

# **The Diffusion of Non-nuclear Postures among U.S. Allies – Explaining West Germany’s Nuclear Reversal**

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The vast majority of politicians, pundits, and academic scholars working on nuclear proliferation assert that the protection provided by an alliance with the United States constitutes a particularly effective instrument to make U.S. allies abandon their existing nuclear weapons activities.<sup>2</sup> Entertaining an alliance relationship with the United States, or so the argument goes, implies a “nuclear umbrella” for American allies, as the superior U.S. military capabilities in general, and its nuclear arsenal in particular, deter attacks not only against the American homeland, but also against the territory of Washington’s alliance partners. For American allies, this mechanism of extended deterrence works—implicitly or explicitly—as a security guarantee, which in turn obviates their need for an indigenous nuclear defense capability. According to this narrative, the nonproliferation-related effectiveness of U.S. alliances has—despite the political and scholarly debates over the reliability of American security guarantees—been proven quite spectacularly throughout the nuclear age: Under the shelter of the U.S. nuclear umbrella, the political leaders of numerous severely threatened U.S. allies (e.g. West Germany, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, Italy, Norway, and Canada) consented to the abandonment of their nations’ existing nuclear weapons activities—a behavior that the literature calls “nuclear reversal.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Francis J. Gavin, *Nuclear Statecraft: History and Strategy in America’s Atomic Age* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2012), pp. 164-166; Bruno Tertrais, *Security Guarantees and Nuclear Nonproliferation*, FRS notes No. 14 (Paris: Foundation pour la Recherche Stratégique, 2011); Defense Science Board, *Challenges to Military Operations in Support of U.S. Interests* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2008), pp. 161-163; Department of State International Security Advisory Board, *Report on Discouraging a Cascade of Nuclear Weapons States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2007), pp. 22-23; Lewis A. Dunn, “Countering Proliferation: Insights from Past ‘Wins, Losses, and Draws’,” *Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (November 2006), pp. 481-482; Zachary S. Davis and Mitchell B. Reiss, “Nuclear Proliferation: Where Has the United States Won—and Why?,” in Henry D. Sokolski, ed., *Prevailing in a Well-armed World: Devising Competitive Strategies Against Weapons Proliferation* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2000); T.V. Paul, *Power versus Prudence: Why Nations Forgo Nuclear Weapons* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000), pp. 153-154; Mitchell B. Reiss, “Conclusion: Nuclear Proliferation after the Cold War,” in: Mitchell B. Reiss and Robert S. Litwak, eds., *Nuclear Proliferation after the Cold War* (Washington; D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1994), pp. 341-343; Matthias Dembinski, Alexander Kelle, and Harald Müller, *NATO and Nonproliferation: A Critical Appraisal*, PRIF Report No. 33/94 (Frankfurt: Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, 1994), pp. 1-5; Benjamin Frankel, “The Brooding Shadow: Systemic Incentives and Nuclear Weapons Proliferation,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 3-4 (Spring/Summer 1993), p. 37; Joseph S. Nye, “NPT: The Logic of Inequality,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 59 (Summer 1985), p. 126. For a recent quantitative take, see Philipp C. Bleek and Eric Lorber, *Security Assurances and the Prevention of Allied Nuclear Proliferation: A Mixed-Method Analysis*, paper presented at the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, April 1-4, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Conversely, a weakening or abrogation of major U.S. alliances is feared as potentially leading these partners to reconsider their nuclear choices, thereby raising the specter of a re-nuclearization of externally threatened U.S. allies. See Victor A. Utgoff and David Adesnik, *On Strengthening and Expanding the US Nuclear Umbrella to*

However, neither pundits nor scholars have been able to explain why in those U.S.-allied nations where the government decided to give up all nuclear weapons activities, typically some political leaders steadfastly refused to support this course of action. That is, the above-mentioned assurance-based explanation of nuclear reversal of U.S. allies can account for the *proliferation behavior* of the respective *states*, yet not—or at least not sufficiently—for the *attitudes of political leaders* in these states toward their nation’s nuclear reversal. To be sure, this within-case variation in political leaders’ attitudes does not imply that the assurance effect of American alliances had no role in convincing the foreign policy elites of U.S. allies to give up their nation’s nuclear weapons activities. Case study research has demonstrated beyond doubt that it did play a role.<sup>4</sup> What the within-case variation in political leaders’ attitudes shows, however, is that the protection provided by an alliance with the United States is not sufficient for obtaining the agreement of the leaders of U.S.-allied nations to a nuclear reversal. In other words, if we are to understand why the political leaders of U.S. allies approved the abandonment of their nation’s nuclear weapons activities, we need to go beyond the assurance effect of U.S. alliances and consider additional variables. Over the last fifteen years, proliferation experts have repeatedly alluded to this urgent task for scholars of nuclear reversals:

*“Although there is substantial merit in alliance-based arguments [of nuclear restraint], they need to be further specified and made conditional if their validity is to be established beyond doubt.”*<sup>5</sup>

(T.V. Paul)

*“[Recent works on nuclear weapons acquisition and renunciation] suggest the need to examine more closely a number of often asserted but infrequently tested causal relationships involving the impact of alliances on nuclear weapons restraint.”*<sup>6</sup>

(William C. Potter & Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova)

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*Dissuade Nuclear Proliferation* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Defense Analysis, 2008); Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *Chain Reaction: Avoiding a Nuclear Arms Race in the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2008); Christopher W. Hughes, “North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons: Implications for the Nuclear Ambitions of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan,” *Asia Policy*, No. 3 (January 2007), pp. 102-104; Mitchell B. Reiss, “Prospects for Nuclear Proliferation in Asia,” in Ashley J. Tellis and Michael Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2005-06: Military Modernization in an Era of Uncertainty* (Seattle, Wash.: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2005), pp. 353-356; Kurt M. Campbell and Robert J. Einhorn, “Avoiding the Tipping Point: Concluding Observations,” in Kurt M. Campbell, Robert J. Einhorn, and Mitchell B. Reiss, eds., *The Nuclear Tipping Point: Why States Reconsider their Nuclear Choices* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), p. 321.

<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey W. Knopf, ed., *Security Assurances and Nuclear Nonproliferation* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2012); Kurt M. Campbell, Robert J. Einhorn, and Mitchell B. Reiss, eds., *The Nuclear Tipping Point: Why States Reconsider their Nuclear Choices* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Paul, *Power versus Prudence*, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> William C. Potter and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova, “Divining Nuclear Intentions: A Review Essay,” *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Summer 2008), p. 167.

*“[W]hat is clear, however, is that the causal relationship [between alliance protection and nuclear reversal] is not as straightforward as often suggested. Alliance alone is not a sufficient condition; and additional reinforcing factors are needed [...].”<sup>7</sup>*  
(Harald Müller & Andreas Schmidt)

The paper offers a first step toward this longed-for advancement of assurance-based explanations of nuclear reversal. Focusing on the example of the nuclear reversal of West Germany in the early 1970s, the paper examines the following question: *Why have some political leaders in Bonn consented to the abandonment of their nation’s nuclear weapons activities, while other West German leaders have consistently rejected this course reversal?*

Although there are other cases of U.S. allies where not all political leaders supported the government’s policy of giving up all nuclear weapons activities, studying West Germany’s nuclear reversal is particularly important for advancing assurance-based explanations of nuclear reversal. This is because until the early 1960s, foreign experts on nuclear proliferation had considered it highly unlikely and quite extraordinary that the young Federal Republic—a technologically capable, fast-rising regional power which had a tradition as a great power and was facing a severe security threat from Soviet troops stationed right behind the “Iron Curtain”—would commit itself to a non-nuclear security posture.<sup>8</sup> As a result of these earlier expectations, later proponents of assurance-based accounts of nuclear reversal have typically referred to the West German example as major supporting evidence for their argument.<sup>9</sup> If even West German political leaders, in this “least-likely” case of nuclear reversal, were able to give up all nuclear weapons activities, or so the argument goes, then the effect of U.S. alliances on allies’ nuclear restraint is beyond any reasonable doubt. Thanks to this role of West Germany’s nuclear reversal as a prime example, studying the German case offers particularly valuable insights for advancing assurance-based explanations of nuclear reversal.<sup>10</sup>

Existing accounts of why West German political leaders agreed to abandon all nuclear weapons activities and committed to a non-nuclear posture have complemented the assurance effect of U.S. protection with one of the following explanatory variables: (1) a coercive threat

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<sup>7</sup> Harald Müller and Andreas Schmidt, “The Little-Known Story of De-Proliferation: Why Countries Give Up Nuclear Weapon Activities,” in William C. Potter and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova, eds., *Forecasting Nuclear Proliferation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Vol. 1: *The Role of Theory* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010), p. 145.

<sup>8</sup> Moeed Yusuf, *Predicting Proliferation: The History of the Future of Nuclear Weapons*, Policy Paper No. 11 (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2009), p. 61; George H. Quester, *The Politics of Nuclear Proliferation* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 167. For an example, see Thomas C. Schelling, “Kontinuität und Neubeginn in der NATO,” *Europa-Archiv*, Vol. 21, No. 13 (July 1966), p. 471.

<sup>9</sup> See Virginia Irene Foran, *Alliances, Assurances, Security Guarantees, and Nonproliferation: A Model for Empirical Analysis* (PH.D. dissertation, University of Maryland, 2000), p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> See John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 115-119.

of U.S. materialist pressure on Bonn,<sup>11</sup> (2) increased NATO integration (namely the creation of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group) as the "solution" to West German doubts about U.S. reliability,<sup>12</sup> (3) growing social pressure on Bonn from its NATO allies to permanently renounce nuclear weapons,<sup>13</sup> or (4) anti-nuclear sentiment among a new generation of West German political leaders and the public at large.<sup>14</sup> However, from among these accounts, I find evidence only for the impact of the mounting social pressure on Germany within NATO to commit to a non-nuclear posture. Yet, even this explanation for West Germany's nuclear reversal is obviously insufficient since it fails to account for why only some—but not all—political leaders in Bonn responded to this social pressure from their allies and thus consented to give up all nuclear weapons activities.

I explain the different propensities among West German leaders to agree to their nation's nuclear reversal with the interaction of two variables that draw on insights from social and cognitive psychology, respectively: first, the concerted *social* pressure of Bonn's allies to permanently renounce nuclear weapons, which left German elites isolated within NATO, and second, German leaders' individual intuitive conception of how high their nation ranks vis-à-vis its American protector—a status belief that promoted different risk propensities under this condition of social isolation. In a nutshell, I argue that German leaders' individual conception of Germany's status vis-à-vis the United States determined whether they could stand the risk of confronting their crucial U.S. ally over the nuclear reversal *without any support from other NATO countries*. I find that those leaders who conceived of Germany as a divided and weak country that was little more than a second-class power if compared to the United States resisted U.S. demands that Germany give up all nuclear weapons activities only as long as Bonn's stance enjoyed at least some political backing from other European NATO states. Once this support was gone, these elites considered the ensuing isolation of Germany in its nuclear reversal dispute with Washington as unacceptably risky and dangerous and, as a result, decided to back down: The fear of West Germany ending up as the lone dissenter against a legitimate

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<sup>11</sup> Wolfgang Krieger, *The Germans and the Nuclear Question*, Occasional Paper No. 14 (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1995), p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> Catherine McArdle Kelleher, *Germany and the Politics of Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975); Christoph Hoppe, *Zwischen Teilhabe und Mitsprache: Die Nuklearfrage in der Allianzpolitik Deutschlands 1959-1966* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1993), pp. 367-369.

<sup>13</sup> Matthias Küntzel, *Bonn und die Bombe: Deutsche Atomwaffenpolitik von Adenauer bis Brandt* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 1992), pp. 125-126, 238. An English edition was published in 1995. Erwin Häckel, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Atomwaffensperrvertrag: Rückblick und Ausblick* (Bonn: Europa-Union-Verlag, 1989), pp. 20-21; Paul, *Power versus Prudence*, pp. 44-47.

<sup>14</sup> Maria Rost Rublee, *Nonproliferation Norms: Why States Choose Nuclear Restraint* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2009), pp. 192-193.

authority (i.e. the higher-ranked U.S. protector) had changed these leaders' attitude—a typical reaction which social psychologists have studied extensively as “obedience to authority.”<sup>15</sup>

In contrast, those leaders who envisioned Germany as an important European (great) power that despite its narrow power base enjoyed, just like France, a status on par with the United States, did not bend to U.S. demands for a nuclear reversal even after becoming completely isolated within NATO. As in their worldview there was no legitimate authority above major powers like Germany (i.e. no higher-ranked U.S. protector), Bonn would just not obey orders from Washington without resistance as if it were a subordinate entity, and least of all if these orders infringed on Germany's sovereign right to possess the weapons it needed to defend itself. Thus, when Bonn was asked to obey just such an order from the United States and permanently renounce nuclear weapons, these German leaders considered the U.S. request as disrespectful overreaching. As a result, they were willing to take the risk of standing up to their crucial U.S. ally even if this meant being the lone dissenter, since in their defiant view, major powers like Germany needed no “applause” for their policies from other nations. Confronted with an order from an illegitimate authority (i.e. a merely equal-ranked U.S. ally), these German elites refused to back down easily and, hence, rejected the nuclear reversal.

Interestingly, statements behind closed doors reveal that these defiant German leaders knew perfectly well that *they would have to acquiesce* into West Germany's nuclear reversal if—a big if—Washington would take the gloves off and actually exert *material* pressure on Bonn to comply. However, they were willing to confront the U.S. government in a contest of will, sensing that U.S. leaders would not go so far as to punish a critically important ally “only” to get it to permanently renounce nuclear weapons.

To explain the divergent risk-propensity among the two groups of West German political leaders, I draw on the mediating role of emotions in human judgment and decision making. I argue that an individual leader's conception of Germany's status vis-à-vis the United States determined whether the U.S. demand to give up all nuclear weapons activities made these German leaders feel either sad or angry. As the emotions of sadness and anger are well-known to generate risk-averse and risk-prone behavior,<sup>16</sup> respectively, this emotional response affected if German leaders would choose the risky path of confronting their crucial U.S. ally over the nuclear reversal without enjoying any diplomatic backing from other NATO partners.

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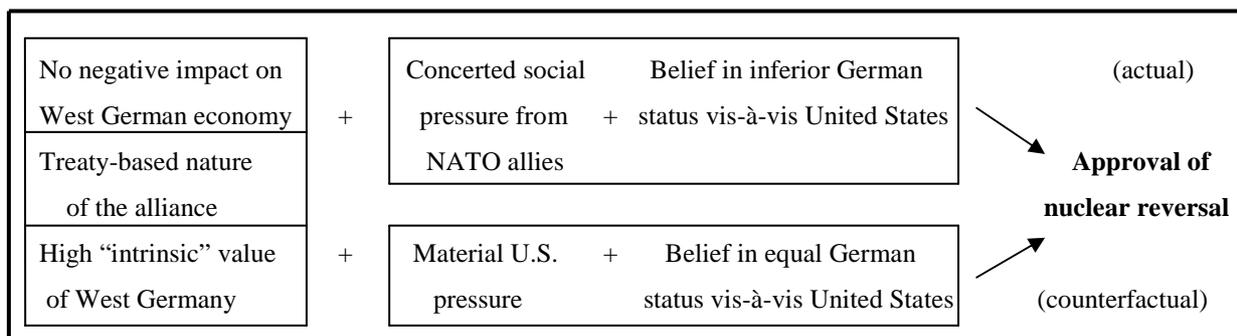
<sup>15</sup> Two seminal works are Stanley Milgram, “Behavioral Study of Obedience,” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (October 1963) and Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View* (New York: Harper, 1974). For an overview, see Thomas Blass, “The Milgram Paradigm After 35 Years: Some Things We Now Know About Obedience to Authority,” *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 29, No. 5 (May 1999). For the key role of legitimacy, see Tom R. Tyler, “Psychological Perspectives on Legitimacy and Legitimation,” *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 57 (2006), pp. 379-380.

<sup>16</sup> References on the effect of anger and sadness on risk-taking are provided in the next section of this paper.

To sum up this part of the argument, for those German elites that finally agreed to the nation’s nuclear reversal, the combination of high social pressure from NATO allies and a status conception that ranked Germany as inferior to the United States was a prerequisite for their consent to ending all nuclear weapons activities. As this combination of variables was absent for the remaining German leaders—they faced the same social pressure, but lacked the inferior status conception vis-à-vis the United States—these political leaders consistently rejected a nuclear reversal. To obtain the approval of these defiant German leaders to a nuclear reversal, their conception of an equal status of Germany vis-à-vis the United States would have had to be combined with material U.S. pressure on Bonn—which did not happen.

