

The New Multilateralism and Nonproliferation: Bringing In Domestic Politics



Etel Solingen

The so-called new world order compels new modes of thinking about the sources of behavior of countries suspected to harbor nuclear designs. These “fence sitters” are undecided states reluctant to commit themselves fully and effectively to the global nonproliferation regime (a full formal commitment, such as ratifying the nonproliferation treaty, is different from an effective commitment to such membership; in other words, Iraq is no Costa Rica). Such states can wait to make the ultimate declaratory political stand while sitting on various types of fences (some with basements), holding different levels of nuclear capabilities. Fence-sitting, in other words, refers to effective international political postures, not military status. The term can thus accommodate an array of countries to which different ranges of capabilities, intentions, and formal commitments are often attributed, including India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Libya, Pakistan, and North Korea (Argentina, Brazil, and South Africa left this group recently and are discussed below; Ukraine and Kazakhstan are particular cases, as countries that inherited nuclear weapons from the Soviet empire).

Scholars and practitioners alike have traditionally explained the behavior of fence sitters in terms of security dilemmas—that is, of fundamental problems of physical survival in an anarchic world. Much of the nonproliferation scholarship has thus remained wedded to realist, rational actor, purely security-laden interpretations. In some cases this focus is more justifiable than in others; but in all cases, an exclusive concern with states as unified actors, and with fear as the organizing principle underlying behavior, has two types of drawback. The first is analytical, stemming from the observation that the behavior of states has proven to be increasingly more responsive to other than security concerns, particularly in the last two decades. Increased attention to economic considerations and domestic priorities has often weakened the ability of politicians and foreign policy bureaucracies to shape security postures in isolation from other macropolitical concerns. While security dilemmas have not withered away, fence sitters have increasingly diversified their portfolio of instruments

for coping with them. Observers must likewise diversify their tools of analysis.

The second pitfall of the dominant thinking with respect to nonproliferation is operational, and relates to the practical implications of a focus on states (rather than subnational and transnational nonstate actors) and on abstract (and, for the most part, open-ended) formulations of what the security context of fence sitters is all about. An analysis that ignores the internal architecture of states and attempts to guess shifting definitions of security contexts provides a shaky foundation on which to build an international response to the problem of nuclear proliferation. Such an approach has tended also to narrow the range of means for influencing the behavior of fence sitters; it focused too much on carrots and sticks from the classical “security” kit (such as the supply of conventional weapons) and on an undifferentiated target (i.e., the recalcitrant “state”).

The role of domestic politics in nuclear proliferation deserves far more attention now than it has gained in the past. Internal cleavages within would-be nuclear powers are worth considering systematically—across all regions—because they have practical implications for multilateral efforts to stem the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The approach suggested here should be viewed within a wider context of strategies, none of which alone opens the gate to the holy grail of nuclear disarmament, which many consider the most challenging issue in the global-security agenda of the twenty-first century.

Nonproliferation and the Neglect of Domestic Politics

The assumption that domestic politics and nonstate actors are least likely to play an important role in the area of security has been the driving force behind the reluctance of nonproliferation scholars and practitioners to engage such arguments seriously. Such reluctance is particularly puzzling in light of the fact that analyses of the strategic interaction par excellence (i.e., U.S.-Soviet relations) have progressively and successfully, for some time now, cracked the dominance of neorealism. Two ancillary explanations may be advanced for why this conceptual shift did not carry over to the study of nonproliferation. On the one hand, international theorists have generally been less interested in nonproliferation, relative to the voluminous efforts devoted to theories of superpower nuclear relations.¹ On the other hand, nonproliferation studies have underused international relations theory, orienting themselves largely toward “problem solving”—toward a U.S. perspective, at that.²

Descriptive individual studies of fence sitters have, in some cases, included some discussion of the role of domestic groups in defining incentives

and disincentives to adopt one nuclear posture or another. For the most part, however, these efforts involved mostly an ad hoc enumeration of relevant political groups or individuals. At best, they provided a rough-and-tumble account of the bureaucratic politics dimension of nuclear decision-making. A diffuse awareness of domestic factors never amounted to their systematic inclusion in the analysis of nuclear postures. The idea of monolithic states with unified preference structures relegated what the international relations literature has labeled “second image reversed” effects (the impact of international systemic effects on domestic politics) to marginality in accounting for nuclear outcomes in the world’s regions.³

The strategic context of states varies from very threatening and precarious to relatively benign. Such differences undoubtedly set up the background conditions under which alternative choices are weighed. Yet a total, exclusive absorption with structural power and security dilemma considerations offered a limited ground for interregional comparisons. Inclusive volumes could thus go no further than establishing that the security context was more fragile in the Middle East than in the Southern Cone of Latin America (not a dramatic finding in itself), without really explaining why fence-sitting continued to hold for over two decades in both cases. To a significant extent, the literature forced a neorealist perspective onto regions where its utility, even as a “first cut,” was doubtful, as in Brazil and Argentina. Nor could the sole preoccupation with the security context easily account for why a range of paranoids, pygmies, and pariahs opted for different solutions to their predicament.⁴ Taiwan and South Korea crossed the fence and became bona fide members of the nonproliferation regime, while other superpower “protectorates” (Iraq, North Korea, Libya, Israel, and Pakistan) remained.

The overconcentration on differences in structural power and levels of insecurity undermined the ability to consider alternative sources of behavior—including some commonalities—that affected all fence sitters in the same way. In particular, these were all industrializing states in which alternative political-economic coalitions competed throughout the postwar years to define their country’s association with the international political and economic order. Before exploring in the next section how this particular fact helped bring domestic politics into the calculus of nuclear preferences, I should define the relationship between external and internal considerations more explicitly.

