic interaction considerations and had primarily a domestic basis: "Israel has nuclear weapons but will not use them unless she finds herself being strangled" (Feldman, 1982:87). This recognition that Israeli nuclear capabilities—whatever they may be—have been designed as defensive, rather than offensive tools, is particularly astounding coming from the foremost advocate of nuclear weapons in Egypt. Israel's survival motive, however, has been widely acknowledged, despite attempts by radicals to vest an Israeli weapon with offensive objectives. As King Hussein of Jordan declared, the Israelis would not use a nuclear device "unless they were in mortal danger" (Feldman, 1982:87). Strategic interaction, in other words, might arguably have played a greater role—in strengthening support for national (*watanyia*) nuclear deterrents—in the context of inter-Arab or Arab–Iranian relations than in the context of the Arab–Israeli conflict.[43]

Competing Ruling Coalitions and the Politics of Industrialization. Throughout most of the Cold War era two basic types of coalition—both leaning on the military—ruled over Middle Eastern countries. On the one hand, there were inward-looking nationalist-populist groups which conquered the state in order to implant pan-Arab versions of Soviet-style regimes (Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Egypt in the 1950s and 1960s). This group, as we have seen, was the most active in pursuing nuclear weapons (Dunn, 1982; Pajak, 1982). Yet their project was constrained by the fact that Soviet economic support was critical to their ability to maintain domestic legitimacy for their comprehensive revolutionary objectives. Transgressing the boundaries of the superpower consensus to stem the proliferation of nuclear weapons throughout the world endangered those objectives. These constraints (which transcend the foreign-domestic boundary)

[41]For this and other public denials see Feldman (1982). Even Nasser, who had warned against Israel's development of a nuclear weapon, declared that Dimona was not yet being used for that purpose (The London *Observer*, 7/5/1964).

[42]On Egypt's efforts see Jabber (1981). On Syria's efforts see *Newsweek* (4/3/1978) and *Mednews* 5, 21 (8/3/1992:1). On Saddam Hussein's see Dunn (1982) and Beres (1986).

[43]See efforts by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and others to preclude an Iraqi or Libyan nuclear weapon, and statements by Egypt's former Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy against signing the NPT, to preclude strategic advantages by Libya and Iraq, as well as by Israel (quotes from the opposition paper *A-Sha'ab* in Bar-Joseph, 1982:208). On Arab countries' concern with Iranian nuclear designs see Sayigh (1993).

precluded a policy of overt deterrence, *but not one of opaqueness,* and they may well explain these countries' eventual decision to sign the NPT. Signing it was not altogether equivalent with abiding by its spirit, as was often suspected and more recently confirmed in the case of Iraq.[44] *De facto,* therefore, these coalitions implemented a policy of opaqueness that had the double advantage of not compromising the foreign benefactors of their domestic power base while nurturing important political segments in that base.

On the other hand, there were coalitions relying on the political, military, and/or economic support of the U.S. and Western Europe, primarily in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, pre-revolutionary Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt (1970s and 1980s).[45] For these coalitions, nuclear "restraint" was also a requirement to maintain the external support on which the interests of important domestic segments relied. Lack of restraint (a pursuit of weapons capabilities) implied bilateral and multilateral economic sanctions likely to damage the concentrated interests of rising industrial, contracting, and commercial sectors in expanding trade and investments.[46] Restraint (ideally in the form of a NWFZ) was in line with embracing regional policies that would not threaten the domestic beneficiaries of international economic, financial, and political exchanges. These benefits included debt-forgiveness, export markets, technology transfer, food imports, aid, and investments. The beneficiaries were generally among these regimes' most economically powerful constituencies, such as the oil-exporting industries in the Gulf and the tourist-based and *munfatihun* economies of Egypt and Jordan.[47] Leading exemplars of such coalitions—Iran under the Shah and Egypt under Sadat—played an entrepreneurial role in advancing the idea of a NWFZ, for the first time in 1974.