However, while the interaction of concerted social pressure with an inferior national status conception should be considered a *necessary* condition for why the majority of West German leaders approved the nuclear reversal, this combination must not be regarded as a *sufficient* condition for this outcome to occur. A sufficient explanation for the approval of the nuclear reversal needs to add three more variables, each of which acted as a necessary condition for the nuclear reversal: first, a guarantee that the nuclear reversal would not negatively impact the West German economy; second, preservation of the treaty-based nature of the U.S.-German alliance; and third, the high value of West Germany’s freedom for Washington’s sense of security (i.e. West Germany’s high “intrinsic” importance to the United States). These three variables in conjunction with the above-mentioned combination of social pressure and an inferior status conception vis-à-vis the United States produce a sufficient condition for the consent of the majority of German leaders to their nation’s nuclear reversal. Moreover, I argue that these same three variables in conjunction with the above-mentioned counterfactual combination of material U.S. pressure and the view of an equal German status vis-à-vis the United States would have been sufficient for attaining the approval of the defiant German leaders to the nuclear reversal. Figure 1 illustrates the two pathways of causal sufficiency.

**Figure 1:** Pathways of causal sufficiency for the approval of West Germany’s nuclear reversal



The next section of this paper offers the theoretical underpinnings of my claim that differing individual conceptions of a nation's status trigger specific emotional responses which lead to diverging levels of risk-propensity among political leaders. Following this, I define, specify, and discuss my dependent variable. Next I test my argument against the empirical evidence, using congruence tests and process tracing. I then evaluate alternative explanations for West Germany's nuclear reversal. Finally, I discuss the implications of my results.

### **The Feeling of Nuclear Reversal: Inferior Status, Sadness, and Obedience to Authority**

I assert that the different conceptions held by West German leaders of Germany's status vis-à-vis the United States led to diverging levels of risk-propensity among these elites. But why is this supposed to happen? And how does this mechanism play out? Here, I draw on insights from neuroscience on the crucial role of emotions in human judgment and decision-making:<sup>17</sup> Simply put, when confronted with a decision problem, humans do not soberly calculate the advantages, disadvantages, and probabilities of all possible responses and subsequently choose the option that maximizes their subjective expected utility as conventional wisdom (i.e. rational models of decision-making) presumes. Rather, when humans face a decision problem, the content of this problem automatically and instantaneously triggers an emotional response in their brain. And this emotional response strongly shapes the final choice by influencing which events (that are relevant to the choice) are recalled, how these recalled events are judged, and what conclusions are drawn from these experiences for the decision problem at hand. This process *can* result in a choice that perfectly matches with what rational models would have predicted. Depending on the specific emotional reaction, however, the final choice might also deviate considerably from rationalist expectations. In short, emotions act as intervening variables that exert a conditioning effect on judgment and decision-making.

Now, how does the issue of a West German nuclear reversal trigger specific emotions in the brains of German leaders, and which particular emotions does it produce? Drawing on cognitive psychology, I argue that when German political leaders were being asked by U.S. diplomats to permanently renounce nuclear weapons, their mind responded with what Daniel Kahneman calls "substitution." Substitution is a very common mechanism which the human mind employs to cope with a complex reality. It basically means "answering an easier ques-

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<sup>17</sup> For good overviews, see Janice Gross Stein, "Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Rational, Psychological, and Neurological Models," in Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, and Timothy Dunne, eds., *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 139-143; Jonathan Renshion and Jennifer S. Lerner, "The Role of Emotion in Foreign Policy Decision Making," in Daniel J. Christie and Cristina Montiel, eds., *Encyclopedia of Peace Psychology* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell Press, 2012); Jonathan Mercer, "Emotional Beliefs," *International Organization*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2010).

tion” in case that the original question one is confronted with is too complex to immediately come up with an answer.<sup>18</sup> Importantly, substitution happens automatically and unconsciously. Humans are not aware of the fact that they answer a different (though related) question than they were asked, but believe they answer the original question. Coming back to Bonn, I posit that German leaders, when being requested by U.S. diplomats to agree to Germany’s nuclear reversal, substituted the complex question “*Should West Germany permanently renounce nuclear weapons?*” with the far easier one “*Can the United States issue orders toward Germany?*”. That German leaders likely engaged in this specific substitution is suggested by experimental research indicating that when humans are being asked to evaluate the *content* of a request or proposal, they instead typically judge the *process* through which it was voiced.<sup>19</sup>

I propose further that leaders in Bonn answered the process-related question “*Can the United States issue orders toward Germany?*” by unconsciously drawing on their individual conception of Germany’s status vis-à-vis the United States. This claim is grounded in the fact that this specific bilateral status conception provides a clear-cut answer to the process-related question. Besides, it is based on the assumption that the political leaders of a U.S.-allied nation have an intuitive idea of how high their nation ranks vis-à-vis this major interaction partner. This assumption receives strong support from social identity theory.<sup>20</sup> Finally, the claim is supported by a plethora of cognitive psychological research suggesting that our mind privileges answers that are readily available—regardless of their validity.<sup>21</sup> Hence, combining the process-related question with German leaders’ national status conceptions, I posit that political leaders in Bonn who conceived of Germany as a nation with an inferior status compared to the United States responded affirmatively to the process-related question. In contrast, political leaders who envisioned Germany as enjoying a status on par with the United States instinctively denied that Washington could issue orders that Bonn would have to obey.

Next, I argue that the process of arriving at these positive or negative conclusions triggered specific corresponding emotional responses among the involved West German leaders. From among the five basic emotions that neuroscientists distinguish (love, happiness, sadness,

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<sup>18</sup> Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), p. 97. This mechanism is described in more detail as “attribute substitution” in Daniel Kahneman and Shane Frederick, “Representativeness Revisited: Attribute Substitution in Intuitive Judgment,” in Thomas Gilovich, Dale W. Griffin, and Daniel Kahneman, eds., *Heuristics and Biases: The Psychology of Intuitive Judgment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> The seminal work is E. Allan Lind, “Fairness Heuristic Theory: Justice Judgments as Pivotal Cognitions in Organizational Relations,” in Jerald Greenberg and Russel Cropanzano, eds., *Advances in Organizational Justice* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001).

<sup>20</sup> Kenneth D. Locke, “Status and Solidarity in Social Comparison: Agentic and Communal Values and Vertical and Horizontal Directions,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 84, No. 3 (March 2003).

<sup>21</sup> For a good overview, see Daniel Kahneman, “A Perspective on Judgment and Choice: Mapping Bounded Rationality,” *American Psychologist*, Vol. 58, No. 9 (September 2003), pp. 697-702.

fear, and anger), two are particularly relevant for studying the unpleasant choice of whether or not to obey an order: sadness and anger.<sup>22</sup> I propose that those German political leaders who agreed that the United States could issue orders toward Germany experienced sadness when reaching this conclusion. Since their status conception portrayed the United States as a higher-ranked and, therefore, legitimate authority, these elites considered obeying U.S. orders not as a humiliating personal loss. Instead, for them obeying U.S. orders meant a loss that was inevitable given the prevailing status hierarchy. And psychological experiments have demonstrated that losing due to circumstances beyond one's control induces sadness.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, I posit that those German leaders who opposed the notion that Washington could issue orders toward Bonn experienced anger when arriving at this response. Since their worldview envisioned the United States merely as an equally-ranked and, thus, illegitimate authority, being confronted with a U.S. order meant that Germany was treated disrespectfully and not accorded the equal status that it deserved. And status dissatisfaction has been shown to strongly induce anger.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, in order to link these emotions with German elites' different risk-propensities, I draw on the cognitive and behavioral effects of sadness and anger. The main effects of sadness on human judgment and decision-making are to instill moderate uncertainty about one's own judgment, a strongly reduced sense of individual control over the situation, and openness toward careful processing of information and arguments, all of which leads to (at least moderately) risk-averse behavior.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, anger has been shown to induce a high degree of certainty in one's own judgment, instill an overstated sense of individual control over the situation, and reduce scrutiny of arguments and demand for information, all of which promotes decidedly risk-prone behavior.<sup>26</sup> And these risk-propensities became decisive when

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<sup>22</sup> Larissa Z. Tiedens, Phoebe C. Ellsworth, and Batja Mesquita, „Sentimental Stereotypes: Emotional Expectations for High- and Low-Status Group Members,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 26, No. 5 (May 2000).

<sup>23</sup> Craig E. Smith and Phoebe C. Ellsworth, “Patterns of Cognitive Appraisal in Emotions,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (April 1985); Dacher Keltner, Phoebe C. Ellsworth, and Kari Edwards, “Beyond Simple Pessimism: Effects of Sadness and Anger on Social Perception,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 64, No. 5 (May 1993).

<sup>24</sup> Jonathan B. Renshon, *Fighting for Status* (PH.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2012); Jan E. Stets, “Examining Emotions in Identity Theory,” *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (March 2005); Dale T. Miller, “Disrespect and the Experience of Injustice,” *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (2001); Reinhard Wolf, “Respect and Disrespect in International Politics: The Significance of Status Recognition,” *International Theory*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (February 2011).

<sup>25</sup> Larissa Z. Tiedens and Susan Linton, “Judgment under Emotional Certainty and Uncertainty: The Effects of Specific Emotions on Information-Processing,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 81, No. 6 (December 2001); Galen V. Bodenhausen, Lori A. Sheppard, and Geoffrey P. Kramer, “Negative Affect and Social Judgment: The Differential Impact of Sadness and Anger,” *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (January/February 1994); Sasa Drace and Francois Ric, “The Effect of Emotions on Risk Perceptions: Experimental Evaluation of the Affective Tendencies Framework,” *Psihologija*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (2012).

<sup>26</sup> Jennifer S. Lerner and Dacher Keltner, “Beyond Valence: Toward a Model of Emotion-Specific Influences on Judgment and Choice,” *Cognition and Emotion*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (2000); Jennifer S. Lerner and Dacher Keltner,

Germany became the lone dissenter within NATO against U.S. nonproliferation efforts. For being the lone dissenter is particularly risky, and experiments have shown this isolated situation to be the most effective factor for inducing obedience to a legitimate authority.<sup>27</sup> Thus, I argue that German elites who experienced sadness when asked to approve Germany's nuclear reversal could not stand the high risk of being the lone dissenter against their U.S. protector *because their sadness made them risk-averse*. Hence, they obeyed the U.S. order and agreed to the nuclear reversal. In contrast, those leaders who experienced anger were able to take the risk of confronting Washington as a lone dissenter *because their anger made them more risk accepting*. As a consequence, they disobeyed the U.S. order and rejected the nuclear reversal.

### **The Dependent Variable**

My dependent variable is the *individual attitudes of West German political leaders toward their nation's nuclear reversal*. Before I discuss the variation in this variable in the West German case, I will explain how I define and specify my dependent variable.

My dependent variable includes three concepts that I need to define: (1) nuclear reversal, (2) political leader, and (3) attitude. First, I define nuclear reversal as the abandonment of a nation's nuclear weapons activities. This definition focuses on observable behavior, as opposed to intentions, regarding nuclear weapons. Hence, a state's nuclear reversal *might* go hand in hand with the abandonment of its (i.e. the government's) nuclear weapons ambitions. However, this need not be the case. Ariel Levite's often-cited definition of nuclear reversal captures this behavior-centric understanding of the concept quite nicely. According to Levite,

*“Nuclear reversal refers to the phenomenon in which states embark on a path leading to nuclear weapons acquisition but subsequently reverse course, though not necessarily abandoning altogether their nuclear ambitions. [...] At the core of this definition is the distinction between states that have launched (indigenously or with external assistance) a nuclear weapons program and then abandoned it and those that never had such a program in the first place.”*<sup>28</sup>

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“Fear, Anger, and Risk,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 81, No. 1 (July 2001); Paul M. Litvak, Jennifer S. Lerner, Larissa Z. Tiedens, and Katherine Shonk, „Fuel in the Fire: How Anger Impacts Judgment and Decision Making,” in Michael Potegal, Gerhard Stemmler, and Charles Spielberger, eds., *International Handbook of Anger* (New York: Springer, 2010); Tiedens and Linton, “Judgment under Emotional Certainty and Uncertainty.”

<sup>27</sup> Stanley Milgram, “The Liberating Effects of Group Pressure,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (February 1965), pp. 130-131.

<sup>28</sup> Ariel E. Levite, “Never Say Never Again: Nuclear Reversal Revisited,” *International Security*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Winter 2002/03), pp. 61, 67.

Furthermore, for an abandonment of all nuclear weapons activities to count as a nuclear reversal, the nuclear weapons activities must have been authorized by the respective state's political leadership. An explicit decision "to build the bomb" is not required, though.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, this definition of nuclear reversal excludes the abandonment of nuclear weapons activities that had been conducted without authorization from the nation's political leadership.

Now, what are the types of observable behavior which indicate that a state has embarked upon the path toward nuclear weapons and which therefore qualify as "nuclear weapons activities"? Borrowing from Harald Müller and Andreas Schmidt, I define a state that conducts nuclear weapons activities as a state whose behavior includes at least one activity from any of the following five categories:

- (1) "Ambiguous activities (nuclear facilities not under safeguards, no clear commitment to renounce nuclear weapons)
- (2) Serious consideration of [nuclear] weapons program (repeated statements by political or military leaders, studies on utility and feasibility of nuclear weapons acquisition)
- (3) [Nuclear] weapons program (construction of facilities, studies on weaponization, test)
- (4) Nuclear weapon [state] status (actual possession of nuclear explosive devices)
- (5) Inheritance (nuclear weapons on territory inherited from former empire or occupation forces)."<sup>30</sup>

Importantly, according to this definition, merely operating dual-use facilities—even plants for enriching uranium to above reactor-grade level or reprocessing of plutonium from spent fuel rods—does not qualify as a nuclear weapons activity *as long as these plants are covered by safeguards*. Only unsafeguarded dual-use facilities are considered nuclear weapons activities.

Second, who qualifies as a political leader? In the context of this paper, I define a political leader as a person who, because of his role as a member of the parliament or the government of his nation, exerts a major influence on the political decision over the nation's nuclear reversal. This definition includes cabinet members, officials at the state secretary and head of department level of the relevant ministries, but also the chairmen as well as the foreign policy and defense experts of the parliamentary groups of political parties. The definition excludes opinion makers from the media sector, think tanks and the academic world.

Third, what is my definition of a political leader's attitude? I define a leader's attitude as his *personal* stance toward a specific policy issue. The attitude of a leader thus precedes not

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>30</sup> Müller and Schmidt, "The Little-Known Story of De-Proliferation," p. 158.

only the behavior of the state on the issue at hand, but also the pressures for consensus within his political party, parliamentary group or coalition government, each of which might lead the leader to modify his position. However, while my definition of a leader's attitude excludes constraints from party and coalition politics, it includes all constraints from the international sphere: Simply put, a leader's attitude is his answer to the question of "*How would I decide if I were the only political voice in my country?*" To gauge these attitudes, I draw on explicit statements in private letters, internal memos, and unedited minutes of closed meetings.

Finally, how do I specify my dependent variable? I have chosen a dichotomous specification. Thus, when I measure an individual political leader's attitude toward his nation's nuclear reversal, I distinguish only between "approval" and "non-approval", or rejection, of the reversal. As far as my dependent variable is concerned, I therefore study only two types of political leaders: Type A covers those leaders who changed their attitudes toward their nation's nuclear reversal from "non-approval" to "approval." Type B comprises those elites whose attitude of "non-approval" of the nation's nuclear reversal remained constant.<sup>31</sup>

Having defined and specified my dependent variable in general terms, what kind of nuclear weapons activity did the West German nuclear reversal stop? And which West German political leaders acted as Type-A and which as Type-B leaders?

