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# "Do as I say, not as I Do": An Examination of the Impact the United States has on Nuclear Weapons Norms

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the reputation that the United States has for supporting and promoting three norms related to nuclear weapons: nonproliferation, non-use, and deterrence, while simultaneously examining the impact that United States actions can have on the saliency of the norms themselves. Ultimately, the United States has the ability to considerably impact the saliency of international nuclear norms, and has encouraged other states to accept and abide by them. However, there exists a disparity between the words and actions of the United States. In effect, the United States may “talk the talk” by expressing support and attempting to influence other states to abide by nuclear norms, but has shown a reluctance to “walk the walk” by failing to demonstrate behavior that is in full accordance with the norms. This disparity between words and actions has the ability to damage the United States’ reputation as a leader of nuclear norms, and can ultimately diminish their saliency to the international community.

Claremont McKenna College

“Do as I say, not as I Do”: An Examination of the Impact the United States has on  
Nuclear Weapons Norms

submitted to  
Professor Lisa Koch

by  
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for  
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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Norms are everywhere. From the style of clothes that you wear, to the way that you speak, and the behavior that you exhibit, social norms help us conduct ourselves in a manner that is deemed acceptable by societal standards. Although these norms help to define appropriate behavior and conduct on an individual societal level, they also exist on a larger international scale. International norms have helped the international community discourage and sanction states who conduct human rights violations like slavery, as well as other atrocities like international drug trafficking and prostitution.<sup>1</sup> In addition to human rights violations, international norms have also dealt with prominent security issues, namely, the threat posed by the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons. There are three norms that are central to the topic of nuclear weapons: nonproliferation, which aims to discourage the spread of nuclear weapons to other actors,<sup>2</sup> non-use, which seeks to prevent nuclear war through discouraging the literal use of nuclear weapons, and the deterrence norm, which strives to prevent states from using a nuclear weapon against other nuclear states.<sup>3</sup> At the forefront of this effort towards the promotion of nuclear norms, the United States has long been involved with attempts to denuclearize their domestic nuclear arsenal, as well as the arsenals of other nuclear states.

However, the United States has demonstrated a type of “nuclear hypocrisy” toward this group of nuclear norms. Although the United States may officially endorse a

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<sup>1</sup> Ethan A. Nadelmann, “Global Prohibition Regimes: The Evolution of Norms in International Society,” *International Organization* 44 (1990): 499.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Freedman, “Disarmament and Other Nuclear Norms,” *The Washington Quarterly* 36 (2013): 96.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

policy geared towards nuclear restraint and encourage others to do the same,<sup>4</sup> their actions have not aligned with their words.<sup>5</sup> The United States currently possesses one of the most powerful nuclear weapons arsenals in the world,<sup>6</sup> the most powerful military in the world, and a solidified economy.<sup>7</sup> Because the United States leads the world in both military and economic strength, other states may seek to align their own status with the high status of the United States. Put simply; states may seek to align themselves with strong powers in order to piggyback off of their prominent international status. Thus, the United States' stance on nuclear weapons norms can have large impacts on the normative thinking of other nations who look to the United States for guidance on nuclear issues.

This creates a problem: What do states seeking to align themselves with United States nuclear policy do when Washington's actions do not align with its words?<sup>8</sup> In this thesis, I will explore the extent to which the United States has practiced "nuclear hypocrisy" with regards to each of the three aforementioned nuclear norms: nonproliferation, non-use, and deterrence. In doing so, I will examine the impact that this hypocrisy has had on the nuclear behaviors and policies of states attempting to align themselves with the United States.

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<sup>4</sup> Ian Traynor, "Barack Obama Launches Doctrine for Nuclear-Free World," *The Guardian*, October 7, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/apr/05/nuclear-weapons-barack-obama>.

<sup>5</sup> Loren Thompson, "Obama Backs Biggest Nuclear Arms Buildup Since Cold War," *Forbes*, October 7, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lorenthompson/2015/12/15/obama-backs-biggest-nuclear-arms-buildup-since-cold-war/#4ce248942a0f>.

<sup>6</sup> "Nuclear Weapons: Who Has What at a Glance," Arms Control Association, accessed October 7, 2017, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Nuclearweaponswhohaswhat>.