It is indeed the case that security dilemmas tied most of these countries to the nuclear fence at the outset. Moreover, competition in the realm of security explains almost single-handedly the decisions of nuclear weapon states (the Five) in the decade following World War II. Yet the analysis here takes into consideration the different “world time” (particularly with respect to the global political economy) under which this second

tier of countries (the fence sitters) has contemplated the development of nuclear weapons. Thus, over time, the impact of domestic considerations increased for several reasons.

First, there was a realization that the relationship between nuclear weapons and genuine security is more complex and indeterminate than previously assumed.⁵ In other words, nuclear weapons may, but do not necessarily, guarantee a state's security, and they might even undermine it. The recognition of this complexity increasingly weakened the privileged status of nuclear programs as deserving sacrosanct autonomy from "politics as usual." If the value of nuclear weapons is inconclusive, why could domestic groups not follow their natural tendency and frame their attitudes toward this issue (as toward others) on the basis of their respective political and institutional interests? To sum up this point, an essential feature of nuclear weapons (their unpredictable utility) progressively, albeit often imperceptibly at the popular level, weakened the autonomy of nuclear policy.

Second, the requirements of industrialization and of defining a developing state's relations to the international economic and political system weakened the relative autonomy of nuclear policy even further. Here, factors external to the nature of nuclear weapons blurred the boundaries between strategies of industrialization and security postures. A choice to deepen one's relationship to global markets and international finance had certain implications for the range of choices available in the nuclear area. States could once sit on the fence while pursuing their economic strategies with relative impunity. That situation began to change with the emergence of mild but creeping linkages between access to foreign capital and advanced technology and nuclear policies (the PRC developed nuclear weapons well before these trade-offs were relevant to its strategy of industrialization). The demonstration effect in the last fifteen years or so of the "miracle" trading states of East Asia (none of which remains on the fence) became an important reference point in linking economic achievement with nuclear restraint. The growing degree of internationalization of markets, finance, and technology raised the stakes, and domestic coalitions steering integration with the world political economy understood the terms. More on this point later.

Third, more recently the end of the Cold War and the growing "regionalization" of conflicts exacerbated domestic debates within fence sitters over their security policies. It was no longer feasible, as in the past, to peg regional postures to the inexorable logic of superpower competition. Domestic processes thus began gaining greater relevance, and, for the first time ever, the signs of an incipient broadening of the debate over nuclear policy were evident among a number of fence sitters (from Argentina to Israel). Moreover, the waning of certain external "rents" (such as the superpowers' granting foreign aid in exchange for strategic influence) to

regions like the Middle East, and the consequent resource contraction at home, have forced a domestic debate over redefining priorities.

Domestic politics has thus become an important parameter, even where external considerations are very real. Ignoring how domestic groups weigh nuclear policy according to its potential effect on their own political and institutional payoffs and trajectories is not only analytically deficient; it may undermine the task of conceiving effective means of collective action on behalf of a safer world. But how do we begin to link subnational groups to alternative nuclear postures? Why would remaining on the fence or crossing it matter for one group and not another? Assuming that different domestic actors are concerned with short-term political/electoral gains or with longer-term institutional-bureaucratic survival, they tend to rank their policy preferences according to (1) the nature of side payments associated with a given policy—providing conventional weapons to induce nuclear restraint is a classical example of side payments benefiting the conventional military establishment; (2) the rate at which they discount the future—a political coalition in power may prefer a tangible (even if less valuable) reward for nuclear restraint now, to a potentially more valuable one in the uncertain future; and (3) the sensitivity coefficients of different policies to gaps in gains and transparency. On the one hand, 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. In other words, it may accept nonconventional parity (nuclear, chemical, and the like) more easily than conventional parity. On the other hand, greater transparency may deprive nuclear agencies from the ability to pursue a wider range of institutional options. Simply put, under effective international safeguards, nuclear activities can be directed only toward civilian uses.

Understanding the behavior of fence sitters from this perspective allows us to dwell on one particular dimension of their domestic politics: coalition building.

Political Coalitions Within Fence Sitters

Knowing what kinds of compromises on the nuclear issue might be acceptable to a given state requires us to untangle the constituencies likely to back one solution over another. More than ever before, in light of expanding democratization, new and more popular constituencies might be relevant to the ratification of a regional or international agreement binding these countries' nuclear status. The task ahead for applied nonproliferation research is thus to identify those key institutions and constituencies in each country.

As argued, groups and institutions do not approach the nuclear issue in a vacuum; the macropolitical context defining a country's relationship to the global political economy matters. Thus, domestic political coalitions pursuing economic liberalization seem more likely to embrace cooperative nuclear arrangements than their inward-looking, nationalist, and fundamentalist counterparts. The former, relying on an open economic system, are not only more susceptible to international inducements to join a regime but also favor denuclearization for its domestic political effects as well. Coalitions of the second type tend to rely on nuclear weapons as an important source of mythmaking that is expected to enhance the domestic viability of their political economic strategies.⁶

The assumption behind this argument is that the links between domestic groups and the national and international political economy provide a baseline for defining their (ideal and material) interests.⁷ Economic liberalization and its distributional consequences create two basic types of coalition: one favoring it, the other opposing it. Economic liberalization implies a contraction of state control over markets and of barriers to trade, an expansion of private economic transactions and foreign investment, and the privatization of public sector enterprises. "Liberalizing" coalitions rely heavily on the global economy and on the political support of major powers within institutions involved in managing international economic relations. Such reliance makes these coalitions more receptive to security arrangements that can strengthen external economic ties as well as their own domestic positions. By delivering a policy of nuclear disarmament, these coalitions can enhance their bargaining position vis-à-vis international institutions and powerful states, who connect these coalitions to the promise of development, rationalization, and demilitarization.