The West German nuclear reversal concerned the abandonment of nuclear weapons activities falling under the above-mentioned types of behavior of "no clear commitment to renounce nuclear weapons" (category 1) and "repeated statements by political and military leaders" (category 2) in favor of German control over nuclear weapons. After West Germany in 1954 had committed itself vis-à-vis its Western allies not to produce nuclear weapons on its own territory, and after plans in 1957/58 to produce nuclear arms together with France and Italy on French soil had been scrapped by newly-elected French President de Gaulle, Bonn's nuclear weapons ambitions had turned to securing a share for Germany in the control over an integrated multilateral nuclear force within either NATO or the European Communities (EC).<sup>32</sup> That is, West Germany aspired to become the co-owner of formerly American or French nuclear weapons. These desires were more than hypothetical, though, as Washington in the early 1960s had put forward several proposals for such a multilateral nuclear force with German participation. Moreover, as late as 1964 all major political parties in Germany called

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<sup>31</sup> Beyond these two types, I am interested neither in elites who have never disapproved of the nuclear reversal nor in leaders whose attitude changed from approval to rejection of a nuclear reversal (and not the other way around). Both these attitude evolutions go beyond the research question I am tackling here.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Fischer, „Das Projekt einer trilateralen Nuklearkooperation: Französisch-deutsch-italienische Geheimverhandlungen 1957/58,“ *Historisches Jahrbuch*, No. 112 (1992); Dieter Mahncke, *Nukleare Mitwirkung: Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland in der Atlantischen Allianz 1954-1970* (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1972).

for the creation of such a force with either the United States or France.<sup>33</sup> However, when Washington and Moscow in fall 1966 agreed on their first joint draft of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which required Bonn to permanently renounce even participation in multilateral nuclear forces, Bonn's nuclear ambitions shifted toward a more passive agenda. This limited agenda aimed at preventing or at least modifying the NPT, so as to keep open the option of future German participation in a multilateral nuclear force.<sup>34</sup> Hence, German leaders' failure to undertake a clear commitment to renounce nuclear arms (category 1 activity) and the repeated statements of German leaders that Bonn needed a share in the control over Western nuclear forces (category 2 activity) expressed themselves in political leaders' *refusal to approve West Germany's NPT membership*. Notably, membership does not mean Bonn's signing of the NPT, which took place in November 1969 but was not legally-binding. Rather, NPT membership refers to the binding ratification of the treaty by the Bundestag and the Bundesrat in February and March 1974, respectively.<sup>35</sup>

Against this historical background, my dichotomous dependent variable measures if an individual West German political leader gave his approval for West Germany's accession to the NPT or if he refused to endorse this treaty commitment. Some might argue that defending the mere option of a future share in a multilateral nuclear force should not be considered a nuclear weapons activity and that, therefore, the date of West Germany's nuclear reversal should be set in 1958, when actual plans for joint manufacture of nuclear weapons with Italy and France died.<sup>36</sup> I disagree, though, because seeking participation in a multilateral nuclear force clearly goes against the NPT and would thus today be *unanimously* regarded as pursuit of nuclear weapons. Besides, "merely" closing the option of future German participation in a multilateral nuclear force in fact meant a lot to all involved actors at the time: Moscow was singularly fixated on West German accession to the NPT, the United States pushed through some 25 changes to the text of the NPT only to make it more agreeable to Bonn, most other European countries also had strong feelings in favor of Germany joining the treaty, and at least some German leaders were ready to take high risks to keep the nuclear option open.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Küntzel, *Bonn und die Bombe*, p. 77.

<sup>34</sup> Hoppe, *Zwischen Teilhabe und Mitsprache*, pp. 329-332.

<sup>35</sup> West Germany's formal accession to the NPT was undertaken concurrently with the other non-nuclear EC states, which delayed this step until May 1975.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, Philipp C. Bleek, "Why Do States Proliferate? Quantitative Analysis of the Exploration, Pursuit, and Acquisition of Nuclear Weapons," in William C. Potter and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova, eds., *Forecasting Nuclear Proliferation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Vol. 1: *The Role of Theory* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010), p. 169.

<sup>37</sup> For a good overview, see Oliver Bange, "NATO and the Nonproliferation Treaty: Triangulations Between Bonn, Washington, and Moscow," in Andreas Wenger, Christian Nünlist, and Anna Locher, eds., *Transforming NATO in the Cold War: Challenges Beyond Deterrence in the 1960's* (London: Routledge, 2007).

As regards which German elites finally came out in favor of West German NPT membership, and which leaders refused to support this course until the end, it is useful to distinguish between three groups of elites. For the sake of simplicity I will label these three groups NPT *supporters*, NPT *critics*, and NPT *opponents*. As for the supporters of the NPT, it is important to note that even these leaders were not at all enthusiastic about the NPT and Germany's accession to the treaty.<sup>38</sup> Yet within West Germany these political leaders had arguably the smallest concerns with joining the NPT, not the least because they had never been passionate supporters of the multilateral force idea in the early 1960s.<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, the NPT supporters' unreserved approval of German NPT membership came about only in April 1973. All of these elites were either members or affiliates of the Social Democrats (SPD) or the Free Democrats (FDP), and Willy Brandt, Egon Bahr, and Walter Scheel acted as the leading voices. Table 1 lists some representatives of all three groups as well as their positions at the time.

Members of the second group, whom I label NPT critics, objected to the treaty on several grounds, and these political leaders made serious efforts to avoid West German accession to the NPT by playing for time during the treaty negotiations while hoping that the entire NPT project would unravel. However, these leaders made clear that they would acquiesce into joining the NPT if certain improvements in the text of the treaty were achieved and if a particular international climate were to evolve. They finally agreed to Germany's NPT membership in September 1973. This group encompassed the moderate wing of the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) as well as a few Social Democrats, and it included Kurt Georg Kiesinger, Kurt Birrenbach, Karl Carstens, Gerhard Schröder (from the CDU), and Helmut Schmidt.

Finally, the NPT opponents rejected a German NPT membership as a matter of principle. These leaders were not at all concerned with improving the text of the treaty, and they avowed repeatedly in public as well as private settings that they would actually fight against the NPT. Needless to say, these were the leaders that did not approve West Germany's NPT accession. All of them were either members of or affiliated with the conservative wing of the Christian Democrats. Franz Josef Strauss, Konrad Adenauer, Swidbert Schnippenkötter, Alois Mertes and Wilhelm Grewe were the most active voices among these NPT foes.

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<sup>38</sup> For example, Brand declared in a closed meeting in 1969 that "he had never said that the treaty was good." Quoted in "Summary of a meeting of Foreign Minister Brandt with the leaders of the CDU/CSU regarding the NPT, April 29, 1969," p. 13, Records of the German Chancellery (B 136), Vol. 6904, German National Archives Koblenz [hereafter BAK].

<sup>39</sup> Peter Merseburger, *Willy Brandt 1913-1992: Visionär und Realist* (Stuttgart: DVA, 2002), p. 468-469; Beate Kohler-Koch, *Der Vertrag über die Nichtverbreitung von Kernwaffen und das Problem der Sicherheitsgarantien* (Frankfurt am Main: Alfred Metzner Verlag, 1972), pp. 121-122.

**Table 1:** *NPT supporters, critics, and opponents among West Germany's political leaders*

<b>NAME</b>	<b>POSITION DURING THE NPT DEBATE</b>
<b><i>NPT supporters</i></b>	
Willy Brandt (SPD)	Federal Chancellor (1969-1974); Foreign Minister (1966-1969)
Egon Bahr (SPD)	Head of Policy Planning, Foreign Office (1966-1969)
Walter Scheel (FDP)	Foreign Minister (1969-1974); FDP chairman (1968-1974)
Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz	State Secretary, Foreign Office (1967-1970)
Paul Frank	State Secretary, Foreign Office (1970-1974)
Karl Moersch (FDP)	Parliamentary State Secretary, Foreign Office (1970-1976)
Hellmuth Roth	Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs, Foreign Office (1969-1977)
<b><i>NPT critics</i></b>	
Kurt Georg Kiesinger (CDU)	Federal Chancellor (1966-1969)
Kurt Birrenbach (CDU)	Head of CDU/CSU working group on NPT (1967-1969)
Gerhard Schröder (CDU)	Foreign Minister (1961-1965); Defense Minister (1966-1969)
Karl Carstens (CDU)	State Secretary, Foreign Office (1960-1966), Defense Ministry (1966-1968), and Federal Chancellery (1968-1969); chairman, CDU/CSU parliamentary group (1973-1976)
Gerhard Stoltenberg (CDU)	Minister for Research and Technology (1966-1969)
Rainer Barzel (CDU)	Chairman, CDU/CSU parliamentary group (1964-1973)
Ludwig Erhard (CDU)	Federal Chancellor (1963-1966)
Werner Marx (CDU)	Foreign policy expert, CDU/CSU parliamentary group (1971-1976)
Heinrich Knapstein	Ambassador to the United States (1962-1968)
Helmut Schmidt (SPD)	Defense Minister (1969-1972); Finance Minister (1972-1974); chairman, SPD parliamentary group (1966-1969)
Fritz Erler (SPD)	Chairman, SPD parliamentary group (1964-1966)
<b><i>NPT opponents</i></b>	
Konrad Adenauer (CDU)	Federal Chancellor (1949-1963); CDU chairman (1949-1965)
Franz Josef Strauss (CSU)	Finance Minister (1966-1969); CSU chairman (1961-1988)
Wilhelm Grewe	Ambassador to NATO (1962-1971)
Alois Mertes (CDU)	Foreign policy expert, CDU/CSU parliamentary group (1972-1985)
Swidbert Schnippenkötter	Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs, Foreign Office (1965-1969)
Manfred Wörner (CDU)	Defense expert, CDU/CSU parliamentary group (1965-1988)
Walter Becher (CSU)	Foreign policy expert, CDU/CSU parliamentary group (1965-1980)
Friedrich Zimmermann (CSU)	Defense expert, CDU/CSU parliamentary group (1957-1990)
Marcel Hepp (CSU)	Personal assistant of Franz Josef Strauss (1965-1970)
Wilhelm Hartlieb	Consul General in Nancy (1967-1969)
Alfred Dregger (CDU)	Defense expert, CDU/CSU parliamentary group (1972-1998)

### **Testing the Argument**

To test my argument, I start with those three independent variables whose presence served a necessary condition for the (actual or counterfactual) consent to Germany's NPT membership

of *all three* groups of political leaders in Bonn. These variables are (1) the high importance of West German freedom for U.S. security, (2) preservation of the treaty-based character of the U.S.-German alliance, and (3) protection of the West German economy. Afterwards, I evaluate those two variables that did not have an effect on all West German leaders and, thus, determined the variation in German leaders' approval of the NPT: (1) the international social pressure on Bonn to join the NPT, and (2) political leaders' conception of Germany's status vis-à-vis the United States.

Causal necessity means that a particular independent variable X has to be present for the outcome under study Y to occur. At the same time, the presence of X is no guarantee—that is, no sufficient condition—for the occurrence of Y, but merely one of several (and potentially many) prerequisites for Y. Importantly, every assertion of causal necessity automatically implies a counterfactual claim that if X had been absent, Y would not have occurred.<sup>40</sup>

### *(1) West Germany's high intrinsic importance for U.S. security*

The theoretical argument underpinning this variable holds that, first, the political leaders of U.S. allies only consent to their nation's nuclear reversal if they trust U.S. pledges of protection and, second, that U.S. alliance protection is more reliable under bipolarity. For only in a bipolar environment does U.S. preoccupation with the global balance of power make Washington sensitive to losing allies that are geographically and economically important and, thus, accorded a high "intrinsic" value for U.S. security.<sup>41</sup> As in this view the intrinsic importance of Germany results directly from the existence of bipolarity, the congruence test can focus straight on global polarity. Hence, when testing for necessity, the hypothesis passes the congruence test for a particular German leader if the world exhibited a bipolar structure on the eve of the leader's approval of West German NPT membership. Since bipolarity was evident in spring and fall 1973, when the NPT supporters and NPT critics in Bonn respectively agreed to join the treaty, the hypothesis passes the congruence test for these two groups. Besides, the hypothesis also passes the test for the group of NPT opponents, because the existence of bipolarity is congruent with these elites' rejection of German NPT accession as long as bipolarity is tested as a necessary (and not a sufficient) condition for the approval of NPT accession.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> For a comprehensive treatment, consult Gary Goertz and Harvey Starr, eds., *Necessary Conditions: Theory, Methodology, and Applications* (Lanham et al.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

<sup>41</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Fall 1993); John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Summer 1990); Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (July 1984); Frankel, "The Brooding Shadow."

<sup>42</sup> See Jason Seawright, "Testing for Necessary and/or Sufficient Causation: Which Cases are Relevant?" *Political Analysis*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Spring 2002).

After the congruence test the analysis now turns to process-tracing tests. Again testing for necessity, the hypothesis passes the process-tracing test for a particular political leader if (1) the leader, on the eve of his approving of Germany's NPT membership, judged U.S. protection of West Germany as reliable, if (2) he had at some point linked this reliability to the high intrinsic importance of West German freedom to U.S. security, and if (3) he had at some point based his decision to join the NPT explicitly on his trust in U.S. alliance protection.

The group of NPT supporters in Bonn offers strong evidence to fulfill these requirements. During the entire German NPT debate, the treaty supporters had never doubted the U.S. commitment to defend West Germany against Soviet aggression. For evidence from the years surrounding Bonn's NPT accession, Paul Frank and Karl Moersch made their views known during the Bundestag hearings on the NPT in 1973 and 1974: After repeating recent U.S. pledges of protection, Frank testified that "the Federal Government has no reason to doubt these American assurances."<sup>43</sup> One week later, Moersch likewise testified that he and the SPD/FDP coalition government placed strong trust in U.S. protection for West Germany.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, over the preceding years, the NPT supporters had explicitly tied their trust in the U.S. protector to West Germany's high intrinsic value for U.S. security. For example, in a 1969 letter to Brandt, Egon Bahr had explained that U.S. protection of Germany was guaranteed even in the post-Vietnam era because West German security belonged to "the vital U.S. foreign policy interests" that Washington would defend under any circumstances.<sup>45</sup> Brandt had also frequently stressed the overlap of U.S. strategic interests and German national security interests as well as the resulting reliability of U.S. protection.<sup>46</sup> Looking back on the 1960s in his memoirs, Paul Frank made this point even clearer: "If West Germany as the shield of West European defense sinks, the encirclement of the 'Fortress America' will follow regardless of its strategic nuclear forces."<sup>47</sup> Consequently, U.S. protection was trustworthy.

Finally, the NPT supporters based their approval of West German NPT accession on the reliability of U.S. protection that they derived from Germany's intrinsic importance to the United States. To give just one example, in a confidential meeting with NPT critics in April 1969, Brandt responded to doubts that NATO might fall apart after Bonn acceded to the NPT

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<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Wolfgang Hölscher and Joachim Wintzer, eds., *Der Auswärtige Ausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages. Sitzungsprotokolle 1972-1976*, Vol. 1: *Januar 1973 bis November 1974* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2010), p. 447.

<sup>44</sup> See Wolfgang Hölscher and Joachim Wintzer, eds., *Der Auswärtige Ausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages. Sitzungsprotokolle 1972-1976, CD-Supplement* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2010), p. 627.

<sup>45</sup> „Doc. 296: Memorandum from Bahr, September 21, 1969,“ in *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik [hereafter AAPD] 1969*, Vol. 2: *Juni bis Dezember*, (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1969), p. 1050.

<sup>46</sup> Judith Michel, *Willy Brandts Amerikabild und -politik 1933-1992* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2010), pp. 84-85, 151-152.

<sup>47</sup> Paul Frank, *Entschlüsselte Botschaft: Ein Diplomat macht Inventur* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1981), p. 144.

with a strong statement of U.S. reliability, asserting that even in this unlikely case “U.S. self-interest in maintaining the nuclear guarantee [for West Germany] will be strong enough.”<sup>48</sup> Therefore, Brandt argued, U.S. reliability could be no hurdle for Bonn’s joining the NPT.

As for the group of West German NPT critics, these leaders also constantly placed great trust in U.S. pledges of protection against Soviet aggression. Moreover, in the months surrounding these leaders’ final approval of Germany’s NPT membership, their confidence in the U.S. protector remained high. For instance, Kurt Birrenbach, the Christian Democrats’ foremost NPT expert, declared in a confidential presentation before his party’s parliamentary group in September 1973 that U.S. guarantees were definitely reliable.<sup>49</sup> While other NPT critics thereafter frequently stressed the key U.S. role for West German security, not even behind closed doors did any of them voice doubts over the reliability of U.S. protection.<sup>50</sup>

Besides, like the NPT supporters, the critics likewise linked their trust in the United States to the shared U.S.-West German interest in the freedom of West Germany from Soviet domination, that is, to Germany’s high intrinsic importance for U.S. security: In the above-mentioned presentation, Birrenbach based his claim of U.S. reliability on the assertion that “the loss of Europe [to the Soviets] would be a catastrophe for the United States in many ways.”<sup>51</sup> As early as 1962, Gerhard Schröder had similarly argued that there was “far-reaching overlap of the interests of both countries [i.e. West Germany and the United States] in defending the free world against Soviet expansionism. If one takes this basic fact into account, one won’t feel a constant need to receive U.S. assurances of protection on a daily basis [...].”<sup>52</sup> Ludwig Erhard had even went so far as to call his trust in the United States a political “statement of faith”, lecturing the wary de Gaulle that “America knows that if it loses Europe, world dominance will come into the Soviet Union’s reach.”<sup>53</sup> Ambassador Knappstein likewise explained in spring 1968 at an intimate gathering that “the United States cannot afford to

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<sup>48</sup> Quoted in “Summary of a meeting of Foreign Minister Brandt with the leaders of the CDU/CSU regarding the NPT, April 29, 1969,” p. 10.

<sup>49</sup> “Minutes of a special meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group on German ties with the United States, September 19, 1973,” p. 55-56, Records of Karl Carstens (NL 1337), Vol. 23, BAK.