In recent years a new modality replaced coalitional politics in the region. On the one hand, liberalizing coalitions aiming at greater integration with the world economy have become more widely entrenched. Their strategies of industrialization—and the need to secure economic benefits to its supporting constituencies—required the kind of security arrangements that would gain the blessing of the international community.[48] The Gulf War epitomized the willingness of these coalitions to embrace a more "internationalist"—rather than a narrow regional—approach. This process culminated in their decision to enter into unprecedented bilateral and multilateral negotiations with Israel, a process started in Madrid in 1991. These coalitions have recently been advocating somewhat less rigid versions of a NWFZ than in the past, to be negotiated in a context of direct negotiations with Israel.[49] For coalitions whose interests are increasingly embedded within the global economic system and its associated institutions, the shadow of future political and economic exchanges with external partners thus looms large enough—so far—to offset any domestic pressures opposed to nuclear restraint.

On the other hand, an alternative alliance of political and economic forces has begun challenging liberalizing coalitions. Its common denominator is the

[44]Saddam Hussein was reported to have asked his senior nuclear advisor: "Dr. Jaffar, if we stay in the NPT, will it in any way hinder the clandestine nuclear program?" Jaffar reported his own answer to have been an immediate and unequivocal no (Kay, 1993:88).

[45]On local elites and relations with the U.S. see Herrmann (1991).

[46]On these sectors see Binder (1988) and Richards and Waterbury (1990).

[47]On the *munfatihun* ("openers") who facilitate exchanges with a global market see Waterbury (1983).

[48]On Syria's, Lebanon's, and Jordan's business class interest in international competitiveness and peace with Israel see W. E. Schmidt (*New York Times,* 6/27/1993:1).

[49]Syria announced its willingness to sign an IAEA safeguards agreement but refused to participate in the Multilateral Working Group on Arms Control (*Washington Post,* 2/11/1992:A16). Most major Arab states have not signed the 1992 chemical weapons convention.

rejection of "Western" regimes on the basis of threatened material or ideal-confessional interests. On the material side, economic liberalization and orthodox stabilization plans, particularly as imposed by the IMF and other financial institutions, endanger import-competing firms with close ties to the state and domestic markets, unskilled, blue-collar workers, white-collar and other state employees, small firms, politicians who oppose the dismantling of state enterprises (a rich source of political patronage), and the underemployed intelligentsia (Kahler, 1989; Kaufman, 1989). Radical Islamic groups are perhaps the most significant ideological force in the region espousing an alternative political economy of development.[50] Its tenets include a repudiation of ties to the international economy and its perceived associated scourges: inequalities, corruption, unemployment, and enslaving indebtedness. In the words of Hasan Turabi (1992:53), leader of Sudan's National Islamic Front, Islam seeks justice and will "challenge those who enjoy an advantage under the present world order, in economic relations between north and south, in the U.N. structure, in the monopoly of information, technology or armaments." Islamic coalitions often include "bourgeois factions, some rural agrarian capitalists, notables and estate-owners, and the virtually proletarianized members of the state-employed petite-bourgeoisie, the underemployed intelligentsia, and the large student population" (Binder, 1988).

The common thread in this logrolled alliance is the advancement of a new social order in which the idea of a peace settlement with non-Moslems appears oxymoronic, confounding the clear Islamic dichotomy of *dar-al-Islam* (Islamic realm) and *dar-al harb* (realm of warfare). The domestic political appeal of radical (also labeled militant) fundamentalist movements stems from their call to redress global inequities and frozen hierarchies, and from their willingness to advance "extreme," final, redeeming solutions to social and political problems.[51] Islamic movements were the most active opponents to the Camp David Peace Accords and to any negotiations with Israel, including the Madrid peace process.[52] Clearly, these coalitions have not, thus far, shown a willingness to negotiate either a conventional or a nuclear regional regime. In fact, Iran discontinued its formerly active role in promoting a NWFZ at the U.N. in 1979, in the aftermath of the Islamic revolution (Karem, 1988:103). Iran became the foremost representative of coalitions basing their political power on contempt for Western political and economic principles. Yet, even in Iran have reformist currents—with Rafsanjani's among them—often labeled "economy first" or "pragmatic" (Keddie and Monian, 1993; Sadowski, 1993:63), favored *Baz-Sazi* (rebuilding), a policy geared to liberalize the economy, increase trade and foreign investments, and adopt a utilitarian—as opposed to an ideological—foreign policy (Karawan, 1992). The results of 1993 elections suggest only limited support for these efforts. Radical Islamic organizations controlling bloated state industries and charity foundations have little incentive to transfer their power to private entrepreneurs or to discontinue challenging "Western" regimes and institutions.[53] The continued struggle between these factions in Iran may help explain the unclear (opaque) and unstable nature of Iran's nuclear posture in the past decade.