Yet nuclear postures are not merely a response to international constraints: the domestic consequences of alternative nuclear paths may often be no less important. For instance, the political effects of doing away with nuclear ambiguity often include the weakening of state bureaucracies and industrial complexes that constitute an impediment to economic rationalization. The loss of ambiguity involves greater transparency in budgetary allocations leading to leaner nuclear bureaucracies and industrial complexes. The latter have come to symbolize the excesses of state expansion among virtually all fence sitters. Conversely, denuclearization can be part of a broader program of domestic reform that strengthens market-oriented forces, and the political entrepreneurs and central economic institutions promoting their development (as was the case in Argentina and Brazil, where multibillion-dollar nuclear investments undertaken in the 1970s became primary casualties of the contraction of state activities in the 1990s).

South Korea, Taiwan, Brazil, Argentina, and, more recently, South Africa provide examples of how ruling liberalizing coalitions prevailed

over domestic contenders and crossed the nuclear fence. Following their effective commitments to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in the 1970s, and the creation of a relatively stable regional environment, Taiwan and South Korea went on to become favorites of international economic institutions (private and public) and the envy of the industrializing world. The latest commitments by Argentina, Brazil, and South Africa prompted similar responses as well as their quick removal from lists proscribing transfers of “dual use” items.⁸ The appeals of normalizing the country’s status with the international community were evident in South Africa’s Foreign Minister Botha’s 1991 statement: “We want to be included in the [International Atomic Energy Agency] club.”

Parallel efforts in India and Pakistan at liberalizing their domestic markets and foreign trade during the late 1980s coincided with a modest attempt by Prime Ministers Rajiv Gandhi of India and Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan to initiate nuclear cooperation (in late 1988, the two signed an agreement not to attack each other’s nuclear facilities). The P. V. Narasimha Rao government has undertaken significant steps at economic liberalization, and while it has not embraced a 1991 Pakistani overture for a nuclear weapons-free zone (NWFZ), neither has it rejected the offer completely, arguably at a time of growing Indian dependence on World Bank and IMF loans and on multinational enterprises. The Pakistani proposals for an NWFZ came from Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, whose trademark was an emphasis on free markets, economic reform, foreign investment, and international financial aid. In July 1991, Pakistan expressed interest in signing the NPT unilaterally (without India doing so) if the United States would reinstate aid cut off under the Pressler amendment.⁹ With his base of political support in the business community, Sharif publicly rejected the label *fundamentalist* and lamented the political energy invested in debates over Islamization “while the world is marching fast to meet the challenges [of] the twenty-first century.”¹⁰ Interim Prime Minister Moeen Qureshi, a former vice-president of the World Bank, launched unprecedented economic reforms in 1993—including eliminating some subsidies, strengthening the Central Bank, devaluing the rupee, and taxing the feudal oligarchy—that were welcomed by international donors and banks. Qureshi challenged the power of entrenched elites during his brief transitional administration, giving the central bank new powers to control government deficits while attempting to freeze nuclear activities.¹¹ The policies of Sharif and Qureshi of attracting foreign loans and investments required a dramatic reduction of defense spending, which antagonized segments of the Pakistani military. Not necessarily an advocate of an open deterrent, the military in India and Pakistan surely benefits from an ambiguous posture that is more likely to ensure continued budgetary support than is a program of denuclearization.¹² Benazir Bhutto’s fragile coalition, which includes wealthy landowners and

requires the support of the military, has reversed some of its predecessors' reforms while backing publicly Pakistan's nuclear program.

The backbone of most current ruling coalitions in the Middle East is composed of powerful domestic constituencies favoring an integrative strategy with the world economy, from the oil-exporting industries in the Gulf and the Arabian peninsula, to the tourist-based, commercial agriculture, and *munfatihun* economies of Egypt and Jordan, to the high-tech, export-oriented industrialists in Israel. These coalitions advocate openness to international markets and tourism, cooperative relations with international financial institutions, and support for the Arab-Israeli peace process. Leading exemplars of such coalitions—Iran under the Shah and Egypt under Presidents Sadat and Mubarak—played entrepreneurial roles in coalescing support for NWFZ in the region. For these coalitions, concessions in the realm of security in exchange for economic advantages are not only acceptable but even desirable in order to cope with the socioeconomic havoc left by declining oil prices, overpopulation, economic mismanagement, and foreign policy adventurism. It is quite suggestive that Sadat launched his *infitah* (economic liberalization) program in 1974, the same year Egypt proposed, for the first time, an NWFZ. Finally, most constituencies backing Israel's Labor-centered coalition tend to support liberalizing and internationalizing policies. They are more receptive to territorial compromise, and their support (60:40 percent) for recognition of the PLO reveals a pragmatic understanding of the economic windfalls of peace. 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." The Labor government is effectively pursuing a comprehensive peace settlement at the ongoing multilateral peace talks on arms control. Instead, Likud-led coalitions have generally used external pressures to coalesce forces opposed to a territorial settlement and are less receptive to "intrusive" international mechanisms of regional governance. Although historically an essentially secular party, the block caters also to fundamentalist groups (religious and nationalist).