<sup>50</sup> See “Minutes of a special meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group on the NPT, February 12, 1974,” Records of Karl Carstens (NL 1337), Vol. 24, BAK.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in “Minutes of a special meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group on German ties with the United States,” p. 55. For further evidence, see Kurt Birrenbach, *Die Zukunft der Atlantischen Gemeinschaft: Europäisch-amerikanische Partnerschaft* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 1962), p. 27.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in „Interview of Foreign Minister Schröder with the ‚Kölnische Rundschau‘, April 30, 1962,” in *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik 1962*, Vol. 1: *Januar bis Juni* (Frankfurt am Main: Alfred Metzner Verlag, 1977), p. 473.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in “Doc. 423: Memorandum of a conversation between Chancellor Erhard and President de Gaulle in Paris, November 21, 1963,” in *AAPD 1963*, Vol. 3: *Oktober bis Dezember* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1994), pp. 1474, 1477.

pull back from European affairs, because in doing so it would lose its role as the leading Western power and hand over Europe's tremendous industrial potential to the enemy."<sup>54</sup>

In the end, the NPT critics in Bonn drew on this intrinsic interest account of U.S. reliability to justify their decision to approve Germany's NPT ratification. As the official spokesman for those CDU deputies that acquiesced to the treaty—i.e. the NPT critics—, Birrenbach stated in his final report on the NPT to the Bundestag in February 1974 that “the full and recently demonstrated readiness of the United States to stand by its alliance commitments” formed a “decisive political pillar for an application of the treaty [i.e. the NPT] that guarantees the security of alliance members [...]”<sup>55</sup> The justification for joining the NPT that Birrenbach had given one week earlier at a closed meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group had also stressed that West German security was assured through the alliance with the United States and that preservation of this alliance was certain because “for the United States the protection of its strategic forefront in Europe is still a vital interest.”<sup>56</sup> For the NPT critics, hence, Germany's intrinsic value had the effect of a necessary condition for joining the NPT.

Unlike the critics and the supporters of the NPT, German leaders belonging to the group of NPT opponents held considerable doubts if the United States would defend West Germany against Soviet aggression. Ever since the Kennedy administration had shifted U.S. strategic policy toward détente, conservative political leaders in Bonn like Adenauer and Strauss had sensed that Washington was tempted to sacrifice its German ally for the sake of superpower cooperation.<sup>57</sup> These suspicions remained very much alive in the first half of the 1970s: During a closed meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in September 1973, Strauss denied that the United States was still prepared to use decisive force, including U.S. nuclear weapons deployed in West Germany, to save its ally in Bonn.<sup>58</sup> In the same vein, Wörner complained privately in February 1974 that he was not sure at all “what U.S. strategic nuclear protection [for West Germany] [...] will look like in 10, 15 or 20 years.”<sup>59</sup> Other NPT opponents like Mertes remained convinced that in case of Soviet military aggression the Unit-

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<sup>54</sup> “Ambassador Knappstein to State Secretary Duckwitz, Re: Summary of my presentation for the foreign policy colloquium, April 23, 1968,” p. 2, Classified records section (B 150), Vol. 125, Political Archive of the German Foreign Office, Berlin [hereafter PA/AA].

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, Vol. 86*, February 20, 1974 (Bonn: Heger, 1977), p. 5256. Due to illness, Birrenbach's report was read by Mertes.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in “Minutes of a special meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group on the NPT, February 12, 1974,” p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, Konrad Adenauer, *Erinnerungen 1959-1963: Fragmente*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Stuttgart: DVA, 1978), p. 200.

<sup>58</sup> See “Minutes of a special meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group on German ties with the United States, September 19, 1973,” p. 28.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in “Minutes of a special meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group on the NPT, February 12, 1974,” p. 47.

ed States would still come to West Germany's defense. However, he was far less certain that Washington would provide strong allied support in case of the more likely scenario that Moscow limited itself to political pressure against Bonn in order to gain influence over West German elites through a process of "Finlandization" that alienates Bonn from its allies.<sup>60</sup>

However, regardless of these doubts, the NPT opponents still considered West Germany's intrinsic value for U.S. security as a prerequisite for a reliable U.S. security guarantee. In other words, the NPT opponents did not regard U.S. pledges of protection as reliable in all conflict scenarios with Moscow. However, their limited trust, which covered only part of all conceivable conflict scenarios, was based critically on the high importance of West Germany for U.S. security during the Cold War. Thus, Adenauer was convinced that West European security constituted a fundamental premise for U.S. freedom under conditions of bipolarity.<sup>61</sup> Starting with the Kennedy administration, though, he grew increasingly alarmed that leading U.S. decision makers no longer understood the high intrinsic value of West Germany: Said Adenauer in 1965, "One has to tell the Americans forcefully that after the loss of Europe, the United States will be doomed as well." Or else, he argued, U.S. leaders could simply "overlook" Europe's importance, as they were "completely incompetent to understand anything about Europe."<sup>62</sup> Mertes also stressed the shared transatlantic interest in Germany's freedom. During a meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in early 1974 he maintained that "if the President of the United States [...] should ever face the situation in which he puts Chicago and New York at risk in order to defend Europe, then he can only do this because he is convinced that to rescue Cologne and Paris he must put American lives at risk because the rescue of Cologne and Paris is in the fundamental U.S. interest."<sup>63</sup>

These statements demonstrate that the NPT opponents were well aware of the reliability-enhancing effect of Germany's high intrinsic value for the United States and that they regarded this effect as essential for their—limited—trust in their U.S. protector. And without even this limited trust in U.S. reliability to defend Bonn, the NPT opponents' consent to West Germany's NPT accession was out of the question. Hence, even for the NPT opponents, Germany's intrinsic value acted as a necessary, yet not sufficient condition for joining the NPT.

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<sup>60</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 66-67. "Finlandization" means preventing or weakening a state's membership in a US-led alliance through massive Soviet intimidation. Finland during the Cold War is the prime example for this phenomenon.

<sup>61</sup> Klaus Hildebrand, *Von Erhard zur Großen Koalition 1963-1969* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1984), p. 172.

<sup>62</sup> Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Adenauer: Der Staatsmann: 1952-1967* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1991), pp. 899, 924.

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in "Minutes of a special meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group on the NPT, February 12, 1974," p. 65-66.

## *(2) Preservation of the treaty-based character of the U.S.-German alliance*

The theoretical claim underpinning this variable holds, first, that the leaders of U.S.-allied nations only give up their country's nuclear weapons activities if they trust U.S. pledges of protection and, second, that these pledges of allied protection are more reliable if an alliance is grounded in a mutual defense treaty.<sup>64</sup> Once achieved, preserving this formal character might be deemed crucial by national leaders to maintain the reliability of allied pledges of protection. For Bonn's nuclear reversal, preservation of the treaty-based character of the U.S.-German alliance played a role, not the least because its continuing survival then seemed at risk: Starting in 1969 every NATO member state could withdraw from the NATO treaty on one year's notice, which raised doubts as to whether Washington would continue its formal alliance with Bonn.

Consequently, when testing for necessity, the hypothesis passes the congruence test for a particular German leader if, at the time when the leader approved Germany's NPT membership, the United States still entertained a formal alliance with West Germany. As this requirement was being met in spring and fall 1973, when the NPT supporters and critics respectively agreed to Germany's NPT accession, the hypothesis passes the congruence test for both these groups. Furthermore, the hypothesis also passes the congruence test for the NPT opponents. For the continuing survival of the formal U.S.-German alliance is congruent with the opponents' rejection of German NPT membership if preserving this integration step is tested as a necessary (and not a sufficient) condition for approving Germany's NPT accession.

Testing again for necessity, the hypothesis passes the process-tracing test for a particular West German political leader if there is evidence showing that the leader regarded preserving the formal character of the U.S.-West German alliance as a prerequisite for joining the NPT *because in his opinion the U.S. pledge of protection would not be reliable without a mutual defense treaty*. Substantiating this assurance motive for the formal character of the alliance is crucial here since preservation of the formal U.S.-German alliance could also be exclusively driven by the requirements of deterring Soviet aggression against West Germany.

As for the NPT supporters in Bonn, there is plenty of evidence linking their consent to German NPT membership to the preservation of the formal U.S.-German alliance. For example, in April 1968 Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz instructed the West German embassy in Washington to make it clear to U.S. leaders "that there is an inseparable link between the existence of the Atlantic Alliance and the acceptance of the commitments of the NPT by the non-

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<sup>64</sup> See, for example, Makreeta Lahti, *Security Cooperation as a Way to Stop the Spread of Nuclear Weapons? Nuclear Nonproliferation Policies of the United States toward the Federal Republic of Germany and Israel, 1945-1968* (PH.D. dissertation, University of Potsdam, 2008).

nuclear NATO partners.”<sup>65</sup> Besides, when the Social-Liberal coalition government, which was led by Brandt and Scheel, signed the NPT in November 1969, it issued a signing statement declaring that Bonn signed on the premise “that the security of the Federal Republic of Germany will remain guaranteed through NATO [...]”<sup>66</sup> The same statement was issued again in May 1975, when West Germany deposited the instruments of ratification for the NPT.<sup>67</sup>

However, these statements about the key role of the formal alliance could have been solely motivated by the need to preserve the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence toward the Soviets—and not by the assurance-oriented goal of inducing the United States to keep its pledges of protection toward Bonn. Additional evidence shows, though, that the NPT supporters’ focus on preserving NATO was indeed driven by assurance motives: In November 1969, Scheel stated in the Bundestag that the security-related requirements for joining the NPT were fulfilled as West Germany’s security was “guaranteed through solid alliance arrangements.”<sup>68</sup> The reference by Scheel to arrangements that are internal to the alliance and thus cover the relationship between the allies addresses exactly the assurance mechanism tested here—and it ignores the deterrence relationship between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. In a similar vein, Duckwitz detailed in a confidential memo in April 1968 that ensuring West German security over the long run so as to allow it to join the NPT did not necessarily require an enhanced formal security guarantee because even reaffirming the existing NATO guarantee “could have the effect of politically and psychologically stabilizing the alliance.”<sup>69</sup> Duckwitz’ allusion to a positive psychological effect of the NATO treaty nicely addresses the assurance effect of formal alliances, and both his and Scheel’s statements demonstrate that the treaty-base assurance provided by NATO was in fact a precondition for the NPT supporters’ approval of the NPT.

Turning to the NPT critics, the available evidence likewise suggests that preserving the formal character of the U.S.-German alliance acted as a necessary condition for the critics’ consent to West Germany’s NPT membership. For instance, when Chancellor Kiesinger and President Johnson met in Washington in August 1967 for a confidential exchange, Kiesinger argued forcefully that Bonn would be forced to withdraw from the NPT if the United States

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<sup>65</sup> “Doc. 128: State Secretary Duckwitz to the embassy in Washington, April 16, 1968,” in *AAPD 1968*, Vol. 1: *Januar bis Juni* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1999), p. 460.

<sup>66</sup> “Doc. 281: Statement and note of the Federal Government on the signing of the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons on November 28, 1969,” in *Auswärtiges Amt*, ed., *Die Auswärtige Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1972), p. 712.

<sup>67</sup> “Statement of the Federal Government on the occasion of the deposition of the instruments of ratification of the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons on May 2, 1975,” in *Auswärtiges Amt*, ed., *Abrüstung und Rüstungskontrolle: Dokumente zur Haltung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Bonn: Auswärtiges Amt, 1983), p. 66-67.

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages*, Vol. 71, November 12, 1969 (Bonn: Heger, 1970), p. 323.

<sup>69</sup> “Doc. 128: State Secretary Duckwitz to the embassy in Washington, April 16, 1968,” p. 461, n. 10.

were to terminate its defense commitments under the NATO treaty.<sup>70</sup> By the same token, during a trip to the United States in spring 1968, Birrenbach told U.S. officials that NATO's continued existence was an absolute prerequisite for West Germany's accession to the NPT.<sup>71</sup>

As they stand, however, these statements do not prove that the demands to preserve the NATO treaty were driven by assurance needs and not exclusively by deterrence motives. Other documents show, though, that assurance did play a role in the considerations of the NPT critics on NATO survival: To give just one example, Kiesinger stated in a closed meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in January 1968 that in his view the intrinsic value of West Germany to U.S. security alone was not sufficient for U.S. pledges of protection to be reliable and that, consequently, the formal U.S. defense commitment within NATO was also necessary: "The proposition that the Americans would have to intervene in Europe—with or without NATO—if an attack from the East came about ... To this I can only respond that this is logically correct, but [...] one cannot just count on that if this happens, that will automatically follow. Everywhere politics is done by humans that make mistakes, and humans who also depend on parliamentary support, and parliaments that in turn depend on peoples' moods. Thus, in my view we are still well advised to strengthen our ties and our friendship [with the United States] through NATO."<sup>72</sup> Against this backdrop, the Kiesinger and Birrenbach quotes mentioned above reveal the fundamental role of NATO's assurance effect for the support of the NPT critics for West German NPT membership.

Finally, even the NPT opponents in Bonn considered the preservation of the NATO treaty indispensable for joining the NPT. Thus, in April 1968 Ambassador Wilhelm Grewe stressed in a lengthy memorandum "that accession to the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) must not compromise the existing foundations of German security policy." And among these foundations of German security Grewe listed in first place the "continued existence of NATO."<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, the CSU, which was then led and dominated by NPT opponents, repeatedly demanded that the formal U.S. security guarantee within NATO must be made nonredeemable before German NPT accession.<sup>74</sup> And this implies that the NPT opponents of the CSU simi-

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<sup>70</sup> See Walt Walt W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power: Essays in Recent History* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 381.

<sup>71</sup> See Taschler, *Vor neuen Herausforderungen*, p. 228.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in Stefan Marx, ed., *Die CDU/CSU-Fraktion im Deutschen Bundestag: Sitzungsprotokolle 1966-1969*, Vol. 1: *Dezember 1966 bis März 1968* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2011), p. 660.

<sup>73</sup> "Doc. 118: Ambassador Grewe to the Foreign Office, April 3, 1968," in *AAPD 1968*, Vol. 1: *Januar bis Juni* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1999), p. 429.

<sup>74</sup> See Detlef Bischoff, *Franz Josef Strauß, die CSU und die Außenpolitik: Konzeption und Realität am Beispiel der Großen Koalition* (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1973), p. 201-202.

larly viewed preservation of the existing rescindable U.S. security guarantee as a necessary—though certainly not as a sufficient—condition for joining the NPT.

Once again, though, other sources are needed to substantiate that, in attempting to preserve the NATO treaty, the NPT opponents were not only interested in advancing deterrence, but also in preserving one source of their (limited) trust in the U.S. pledge of protection. Thus, Adenauer had tried hard from early on to formalize the U.S.-German alliance: In May 1950, after tireless efforts, Adenauer had managed to get a formal declaration from the foreign ministers of the United States, Great Britain, and France that West Germany for all intents and purposes belonged to the territories protected by NATO—although West Germany was then not a NATO member state. The fact that Adenauer, according to the minutes of the meeting, had happily welcomed this formal commitment of the Western powers as an important accomplishment for Bonn *even though the agreement was at first not publicized*<sup>75</sup>—and, hence, could not in any way deter Soviet aggression—proves his assurance-based motive for formalizing the U.S. pledge of protection. Hence, for Adenauer, the formalization of the U.S.-German alliance meant a major increase in his trust in the U.S. pledge of protection, and this (still limited) trust was necessary, though not sufficient, for the opponents' consent to Germany's NPT membership.

### ***(3) Protection of the West German economy***

The idea behind this variable is the simple argument that political leaders are unlikely to agree to their nation's nuclear reversal if this negatively impacts the domestic economy. While from today's perspective the idea that *giving up* nuclear weapons activities might be economically disadvantageous seems odd, this has not always been the case. In the 1960s and 1970s, the prospect of renouncing nuclear weapons by joining the NPT raised substantial worries among nations with advanced civilian nuclear programs. For these nations feared that the inspections of nuclear plants and the nuclear trade restrictions under the NPT might damage their competitive position vis-à-vis nonmembers of the NPT. Furthermore, during the early negotiations over the NPT, developed nations suspected that the NPT might, due to the dual-use nature of nuclear technology, also ban *all* civilian applications of nuclear energy. As a country with an advanced civilian nuclear program, West Germany was strongly affected by these concerns.

When testing for necessity, then, the hypothesis passes the congruence test for a particular political leader if at the time when the leader approved Germany's NPT accession he

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<sup>75</sup> Walter Schwengler, "Souveränität und Sicherheit," in Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Anfänge westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik 1945-1956*, Vol. 4: *Wirtschaft und Rüstung, Souveränität und Sicherheit* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1997), p. 357-358.

no longer feared that NPT membership would negatively impact the German economy. Also testing for necessity, the hypothesis passes the process-tracing test for a certain political leader if there is evidence indicating that the leader considered preventing negative economic side-effects of the NPT for Germany a precondition for joining the treaty.