<sup>7</sup> Ian Bremmer, "These are the 5 Reasons Why the U.S. Remains the World's Only Superpower," *Time*, October 7, 2017, <http://time.com/3899972/us-superpower-status-military/>.

<sup>8</sup> Maria Rost Rublee, "Taking Stock of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime: Using Social Psychology to Understand Regime Effectiveness," *International Studies Review* 10 (2008): 423.

According to Robert Axelrod, “a norm exists in a given social setting to the extent that individuals usually act in a certain way and are often punished when seen not to be acting in this way”.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, norms can act to broadly define appropriate interstate and intrastate behavior and conduct by the threat and imposition of various kinds of sanctions. For example, the United Nations Security Council recently approved a fresh round of sanctions to be placed on North Korea after its sixth nuclear test.<sup>10</sup> These sanctions included large cuts on foreign oil imports to North Korea, as well as the exports of textiles from the state.<sup>11</sup> Given the passage by the multiple members of the U.N. Security Council, as well as the continued international pressure on North Korea to curtail its nuclear weapons programs, the norm against the unauthorized development of nuclear weapons is quite prominent. In sanctioning North Korea, the U.N. Security Council was able to define appropriate behaviors for other potential proliferators by using the punishment of increased multilateral sanctions. Moreover, norms are standards of behavior that can be examined on a scale of how prominent they are, rather than being an “all or nothing proposition.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, norms exist on a kind of influential continuum in which some norms can be classified as holding more strength of influence than others. Therefore, the compliance that states demonstrate with certain norms may depend on the norm’s relative prominence in the international system.

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<sup>9</sup> Robert Axelrod, “An Evolutionary Approach to Norms,” *The American Political Science Review* 80 (1986): 1097.

<sup>10</sup> Zachary Cohen and Richard Roth, “U.N. Passes Fresh Sanctions on North Korea,” *CNN*, September 12, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/09/11/politics/north-korea-un-security-council-vote/index.html>.

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

<sup>12</sup> Axelrod, 1097.

In addition, these norms do not appear out of thin air, but rather go through a process or “life cycle” which serves to integrate them into a social setting. According to Finnemore and Sikkink, norms are initially advocated for by “norm entrepreneurs” who encourage a large number of states to embrace their new norm, resulting in “norm emergence.”<sup>13</sup> Once brought to the international stage, those same norm entrepreneurs attempt to exert social pressure on other states to conform, causing a “norm cascade” to occur.<sup>14</sup> Once a norm cascade occurs, a new dynamic begins to occur in which “more countries begin to adopt new norms more rapidly without domestic pressure for such change. . .[and]. . .networks of norm entrepreneurs and international organizations also act as agents of socialization by pressuring targeted actors to adopt new policies and laws.”<sup>15</sup> Therefore, once a norm cascade occurs, a new normative environment is created in which social pressure is exerted upon members of the group to accept the new normative changes.

These norm cascades can be caused by a “combination of pressure for conformity, desire to enhance international legitimation, and the desire of state leaders to enhance their self-esteem.”<sup>16</sup> Finally, norm internalization occurs, which ultimately results in the general acceptance and further promotion of that norm.<sup>17</sup> Thereafter, social pressure begins to build that encourages other states to also internalize the norm.<sup>18</sup> Thus, norms appear to be dynamic; their level of influence and prominence can change depending on

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<sup>13</sup> Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,” *International Organization* 52 (1998): 895.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink, 902.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 895.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

the amount of popular support and state participation that they receive. Accordingly, it is the responsibility of norm entrepreneurs to ensure that the norm they promote retains its prominence and legitimation within the international system.

Therefore, the process of norm growth, internalization, and enforcement largely relies on aspects related to social pressure. According to Charles Whitehead, “norms regulate behavior by taxing and subsidizing actions associated with defection and compliance. Adherence to a network norm may enhance a member’s status among her network peers. Violations, conversely, may cause network members to apply sanctions.”<sup>19</sup> Applying this logic to nuclear norms, we can see a concrete distinction start to form. States that abide by established nuclear norms are able to join a sort of “international club” in which the security and social benefits that nuclear weapons provide are substituted for the status benefits that club admission provides. In this way, these “social clubs” are created from status-seeking states looking to enhance their international social standing by aligning their identities and interests with the United States. As a result, they are able to compensate for their deficiencies in areas associated with traditional notions of power.