Opposing economic liberalization are "nationalizing" coalitions that often coalesce statist economic interests and nationalist, fundamentalist religious, ethnic, or cultural groups, all of which regard the strategy of internationalization as a threat to their material or spiritual values. Leaders of such coalitions (Perón in Argentina, the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran, Nasser in Egypt) often relied heavily on "mythmaking"¹³—rejecting global markets and institutions while espousing adversarial regional policies. In the extreme form of such coalitions, as with Saddam Hussein, nuclear weapons have played a central (and more open) role in the call for final, "redeeming" solutions to real or invented threats.¹⁴ The platform of India's fundamentalist Hinduist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has combined

banning foreign loans, investments, and imports with a call to construct and deploy nuclear weapons. Building on widespread popular resentment against the West, both for its economic success and for imposing a nuclear cartel over less powerful states, BJP also enjoys increasing support from import-competing industries such as food processing, automobile manufacturing, banking, and communications. The party thus expressly rejects World Bank and IMF-imposed plans for restructuring the Indian economy as well as the policy of international development agencies favoring population control and the eradication of illiteracy. Many of these positions are echoed by Pakistan's radical Islamic party *Jamaat-i-Islami*, which has often challenged the Western-style modernization policies of the Sharif coalition. It is suggestive that the ascension of President Itamar Franco in Brazil, his wooing of a nationalist constituency, and his attacks on international financial institutions and their domestic "allies" were accompanied by retroactive statements on Brazil's sovereignty in nuclear matters.¹⁵

In the Middle East, different brands of Islamic fundamentalist challengers offer themselves as an alternative to royalist, secular-radical, and liberalizing coalitions or any combination thereof, proposing a new political economy that, in some cases, is less compatible with cooperative solutions to regional nuclear dilemmas. Islamic coalitions of rural agrarian notables and estate owners, the state-employed petite bourgeoisie, and the underemployed intelligentsia detract ties to the international economy and its perceived associated scourges: inequalities, corruption, unemployment, and enslaving indebtedness.¹⁶ For the most part, these coalitions advocate a new social order in which the idea of a comprehensive peace settlement—let alone a regional nuclear regime—has gained little support so far. I emphasize "for the most part," because it indicates a general trend but not a universal feature. Some Islamic movements do not completely oppose free enterprise or global economic integration.¹⁷ In fact, the kingdoms in the Arabian peninsula have struck a convenient balance between Islam and economic reliance on the West.

On the whole, the results of the most recent elections in Iran confirm only limited support both for President Hashemi Rafsanjani's attempt to consolidate a coalition endorsing privatization, free trade, and foreign investments and for the reversal of a policy of national redistribution of wealth from the private to the public sector. Radical Islamic organizations controlling bloated state industries and charity foundations have little incentive to transfer their power to private entrepreneurs or to abandon their challenge to "Western" regimes and institutions.¹⁸ The continued struggle between pragmatic and militant fundamentalists in Iran helps explain the unclear and unstable nature of Iran's nuclear postures in the past decade. Whatever nuclear capabilities Iran may be seeking, they are now a problem

of the international community and not merely of Iran's neighbors.¹⁹ Specific evidence regarding these activities may thus trigger the kind of multilateral intervention engineered for Iraq. The ability of intransigent coalitions—as those in Iran and Sudan—to wreak havoc in the region is inversely related to the successful achievement of a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement.

The historical record across regions suggests that where liberalizing coalitions had the upper hand, nuclear policy shifted toward more cooperative nuclear postures. Nationalist-confessional coalitions, in contrast, shied away from any commitments for effective denuclearization. Moreover, where the domestic interests potentially affected by external sanctions were most concentrated and coherent, and less challenged domestically, as in South Korea and Taiwan, the shift in nuclear policy was relatively swift. The stronger the coalition supporting economic liberalization grew, the more clear-cut was the departure from nuclear ambiguity (even where the security context deteriorated, as in the Korean peninsula). This trend is illustrated by Argentina's commitment to the full-scope safeguards regime in the early 1990s, following the consolidation of political forces supporting liberalization. It is also clear from South Africa's acceptance of NPT arrangements in 1991, even as it disclosed past attempts to produce a bomb. Spain endorsed the NPT when a liberalizing coalition eager to join the European Community was able to put the inward-looking, nationalist policies of the Franco era behind it. In contrast, the weaker the liberalizing coalitions—as in the case historically in India and Israel, in Argentina until the early 1990s, and in Iran today—the more politically constrained they were in curbing their nuclear programs. Weak liberalizing coalitions are often less able to defend themselves from the accusation of selling out; their very weakness also renders them more dependent on additional domestic partners. Such conditions may help explain the hesitation of the Rao government in India to promise effective denuclearization or Brazil's initial wariness under Itamar Franco to implement one.

Of all states (beyond the original five) considering a nuclear option in the last three decades, not one endorsed an NWFZ under a nationalist coalition. Furthermore, only liberalizing coalitions undertook effective commitments to denuclearization. This is, of course, a highly significant pattern—but not an infallible rule. Thus, domestic coalitions in industrializing states may strongly support their country's integration within the international economy but resist other (political, security, environmental, human rights) global regimes. It is not yet clear whether these coalitions will be able to disaggregate a state's allegiance to emerging global arrangements (“we will trade as freely as we repress and pollute”), as it has been the case so far. Exploring the extent to which the commitment to international regimes becomes more and more indivisible is in itself an important subject

in the research agenda of international organization scholarship. It is clearly the case, however, that the nuclear postures of fence sitters are increasingly “nested” in a broader context of global (primarily economic) relations that create certain mutual expectations. The international community expects effective adherence to NPT principles, while would-be nuclear powers expect to share in the benefits of international economic interdependence.