The NPT supporters in Bonn pass both these tests. Beginning with the congruence test, when the supporters gave the treaty their final approval in April 1973, they no longer held any doubts that NPT membership would damage Germany's competitive position on world markets. This became apparent in an April 1973 memorandum on NPT ratification from Foreign Minister Scheel for the Cabinet: Scheel reported that now, after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) had concluded the long-awaited agreement on verification procedures, the last economic problem surrounding German NPT accession had come to a "satisfying solution."<sup>76</sup> Frank and Moersch conveyed exactly the same view during the Bundestag hearings on the NPT in late 1973.<sup>77</sup>

As to the process tracing, several documents reveal the crucial importance that the NPT supporters attached to preventing the NPT from negatively impacting the German economy. In February 1967, during his first visit to the United States after seeing the first draft of the NPT, Brandt made it clear that to him ensuring continued German civilian use of nuclear power was "of greatest importance."<sup>78</sup> Also in February 1967, Scheel asserted during a Bundestag hearing that preventing negative side effects of the NPT for the German economy was, "over the long term, the most important aspect [...] on which the [NPT] negotiations should concentrate."<sup>79</sup> That the NPT supporters considered protection of the German economy an absolute prerequisite for their assent to NPT accession was finally proven when the SPD/FDP government, on the occasion of Bonn's signing of the NPT, even released a diplomatic note declaring that it would "not submit the NPT for ratification unless the negotiations between the Commission [of the EC] and the IAEA have led to an agreement" and thus solved the last remaining problem involving the NPT's economic impact on nonnuclear member states.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Quoted in "Draft bill from the Foreign Office for consideration by the Cabinet, Re: Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons of July 1, 1968 (NPT)," p. 25, Records of the German Chancellery (B 136), Vol. 6904, BAK.

<sup>77</sup> See Hölscher and Wintzer, eds., *Der Auswärtige Ausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages*, pp. 432-433, 448-451.

<sup>78</sup> "Doc. 48: Foreign Minister Brandt to State Secretary Schütz, February 8, 1967," in *AAPD 1967, Vol 1: Januar bis April* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998), p. 249.

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Joachim Wintzer, ed., *Der Auswärtige Ausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages: Sitzungsprotokolle 1965-1969, Vol. 1: Dezember 1965 bis Dezember 1967* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2006), p. 368.

<sup>80</sup> "Doc. 281: Statement and note of the Federal Government on the signing of the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons on November 28, 1969," p. 716.

Regarding the NPT critics, the hypothesis passes the congruence test for this group, as at the time of their approval of Germany's NPT accession in fall 1973, its members no longer feared harmful economic consequences from the NPT. After EURATOM and the IAEA had reached an agreement on verification procedures in April 1973, the NPT critics scrutinized the accord through a special CDU/CSU-commission on the NPT and in September 1973 concluded that the German economy had nothing to fear from NPT membership: As the author of the commission's final report, Birrenbach in October 1973 summarized the critics' view that if Bonn joined the NPT, it would be "ensured that the Federal Republic of Germany, as a non-nuclear-weapon state, would not be discriminated vis-à-vis the nuclear-weapon states with which she competes on the world market in applying nuclear energy to peaceful uses."<sup>81</sup>

The hypothesis also passes the process-tracing test for the NPT critics, as they considered averting negative economic side effects of the NPT an essential premise for joining the treaty. That became apparent in early 1967, when the NPT draft did not yet take the economic interests of non-nuclear-weapon states like West Germany fully into account: In a letter to his friend John McCloy, Birrenbach called the possible economic discrimination of non-nuclear-weapon states "the fundamental problem of the treaty" that had to be resolved.<sup>82</sup> Stoltenberg likewise told U.S. Ambassador McGhee that the economic issues constituted the major stumbling block for a German decision to join the NPT.<sup>83</sup> In front of CDU/CSU deputies, Barzel also made this point forcefully: Regarding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the NPT, he said, "[...] we must be strict and clear that there can be no rotten compromises! Here we must reject whatever threatens our rank as an industrial nation and could make the peaceful uses impossible or more difficult."<sup>84</sup> Years later in early 1969, Kiesinger likewise told leading members of the CDU/CSU that resolving all doubts over possible economic discrimination of Germany remained a nonnegotiable condition for approving the NPT.<sup>85</sup>

Lastly, the hypothesis also passes the congruence test for the NPT opponents in Bonn. For at the end of the German domestic NPT debate in spring 1974, even the treaty opponents did not worry anymore about damaging economic effects of the NPT. For instance, in a September 1973 letter to all CDU/CSU deputies, Strauss characterized the April 1973 agreement

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<sup>81</sup> "Memorandum from Birrenbach, Re: Scientific, technological and economic aspects of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and the verification agreement (VA), October 19, 1973," p. 1, Records of Karl Carstens (NL 1337), Vol. 175, BAK..

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Hans-Peter Ernst Hinrichsen, *Der Ratgeber: Kurt Birrenbach und die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Berlin: Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 2002), p. 351.

<sup>83</sup> George McGhee, *At the Creation of a New Germany: From Adenauer to Brandt: An Ambassador's Account* (New Haven, N.J.: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 211.

<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Stefan Marx, ed., *Die CDU/CSU-Fraktion im Deutschen Bundestag: Sitzungsprotokolle 1966-1969, CD-Supplement* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2011), p. 149.

<sup>85</sup> See Hinrichsen, *Der Ratgeber*, p. 386.

between the IAEA and EURATOM as “thoroughly negotiated and relatively satisfying.”<sup>86</sup> Mertes agreed in early 1974, declaring all economic questions to be “satisfactorily solved” under the NPT.<sup>87</sup>

Turning to the process tracing, I must analyze a counterfactual scenario, as the NPT opponents have never approved Germany’s membership. Hence, when testing for necessity, we must ask: *If the NPT had remained discriminating against the West German economy, is it inconceivable that the NPT opponents would ever have acquiesced into joining the treaty?* The available evidence suggests that the question must be answered positively. This assessment stems in part from the central role that leaders like Adenauer and Schnippenkötter attached to preventing negative economic consequences for Germany in their criticisms of the NPT.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, other NPT opponents explicitly made protecting the German economy a prerequisite for approving the NPT: Thus, in April 1967, Friedrich Zimmermann avowed that the CSU would evaluate the acceptability of the NPT based on three criteria, one of them being that “research, development, and use of peaceful applications of nuclear energy would not be hampered” under the treaty.<sup>89</sup> Likewise, in July 1968, the CSU party convention approved a resolution from the NPT opponents surrounding Strauss which determined that the CSU Bundestag deputies oppose even bringing about a decision over joining the NPT unless the issue of economic discrimination was fully resolved.<sup>90</sup> Based on this evidence, an economically discriminating NPT would most likely not have won the treaty opponents’ approval.

And such a scenario, in which the NPT would have remained discriminating against the German economy, must be considered plausible:<sup>91</sup> For in 1970 and 1971, conclusion of the verification agreement between EURATOM and the IAEA was in serious doubt and could easily have failed due to Paris’ efforts to free France from EURATOM inspections.<sup>92</sup> If these verification talks had collapsed, Germany could have been discriminated under the NPT while the treaty opponents in Bonn would still have had to make a decision over joining the NPT because it had already entered into force in March 1970. Given the plausibility of this coun-

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<sup>86</sup> “Strauss to Carstens, September 12, 1973,” p. 1, Records of Karl Carstens (NL 1337), Vol. 175, BAK.

<sup>87</sup> Quoted in “Minutes of a special meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group on the NPT, February 12, 1974,” p. 8.

<sup>88</sup> See Konrad Adenauer, “Grundsätzliche Überlegungen zur Notwendigkeit einer europäischen Union (speech given at the Ateneo in Madrid on February 16, 1967),” in Hans-Peter Schwarz, ed., *Konrad Adenauer: Reden 1917-1967: Eine Auswahl* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1975), pp. 490-491; “Doc. 314: Memorandum from Ambassador Schnippenkötter, September 4, 1967,” in *AAPD 1967, Vol. 3: September bis Dezember* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998), p. 1240.

<sup>89</sup> Quoted in *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, Vol. 64*, April 27, 1967 (Bonn: Heger, 1967), p. 4964.

<sup>90</sup> See Bischoff, *Franz Josef Strauß, die CSU und die Außenpolitik*, p. 201-202.

<sup>91</sup> On the plausibility of counterfactuals, see Richard Ned Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit: Counterfactuals and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 47-64.

<sup>92</sup> See “Doc. 119: German-Italian governmental talks, April 3, 1971,” in *AAPD 1971, Vol. 1: Januar bis April* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2002), p. 571-572.

terfactual scenario and the evidence that the NPT opponents regarded protection of the economy as crucial, the hypothesis passes the process-tracing test for the treaty opponents.

Now I turn to those two variables which did not have an effect on all three groups of German political leaders and which, thus, explain the variation in the attitudes of German leaders toward NPT membership: (1) the international social pressure on Bonn to join the NPT and (2) German leaders' conceptions of Germany's status vis-à-vis the United States.

### ***(1) International social pressure to join the NPT***

This variable draws on the social psychological argument that humans usually try to avoid isolation and, therefore, go along with the majority opinion of their social environment even if this contradicts their preferences.<sup>93</sup> Applied to the phenomenon of nuclear reversal, this theory holds that political leaders consent to the abandonment of their nation's nuclear weapons activities because these activities have the effect of isolating their nation from the states that it interacts with.<sup>94</sup> In the German case, the reactions of Bonn's Western partners are crucial in this regard as isolation from its Eastern European neighbors was then the normal state of affairs.

When testing for necessity, hence, the hypothesis passes the congruence test for a particular political leader if at the time of the leader's approval of German NPT accession he felt the social pressure of Bonn becoming isolated internationally due to its reluctance to join the NPT. The hypothesis also passes the process-tracing test for a political leader if there is evidence showing that the leader did in fact agree to West Germany's NPT membership in order to avoid West Germany's isolation within its international environment.

The hypothesis passes both these tests for the NPT supporters in Bonn. As for the congruence test, these elites sensed a looming threat of Germany's diplomatic isolation in spring 1973 over its still unfulfilled commitment to join the NPT: During the Bundestag hearings in late 1973 and early 1974 on NPT ratification, Frank declared that he had felt for a long time that Bonn's rejection of NPT ratification would lead to deteriorating relations with the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Denmark. Since Bonn's refusal to join the NPT would furthermore destroy EURATOM, Frank argued, it would also alienate Germany from its partners within the EC.<sup>95</sup> Responding to a question if Bonn could not somehow shun the NPT, Moersch likewise stressed Germany's pending isola-

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<sup>93</sup> One seminal work in this research area is Solomon E. Asch, "Studies of Independence and Conformity: I. A Minority of One against a Unanimous Majority," *Psychological Monographs*, Vol. 70 (1956).

<sup>94</sup> Rublee, *Nonproliferation Norms*, pp. 16-21.

<sup>95</sup> See Hölscher and Wintzer, eds., *Der Auswärtige Ausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages*, pp. 451-452.

tion, stating that “all our partners expect that, once a deal on the verification agreement is reached—this has recently been achieved—, the NPT will be ratified by us.”<sup>96</sup> In short, the supporters were well aware of the looming social costs of rejecting the NPT.

Additionally, there is strong process-tracing evidence that directly links the NPT supporters’ decision to join the NPT to their desire to avoid a diplomatic isolation. For example, in April 1968, Bahr sent then Foreign Minister Brandt a confidential memorandum recommending that the Federal Government sign the NPT in fall 1968 if a majority of the countries with a developed civilian nuclear industry (which mostly represented Germany’s Western partners)<sup>97</sup> had indicated their intention to sign. According to Bahr, Bonn’s signing of the NPT must not wait even until after the treaty had come into force one year or so later, because “by then this position would have already isolated us diplomatically.”<sup>98</sup> Brandt also argued in favor of signing the NPT by highlighting Germany’s looming isolation. According to the confidential minutes of the meeting, he told the government’s key foreign policy makers in May 1968 that “Should the Nonproliferation Treaty be opened for signature, then he, Brandt, recommends acting in pursuance with the majority of civilian nuclear powers. Should the majority sign, then we could not stay away.”<sup>99</sup> In August 1968, Scheel similarly based his demand for Germany to sign the NPT on the costs of international isolation should Bonn waver any longer.<sup>100</sup> That this evidence refers only to the act of signing the NPT, and not to the act of ratification, is irrelevant, though. For in the end, the fact that the NPT supporters approved German ratification of the treaty only in 1973 despite Bonn’s looming isolation in the late 1960s proves the claim made here that the international social pressure to join the NPT constituted only a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for the supporter’s approval of NPT membership.

Besides the supporters, the international social pressure on Bonn also moved the German NPT critics toward acquiescence to NPT membership. With the critics sensing in the fall of 1973 that Germany’s unfulfilled commitment to join the NPT threatened to isolate the country within NATO, the hypothesis passes the congruence test: Birrenbach repeatedly stressed the expectation of Germany’s allies that Bonn would join them in acceding to the

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<sup>96</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 488.

<sup>97</sup> See the list of countries with a civilian nuclear industry in 1967 in Häckel, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Atomwaffensperrvertrag*, p. 94.

<sup>98</sup> “Memorandum from Head of Department Bahr, Re: Further handling of the NPT, April 24, 1968,” p. 5, Classified records section (B 150), Vol. 125, PA/AA.

<sup>99</sup> Quoted in “Doc. 146: Foreign policy colloquium in Heimerzheim, May 2, 1968,” in *AAPD 1968*, Vol. 1: *Januar bis Juni* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1999), p.529.

<sup>100</sup> Patrick William Murphy, *The Response of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Challenge of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty* (PH.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1974), p. 49.

NPT. In a letter to Grewe in January 1974, Birrenbach sadly explained that “a rejection of the treaty does not fit into today’s landscape” of Transatlantic politics.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, rebuffing the idea that Germany could shun the NPT and merely agree to inspections under the verification agreement with the IAEA, Birrenbach made it plain in a hearing that the other EC states held “the expectation that *all* future parties to the verification agreement also ratify the NPT.”<sup>102</sup> In the same vein, Stoltenberg wrote Carstens in October 1973 that the CDU would have “no allies, neither domestically nor abroad,” for rejecting the NPT.<sup>103</sup> Marx, the foreign policy spokesman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, also told his colleagues in early 1974 that during the previous months “Nowhere [abroad] have I found a single person who would agree with us that we should reject the treaty” or “who would give us political support in this question.”<sup>104</sup>

Yet the NPT critics did not merely feel the rising threat of Germany’s isolation over the NPT. Furthermore, there is strong process-tracing evidence that their decision to approve Germany’s NPT membership occurred as a result of this international social pressure. Thus, when Carstens explained to the Bundestag in February 1974 why he and the other NPT critics had finally consented to Germany’s accession, he underscored the importance of “the fact that presumably none of our partners within NATO and the European Communities will reject the treaty, except for France, which takes a fundamentally different stance on this issue that obviously cannot be transferred to the situation of the Federal Republic of Germany.”<sup>105</sup> Birrenbach and Kiesinger likewise tied the need to join the NPT directly to Germany’s pending diplomatic isolation: In summer 1968, upon concluding “with a heavy heart” that Bonn would have to join the NPT,<sup>106</sup> Birrenbach explained to friends that “Rejection of the signing [of the NPT] would isolate the Federal Government to a life-endangering extent.”<sup>107</sup> Kiesinger shared this view. When Germany’s isolation over its reluctance to sign the NPT reached new heights in February 1969, Kiesinger told the leaders of the CDU/CSU in a closed meeting that Bonn had to reduce its NPT-related demands to a minimum: As Barzel summarized Kiesinger’s point in his notes, “Pursue only what can be achieved. Insist upon this. But beyond this: noth-

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<sup>101</sup> Quoted in Hinrichsen, *Der Ratgeber*, p. 542.

<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Hölcher and Wintzer, eds., *Der Auswärtige Ausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages*, p. 489 (emphasis added).

<sup>103</sup> „Stoltenberg to Carstens, October 29, 1973,“ p. 2, Records of Karl Carstens (NL 1337), Vol. 175, BAK.

<sup>104</sup> Quoted in “Minutes of a special meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group on the NPT, February 12, 1974,“ p. 37.

<sup>105</sup> Quoted in *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestage*, Vol. 86, February 20, 1974 (Bonn: Hoger, 1977), p. 5283.

<sup>106</sup> Kurt Birrenbach, *Meine Sondermissionen: Rückblick auf zwei Jahrzehnte bundesdeutscher Außenpolitik* (Düsseldorf: Econ-Verlag, 1984), p. 220.

<sup>107</sup> Quoted in Hinrichsen, *Der Ratgeber*, p. 369.

ing or life-endangering isolation!”<sup>108</sup> International social pressure unquestionably played an indispensable role in pushing the German critics toward approving NPT membership.

The same cannot be said about the German NPT opponents, though. Nonetheless, even they recognized Germany’s looming international isolation over its stance on the NPT. Thus, only days after the NPT had opened for signature in July 1968, Strauss painted a lively picture of the pending social costs should Germany refuse to join the NPT: In this case, Strauss said, Bonn would march “against the wind” of majority opinion on a “path” that was “thorny and rocky”, would meet “opposition” and “sometimes become bitter.”<sup>109</sup> In a confidential memo, Grewe in September 1968 similarly diagnosed Germany’s isolation within NATO: Washington and London had pushed the NPT, the smaller allies would also join it, France did not support Bonn and Italy had abandoned its resistance against the treaty: “The solidarity of the EURATOM partners proved insufficient [...]”, Grewe complained.<sup>110</sup> Statements from 1973 and 1974 likewise reveal that the NPT opponents were aware of Bonn’s isolation.<sup>111</sup> Against this backdrop, the hypothesis passes the congruence test because, when testing for *necessity*, the presence of international social pressure is consistent with rejecting the NPT.