On the contrary, states that refuse to internalize these norms become part of a social outgroup, and are ostracized for dismissing the norm. Consequently, behavioral consistency with norms provides a way for states to significantly improve their social status in the international community without pursuing traditional markers of status, such

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<sup>19</sup> Charles K. Whitehead, “What’s your Sign?-International Norms, Signals, and Compliance,” *Michigan Journal of International Law* (2006): 707.

as a large military force or prosperous economy.<sup>20</sup> Thus, states that pursue the development of nuclear weapons in order to gain social status may be persuaded to cease their nuclear ambitions in exchange for the status that is gained from adhering to a prominent nuclear norm.

Due to their considerable reliance on social pressure, the endorsement and support of an international norm can be helped or hindered depending on the relative status of the endorsing state.<sup>21</sup> This comparison of state status largely depends on the capabilities that a state can “utilize to potentially effectuate their environment and pursue their objectives.”<sup>22</sup> In other words, states attribute status in accordance with traditional notions of a states’ power like their economic and military resources, as well as their population.<sup>23</sup> Although these attributes may not be directly related to norms, they can be used to exert influence over other state actors in order to encourage them to adhere to a norm. Thus, the previously mentioned traditional notions of state power and status can be linked to an individual states’ ability to help or hinder the development and promotion of a norm.

Therefore, it would seem to naturally follow that powerful states like Russia, China, and the United States are able to promote norms more effectively than a smaller power such as Grenada would. This phenomenon is highlighted by Axelrod, who states that one group’s dominance over another, such as a powerful state interacting with a

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<sup>20</sup> Jennifer L. Miller et al., “Norms, Behavioral Compliance, and Status Attribution in International Politics,” *International Interactions* 41 (2015): 798.

<sup>21</sup> Freedman, 95.

<sup>22</sup> Miller et al., 783.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

weaker state, can be useful in the support of norms.<sup>24</sup> As a result, the promotion and support of international norms by major powers like the United States can have a large impact on the extent to which these norms are successful. In addition to boasting a strong economy, the most powerful military in the world, and the largest active nuclear weapons arsenal in the world,<sup>25</sup> the United States is also a leader in global technological innovation, provides extensive foreign aid packages to multiple countries, sits as a permanent member with veto power in the U.N. Security Council, and is a founder of multiple international organizations, including NATO and the United Nations. Thus, it seems as if the United States possesses more than enough social status with which they are able to influence international nuclear norms. In this way, the United States can be considered as a leader in this realm, and can be held partially responsible for the creation and maintenance of an international normative nuclear agenda.

In addition to the positive impacts that the United States may be able to have on international nuclear norms, it also possesses the ability to adversely impact them. According to Finnemore and Sikkink, a powerful tool that can be used to impact the “consolidation and universalization of norms after a norm cascade may be iterated behavior and habit.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, repeated state behaviors have the ability to subtly shift normative frameworks, leading to the natural “evolution” of norms.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, depending on the behaviors of a supporting state, one of two things can occur. First, international norm leaders like the United States can decide to “lead by example” by

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<sup>24</sup> Axelrod, 1103.

<sup>25</sup> Bremmer, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink, 905.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

continuously abiding by norms in order to solidify and promote them. However, international norm leaders like the United States can also display a level of deviance from norms that they previously promoted, causing them to seemingly renege on values and commitments that they previously affirmed, causing the norm to morph and grow further apart from its original version.

Other scholarship seems to confirm this phenomenon. Although it is identified under a different name, Axelrod also describes the effect that observed social behavior can have on norms. Dubbed “social proof,” Axelrod claims that the actions of others around us can provide information about the boldness levels of other actors, and can also provide suggestions for what the proper course of action is.<sup>28</sup> This effect can be likened to a “monkey see, monkey do” phenomenon, in which states that are uncertain about what a proper course of action may look like will look to leading states in order to figure out what they should do. Thus, states that are considered leaders in the realm of nuclear norms have the ability to set a proper example of international nuclear conduct, and exercise influence over other states who lack the same authority. In addition, Axelrod notes that conforming to the actions of other actors can allow us to become part of a social group.<sup>29</sup> Analyzing the claims of Finnemore and Sikkink along with Axelrod, it becomes clear that major powers like the United States have the ability to significantly impact social norms through their demonstrated behavior.