The New Multilateralism and Nonproliferation

What are the implications of a domestic approach in general, and of the foregoing analysis of coalitions in particular, for the role international institutions might play in nonproliferation? The essence of the multilateralism emerging in the aftermath of the Cold War seems to be the growing recognition that international institutions (in all issue areas) provide a mechanism to socialize civil societies worldwide into conformity with new norms.²⁰ Holding rulers accountable for respecting human rights, monitoring elections, defending the environment, and challenging sovereignty over nuclear facilities all point to the increased accepted intrusiveness of the international community in the affairs of nation-states. Through these and other, perhaps less evident, intrusions, international institutional intervention can shift domestic coalitional balances by bolstering certain groups and agencies at the expense of others. For instance, externally induced structural adjustment efforts often threaten military-industrial complexes and strengthen those in charge of reform (particularly finance ministries, central banks, and export promotion bureaus) in the short term. International pressures for human rights standards empower domestic groups responsible for monitoring compliance, at the expense of repressive agencies. Environmental regimes entrust local institutional networks with the ability, backed by unprecedented legal powers, to challenge certain industrial activities (such as nuclear energy production). Many of these groups have a natural affinity with the denuclearizing agenda. It is no less important, however, to bear in mind potential unintended effects of international institutional intervention.

“Disaggregating” the domestic context can thus help in devising more-effective mechanisms to weaken pronuclear constituencies and strengthen those groups, institutions, parties, and electoral blocs opposing nuclearization on economic, ideological, or other grounds. The formal institutions within the nonproliferation regime have, for the most part, been precluded from exercising any such intervention. More recently, the activities of the UN Special Commission on Iraq had the practical effect of dismantling much of Iraq’s nuclear industrial complex in a very direct way. However, this type of intervention in the wake of military defeat may prove to be an

anomaly. The lessons from this experience, including the willingness of an NPT signatory to risk deception, and the usefulness of aggressive “challenge” inspections and biting sanctions, are the subject of intense scrutiny in the nonproliferation community, and I will not discuss them here.²¹

Much less subject to public debate is the possible role of international economic institutions in this area. This subject is of particular interest in the context of the argument advanced in this essay, because the fate of liberalizing coalitions is embedded in the global economic system and its associated institutions. As allies of liberalizing coalitions, international institutions providing credit (World Bank, IMF, private banks) and defining the terms of trade and investment (GATT, regional common markets) can affect the political longevity of these coalitions. The behavior of these institutions vis-à-vis specific countries affects decisions by private financial and investment networks as well.

Four main points are worth considering in thinking about linkages between the nonproliferation and other international (including economic) regimes; these are discussed in the following sections.

Direct Linkages: Carrots and Sticks

The growing willingness of international financial institutions—since 1989—to address specifically the issue of military expenditures in the context of conditionality is an important precedent for specific quid pro quos in the nuclear arena. Military expenditures often account for a significant portion of the foreign debt, have an inflationary impact, and compete with savings and alternative productive investment. More-direct measures include deducting the estimated budget of rogue agencies or suspect programs from IMF loans. Not all fence sitters are equally sensitive to disbursements from international financial institutions, but most (including North Korea) would prefer not to forgo access to an important source of capital. For some—like India, for which close to \$6 billion in IMF standby funds were approved in a single year (1981)—the amounts involved are not merely a token.

The original mandate of the World Bank to promote economic development and reconstruction of war-torn areas makes it an ideal candidate for playing a role in efforts to combat both poverty and nuclearization. India has been the largest recipient of loans from the International Development Association (a World Bank institution), accounting for 41 percent of disbursements through 1982.²² The World Bank could contemplate creative ways to condition loans on steps toward denuclearization by targeting the right bureaucratic agencies. For instance, in the 1980s the Bank threatened to withdraw funding for Brazil’s state utility Eletrobrás because the agency inherited the management of Brazil’s nuclear power plants.

Brazil had continuously refused to join the NPT, but its recent agreements with Argentina are a clear message that both countries are ready to leave behind a history of unclear nuclear intentions. In other areas, the World Bank has recently postponed a planned loan package to Croatia in light of its government's repression of the press. Surely, the pretense that international financial institutions are precluded from intervening in the domestic affairs of recipients is losing ground. The fact that these institutions' interlocutors are mostly economic and development ministries and not military agencies is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it may undermine the domestic legitimacy of such ministries (accused of taking their cues from foreign institutions); on the other, it may be used to shift the blame for downsizing "national" symbols—such as the military sector—to external actors, while highlighting the positive socioeconomic outcomes of that process.

Regional banks can be entrusted, at least in some cases, with formulating specific directives linking loans to reduced military expenditures and to greater accountability of nuclear agencies. The Asian Development Bank seems an ideal candidate, because the dominant countries in the region—Japan, Australia, and New Zealand—all share good credentials for having renounced nuclear weapons in spite of their obvious technical capacity to produce them. This bank could play a role in providing financial reassurance to North Korean leaders fearful of change and suspicious of U.S.-dominated institutions. Another regional bank, the new European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, has broken new ground in tying recipients to certain norms of behavior, including the upholding of democratic values, nuclear safety, and human rights. These conditions, as argued, empower domestic groups to become custodians of such international bargains.

It is no longer inconceivable to design a global campaign that would grant legitimacy to the conditioning of economic exchanges on total transparency of military budgets and effective commitments to abjure weapons of mass destruction. In the past, some subnational groups have recommended such linkages directly to transnational groups. For instance, in 1989 the Federation of American Scientists proposed to creditor banks in the United States to link efforts at restructuring the foreign debt of Latin American countries to their formal commitment to renounce nuclear weapons. More recently, informal institutions linking industrialized countries, such as the Group of Seven (G-7), declared they would condition aid to developing countries on their "good behavior" in nuclear terms. The Maastricht Treaty commits member states to begin exploring specific joint initiatives to prevent nuclear proliferation.²³

The impact of these trends, actual and potential, should not be underestimated. Pakistani officials have openly acknowledged the effects of a

multilateral campaign to force it to renounce nuclear weapons via pressures from the IMF, the World Bank, and bilateral donors.²⁴ The heightened sensitivity to these trends stems from their implications for domestic strategies of political-economic reform. Not all domestic groups respond to these pressures equally. Direct linkages—in the form of sticks—threaten the institutional and political half-life of agencies and groups who tend to exploit such linkages to garner nationalist support to resist them. These are not restricted to atomic energy commissions and include political movements promoting nationalist, ethnic, and/or religious supremacy.