For the hypothesis to also pass the process-tracing test there must be evidence indicating that if the treaty opponents had approved German NPT membership, then international social pressure would have been indispensable for this outcome to occur. In other words: *Is it inconceivable that the NPT opponents would have acquiesced into joining the treaty without Germany being isolated over the issue?* As it stands, this question cannot be answered reasonably, because the described counterfactual scenario of Bonn not being isolated is not plausible. It is implausible because creating this scenario requires changing the détente policies of most NATO countries and thus several significant changes of history and not just the minimal rewrite that is permitted for a counterfactual to remain plausible.<sup>112</sup> However, another counterfactual addressing the role of isolation is plausible: One could analyze the scenario that the NPT opponents acquiesce into joining the NPT due to material U.S. pressure while international social pressure is also present and argue that the latter was not necessary for the decision to join the NPT. This scenario is plausible since creating it requires only a small rewrite of history, namely altering President Johnson and Secretary Rusk’s secret, and unforeseen,

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<sup>108</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 387.

<sup>109</sup> Quoted in Bischoff, *Franz Josef Strauß, die CSU und die Außenpolitik*, p. 201.

<sup>110</sup> “Doc. 283: Ambassador Grewe to Head of Department Ruete, September 5, 1968,” in *AAPD 1968*, Vol. 2: *Juli bis Dezember* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1999), p. 1095.

<sup>111</sup> See „Strauss to Carstens, September 12, Strauss,” pp. 3-4; Hölscher and Wintzer, eds., *Der Auswärtige Ausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages*, pp. 434-435.

<sup>112</sup> Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit*, pp. 47-64.

decision in early 1967 not to apply material pressure on Bonn to join the NPT.<sup>113</sup> As altering this fact would have left Johnson's overall NPT efforts intact, this counterfactual is plausible.

In this counterfactual scenario in which the NPT opponents would have approved the NPT in the presence of both U.S. material pressure and international social pressure, it is conceivable that the social pressure would not have played a role in the opponents' approval. For the NPT opponents had let it repeatedly be known that they—in stark contrast to the NPT critics—did not regard Germany's isolation as something that could change their attitude toward the NPT: In a February 1967 letter to Kiesinger, for example, Strauss had insisted that Bonn must not sign the NPT “out of fear of ‘world opinion.’”<sup>114</sup> Schnippenkötter and Mertes were equally unimpressed by social pressure, considering the entire isolation argument pointless.<sup>115</sup> Grewe claimed that even if the NPT would collapse due to Bonn's refusal, then, with clever tactical maneuvering, Germany could still “weather” the resulting diplomatic storm. If, however, the NPT entered into force without Germany, Bonn would face social pressure for years. According to Grewe, though, even such enduring isolation was no reason to join the NPT.<sup>116</sup> Obviously, international social pressure would not affect the opponents' NPT calculus.

Finally, to substantiate that international social pressure was *not* necessary to sway the opponents' attitude, one needs to demonstrate that, in contrast, material U.S. pressure *would* have caused the NPT opponents' acquiescence to the treaty. There are two pieces of evidence that directly support this claim: First, in the above-mentioned memo that played down the significance of international social pressure and demands to reject the NPT, Grewe also stated that Bonn could still reconsider its refusal “if the price for not signing becomes too high.”<sup>117</sup> As Grewe had just ridiculed the isolation argument, this statement can only mean that Germany may only join the NPT if the costs of abstaining go beyond the social sphere and enter the domain of material coercion. Since the memo focused exclusively on the NATO context,<sup>118</sup> Grewe must have had in mind non-economic aspects like decreasing U.S. support for Bonn's policy of unification. The second statement comes from Consul Wilhelm Hartlieb. In early 1969, Hartlieb sent a letter to Duckwitz suggesting tactical measures in case that “after a maximum of stalling, our signature to the Nonproliferation Treaty *had* to occur *as a result of pres-*

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<sup>113</sup> Lahti, *Security Cooperation as a Way to Stop the Spread of Nuclear Weapons?*, p. 334.

<sup>114</sup> Quoted in Taschler, *Vor neuen Herausforderungen*, p. 91.

<sup>115</sup> See “Presentation of Ambassador Schnippenkötter on the Nonproliferation Treaty on occasion of the security conference in Munich, February 1-2, 1969,” p. 1, Section B 1, Vol. 379, PA/AA as well as Mertes' statement in Hölscher and Wintzer, eds., *Der Auswärtige Ausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages*, pp. 434-435.

<sup>116</sup> “Doc. 283: Ambassador Grewe to Head of Department Ruete, September 5, 1968,” p. 1096-1097.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1097.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1094, 1097.

sure from both superpowers.”<sup>119</sup> As Hartlieb played down the relevance of diplomatic isolation in the very same letter,<sup>120</sup> the quote certainly refers to material pressure. Moreover, in his scenario of “pressure from both superpowers”, Hartlieb’s focus was clearly on the United States,<sup>121</sup> for Soviet pressure on Bonn was then still the normal state of affairs.

Besides these direct allusions to the conditions under which the NPT opponents would join the NPT, there are two pieces of indirect evidence: The first one concerns the efforts of CSU deputy Walter Becher who, together with Strauss’ personal assistant Marcel Hepp, clandestinely traveled to Washington in April 1969 to influence the NPT ratification debate in Congress in favor of the German treaty opponents. Upon his return, Becher not only proudly reported to Kiesinger that Germany would face “no reprisals”<sup>122</sup> from Congress if it rejected NPT membership, but furthermore argued that under these circumstances, Germany no longer needed to join the NPT.<sup>123</sup> Conversely then, Germany could not avoid NPT membership if the United States would apply material pressure on Bonn, according to Becher. The same link is implied in a September 1968 secret memorandum from Schnippenkoetter on the consequences of continued German abstention from the NPT: According to Schnippenkoetter, with adroit tactical maneuvering “the objective consequences” would be “relatively minor. [...] In the United States, no weighable reactions would occur, except for a certain irritation among Democrats.” Moreover, although the indignation of the smaller NATO allies would at first be intense, it would be unlikely “that more than atmospheric troubles would occur.” Only Moscow and its allies would surely “increase the propaganda drumfire.”<sup>124</sup> Under these conditions of minor “objective” pressure from the East and merely social pressure from NATO partners, Schnippenkoetter saw no problem at all with Germany continuing her abstention from the NPT.<sup>125</sup> Conversely then, according to Schnippenkoetter, Bonn could not afford to stay away from the NPT once it faced significant “objective”, i.e. material, consequences within NATO.

To recapitulate this scenario, Grewe, Hartlieb, Becher, and Schnippenkoetter would probably have acquiesced to NPT membership only in response to material U.S. pressure

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<sup>119</sup> “Hartlieb to Duckwitz, Februar 11, 1969,” p. 1, Records of Karl Carstens (NL 1337), Vol. 570, BAK (emphasis added).

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>121</sup> See his view of constant Soviet pressure in “Hartlieb to Carstens, April 24, 1969,” pp. 2-3, Records of Karl Carstens (NL 1337), Vol. 570, BAK.

<sup>122</sup> These words are not from Becher, but from Bischoff (who could draw on Becher’s written report): Bischoff, *Franz Josef Strauß, die CSU und die Außenpolitik*, p. 212.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> „Ambassador Schnippenkoetter to Head of Department Ruete, September 6, 1968,” pp. 3-5, Classified records section (B 150), Vol. 134, PA/AA.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

against Bonn. And though international social pressure would have been part of this scenario, these social costs would have been unnecessary for the opponents' NPT approval to occur.

## *(2) The leaders' conception of Germany's status vis-à-vis the United States*

The idea behind this variable is that political leaders' reaction to a request from their U.S. protector to give up all nuclear weapons activities is driven by their individual intuitive conception as to how high their nation ranks vis-à-vis the United States.<sup>126</sup> If a leader conceives of his nation as on par with the United States, he will view Washington's request as illegitimate and resist it. If, on the other hand, a leader accords his nation a status below that of the United States, he will consider the demand of his protector legitimate and follow it.

To determine leaders' individual conception of Germany's status vis-à-vis the United States, I draw on the qualitative interpretative literature on the foreign policy of the Bonn Republic. Notably, the qualitative data for measuring leaders' status conception vis-à-vis their U.S. ally excludes all material directly related to the U.S.-German discussions over the NPT. For otherwise, a leader's attitude toward German NPT membership could impact the coding of his status conception vis-à-vis the United States, thus introducing endogeneity.

In allusion to the early 1960s debate within the CDU/CSU over the appropriate level of autonomy from the United States, the qualitative interpretative literature distinguishes between two conceptions of Germany's status vis-à-vis the United States: *Atlanticist* and *Gaullist* (which today is typically termed *Europeanist*). Within this framework, the Atlanticist conception accords Germany a status well below that of the United States, and it is typically associated with a desire to avoid political confrontations with Washington. The Gaullist conception, meanwhile, accords Germany a status on par with that of the United States, and this view is normally associated with a greater readiness to stand up to Washington and confront it over issues of political importance.<sup>127</sup> Significantly, German elites holding a Gaullist conception do not automatically share an anti-American approach, nor do Atlanticist leaders necessarily hold passionately pro-American views. The camps only differ in how they envision the nature of

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<sup>126</sup> On status-related role conceptions within U.S. alliances, see Jacques E.C. Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation: Identity, Emotions, and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), David A. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2009), and Ulrich Kotz and James Sperling, "Discord and Collaboration in Franco-American Relations: What Can Role Theory Tell Us?," in Sebastian Harnisch, Cornelia Frank, and Hanns W. Maull, eds., *Role Theory in International Relations: Approaches and Analyses* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>127</sup> Tim Geiger, *Atlantiker gegen Gaullisten: Außenpolitischer Konflikt und innerparteilicher Machtkampf in der CDU/CSU 1958-1969* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2008); Ronald J. Granieri, *The Ambivalent Alliance: Konrad Adenauer, the CDU/CSU, and the West* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2003); Hans-Jürgen Grabbe, *Unionsparteien, Sozialdemokratie und Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika 1945-1966* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1983).

the German-American relationship: whether it is an alliance of equals or a relationship in which one partner leads and the other follows.

Drawing on the literature on the Atlanticist-Gaullist debate, both the NPT supporters and the NPT critics must surely be accorded a status conception that conceives of Germany as a nation of inferior rank compared to the United States: From the early 1960s onward, the entire SPD and the whole FDP clearly belonged to the Atlanticist camp. Moreover, within the CDU/CSU, the leading NPT critics—e.g. Birrenbach, Carstens, Schroeder, and Erhard—were also the most prominent advocates of an Atlanticist foreign policy orientation.<sup>128</sup> And while Kiesinger and Barzel can be labeled neither Atlanticists nor Gaullists, as they had remained neutral during this debate, the literature clearly accords both of them a status conception in which Germany ranks naturally lower than the United States.<sup>129</sup> On the other hand, according to the interpretative literature, the NPT opponents in Bonn evidently held a status conception that envisioned Germany on par with the United States: Adenauer and Strauss had acted as leading proponents of German Gaullism during the early 1960s, Grewe had never avoided any confrontation with Washington, and Mertes had likewise been willing to stand up to the United States and fight for German interests.<sup>130</sup>

Consequently, when testing for necessity, the vision that German leaders held regarding their nation's status vis-à-vis the United States was perfectly consistent with their final decision on German NPT membership. Hence, the hypothesis passes the congruence test for all three groups of political leaders in Bonn: According to the literature, both the supporters and the critics of the NPT conceived of Germany's status as being lower than that of the United States, and both these groups approved NPT ratification. Meanwhile, the literature associates the NPT opponents with a status conception that views Germany and the United States at the same rank, and these leaders rejected the NPT.

For the hypothesis to pass the process-tracing test there should be evidence that—although Washington refrained from threatening coercion—the NPT supporters and critics

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<sup>128</sup> Horst Osterheld, *Außenpolitik unter Bundeskanzler Ludwig Erhard 1963-1966: Ein dokumentarischer Bericht aus dem Kanzleramt* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1992); Hildebrand, *Von Erhard zur Großen Koalition*; Hinrichsen, *Der Ratgeber*; Ronald J. Granieri, "Political Parties and German-American Relations: Politics Beyond the Water's Edge," in Detlef Junker, ed., *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945-1990: A Handbook*, Vol. 1: 1945-1968 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>129</sup> See Philipp Gassert, *Kurt Georg Kiesinger 1904-1988: Kanzler zwischen den Zeiten* (Stuttgart: DVA, 2006); Günter Diehl, *Zwischen Politik und Presse: Bonner Erinnerungen 1949-1969* (Frankfurt: Societäts-Verlag, 1994), pp. 519-531; Morgan, Roger, *The United States and West Germany 1945-1973. A Study in Alliance Politics*, London et al.: Oxford University Press, 1974, S. 157-158, 169, 184, 217.

<sup>130</sup> See Rainer A. Blasius, "The Ambassadors of the Federal Republic of Germany in Washington, 1955-1968," in Detlef Junker, ed., *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945-1990: A Handbook*, Vol. 1: 1945-1968 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 158-161; Georg S. Schneider, *Alois Mertes (1921-1985): Das außenpolitische Denken und Handeln eines Christlichen Demokraten* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2012); Geiger, *Atlantiker gegen Gaullisten*.

deemed it impossible that Bonn confront the United States by dismissing the request for Germany to join the NPT. Further confirmatory evidence would show that the NPT supporters and critics based this assessment on the belief that West Germany was merely a second-rank power and, therefore, could not stand up to the U.S. superpower. Regarding the NPT opponents, on the other hand, confirmatory evidence should demonstrate that these leaders considered it perfectly possible to challenge Washington and oppose the NPT because Germany was an important power that did not need to be submissive to the United States.

Starting with the NPT supporters, there is strong evidence supporting the hypothesis. In November 1967, for instance, Brandt told the German Cabinet that in his view Germany would in any case not be able to permanently stay away from the NPT. For abstaining would not merely irritate the East, but also isolate Germany from its Western allies and at the same time damage its alliance with the United States.<sup>131</sup> Brandt's belief that Bonn could not avoid the NPT if only for the harmony within its alliance with Washington speaks volumes to his readiness to defer to U.S. priorities. That Brandt accorded his nation only an inferior status had become even plainer in a Bundestag hearing in January 1967. There he had demanded that Bonn make it clear to the French that Germany could not stand up to Washington, because, "in contrast to them [i.e. the French], we are not a great power" but merely "a European middle-power. We are also a divided nation. We have Atlantic commitments [...]"<sup>132</sup> And for Brandt this basic requirement to be in line with the United States was all the more essential if Germany had no international support for its position. Thus, in July 1968, when Germany's European partners were about to sign the NPT, he urged Kiesinger to follow suit. For abstaining, he warned, would put Bonn under social pressure "from East *and West*" while "No one will be prepared to show solidarity with us and defend us. We remain alone."<sup>133</sup> Hence, for Brandt, losing European support necessitated deference to U.S. demands.

Bahr likewise sensed that West Germany had no choice but to adapt to and follow the policies of its American ally since it was weak and dependent upon U.S. protection and diplomatic support. As Bahr noted in a 1969 planning study, "The Federal Republic of Germany does not belong to the world's great and leading powers." From this minor international status and its location at the frontline of the Cold War, Bahr concluded that West Germany must "attempt, whenever possible, to swim not against but with the political current" of Western diplomacy. In this regard, he said, the most important reference point was the United States

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<sup>131</sup> See Martin Winkels, *Die Deutschland- und Ostpolitik der ersten Großen Koalition in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (1966-1969)* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Bonn, 2009), pp. 206-207.

<sup>132</sup> Quoted in Wintzer, ed., *Der Auswärtige Ausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages*, p. 318.

<sup>133</sup> "Doc. 221: Foreign Minister Brandt to Chancellor Kiesinger, July 15, 1968," in *AAPD 1968*, Vol. 2: *Juli bis Dezember* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1999), p. 870 (emphasis added).

because “in the end, our security depends upon our relationship with it [i.e. the United States].”<sup>134</sup> The status-related necessity to follow “the current” of Western and especially U.S. détente policy also became apparent in Bahr’s view that joining the NPT was inevitable for Bonn: As he privately told Strauss in May 1968, “no one [in Germany] will be able to avoid signing the NPT once the majority of civilian nuclear powers goes ahead” and, consequently, Bonn becomes isolated within NATO in its resistance to Washington’s NPT efforts.<sup>135</sup> For this situation, as Bahr warned in a memo, “would put a heavy strain on our ties with the United States [...]. The consequences for the German-American relationship would be fatal.”<sup>136</sup> In Bahr’s view, therefore, at least from an isolated position within NATO, Bonn could not resist the U.S. request for Germany to join the treaty.