However, there seems to be a disconnect between the official nuclear norms promoted by the United States, and the actions that are then taken on the United States’

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<sup>28</sup> Axelrod, 1105.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

behalf. This effect has caused the emergence of the term “nuclear hypocrisy,” referring to the United States’ tendency to do things like offer official support for a “world without nuclear weapons,”<sup>30</sup> yet display a significant drop in domestic nuclear disarmament rates as compared to previous years.<sup>31</sup> It is this behavior of the United States when it comes to norms-their ability to talk the talk, but reluctance to walk the walk-that seems to be immediately concerning. This United States practice is apparent when it comes to nuclear norms like nonproliferation, as well as the connected nuclear norms of non-use and deterrence. This display of nuclear hypocrisy has not gone unnoticed. Other state leaders like Recep Erdogan have expressed statements criticizing the United States and other nuclear nations for pressuring states to relinquish their nuclear stockpiles, yet refusing to do the same to themselves.<sup>32</sup> This recognition signifies that the United States’ nuclear hypocrisy has not gone unnoticed, leading us to consider what effects this practice can have on other states, particularly those who look to the United States as leaders on nuclear norms and seek to align themselves with United States nuclear policies.

Although international norms can be promoted by a large group of states, the support and leadership of major international powers can help to further reinforce and solidify that norm in the international system. As a result, major powers like the United States are able to become emergent leaders of the “social clubs” that are created from status-seeking states looking to enhance their international social standing by aligning

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<sup>30</sup> David Nakamura, “In Hiroshima 71 Years After First Atomic Strike, Obama Calls for End of Nuclear Weapons,” *Washington Post*, October 6, 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/obama-visits-hiroshima-more-than-seven-decades-after-the-worlds-first-atomic-strike/2016/05/27/c7d0d250-23b6-11e6-8690-f14ca9de2972\\_story.html?tid=a\\_inl&utm\\_term=.4f4113cfbb0f](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/obama-visits-hiroshima-more-than-seven-decades-after-the-worlds-first-atomic-strike/2016/05/27/c7d0d250-23b6-11e6-8690-f14ca9de2972_story.html?tid=a_inl&utm_term=.4f4113cfbb0f).

<sup>31</sup> Phillip Bump, “Obama Calls for End to Nuclear Weapons, but U.S. Disarmament is Slowest Since 1980,” *Washington Post*, October 6, 2017.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Tait, “Turkish PM Exposes Nuclear Rift in NATO,” *The Guardian*, October 6, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/oct/26/turkey-iran>.

their identities and interests with the United States. As leaders of these normative social clubs however, the United States can either help or hinder the effectiveness of the norms through demonstrating behaviors that align or break from the normative framework. This becomes especially important to examine in issues of United States nuclear norms, as the United States has been accused by other states of committing “nuclear hypocrisy.” By examining the United States’ behavior with regards to the nuclear norms of nonproliferation, non-use, and deterrence, as well as the impact that their behavior has had on states that seek to identify with United States nuclear norms leadership, we can improve our understanding of international nuclear norm dynamics, and the effects that nuclear hypocrisy has on the norm adherence and development of other states.

## Chapter 1: The Nonproliferation Norm

Of the three aforementioned nuclear norms, the norm of nonproliferation is perhaps the most popular and well-known. To proliferate means to spread rapidly, and nuclear weapons can do this through two main mediums: vertical and horizontal proliferation.<sup>33</sup> To proliferate horizontally, nuclear weapons must spread from state to state,<sup>34</sup> thereby increasing the total number of states that possess them. On the other hand, to proliferate vertically, a state must increase the number of nuclear weapons that it has in its own domestic arsenal.<sup>35</sup> In essence, the norm of nuclear nonproliferation encapsulates both of the methods of proliferation: “a process by which countries move closer to or away from different thresholds toward developing the bomb.”<sup>36</sup>

This nuclear norm is consistently regarded as the most important primarily because it is solidified in various international treaties and doctrines which serve to create a “network of formal and informal structures and relationships that send messages about what is and is not officially and unofficially acceptable.”<sup>37</sup> In addition, the norm of nonproliferation is seen as the most important because it holds the most weight of any

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<sup>33</sup> Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: An Enduring Debate* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2013), 3.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Todd Robinson, “What do we Mean by Nuclear Proliferation,” *The Nonproliferation Review* 22 (2015): 55.