For those whose interests lie in economic modernization and increased international competitiveness, external pressures operate in the desired direction anyway, by inducing a contraction of unproductive and inflationary (military) expenditures. It may be the case that nuclear policy *per se* has not so far played a conscious role in the way in which economic actors strategize their political moves. International institutions may thus raise awareness of the costs involved in ignoring the linkages between access to markets, capital, and technology on the one hand, and nuclear postures on the other. Important segments of the business community are as “natural” an ally of nonproliferation efforts as peace movements (and many a central bank). Coalitions favoring steps toward denuclearization could be rewarded with a variety of trade benefits, investments, selective removal from export control lists, debt relief, and the like. However, side payments for cooperative regional postures must reach more than the narrow industrial and commercial interests that often sustain these coalitions, a point I elaborate below.

The attempt to disaggregate states and identify the effective targets of international measures is particularly important in light of the lessons we learn from the impact of international sanctions. Treating the state as a “black box,” a monolithic target of punishment (widespread economic sanctions, blockades, exclusion from membership in international institutions), often helps uncompromising leaders coalesce national opposition against the senders, as in Iraq and Serbia most recently. This is particularly the case when sanctions affect a wide range of constituencies in a particularly harsh manner. Ruling coalitions and personal dictatorships have the ability to distribute the burden of sanctions according to their political priorities. Saddam Hussein’s regime’s shifting the costs of adjustment to the weak and to political challengers (Kurds and Marshland Iraqis) are a text case. Major beneficiaries of widespread sanctions are black market profiteers (state and private) and those who monopolize the means of coercion (state and private). The two groups are, of course, highly related. The ensuing erosion of social trust may not be a good foundation on which to build a democratic society at home—and one willing to commit

to international reciprocity, including zones free of weapons of mass destruction.²⁵

The success of economic sanctions is not merely determined by tight multilateral compliance, but is contingent on whether or not sanctions empower the right domestic alternative to the punished policies, or weaken those who uphold the banned behavior. Freezing the personal bank accounts of Haiti's unlawful rulers and all their supporters in the business community and canceling their travel visas may have been far more effective than depriving Haiti's poor further. Deepening hunger and deprivation among Iraqi and North Korean citizens is neither humane nor conducive to successful popular uprisings. Allowing Iraq to resume oil exports while precluding state agencies from controlling the distribution of revenues is a clever policy. Targeting the Mukhabarat quarters in Iraq and similar centers of repression makes it much harder for a regime like Saddam Hussein's to coalesce domestic support behind it. Deducting Israel's loan guarantees by the amount spent on the territories helped Labor and Meretz unveil the consequences of Likud's policies in a very concrete, and ultimately effective, way. Sanctions on South Africa were particularly effective because of the tension between liberalizing interests in the economic arena and the ruling coalition's rejection of other international regimes (human rights, nonproliferation). Domestic groups supportive of different elements in the international "basket" of regimes were thus able to coalesce a more formidable opposition to apartheid that included important segments of the financial and industrial community.

Finally, international inducements (both positive and negative) can be used by liberalizing coalitions to overrun areas of public policy that have remained traditionally outside their control. Nuclear programs in India and Pakistan have been, de facto if not de jure, accountable only to autonomous bureaucracies or to the military, as used to be the case in Brazil and Argentina until very recently.

*Indirect Effects:
The Paradox of Conditionality Arrangements*

International economic institutions can also have an indirect impact on the domestic array of forces likely to play a role in the debate over denuclearization. In many cases, the net effect of international institutional pressures to transform the domestic economy of industrializing (and formerly planned) countries is to weaken the allies of economic liberalization politically. Stabilization programs often lead to recessions and reduced public investments in infrastructure, while trade liberalization exacerbates unemployment. Food riots in Egypt, Sudan, and Morocco followed the

reduction of staple subsidies (as did the latest Russian coup). This phenomenon is not new, and recent events in Poland, Russia, and Greece may be a fresh reminder of their potential consequences.

Among fence sitters, nonproliferation efforts may be a collateral casualty of such pressures, insofar as they weaken coalitions that are more receptive to denuclearization. Put another way, IMF-style conditionality arrangements may have negative security externalities. Although these sorts of arrangements strengthen in the short term the power of agencies in charge of economic reform, the latter's legitimacy eventually wanes as a result of shock-style implementation. Conditionality thus ends up strengthening domestic forces and institutions that offer an alternative, if unreal, solution to the predicaments of economic transition. Surveys reveal, for instance, that in Poland, parliament and the government enjoyed greatest citizen confidence *before* the reforms; the army, the police, and the church, *after*.²⁶

One solution to this dilemma might be to require recipients (or prospective recipients) of loans, investments, and trade benefits to uphold certain targets in health, education, and welfare reform and expenditures. This solution is normatively desirable, economically sound, and politically cost-effective. Demanding minimal levels of performance along these socioeconomic criteria forces adjustments in public policy, leaving fewer resources for military and ancillary (including nuclear) activities. In turn, the IMF and the World Bank can return to their true call by lending for economic development, stabilization, and recovery, rather than helping debtors pay their debts to big banks.²⁷ Big private banks can thus be forced to share in the burden of maintaining international security, a public good from which they benefit far more than they are willing to contribute. Left to their own designs, private banks and investment firms should not be expected to play any affirmative role in this area. However, for the most part, the increased risk posed by the prospects of nuclearization may deter them from pouring resources into unstable regions. There are curious twists indeed to the operation of the "invisible hand"!