The status-related assessment of Brandt and Bahr that, in the end, West Germany could not confront the United States over the NPT was a shared premise among German NPT supporters. In February 1968 Erhard Eppler likewise called for an early German signing of the NPT because if Bonn adopted a wait-and-see approach, it would still have to “move toward signing the Nonproliferation Treaty one day, yet then with its foreign policy in shambles.” For when it came to the NPT, “not merely our policy toward the East is at stake here, but also our relationship with the United States [...].”<sup>137</sup> Hence, according to Eppler, Germany could delay signing the NPT—and damage its foreign policy in the process. Once its refusal to join the NPT would turn into a German-American dispute and strain the alliance, though, Bonn’s signing of the NPT would become inescapable. Moersch explained this inevitability of NPT membership with an even more explicit reference to Germany’s second-rank status: Looking back in a January 1974 hearing, Moersch asserted that, given West Germany’s vulnerable and dependent situation as a front-line state in the Cold War, “we could not elude the treaty [i.e. NPT] efforts of the great powers, and least of all those of the Americans.”<sup>138</sup>

What is notable about the conclusion that Germany had to defer to U.S. priorities and join the NPT is the supporters’ calm response to it, especially if compared to the furious reaction of the NPT opponents. The treaty supporters simply displayed resignation, which is a typical by-product of sadness stemming from losses beyond one’s own control:<sup>139</sup> From the

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<sup>134</sup> ”Doc. 296: Memorandum from Head of Department Bahr, September 21, 1969,“ in *AAPD 1969*, Vol. 2: *Juli bis Dezember* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000), pp. 1049-1050.

<sup>135</sup> Egon Bahr, *Zu meiner Zeit* (Munich: Blessing, 1996), p. 214.

<sup>136</sup> “Memorandum from Head of Department Bahr, Re: Consequences of a non-signing of the NPT by the Federal Republic, February 24, 1969,“ p. 2, Intermediate archive section (B 1), Vol. 379, PA/AA.

<sup>137</sup> Quoted in Klaus Schönhoven, *Wendjahre: Die Sozialdemokratie in der Zeit der Großen Koalition 1966-1969* (Bonn: Dietz, 2004), p. 471.

<sup>138</sup> Quoted in Hölscher and Wintzer, eds., *Der Auswärtige Ausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages*, p. 511.

<sup>139</sup> See Richard S. Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation* (New York et al.: Oxford University Press, 1991).

beginning of the German NPT debate, the supporters seemed to have accepted that they never even had a choice to reject the NPT. Resigned to this view of inevitability, the majority of the Social Democrats—which represented the NPT supporters—regarded “lengthy soul searching” over the NPT as useless, according to a February 1967 cable from the U.S. Ambassador to Germany.<sup>140</sup> As the negotiations over the treaty automatically confronted these leaders with their country’s inferior rank, many of them apparently wanted to close the depressing German NPT file sooner rather than later.

The NPT critics in Bonn, although outright objecting to the treaty on several grounds, reached similar conclusions on the impossibility of rejecting NPT membership. That this was due to their view of Germany as a weak nation with an inferior status compared to the United States became apparent in a conversation between Kiesinger and de Gaulle in January 1967: Although Kiesinger agreed with de Gaulle that Europe could not be just a follower of U.S. policies, he also explained that Germany, as a divided nation at the front-line of the Cold War, was “to a certain extent an object of international politics.”<sup>141</sup> Therefore, Kiesinger argued, Germany did “not possess the same room to maneuver” as France and consequently did not have, for instance, “the option [...] to criticize American policy toward Vietnam.”<sup>142</sup> The notion of Germany as a mere second-rank power vis-à-vis the United States also took hold on Kiesinger’s attitude toward the NPT: In late 1966, before seeing even the first U.S.-Soviet draft of the NPT, Kiesinger had already commented privately on Germany’s room to maneuver that “We cannot reject a Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [...]”<sup>143</sup> To infer from this remark that he did not mind deferring to U.S. priorities would be a mistake, though: In a confidential meeting of CDU/CSU leaders on the NPT in February 1969, Kiesinger lamented that West Germany was “a virtual protectorate of the USA.”<sup>144</sup> However, holding a status view that ranked Germany lower than the United States, Kiesinger did not get angry over the protectorate-like status of Germany, but seemed rather resigned and sad: In the end, Kiesinger “did not want any trouble with Washington” over the NPT, according to nuclear physicist Karl Wirtz, who advised the Chancellor on the treaty.<sup>145</sup> To Kiesinger, rejecting the NPT was impossible because for Bonn such “posturing” toward Washington was too “dangerous.”<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Quoted in Lahti, *Security Cooperation as a Way to Stop the Spread of Nuclear Weapons?*, p. 335.

<sup>141</sup> Quoted in “Memorandum of a conversation between Chancellor Kiesinger and President de Gaulle in Paris, January 14, 1967,” p. 12, Classified records section (B 150), Vol. 94, PA/AA.

<sup>142</sup> Quoted in „Doc. 14: Memorandum of a conversation between Chancellor Kiesinger and President de Gaulle in Paris, January 13, 1967,“ in *AAPD 1967*, Vol. 1: *Januar bis April* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998), p. 77.

<sup>143</sup> Quoted in Gassert, *Kurt Georg Kiesinger 1904-1988*, p. 510.

<sup>144</sup> Quoted in Hinrichsen, *Der Ratgeber*, p. 386.

<sup>145</sup> Karl Winnacker and Karl Wirtz, *Das unverstandene Wunder: Kernenergie in Deutschland* (Düsseldorf and Vienna: Econ, 1975), p. 245.

<sup>146</sup> Quoted in Hinrichsen, *Der Ratgeber*, p. 386.

The same resigned stance became plain in early 1974, when Kiesinger argued in favor of NPT membership in a closed meeting of CDU/CSU deputies: Reacting to Strauss' protest that this step would degrade Germans to helots, or slaves, of the United States, Kiesinger stressed that, for the choice of joining or rejecting the NPT, "The crucial question is our relationship with our allies. [...] Helots, well, helots—we are not helots, but *sadly* we are in fact wards! Wards! And [we] cannot retain our freedom by any stretch of the imagination without the protection by the alliance, and this means, in fact, without the protection by the United States."<sup>147</sup>

And this view of Germany's lesser, ward-like status made it intuitively imperative for Kiesinger to comply with U.S. requests on the NPT once Germany lacked diplomatic backing from other NATO partners. Hence, in September 1968, when Italy's suspension of its planned NPT signing had temporarily rescued Germany from losing its last supporter on NPT matters, Kiesinger felt the mounting social pressure, thus fending off requests from NPT opponents to openly reject the treaty: Behind closed doors, he declared that in terms of personal preferences he was "on the side of the CSU. [...] However, as Chancellor", Kiesinger argued, he had to "act cool-headed" because "there is one thing we cannot afford under any circumstances, namely being isolated."<sup>148</sup> However, this is what happened in January 1969 when Italy signed the NPT. Although Kiesinger had received early pledges from incoming President Nixon that his administration would be appreciative of further delays before Bonn joined the treaty,<sup>149</sup> Kiesinger now realized a looming danger for Germany if Nixon lost his patience: In a confidential NPT discussion of CDU/CSU leaders in February 1969, he cut down the list of remaining German demands on the NPT: As Barzel annotated Kiesinger's order, "Pursue only what can be achieved. Insist upon this. But beyond this: nothing or life-endangering isolation!"<sup>150</sup> It is this fear of becoming the lone dissenter against Washington that reveals Kiesinger's view of Germany's inferior status vis-à-vis the United States.

Birrenbach displayed the same instinctive deference to U.S. nonproliferation priorities. Despite his many concerns about the NPT, chief among them Germany's indefinite dependence on U.S. nuclear protection,<sup>151</sup> Birrenbach considered joining the NPT inevitable, confidentially telling CDU/CSU deputies as early as February 1967 that "We can hardly reject the

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<sup>147</sup> Quoted in "Minutes of a special meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group on the NPT, February 12, 1974," pp. 52-53 (emphasis added).

<sup>148</sup> Quoted in Günter Buchstab, ed., *Kiesinger: „Wir leben in einer veränderten Welt“: Die Protokolle des CDU-Bundesvorstands 1965-1969* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2005), pp. 1083-1084.

<sup>149</sup> Nixon sent Kiesinger a handwritten letter on the issue. See „Ambassador Pauls to Chancellor Kiesinger, February 8," in *AAPD 1969*, Vol. 1: *Januar bis Juni* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000), p. 168.

<sup>150</sup> Quoted in Hinrichsen, *Der Ratgeber*, p. 387.

<sup>151</sup> Hinrichsen, *Der Ratgeber*, pp. 119-120, 317, 532.

treaty in any case.”<sup>152</sup> Birrenbach’s dispirited assessment that, in the end, Bonn could not escape NPT membership was, like Kiesinger’s view, driven by the fear of alienating Germany from its allies. As he sadly explained to friends in summer 1968, “Rejection of the signing [of the NPT] would isolate the Federal Government to a life-endangering extent.”<sup>153</sup> In this respect, Birrenbach focused mainly on the United States, agreeing with Kiesinger that Germany’s ability to wait and pursue further improvements on the NPT issue was ultimately dependent on how long Washington considered these German efforts legitimate: Thus, upon returning from official trips to the United States in September 1968 as well as February and June 1969, Birrenbach each time advised that seeking further improvements was still responsible because Washington had displayed understanding for Bonn’s situation. That Birrenbach nonetheless feared the end of U.S. patience and an ensuing German-American dispute over the NPT became apparent through his concurrent warnings to honor Washington’s goodwill with active and constructive efforts toward resolving the outstanding German issues with the NPT.<sup>154</sup> For any other approach toward the NPT would not be tolerated by the United States and thus be “highly dangerous” for Bonn.<sup>155</sup> This strong inclination to avoid a bilateral confrontation with Washington is most indicative of Birrenbach’s inferior status conception for Germany.

Other West German NPT critics displayed the same predisposition to avert turning the NPT into a German-American conflict. Erhard’s attitude toward the NPT, for example, clearly reflected his general foreign policy belief that Germany needed the United States “more than anyone else.”<sup>156</sup> Thus, when Henry Kissinger told Erhard in a private conversation in January 1966 that he did not believe that West Germany would be able to refuse joining the NPT, Erhard did not react angrily but, in contrast, he reportedly *sighed* and said he entirely agreed with this assessment.<sup>157</sup> Shortly thereafter, Kissinger noted his impression that although the Erhard government was still asking for a share in a multilateral nuclear force, it would be easy for Washington to argue them out of such efforts since the Germans leaders were “so eager to be agreeable.”<sup>158</sup> This exemplary description of a perceived inferior German status vis-à-vis the United States also applies to Erhard’s Foreign Minister Schröder: As early as summer 1966, before the first U.S.-Soviet NPT draft had even been reached, Schröder already stated

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<sup>152</sup> Quoted in Marx, ed., *Die CDU/CSU-Fraktion im Deutschen Bundestag, CD-Supplement*, p. 135.

<sup>153</sup> Quoted in Hinrichsen, *Der Ratgeber*, p. 369

<sup>154</sup> Taschler, *Vor neuen Herausforderungen*, pp. 294-299, 307-311, 357-361.

<sup>155</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 357.

<sup>156</sup> Quoted in Osterheld, *Außenpolitik unter Bundeskanzler Ludwig Erhard*, p. 198.

<sup>157</sup> “Memorandum from Kissinger on conversation with Chancellor Erhard, January 28, 1966,” pp. 6-7, Digital National Security Archive, Doc. No. NP01162.

<sup>158</sup> Quoted in Lahti, *Security Cooperation as a Way to Stop the Spread of Nuclear Weapons?*, p. 316.

privately that, in the end, Bonn would not be able to reject an American request for Germany to join an NPT.<sup>159</sup> And this attitude had not changed a bit until February 1974, when Schröder privately argued strongly in favor of joining the NPT, stressing that this was necessary for Germany to remain close to and keep the support of its NATO allies and, first and foremost, of the United States. For, in the end, Schröder said, Germans “will only be able to achieve our political goals [...] if the Alliance, [with] the power of the United States of America in the lead, really stands strong.”<sup>160</sup> Consequently, for Schröder and Erhard, confronting Washington over the NPT was out of the question.

The same held true for Carstens. Although he had held strong reservations against the NPT from the beginning<sup>161</sup>—one of them being, notably, that permanently renouncing nuclear arms would accord Germany a second-class status vis-à-vis *France and Great Britain*<sup>162</sup>—Carstens did not dare rejecting an NPT that Washington considered important: During a Cabinet meeting in February 1967, Carstens argued against rejecting the treaty because, if the NPT would later come into being, he warned, then Germany and the United States would stand on opposing sides of the issue<sup>163</sup>—a scenario which he clearly regarded as unbearable. That Carstens also considered the inevitability of an NPT membership conditioned by Bonn’s diplomatic isolation vis-à-vis the United States was revealed in his memoirs: There, he explains that after Italy’s signing of the NPT in January 1969 had deprived Germany of its last source of allied support against U.S. requests to join the NPT, “we *had to* content ourselves with a few significant improvements of minor aspects of the first [U.S.-Soviet] draft” of the NPT.<sup>164</sup> In short, whereas Carstens feared being relegated to a second-class status vis-à-vis France and Great Britain, German deference to the United States seemed normal to him.

Lastly, Rainer Barzel and Helmut Schmidt, too, regarded German NPT membership as unavoidable. In a February 1967 meeting with Kiesinger, they both agreed with the Chancellor that Bonn would have to consent to the NPT because rejecting it would involve Germany in a political conflict with its allies in which Bonn would have no diplomatic support at all.<sup>165</sup> This appraisal was clearly driven by the two leaders’ inferior status conception vis-à-vis the United States. As Schmidt had stated privately regarding Vietnam in 1968, “We cannot turn

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<sup>159</sup> See Hinrichsen, *Der Ratgeber*, p. 176.

<sup>160</sup> Quoted in “Minutes of a special meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group on the NPT, February 12, 1974,” p. 31.

<sup>161</sup> See „Carstens to Hallstein, April 27, 1967,” Records of Karl Carstens (NL 1337), Vol. 561, BAK.

<sup>162</sup> See “Memorandum from State Secretary Carstens, November 14, 1966,” in AAPD 1966, Vol. 2: *Juli bis Dezember* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1997), p. 1509.

<sup>163</sup> Karl Carstens, *Erinnerungen und Erfahrungen*, ed. By Kai von Jena and Reinhard Schmoedel (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt Verlag, 1993), p. 342.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.* (emphasis added).

<sup>165</sup> See Marx, ed., *Die CDU/CSU-Fraktion im Deutschen Bundestag*, p. LXXV.

against the United States. That must be said.”<sup>166</sup> And to Barzel, not even the EC countries combined were on par with the United States—“be it foreign trade, be it defense matters”<sup>167</sup>—let alone the divided German nation on its own. With a rejection of the NPT, hence, Germany would be punching way above its weight.

In contrast, the NPT opponents envisioned Germany on par with the United States. As a result of this status conception, they refused to defer to U.S. priorities and, instead, strongly favored challenging Washington over the NPT. Thus, Adenauer publicly called on Europeans not to succumb to U.S. demands to join the NPT, even appealing directly to their status feelings: As he proclaimed in Madrid in early 1967, non-nuclear Europeans “must not become controlled objects of the reigning nuclear [weapon] states.”<sup>168</sup> During the same month, Adenauer privately criticized Kiesinger’s NPT stance as “weak” and submissive to U.S. orders.<sup>169</sup> In response, Kiesinger, who had then just concluded with the other NPT critics that Bonn could not avoid deferring to U.S. priorities regarding the NPT, began to wonder “if Adenauer aims at a permanent rift between Germany and the United States.”<sup>170</sup> With both Adenauer and Kiesinger objecting to the NPT, their divergent views on the appropriate response to Washington’s NPT efforts reveal their distinct status conceptions: While Kiesinger viewed Germany as a weak “object” of diplomacy and, therefore, tried to avert confrontations with the United States, Adenauer intuitively listed Germany among the European great powers that could certainly resist U.S. policies: As Adenauer had asked in 1963, when he rejected Washington’s opposition to increased Franco-German defense cooperation under the Élysée Treaty, “Why shall we always act so well-behaved [toward the United States]? De Gaulle has gotten pretty far with his independent approach and his denials [of cooperation].”<sup>171</sup> Notably, Adenauer considered Bonn well-armed for a limited political confrontation with Washington because, as he had proudly stated in 1964 in allusion to the United States, “We are the second strongest economic power in the world.”<sup>172</sup> It is exactly this notion of being on par with the United States that gave Adenauer the confidence to disobey U.S. orders regarding the NPT.