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[50]On the principles of an Islamic political economy see Sahliyeh (1990), Esposito (1991), Turabi (1992), and Kuran (1993). In practice, the Islamic regime in Sudan and Iran do follow IMF-conditionality arrangements.

[51]On militant Islam's readiness to use violence, and its "politics of redemption" see Deeb (1992).

[52]On extremist Egyptian Islamic groups' opposition to Camp David see Ramadan (1993:168). On radical Islamic calls to keep Saudi Arabia out of non-Islamic pacts and treaties (including the peace process) and to build up its armed forces see Haeri (1991). On Hamas's calls for the elimination of Israel through *jihad* and opposition to negotiations see Muslih (1992) and Sisk (1992).

[53]Chris Hedges, *New York Times* (6/11/1993:A3 and 6/14/1993:A6).

Extreme formulations of nuclear postures along confessional lines have found expression, in the past, in the advocacy of an "Islamic bomb," a weapon less aimed at reducing vulnerability or shaping a coherent military strategy than at offsetting psychological injuries and restoring pride and prestige. As Pakistani physicist Hoodbhoy (1993:43) makes clear, "the concept behind the term [Islamic bomb] is of Muslim origin. The idea of a nuclear weapon for collective defense of the entire Muslim *ummah* was, after all, articulated and advocated by Muslim leaders who recognized its popularity and determined to benefit from it."[54] However, fundamentalist movements are not an ideological monolith, and even the Islamic Republic of Iran has not yet *openly* embraced deterrence or launched an "Islamic nuclear club," despite its alleged efforts to acquire nuclear capabilities.[55] The past record of "success" of integrative frameworks in the Middle East casts doubt on the ability of pan-Islamic ideologies to consolidate a common nuclear posture.[56]

The impact of the political-economic nature of ruling coalitions on nuclear postures can be traced quite clearly in the case of Egypt, in its evolution from a Nasserite strategy of redistribution and import-substitution industrialization to Sadat's post-1973 accumulation-and-growth blueprint (Waterbury, 1983). Nasser was reported to have pursued nuclear weapons from the Soviet Union at the height of their strategic alliance (Jabber, 1981:34) and nuclear technology more generally from other suppliers. M. Hasnayn Heikal, an advisor to Nasser and the editor of Egypt's influential *Al-Ahram,* was himself an ardent supporter of an Arab nuclear deterrent.[57] It was the requirements of transforming the domestic political economy through *infitah* (economic liberalization)—the "economic crossing"—that compelled Sadat to negotiate an unprecedented peace treaty with Israel.[58] That *infitah* was launched in 1974, the same year Egypt advanced, for the first time, the idea of a NWFZ, is quite suggestive. Sadat understood the prerequisites of his domestic economic program that precluded a nuclear arms race with a formidable opponent (Nimrod, 1991). Abandoning nuclear ambiguity would also deal a blow to Sadat's domestic political foes, particularly Nasserist, pro-Soviet groups which he regarded as a constant threat to his rule, and which included prominent nuclear advocates. Transcending nuclear ambiguity had the additional advantage of suiting the external requirements of Sadat's strategy for Egypt's transformation, that is, improving relations with the West. President Nixon visited Egypt that year, as a symbol of solidifying U.S.–Egyptian relations. By 1979, Sadat was requesting a foreign aid package

[54]On Pakistan's Islamic bomb see Chellaney (1991:59). On Saudi and Libyan support for an Islamic deterrent see Barnaby (1989). On an Islamic and a black African bomb see Mazrui (1989).

[55]Sayigh (1993); *Eye on Supply* 8 (Winter 1993:9–16); *Frontline* (PBS 4/13/1993). Ayatollah Mohammed Beheshti, a close advisor to Khomeini, urged an Iranian scientist: "It is your duty to build the atomic bomb for the Islamic Republican Party" (Spector, 1990:208). President Rafsanjani's deputy, Ayatollah Mohajerani, declared that "because the enemy has nuclear facilities, the Muslim states too should be equipped with the same capacity" and "I am not talking about one Muslim country, but rather the entirety of Muslim states" (interview distributed by the official Iranian news agency, quoted in R. Jeffry Smith, "Officials Say Iran Is Seeking Nuclear Weapons Capability," *Washington Post,* 10/30/1991:A1). See also Hoodbhoy (1993:43).