Of course, international institutions are only part of the story, and in the final analysis, domestic coalitions have leverage over what kind of economic reform they choose and implement.²⁸ Egypt, for example, has not been very successful in translating the economic opportunities (debt reduction, grants) opened to it by virtue of the important role it plays in regional security (Gulf War and Arab-Israeli conflict). Although Egypt has pioneered peace proposals in the region since the 1970s, including its denuclearization, there are some fears that a takeover by fundamentalist forces imbued with Iranian, Sudanese, and Afghani worldviews might undo much of the progress achieved in the realm of regional security. The political appeal of fundamentalist alternatives to liberalism in the Middle East grows out of their strategy of tackling, in a very direct way,

the symptoms (albeit not the sources) of poverty and alienation. Islamic groups organize separate health and educational networks and respond to earthquakes and disaster without delay. Unless liberalizing coalitions broaden the beneficiaries of economic reform, their prospects for staying in power may be jeopardized and, with them, the prospects for peace settlements and zones free of weapons of mass destruction. The past behavior of the two Islamic republics in existence (Iran and Sudan) does not bode well for the impact of fundamentalism on regional security. However, this notion is often wrongly extended to assume a unified Islamic menace to the West.²⁹ Yet there is a variety of Islamic perspectives, and one should not exclude the possibility that international institutions might help tame extreme views and coalesce a form of Islamic liberalism.³⁰

That is, in brief, the paradox of conditionality for nonproliferation: when applied ruthlessly, without regard to the size and depth of its casualties, it is likely to sow the seeds that will unseat liberalizing coalitions, who tend to define their interests on the side of regional cooperation and denuclearization. The importance of this paradox is that it may work to broaden, rather than narrow, the number of fence sitters. In other words, countries that seem safely committed to nonproliferation may, in some cases, be subject to unorthodox pressures to reverse such commitments. The more equally distributed the benefits of economic liberalization are, the less fertile the ground will be for such calls to take root. There is another side to this coin, of course, that points to what we might label "reverse conditionality." Liberalizing coalitions can use the threat from nationalists and fundamentalists to extract concessions from their international partners and to alleviate the conditions for continued credit and investment. Ukraine is a prime example of how this reverse conditionality might be used in the context of nonproliferation.

Democratization and the Importance of Suasion

The explosion of democratization offers a unique opportunity for the international community to reach domestic groups favoring denuclearization. In his landmark anatomy of the interaction between domestic and international politics, Putnam argued that "given the pervasive uncertainty that surrounds many international issues, messages from abroad can change minds, move the undecided, and hearten those in the domestic minority."³¹ Activists of Israel's Peace Now movement know this fact all too well (and longtime skeptics are no longer laughing, in the aftermath of September 1993). One should not underestimate the effective campaign of Peace Now and its international supporters as an important ingredient in the consolidation of an Israeli majority favoring recognition of the PLO and territorial compromise. The more democratic the state sitting on the fence is, the

more should suasion—rather than sticks—be used, allowing the marketplace of ideas to effect changes. It is critical not to create a security liability among democratic systems by pressuring such systems in regional contexts where democracies confront mostly authoritarian adversaries. Promoting domestic allies of denuclearization is, of course, much harder in authoritarian contexts, such as Iran, Iraq, North Korea, and Libya.

Democratization also allows a more accurate gauging of the domestic debate. The ability of negotiators from fence-sitting countries to use domestic constraints to resist concessions or to claim “involuntary defections” in the nuclear sphere might thus be more limited. The international community is far better equipped today to estimate public opinion in these countries, through publicized interviews with representative figures, legislative debates, and public polls. More of these should be conducted and promoted. The battle for the minds over the nuclear issue—which might not yet have started in earnest among most of those sitting on the fence—will draw new constituencies while becoming less and less impermeable to external influences.

Finally, democratization allows the consolidation of domestic groups that may eventually contribute to verifying compliance with international agreements. In fact, these may become an invaluable complement to international technical means.

The Puzzle of Nonproliferation NGOs: Youngest Sisters in a Growing Sorority

Transnational nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) concerned with the dangers of nuclear proliferation can influence the domestic debate within fence sitters. Such NGOs are freer to play the games of domestic politics than are international institutions and in some cases are less “tainted” in the eyes of those groups who caution against the perils of “neocolonial” schemes. Best suited to support liberalizing and denuclearizing coalitions are NGOs that have consistently opposed nuclearization (in North and South), that are not state-funded, and that attempt to create a truly transnational movement toward banning all weapons of mass destruction; such NGOs make it harder for the opposition to allege a northern conspiracy and to attack liberalization and its supporters. The legitimacy of such NGOs among fence sitters’ constituencies stems from these NGOs’ rejection of the double standards embedded in the NPT bargain.

The creation of a stronger, perhaps more formal, transnational institutional network among NGOs is an important pillar of the nonproliferation regime. It is interesting to note that a relatively strong intergovernmental regime in nonproliferation coexisted with a rather limited number of associated NGOs, while a strong network of NGOs support relatively weak

international governmental organizations (IGOs) in areas such as human rights and the environment. Only a handful of NGOs attended the 1990 NPT review conference (about ten), while more than two thousand NGOs participated in the 1993 Vienna Conference on Human Rights. New nonproliferation NGOs have sprung up with the end of the Cold War, and many existing ones have shifted their attention to this problem. NGOs are an ideal mechanism to strengthen their counterparts in sensitive regions of the world, through both increased contacts and sharing of data and experience. They can help mobilize ancillary groups (active in human rights, environmental, health, and refugee issues), where local nonproliferation movements are relatively weak. They can influence the domestic coalitional balance and help steer public opinion through an educational campaign on the costs of fence-sitting, particularly evident in cases such as India and Pakistan. The acquisition of nuclear weapons is never capped with a minimal deterrent, as advocates of the stabilizing impact of nuclear weapons throughout the regions argue. The historical evidence so far, particularly in the U.S.-Soviet context, points to nuclear weapons as unleashing an expensive arms race, redundancy, baroque, and eventual economic collapse.