Like Adenauer, Strauss publicly challenged U.S. efforts on the NPT. Speaking in Madrid in October 1967, he called on Europeans to resist “new global arrangements analogous to

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<sup>166</sup> Quoted in “Doc. 147: Foreign policy colloquium in Heimerzheim, May 3, 1968,” in *AAPD 1968*, Vol. 1: *Januar bis Juni* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1999), p. 551.

<sup>167</sup> Quoted in Günter Buchstab and Denise Lindsay, eds., *Barzel: „Unsere Alternativen für die Zeit der Opposition“: Die Protokolle des CDU-Bundesvorstands 1969-1973* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2009), p. 1347.

<sup>168</sup> Adenauer, “Grundsätzliche Überlegungen zur Notwendigkeit einer europäischen Union,” p. 490.

<sup>169</sup> Quoted in Dirk Kroegel, *Einen Anfang finden! Kurt Georg Kiesinger in der Außen- und Deutschlandpolitik der Großen Koalition* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1997), p. 107.

<sup>170</sup> Quoted in Geiger, *Atlantiker gegen Gaullisten*, p. 491.

<sup>171</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>172</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 322.

Yalta” like the NPT.<sup>173</sup> And behind closed doors in February 1967, Strauss reportedly shouted wrathfully at British Prime Minister Wilson that he, Strauss, was “an enemy of this treaty, and I can tell you I will fight against it”, declaring the NPT a humiliation, “a new Versailles, and one of cosmic proportions.”<sup>174</sup> Meanwhile, in a defiant letter sent to Kiesinger in the same week, Strauss stressed that a German isolation over the NPT was no reason to back down: After acknowledging the prospect of a diplomatic isolation and the risk that Washington could sever its supplies of fuel for German nuclear power plants, Strauss still denied any need to compromise: “Neither out of fear of world opinion nor under the pressure of American extortion must we sign a treaty that irrevocably reduces Germany to a divided object of a super cartel of the world powers. [...] For reasons of honesty, I announce in advance that I will not under any conditions yield to a Cabinet decision on this issue reached under God-knows-what circumstances (‘In the end, we cannot help but sign!’).”<sup>175</sup> That the refusal to bend to U.S. policies was tied to Strauss’ ambitious vision of Germany’s natural status became apparent when the letter to Kiesinger proceeded with allusions to national sovereignty: Wrote Strauss, “A German government that is still aware of notions like nation and history can and must not sign this treaty. A government signing this treaty surrenders the most fundamental sovereign right out of weakness or out of blindness for the consequences.”<sup>176</sup>

The same link between Strauss’ contempt for the isolation argument and his view of Germany’s international rank was obvious in February 1974, when he angrily argued against joining the treaty in a closed meeting of CDU/CSU deputies. After demanding that Germany must “finally cease defining our interests as a function of how worthy of praise they are for our Western friends,” Strauss tied this point directly to his status conception for Germany: To Strauss, referring to Bonn’s isolation over the NPT “is the argument of helots [i.e. slaves], not the argument of free men. We in the Federal Republic—[...] as the second largest or maybe even the largest trading nation in the world and as the strongest economic partner in the Atlantic area behind the United States—have our own interests [...]. The British have chosen their [nuclear] option, the French have chosen their [nuclear] option, and the rest of the Europeans have in any way quit world history some time ago [...] but the key nation, the destined nation [for Europe’s return to greatness as a federal entity] is the Federal Republic of Germany.” Therefore, if Bonn does not free itself from “the Nazi-complex that Germans, due to their

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<sup>173</sup> „Speech of Finance Minister Strauss in Madrid on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the German Chamber of Commerce in Spain, October 30, 1967,” in *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik 1967*, Vol. 2: *Juni bis Dezember* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1984), p. 1919.

<sup>174</sup> Quoted in „Dagegen kämpfen,” *Der Spiegel*, Vol. 21, No. 9 (February 20, 1967), p. 25.

<sup>175</sup> Quoted in Taschler, *Vor neuen Herausforderungen*, p. 91.

<sup>176</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

past, consider themselves inferior and let themselves be treated accordingly, neither our country nor Europe will ever get its act together again.”<sup>177</sup> According to Strauss, then, Bonn could definitely reject the NPT, if only it would have the stomach to stand up to the United States and act in accordance with its status as an important nation. This, Strauss said, would generate “greater prestige, respect, and a more guaranteed future than cowardly accommodation, petty wobbling, and opportunistic submission.”<sup>178</sup>

While Strauss restricted such plain criticism to private letters and closed meetings, his personal assistant Marcel Hepp was able to openly voice the opinion of his boss and the CSU as early as 1968. In a book against the NPT, Hepp made it clear that the NPT opponents’ criticism was status-related: He claimed that Germany could easily endure a diplomatic isolation and the popular outrage of world opinion just as de Gaulle and the Kremlin had not been harmed by years of international criticism.<sup>179</sup> That Hepp intuitively compared Germany with France and the Soviet Union unmistakably reveals that he accorded Germany the status of a great power. And this self-perception impacted his willingness to confront the United States. According to Hepp, if Washington would risk a trial of strength with Bonn over the NPT, then Germany also had economic and diplomatic tools at its disposal to face down the United States: For it was “unimaginable [...] that the United States would abandon its most faithfully because of its ambitions in Geneva [i.e. the NPT], if it [Germany] raises fierce objections. The United States count on our tendency to fall in line like a model student. But the erstwhile model student has come of age.”<sup>180</sup> Thus, whereas the NPT critics feared a bilateral confrontation with Washington and therefore deferred to U.S. requests, the NPT opponents were not only willing to face up to the United States, but even optimistic that Bonn would prevail in a bilateral showdown.

Grewe similarly favored a confrontational approach toward Washington’s NPT efforts. Considering the NPT a “degradation of the Federal Republic”<sup>181</sup>, he boldly pushed in January 1967 to respond to the first U.S-Soviet NPT draft with a “very resolute and unequivocal reaction” in order to force the superpowers to permit the participation of non-nuclear states in multilateral nuclear forces under the NPT. To this end, Grewe even recommended dropping threatening hints toward the United States that “our future policy toward NATO (e.g. our readiness for integration) will depend upon U.S. decisions regarding the Nonproliferation

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<sup>177</sup> Quoted in “Minutes of a special meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group on the NPT, February 12, 1974,” p. 21-22.

<sup>178</sup> Quoted in Bischoff, *Franz Josef Strauß, die CSU und die Außenpolitik*, p. 201.

<sup>179</sup> Marcel Hepp, *Der Atomsperrvertrag: Die Supermächte verteilen die Welt* (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1968), pp. 116-117.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>181</sup> Wilhelm G. Grewe, *Rückblenden 1976-1951* (Frankfurt: Propyläen-Verlag, 1979), p. 689.

Treaty.”<sup>182</sup> Obviously, Grewe responded to the American NPT requests with angry defiance and a readiness to risk a bilateral confrontation. To him, the deference of the NPT critics was mere “anxiousness.”<sup>183</sup> Even if Germany would become completely isolated within NATO after rejecting the NPT, Grewe argued, this would amount to a “serious test of stamina”, but one which could certainly be passed.<sup>184</sup> A psychological need to be in line with Washington was notably absent here.

Mertes and Wörner displayed the same readiness to endure a diplomatic isolation over rejecting the NPT. Mertes furiously discarded the entire isolation argument as meaningless since Bonn’s allies consisted only of legitimate nuclear weapons states under the NPT and several non-nuclear states all of which Mertes considered “relatively irrelevant in geopolitical terms.”<sup>185</sup> Hence, Mertes also placed Germany in a higher-ranked class of states than the other non-nuclear NATO members. And as they accorded Germany a high status within the alliance, both Mertes and Wörner considered confronting the United States over the NPT a feasible option, even from an isolated position: As Mertes asserted in a closed meeting in February 1974, rejecting the NPT in the face of U.S. disagreement was possible because any truly damaging political fallout would be contained by Washington’s powerful self-interest in a functioning alliance with a free Germany. To Mertes, *this* was the lesson for Germans to learn because “As a result of 20 years of alliance ties with the United States, we, the CDU, have gotten used to a false form of deference to this good and reliable ally.”<sup>186</sup> Wörner shared Mertes’ assessment on NPT rejection: “A nay to this treaty is responsible,” he argued, because even in this case “the German-American relationship would certainly remain intact [...]”<sup>187</sup> As for the gap between an “intact” and a “harmonious” U.S.-German alliance, however, this space comprises exactly the kind of political tensions and uncertainty which the NPT opponents in Bonn were willing to bear and which the NPT supporters and critics feared so badly.

### **Alternative Explanations**

In studying West Germany’s nuclear reversal, I have not only tested the independent variables comprising my own argument, but also several alternative explanations. I will briefly discuss why I think these theories cannot account for the attitudes of German leaders toward the NPT.

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<sup>182</sup> “Doc. 7: Memorandum from Ambassador Grewe, January 4, 1967,” in *AAPD 1967*, Vol. 1: *Januar bis April* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998), pp. 29, 31.

<sup>183</sup> Grewe, *Rückblenden*, p. 695.

<sup>184</sup> “Ambassador Grewe to Head of Department Ruete, September 5, 1968,” p. 1096.

<sup>185</sup> Quoted in Hölscher and Wintzer, eds., *Der Auswärtige Ausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages*, p. 434.

<sup>186</sup> Quoted in “Minutes of a special meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group on the NPT, February 12, 1974,” p. 66.

<sup>187</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

One explanation in the literature holds that Germany acquiesced into joining the NPT due to the threat of American material pressure. However, both the Johnson and the Nixon Administration decided early on to refrain from pressuring Bonn into accepting NPT membership.<sup>188</sup> Besides, there is ample process-tracing evidence showing that German leaders did not feel coerced by the United States to join the treaty.<sup>189</sup> Finally, this theory cannot explain why only some—but not all—German leaders consented to NPT membership.

Another theory claims that the creation of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) in the late 1960s "solved" West German doubts over the reliability of U.S. pledges of protection, and this newly-found assurance allowed Bonn to permanently renounce nuclear arms and join the NPT. This account is inconsistent, though, with the fact that those German leaders who finally approved the NPT—i.e. the NPT supporters and critics—had constantly placed great trust in the U.S. security guarantee:<sup>190</sup> before the creation of the NPG and also afterwards. Thus, an *increase* of allied assurance definitely had no role in Germany's NPT accession.

A third explanation holds that anti-nuclear sentiment among a new generation of German leaders caused Bonn's approval of NPT membership. However, an anti-nuclear "logic of appropriateness" was absent from the NPT attitudes of all three German groups of elites. To be sure, the treaty supporters considered German control over nuclear forces unnecessary. Yet even these leaders approved the NPT on the above-mentioned rationalist grounds. Moreover, several NPT opponents, like Strauss, Mertes, and Woerner, were then quite young, so the argument of a generational change is rather weak. Instead, ideas of national status were crucial: The "old" status view of Germany as a great power also held some sway among young elites.

Finally, one might argue that the German NPT supporters and critics were part of an internationalizing domestic coalition whose dependence on export-led growth forced them to join the NPT.<sup>191</sup> However, while the NPT supporters and critics were proponents of internationalization and economic liberalization, this orientation was not a prerequisite for their approval of Germany's NPT membership. They recognized that rejecting the NPT *could* endanger German access to U.S.-produced nuclear fuel for civilian power plants in Germany. As for the NPT supporters, though, this aspect did not enter their personal calculus regarding the

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<sup>188</sup> Lahti, *Security Cooperation as a Way to Stop the Spread of Nuclear Weapons?*, p. 334; „Ambassador Pauls to Chancellor Kiesinger, February 8,“ p. 168.

<sup>189</sup> See, for example, the statement from Frank in “Minutes of a meeting of the Bundestag Defence Committee, December 5, 1973,“ S. 17, Records of the Defence Committee (B 3119), Vol. A7/12-16/17, Bundestag Archives, Berlin or the 1978 statement from Kiesinger in Kroegel, *Einen Anfang finden!*, p. 236.

<sup>190</sup> See the section above on „West Germany's high intrinsic importance for U.S. security.”

<sup>191</sup> Etel Solingen, *Nuclear Logics: Contrasting Paths in East Asia and the Middle East* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press), 2007.

NPT.<sup>192</sup> From among the NPT critics, only some of them based their argument for joining the NPT on the economic risks of abstaining. And even in these cases, it is often not clear whether their references to the need for nuclear fuel reflected their private motivation or rather constituted an effort to sway the NPT opponents toward approval. Thus, Carstens told CDU/CSU deputies in 1974 that rejecting the NPT would cause trouble because Germany was dependent on U.S. nuclear fuel and these U.S. supplies would become illegal if Germany stayed out of the NPT. His private notes reveal, though, that the trouble he anticipated was not a cutoff of U.S. nuclear fuel supplies for Germany, but U.S.-German political tensions resulting from *continuing* U.S. fuel supplies that would be difficult to justify for Washington.<sup>193</sup> Hence, Carstens' status-based fear of U.S.-German disagreement seems to be the explanatory factor here.

Lastly, the internationalization-based explanation is inconsistent with the fact that the NPT opponents also advocated integration into the world economy. Yet these elites disputed that the United States would dare to deny Germany its nuclear fuel supplies if Bonn rejected the NPT. As Strauss furiously argued, "This is [...] the argument of the slave, if on the next day he will still get the hand-full of rice that he is supposedly entitled to. If we [Germany] are written off in this context, one can write off Europe as well as the entire Atlantic community."<sup>194</sup> Here again, Strauss' status conception vis-à-vis the United States was the key variable.

## Conclusions

In this case study on West Germany's nuclear reversal, I have made two claims of causal sufficiency: First, I have argued that German political leaders holding an inferior national status conception vis-à-vis the United States agreed to their nation's nuclear reversal because four additional conditions were being met: Germany enjoyed a high intrinsic importance for U.S. security; the treaty-based character of the U.S.-German alliance was maintained; the nuclear reversal did not negatively impact the German economy; and Bonn faced concerted international social pressure to give up its nuclear weapons activities. Second, I have claimed that German elites holding a status view that ranks Germany on par with the United States would have acquiesced into a nuclear reversal if four additional conditions, which are almost identical to those listed above, were fulfilled: Germany was accorded a high intrinsic value for U.S. security; the formal character of the bilateral alliance was preserved; the reversal had no nega-

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<sup>192</sup> See the statement from Bahr in Joachim Radkau, "Die Kontroverse um den 'Atomsperrvertrag' in der Rückschau," in Constanze Eisenbart and Dieter von Ehrenstein, eds., *Nichtverbreitung von Nuklearwaffen: Krise eines Konzepts* (Heidelberg: FEST, 1990), p. 66, n. 6.

<sup>193</sup> "Minutes of a special meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group on the NPT, February 12, 1974," p. 33a.

<sup>194</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 23.

tive side effects for the German economy; and Bonn faced material U.S. pressure to abandon its nuclear weapons activities.

If we are to draw implications from these findings for the world of today, we need to determine first how idiosyncratic the above-mentioned conditions were. Here I argue that the first and second condition can be summarized as “The existing level of U.S. allied protection was maintained.” I am not more specific here because the requirements for successful allied assurance are highly context dependent.<sup>195</sup> Thus, it would be a mistake to generalize from the German case that a formal alliance structure is always a prerequisite for a nuclear reversal. Moreover, the third condition was more an artifact of the vagueness of the early NPT drafts which only became relevant because Germany already had an advanced civilian nuclear industry at this time. If this is true, then my theoretical argument becomes simpler and goes like this: *If the United States maintains its existing level of protection for an ally engaged in nuclear weapons activities, Washington can get the ally to conduct a nuclear reversal by mobilizing concerted international social pressure against the ally if its leaders hold an inferior status conception vis-à-vis the United States. If, on the other hand, the political leaders of the ally envision their nation as being on par with the United States, then Washington can still get their acquiescence to a nuclear reversal by exerting material U.S. pressure on the ally.*

Since putting material U.S. pressure on an ally—e.g. withdrawing U.S. troops from its territory, cancelling weapons sales or suspending missile defense cooperation—would be extraordinarily difficult to push through in Washington, the first part of the argument is crucial. According to this first part, the success of future U.S. efforts to make its allies abandon their nuclear weapons activities will be determined by Washington’s ability to mobilize international social pressure and by the presence of allied leaders who rank their nation below the United States. And this seems to be a promising conclusion: For, on the one hand, the United States is still an effective organizer of international coalitions in nonproliferation diplomacy. And on the other hand, at least at this time, most of those U.S. allies which might be tempted to “go nuclear” in the future (namely South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, the United Arab Emirates, or Saudi-Arabia) are led by politicians that seem to rank their nation clearly below the United States and should thus be highly susceptible to concerted U.S.-led social pressure. Therefore, according to the causal claims that I have presented above, there would still be reason for optimism if—a big if—these American alliance partners were to start nuclear weapons activities.

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<sup>195</sup> James J. Wirtz, “Conclusions,” in Jeffrey W. Knopf, ed., *Security Assurances and Nuclear Nonproliferation* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 287-288.