<sup>37</sup> Maria Rost Rublee, “Taking Stock of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime: Using Social Psychology to Understand Regime Effectiveness,” *International Studies Review* 10 (2008): 425.

other nuclear weapons norm: to curb proliferation and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons in their entirety would make other nuclear weapons norms become irrelevant.

Sitting at the core of this network of nuclear nonproliferation norms is the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Having entered into force in 1970, the NPT is “now the most universal disarmament treaty, with 187 member states and only four states outside of it.”<sup>38</sup> The NPT has stood the test of time, as it was indefinitely extended in 1995, and has overseen the global reduction of over 30,000 nuclear weapons in its lifetime.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, due to its concrete and widely-accepted message, the norm of nuclear nonproliferation exercises extreme power over other nuclear norms that may not be officially recognized or documented.

The United States has played a large role in promoting and advancing the nuclear nonproliferation norm. The United States was responsible for drafting and signing the NPT during the mid-1960’s, and persuaded other states to join the NPT in response.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, the United States took a large role in assisting with the denuclearization of former nuclear states such as Kazakhstan, Belarus, and the Ukraine after the fall of the Soviet Union.<sup>41</sup> The United States has also taken actions to reduce their domestic nuclear stockpiles by reducing 85% of their operational and reserved warheads since 1967, and employed treaties like New START, which reduces the numbers of nuclear weapons

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Kate Heinzelman, “Towards Common Interests and Responsibilities: The U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Deal and the International Nonproliferation Regime,” *Yale Journal of International Law* 33 (2008): 451.

<sup>40</sup> George Perkovich, “Global Implications of the U.S.-India Deal,” *Daedalus* (2010): 20.

<sup>41</sup> “Fact Sheet: The Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program,” The Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation, June, 2014, <https://armscontrolcenter.org/fact-sheet-the-nunn-lugar-cooperative-threat-reduction-program/>, paragraph 1.

possessed by both Russia and the United States.<sup>42</sup> Thus, it is clear that the United States has taken large steps towards reducing both horizontal and vertical nuclear proliferation, and has had a large overall impact on the global proliferation of nuclear weapons. As a result, the United States has seemingly solidified itself as a global “norm entrepreneur” of nuclear nonproliferation, and has become a leader in global denuclearization efforts.

Therefore, the United States’ position of leadership in the nuclear nonproliferation regime affords them Axelrod’s concept of “social proof,”<sup>43</sup> in that the United States can provide suggestions about what a proper course of action is, and lead states to move towards that action. It can thus be expected that other states who either do not possess nuclear weapons, or are thinking about acquiring nuclear weapons should attempt to relate their actions to the actions of the United States, hopefully causing a move towards a nuclear-free world. For example, after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Washington passed and implemented the Nunn-Lugar Program, a plan aimed at controlling loose nukes that were formerly under the control of the USSR.<sup>44</sup> As a result, the United States was able to take initiative and accomplish their goal of disarming the newly sovereign states of Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan.<sup>45</sup> Consequently, the United States was able to demonstrate their commitment to pursuing the goal of nuclear nonproliferation, and reinforce their position as a leader in the normative regime. In addition, the United States

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<sup>42</sup> “Nuclear Disarmament United States,” Nuclear Threat Initiative, accessed October 15, 2017, <http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/united-states-nuclear-disarmament/>.

<sup>43</sup> Robert Axelrod, “An Evolutionary Approach to Norms,” *The American Political Science Review* 80 (1986): 1105.

<sup>44</sup> Richard Lugar, “Nunn-Lugar-A Tool for the New U.S.-Russian Strategic Relationship,” *Mediterranean Quarterly* (2001): 5.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

exemplified appropriate behaviors that coincided with the norm of nonproliferation, thereby providing a precedent for other states to follow.