Finally, NGOs should not be conceived merely in terms of "privatizing" the task of logrolling nonproliferation coalitions. They might also become an invaluable instrument of such coalitions by pressing for international concessions. Once again, the lessons from South Africa may be relevant. International allies of the domestic opposition to apartheid were very effective in pressuring the Security Council and a variety of other multilateral forums to implement the objectives of South Africa's opposition.

Conclusions

For the most part, multilateral nonproliferation strategies have bypassed the growing "domestication" of foreign policy among fence sitters and underplayed the importance of wider political-economic factors in the crystallization of nuclear preferences. This fact is particularly puzzling in light of the fact that domestic political-economic transformations have done more for arms reductions at the superpower level than have arms control negotiations. Without discounting the important role of threat perceptions and "classical" security concerns (which have dominated nonproliferation theory and praxis), it might pay to be more systematically attentive to domestic constituencies and coalitions favoring denuclearization.

The emerging international order, particularly the expansion of democracy and economic liberalization, creates new opportunities and affects the domestic context that ultimately determines regional nuclear postures. Democratization challenges the conditions that allowed nuclear

programs to be beyond public scrutiny by the media, political parties, and interest groups—one of the lessons learned from Argentina and Brazil in the 1980s. This effect should not be construed as necessarily implying that democratic regimes—although desirable in every sense—are either necessary or sufficient for cooperative regional nuclear arrangements. Paying serious attention to economic liberalization may help us identify an even more important engine of regional nuclear cooperation. Strategies of integration with the world economy create powerful domestic constituencies unwilling to bear the economic consequences of sitting on the nuclear fence. International institutions and NGOs might design strategies that drive home very clearly the connections between economic futures and nuclear postures, and the distributional consequences of different mixes. Domesticating the nonproliferation debate means making it an important subject of contention among political coalitions vying for power.

Because nuclear weapons can be easily used in mythmaking (i.e., in mobilizing nationalistic and other confessional identity symbols), it is often the case that political parties or movements among would-be nuclear powers are hesitant to bear the costs of an open public campaign to unveil the negative consequences of nuclear weapons (witness Benazir Bhutto's statements after assuming power in October 1993). This hesitation creates the impression of a tacit bipartisan consensus backing the nuclear option. It takes a courageous leadership to spell out the economic costs and potential strategic futility of continued confrontation and technological escalation in modern weaponry. Such leaps of faith, if rare, are not entirely unprecedented nor have they proved to be politically suicidal. For one, Israel's Labor coalition won the 1992 elections on a platform stressing the high costs of investments in the Occupied Territories and of Likud's pursuit of counterproductive myths. Moreover, Labor's potentially risky recognition of the PLO strengthened, rather than weakened, its popular support. Delays in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles have had a negative impact on that support but do not change the initial positive receptivity to Labor's unprecedented policy. Clearly, while it is the ultimate fruits of this process that will bear directly on electoral outcomes, it is important to remember that a policy of reconciliation became a political asset rather than a liability.

It would be wrong to read this analysis of an expanded role by international institutions in terms of great-power exertion of authority to disarm regional nuclear powers. First, to the degree that these institutions continue to be regarded as an instrument of control of the less powerful, their legitimacy will erode.³² Instead, integrating developing countries (the vast majority of which are NPT signatories!) in the design of new institutional procedures may be more effective. In fact, such steps would render global multilateralism compatible with domestic trends toward democratization, liberalization, and decentralization. Second, it is important not to

stall in reaching a comprehensive test ban, implementing Article VI of the Nonproliferation Treaty, and reducing nuclear arsenals effectively.³³ Some of these issues will be under discussion during the NPT Review Conference (April 1995). McNamara's "Nobody Needs Nukes" theory is one of the most persuasive allies of domestic coalitions receptive to regional compromises.³⁴ Domestic reform and economic conversion among current nuclear powers also have a powerful demonstration effect, strengthening the hand of liberalizing coalitions by enabling them to point to a secular de-nuclearization process engulfing the North and South alike.

The suggestions in this article aim at changing on a more thorough medium- and long-term basis the domestic political conditions that contribute to proliferation in the first place. No nonproliferation strategy can yield immediate results or guarantee absolute compliance; even military strikes fall short. Yet in extreme cases, where political means of persuasion have failed and where potential use of nuclear weapons is real, forceful intervention might be required. The recommendations suggested here are therefore complementary of other efforts, including "no-first-use" commitments by nuclear powers, a ban on the production of highly enriched uranium and plutonium, and negative and positive security assurances. There is no magical potion to stem the proliferation of nuclear weapons, particularly under the current transitional, and volatile, circumstances of global political and economic change. No avenue should thus be ignored. ☉

Notes

Etel Solingen is 1994–1995 Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC) Faculty Fellow and assistant professor of political science at the University of California, Irvine. This essay was written under the auspices of the University of California's Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation. The author thanks Audie Klotz, David Lake, Zeev Maoz, Pat Morgan, Manuel Pator, Jennifer Pournelle, Susan Shirk, and the editors and anonymous reviewers for their valuable suggestions.

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