[56]On the failure of Pan-Arabism to create cohesive regional alliances see Walt (1987). On the demise of Pan-Arabism see Ajami (1981). On the competition between Libya and Pakistan for the primacy of an Islamic bomb see Barnaby (1989). On the myth of Monolithic Islam see Esposito (1991) and Karawan (1992). For the contrary view that the Islamic movement is fundamentally uniform see Sudanese leader Hasan al-Turabi's statement in Kramer (1993).

[57]Article in *Al-Ahram* (11/23/1973) reported on *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* (Nonproliferation) (11/26/1973:G1, G2). Other pro-Soviet proponents of such weapons reportedly included Ali Sabri, General Sadek, Science Minister Salah Hedayat, and arguably Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy, who resigned to protest Sadat's peace initiative (Jabber, 1977; Bar-Joseph, 1982; Nimrod, 1991).

[58]Mandelbaum (1988); Stein (1991); Karawan (1994); and, dissenting, Telhami (1990).

of $18 billion from the G-7 group. Egypt's ruling coalition had tied its grand strategy of industrialization to "internationalist" instruments.

The attempt to secure the political survival of its domestic coalition may also explain Egypt's "regional entrepreneurship" better than theories linking hegemons to the creation of regimes. Egypt—hardly a military-economic hegemon—played an active role in brokering between the parties, pointing to overlapping interests, and designing innovative arrangements, such as a Security Council role in establishing a NWFZ (Karem, 1988).

The Military-Industrial Complex. An overt nuclear posture posed similar—and in some cases magnified—challenges to the expansion of conventional military establishments and their industrial complexes in the Arab world and Iran, as they did in Israel.[59] The military has been arguably the most powerful political institution in the Arab Middle East, unconstrained by concerns with subordination to civilian authorities or democratic challenges. Yet the protracted economic crisis imposed some limits on the ability of these (mostly military) regimes to extract resources from civil society (Beblawi and Luciani, 1987; Barnett, 1992; Sayigh, 1992). Structural adjustment programs often had adverse effects on arms imports and on the special privileges of military officers (Springborg, 1989; Sadowski, 1993:32–35). Economic reform also strengthened the hands of civilian technocrats, politicians, and economic institutions in charge of adjustment programs. Under conditions of contracting resources, the pursuit of a nuclear deterrent would have exacerbated the need for trade-offs in military budgets, while leaving intact the conventional mission of "freeing Arab lands."[60]

Opaqueness, instead, enabled military establishments highly dependent on the flow of weapons, technology, and military aid to maintain their power bases. Opaqueness also ensured and extended the institutional half-life of Atomic Energy Commissions, mostly through hidden budgetary allocations and the absence of oversight. The relative strength of nuclear establishments in the Arab world is not easy to assess, but there is evidence that only Iraq's Baath regime managed to coalesce a strong infrastructure of interests (technical communities and state agencies) employing 20,000 people with an investment of $10 bn.[61] Iraq promised to become the first Arab state to obtain a military nuclear capability (Feldman, 1982:73), and the oil bonanza provided the means to back this commitment. Most other nuclear establishments had more severe budgetary and industrial-technological constraints and were likely to forego advocating overt competition with highly reputable Israeli, or with fellow Arab or Iranian, counterparts.

Summing up our review of the domestic sources of nuclear postures, the conditions for phasing out opaqueness began gaining momentum throughout the region in recent years, even prior to the fateful events of September 1993. Israel, the PLO, and most Arab countries are discussing a regional system of safeguards involving the IAEA and mutual inspections, particularly in the context of the Multilateral Working Group on Arms Control.[62] This only implies we are at the beginning of a long road. First, no NWFZ will emerge that does not take care of all other weapons of mass destruction (chemical and biological). Second, such a regime will have to involve highly efficient detection capabilities,

[59]On military budgets and roles see Springborg (1989), Sayigh (1992), and Owen (1992).

[60]On state revenues and expenditures in the Arab world see Beblawi and Luciani (1987).

[61]Sayigh (1992); Kay (1993); *JPRS* (4/16/1993:24).