However, this optimistic outlook on the United States' role in nuclear nonproliferation efforts is not as clear-cut as it seems. Although the United States has decreased its stockpiles of nuclear weapons, it still possesses 45% of the global stockpile,<sup>46</sup> and has been able to maintain its nuclear weapons superiority over most of the world due to the restrictive tenets of the NPT on non-nuclear weapons states. In this way, the United States' interest in nonproliferation can reflect "not so much a moral imperative as the self-interested stance of a country comfortable in its conventional (or nuclear) military superiority,"<sup>47</sup> as it has been able to successfully reduce or eliminate most competing nuclear arsenals while still retaining a level of nuclear superiority over most of the world. This contrast in the United States' official policy of nuclear nonproliferation has caused frustration among the international community. For example, India has referred the NPT as discriminatory, claiming that it imposes one sided commitments on the part of non-nuclear states.<sup>48</sup> In order to better understand this aspect of United States nuclear hypocrisy, as well as the impact that it can have on other states, it is helpful to provide a more nuanced examination of a case study between the United States and India's 2006 nuclear deal.

The governmental system of the United States guarantees that the population has the ability to regularly elect a new presidential administration to lead the country. This

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<sup>46</sup> "Nuclear Weapons: Who Has What at a Glance," Arms Control Association, accessed October 7, 2017, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Nuclearweaponswhohaswhat>.

<sup>47</sup> Lawrence Freedman, "Disarmament and Other Nuclear Norms," *The Washington Quarterly* 36 (2013): 105.

<sup>48</sup> Heinzelman, 453.

ensures that every presidential administration is different; the difference in political views and international outlook each possesses can ultimately effect the different ways in which each administration handles issues of international security. Despite their different avenues through which these issues are handled, each presidential administration is generally expected to uphold the normative affairs that have been previously established. If they fail to do so, they risk creating a situation in which other states become uncertain about the United States' commitment to the normative regime.

The Clinton administration showed some significant signs of support for the nonproliferation regime by acting favorably towards certain treaties that empowered the regime. For example, the Clinton administration succeeded in securing an indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 and also made promises ensuring that Washington would continue to work towards the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, thereby demonstrating their support of the norm.<sup>49</sup> However, the George W. Bush administration presented a sharp change in United States nuclear policy: under his watch, Washington took a sharp reversal towards some of the same policies and initiatives that the Clinton Administration had worked to develop.<sup>50</sup> This change presented a significant challenge to the norm of nuclear nonproliferation, and revealed the Bush administrations' "overwhelmingly unilateralist" approach towards the issue.<sup>51</sup>

One of the most significant changes under the Bush administration's nuclear policy was the 2006 nuclear deal with India. Despite India's reluctance to join the NPT,

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 452; Timothy Savage, "Letting the Genie out of the Bottle: The Bush Nuclear Doctrine in Asia," *Asian Perspective* 27 (2003): 49; Hewitson, 416.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 474.

<sup>51</sup> Patricia Hewitson, "Nonproliferation and Reduction of Nuclear Weapons: Risks of Weakening the Multilateral Nuclear Nonproliferation Norm," *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 21 (2003): 405.

as well as their previous status as an official non-nuclear weapons state, the deal committed the United States to recognizing India as a nuclear weapons state under the NPT, allowed the United States to sell nuclear technology to India, and permitted India to import uranium as long as India abided by IAEA safeguards.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, as Ashton Carter claims, the agreement essentially allows India to “have the best of both worlds-to continue to develop its military nuclear program without being an NPT nuclear weapons state and receive nuclear materials from the United States under limited scope safeguards.”<sup>53</sup>

This effect is significant to the nonproliferation regime. Treaties that serve to empower the norm of nonproliferation do so because they serve as a source of concrete recognition of the norm, and because they also provide rules and guidelines for which member states are expected to uphold their ends of the bargain. By verifying the U.S.-India nuclear deal, the United States effectively violated their commitments as an official nuclear weapons state under the NPT. According to Kate Heinzelman, “The U.S.-India nuclear deal undercuts the promise of the NPT insofar as it gives a country that has refused to join the NPT greater rights than it would have were it to accede to the treaty.”<sup>54</sup>

While some advocates of the deal may praise it because it allows India to balance the regional powers of Pakistan and China, and that it creates better international economic opportunities,<sup>55</sup> the negative consequences that the deal poses could have major implications for the United States’ nonproliferation norm leadership. There are two main

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<sup>52</sup> Ashton Carter, “America’s New Strategic Partner?,” *Foreign Affairs* 85 (2006): 3.