[62]R. Jeffry Smith, "State Department Meeting on Mideast Arms Control Opens without Rancor," *Washington Post* (5/12/1992:A12). On mechanisms under review by the IAEA see Chayes and Chayes (1992) and Scheinman (1993).

and provide guarantees against defection by current *or future* regimes. Finally, Syria, Lebanon, and Iran have not yet joined the Multilateral regional peace talks, a position that questions their declared support for a NWFZ. Whatever nuclear capabilities Iran may be interested in seeking, they are now a problem of the international community, and not merely of its neighbors (Harkabi, 1993); they may thus require the kind of international intervention engineered for Iraq, through a U.N. Special Commission. Clearly, the ability of intransigent regimes to wreak havoc in the region is inversely related to the successful achievement of a lasting and comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement.

While a NWFZ seems now within Israel's win-set (Leonard, 1991), there are signs of growing Arab recognition that the alleged Israeli nuclear deterrent will not wither away prior to a comprehensive settlement.[63] Yezid Sayigh, coordinator of the Palestinian team to the Multilateral Working Group on Arms Control, suggested that "nuclear disarmament and the establishment of a nuclear-weapons-free zone could be delayed until the conventional threat was removed"; such concessions would, of course, need to be reciprocated in other areas (Sayigh, 1993:200). Clearly, it is no longer possible for Arab leaders, particularly following the Vanunu revelations, to uphold what growing sections of public opinion throughout the Middle East—rightly or wrongly—consider now a fiction: that Israel is not yet a nuclear power.[64] Thus, the instrumentality of an ambiguous posture to maintaining a balance of domestic interests has withered away. What does the potential for change suggest for the theories of international regimes reviewed earlier in this article?

Contending Perspectives: Explaining Change

A first possibility—that opaqueness might be maintained—undermines a neorealist perspective, in the face of new structural realities (the end of bipolarity, a new regional structure) that do not result in policy changes. Functional theories could always explain the maintenance of opaqueness and nonemergence of a regime through *ex post facto* stipulations about "market failure" and the inability to realize common gains from cooperation; they are silent, however, on why such inability exists in certain circumstances and not others. A reflective analysis would trace such "market failure" to an absence of shared understandings or values, while remaining methodologically constrained by the very existence of opaqueness (which precludes a reliable probing of such perceptions and values). A domestic perspective offers a guide to test falsifiable propositions about the relationship between contending political coalitions, constituencies relevant to a win-set, and the nature of nuclear postures.

If opaqueness is replaced by overt deterrence—a second possibility—it will be much harder to dismiss a neorealist perspective than neoliberal and cognitive alternatives. Such a change would question the claim that the sharpened teeth of international institutions, multilateralism, and emerging global norms are now more likely to affect states' behavior. The burden on domestic explanations would be to relate such a change to shifting domestic coalitions and a new institutional matrix that leaves overt deterrence as the one outcome overlapping all domestic win-sets.

If opaqueness is superseded by a regime, a domestic interpretation would

[63]To consolidate a regime in weapons of mass destruction, "the Arab members have to pledge that they will not enter any alliances against Israel once it [Israel] has fully complied with the achieved settlement" (Diab, 1993:5).

[64]On Vanunu's declarations see the London *Sunday Times* (10/5/1986).

compete with a neorealist one, because the change in structures can be made to account for the shift in regional outcomes. However, the possibility that regime III (NWFZ) might come about will cast doubt on neorealist assumptions that states cooperate only insofar as they can secure balanced exchanges. This is so because such a regime might imply that, in due time, Israel relinquish its alleged advanced nuclear weapons. No nuclear state has ever done so until recently, when South Africa and the inheritors of the former Soviet Union (except Ukraine) acceded to the NPT. The emergence of a NWFZ may provide an unprecedented confirmation of neoliberal thinking regarding a state's willingness to pursue absolute gains even in the security arena.

Tracing the possible shift from opaqueness to a regime to intersubjective convergence among decisionmakers and/or negotiators requires us to accept at least three assumptions: (1) that there is widespread agreement in the extant literature either about the unreliability of deterrence theory as a guide to action, or about its morally reprobate underpinnings; (2) that this knowledge or values have permeated real-world actors in the region; and (3) that these actors are able, in political terms, to effect the stipulated outcome. The cognitive component of the first two assumptions can be constructed from Nye's (1987) concept of "nuclear learning," one of the most cogent applications of this line of thinking.[65] In this view, the lessons from U.S.–Soviet nuclear interaction would include significant agreement over the economically exhausting impact of nuclear deterrence, and these lessons are often noticed by decisionmakers in would-be regional nuclear powers. It is similarly plausible to make the alternative claim, that there may be intersubjective agreement among these regional actors over the merits—rather than the liabilities—of an overt nuclear posture, on the basis of the "long peace" between the long-standing nuclear rivals in the East–West arena. It is also possible—even probable—that there is no intersubjective agreement whatsoever among experts (agents) regarding the preferred outcome (Bar-Joseph, 1982), and that their behavior is largely shaped by their principal's (i.e., domestic coalitions) concern with political survival.

Notwithstanding these methodological points, interpretive approaches can be credited with increasing our sensitivity to universal ethical considerations, including the (im)morality of nuclear deterrence and of an unequal global distribution of nuclear property rights. The approach also exposes a paradoxical consequence of regional opaqueness. The ambiguity regarding actors' intentions and capabilities may have acted as a barrier to the full introduction of East–West strategic discourse into the region. Thus, despite its inherent risks, opaqueness may have tamed the almost compulsive sequence—embedded in such discourse—leading to open deterrence and an arms race. Given the power of discourse to transform patterns of thought and influence behavior, opaqueness may have been a normatively superior alternative to the transparency of an overt deterrent.

Finally, the analysis of domestic coalitions helps explain variability not only over time but also across regions, a task undertaken elsewhere (Solingen, 1993). Neorealism, instead, provides no parsimonious account of the great variation in nuclear behavior, dynamically and across countries and regions. This variance is evident from India's test of a nuclear device and opposition to NWFZ proposals; Israel's abstention from testing—but warning never to be "second" in a regional nuclear race—while developing a receptivity to a NWFZ;[66] South Korea's, South Africa's, and Taiwan's unilateral adherence to the NPT after tink-

[65]See also Haas (1980).

[66]A panel of scientists appointed by the White House in 1980 concluded that a controversial flash near South Africa was "probably not" a nuclear explosion (Pajak, 1982).

ering with opaqueness; and Pakistan's new openness to NPT and NWFZ solutions after dedicated efforts to acquire a deterrent. I specifically refrained from including Argentina and Brazil in this list, because they are often quickly explained away—in neorealist terms—by reference to a less fragile security context than that of other regions. Yet, paradoxically, accepting the premise that genuine security dilemmas were absent from the Southern Cone of Latin America posits a real problem for neorealism, for both Brazil and Argentina nurtured nuclear opaqueness for over two decades. Thus, two contrasting security contexts—the Middle East and the Southern Cone—coexisted for many years with similar outcomes: regional powers embracing ambiguous nuclear postures and unwilling to commit fully to safeguarded denuclearization. Dramatic domestic shifts in the political-economic programs of ruling coalitions in Brazil and Argentina—and their consequent international requirements—go a long way in explaining the emergence of a NWFZ in the Southern Cone in the early 1990s. Similar considerations account for earlier unilateral steps to transcend opaqueness by South Korea and Taiwan in the 1970s and, more recently, for the South African turnabout. Instead, where liberalizing coalitions have been too weak to carry the day (as in India and Iran), the promise of effective denuclearization remains elusive.

Conclusion

This article uses contending propositions from regime theory to explain nuclear opaqueness in the Middle East, and posits the need to integrate domestic politics seriously—even in the "least likely case" of nuclear strategy—in understanding regime-creation. The advantages of focusing on domestic structural and institutional conditions include the ability to help anticipate whose interests will be aggregated in the formulation of policy, and where will the logrolling process lead.[67] From the vantage point of the regime literature, the article extends what was an almost exclusive prior focus on great powers—particularly in the security, but also in the political economy realm—to the regional arena.[68] The domestic focus reinforces the claim for the analytical convergence of economic, environmental, and security regimes, where all may involve a mutuality of interests and are not necessarily burdened by calculi of relative gains.

The findings can be summarized as follows, beginning with an evaluation of neorealist perspectives:

1. **Although overt deterrence is the most widely accepted neorealist take on this issue, the logic of neorealism is inconclusive regarding which outcome may be preferable or more likely. This questions its ability to explain opaqueness or predict its demise.**
2. **Neither regional nor global hegemons succeeded in imposing a regime to replace opaqueness in the Middle East. The relationship between hegemony versus symmetry in power distribution on the one hand, and the emergence of a regional nuclear regime on the other, remains inconclusive.**
3. **The notion of balanced exchanges has limited value as an explanation for the emergence of regimes, unless it is accompanied by a theory on**

[67]On the impact of changing domestic coalitions on the likelihood of cooperation see Snyder (1991) and Evangelista (1991).

[68]Young (1989a) is an exception. On the neglect of regional security regimes see Nye and Lynn-Jones (1988) and Haftendorn (1991).

how states draw equivalences across different issue-areas. Otherwise, the same structural context can lead to different definitions of what constitutes a balanced exchange. It may also be more useful to assess outcomes in terms of equity rather than "allocative efficiency."[69]

Neoliberal institutionalist hypotheses could explain opaqueness and the absence of a regime in the last fifteen years on the basis of states overlooking rational opportunities for mutual gain, a behavior at which the Middle East has excelled, some might add. However, the demand for a regime questions this tack. Moreover, why have existing international institutions capable of facilitating cooperation in the achievement of mutual gains failed to supply such a regime? And under what conditions are they expected to do so (a question the Yugoslavian debacle brings into relief)?[70] Thus:

4. **The demand for a regime and the supply of institutions capable of performing some of the required functions are not always sufficient for a regime to come about. The task of identifying the conditions under which existing institutions are willing to extend and perfect their operations remains.**

Neither does neoliberal institutionalism enable us to discriminate among alternative institutional solutions, or to envisage the regime's likely nature (I or III). Understanding the domestic impact of such solutions may bring us closer to foreseeing at which point along the Pareto frontier, paraphrasing Krasner (1991), states' preferences may converge.

Interpretive tools can help trace the cognitive processes that hinder the "discovery" of Pareto-optimality or that engender a new understanding of self-interest or of what constitutes a balanced exchange. From this vantage point, the absence of shared meanings regarding the equitable nature of the exchange aborted a NWFZ. Because Arab states had specifically qualified their NPT obligations to exclude the recognition of Israel, the mere extension of NPT procedures to Israeli facilities—the essence of Arab and Iranian proposals at the U.N.—ignored what was at the heart of Israel's security dilemma: the recognition of its existence by its neighbors (Quester, 1973; Karem, 1988:95–100). Such recognition, and direct mutual negotiations among the parties, would have made the acceptance of effective verification mechanisms more palatable. Ultimately, a measure of recognition (by at least some partners) came about independently of arms control negotiations, and strengthened Israel's receptivity to a NWFZ. The limits of this interpretation are given by the fact that:

5. **Knowledge about ideological and psychological processes may help us understand the absence of shared norms and understandings about nuclear deterrence and/or the existence of common preferences for opaqueness, but not why the latter prevailed, or why and when it might be superseded.**

A domestic perspective posits that institutional actors and ruling coalitions throughout the region converged around opaqueness to advance their political agendas. I trace the specific impact of side-payments, issue-linkages, and "shadow of the future" considerations on different domestic actors, and how these considerations defined alternative win-sets. What may be lost in simplicity

[69]This point is emphasized by Young (1989b).

[70]On the increased demand for institutions see Ruggie (1992).

may be gained in explanatory power and perhaps in predictive potential. This suggests that:

6. **Paying closer attention to the preferences and dynamics of domestic coalitions and institutions, and particularly to the political-economic component of their grand strategies of industrialization, may bring us closer to identifying an important engine of regime creation.**

In particular, the growing rationalization imposed by global market competition and international institutions alike have strained old budgetary priorities throughout the region and increased the "defensive positionalism" of domestic groups or agencies previously willing "to share the tent" under opaqueness. This may explain why:

7. **The chances that opaqueness could be replaced with a regime are higher than they have ever been before.**

In sum:

8. **A perspective sensitive to "second-image reversed" effects appears more useful than its conceptual alternatives in explaining why the practice of opaqueness was maintained, and why it may be abandoned. Such a perspective also helps explain: (a) variability across states in their commitment to increase information and transparency; (b) variability within states in their evaluation of gains associated with each outcome; (c) variability within states over time; (d) whose vision of future payoffs counts, and why; and (e) whether relative gains matter, and for whom. I thus find this perspective invaluable in the endless search for the DNA of regime-creation.**

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