<sup>53</sup> Heinzelman, 458.

<sup>54</sup> Heinzelman, 459.

<sup>55</sup> T.V. Paul, “The U.S.-India Nuclear Accord: Implication for the Nonproliferation Regime,” *International Journal* 62 (2007): 848.

routes through which these consequences can arise: the challenge to the statutes and precedents of the nuclear nonproliferation regime, and the alteration of the cost-benefit analysis made by status-seeking states hoping to join the nonproliferation regime.

First, the United States' actions which challenge the statutes and precedents of the nuclear nonproliferation regime can do so through undermining its reputation as the leader of the nonproliferation regime.<sup>56</sup> By acting in direct conflict with the norms that the government has attempted and succeeded at establishing, the United States has failed to exercise "iterated behavior and habit"<sup>57</sup> towards the nonproliferation norm. According to Finnemore and Sikkink, when a state or actor fails to act in this way, a condition is created which can lead to the erosion of "predictability, stability, and habits of trust"<sup>58</sup> among actors. The erosion of trust is especially harmful to the United States' position as a leader in the nonproliferation regime, as it demonstrates that they are willing to use their position as a leader to bypass tenets of the NPT in order to serve their parochial interests, signaling their reluctance to express full support for the norm. Therefore, in verifying the nuclear deal with India, the United States dealt a harmful blow to its own reputation as a leader in the nonproliferation regime. Thus, states who may be on the fringe of either enlisting or rescinding their membership from the nonproliferation regime may become alienated and avoid joining due to their skepticism of the United States' commitment and their damaged leadership reputation.

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<sup>56</sup> Perkovich, 26.

<sup>57</sup> Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52 (1998): 905.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

While challenging the statutes and precedents of the regime may negatively impact the United States' reputation as a leader, it can also have effects on the regime itself.<sup>59</sup> First, by creating changes in the procedures of the recognition of non-nuclear weapons states, the United States crafted a situation which can lead to the unwanted evolution of the nonproliferation norm. According to Finnemore and Sikkink, “procedural changes that create new political processes can lead to gradual and inadvertent normative . . . convergence.”<sup>60</sup> Accordingly, by allowing India to be declared a nuclear weapons state while avoiding the constraints of the NPT, the United States set a precedent upon which future similar actions may be taken. As a result, the norm of nonproliferation becomes susceptible to evolution, making it less stringent on preventing nuclear proliferation, and encouraging other states to push the limits on acceptable nuclear practices.

In other words, the United States' position as a leader in the nonproliferation regime gives its actions considerable weight and importance towards setting precedents which other states will consider when dealing with similar situations. Therefore, by straying from the norm of nonproliferation through bypassing the terms of the NPT, the United States sets a precedent that is different from the norm of strict nonproliferation. By creating a precedent that does not reflect the values of nonproliferation, a slippery slope arises which can lead other states to follow suit, causing the norm of nonproliferation to stray further and further from its original intended meaning.

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<sup>59</sup> Perkovich, 26.

<sup>60</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink, 905.

The second negative effect that the U.S.-India nuclear deal can have on the nonproliferation regime comes as a result of the altered cost-benefit analysis made by status-seeking states looking to join the regime. In order to justify the creation and passage of the deal, Washington offered several explanations for why it would be advantageous to the United States, noting that a nuclear India could serve to counter the nuclear dominance of China, dampen the threat posed by neighboring Pakistan, assist the United States military with basing rights in the region, and allow for the preferential treatment of United States industries and the economy.<sup>61</sup> However, these justifications which advocate for the military, economic, and industrial benefits that result from the deal can prove to be a significant threat to the norm of nonproliferation.

By giving nuclear status and additional nuclear benefits to a state that has historically opposed nonproliferation efforts, as well as declaring that motives fueled by military and economic influence have impacted their consideration of the deal, the United States is essentially demonstrating that they value military and economic incentives over the benefits that result from nonproliferation efforts. Seeing as being officially recognized as a nuclear weapons state brings an enormous amount of benefits through international status, status-seeking states who are members of the nonproliferation regime may be encouraged to follow the same path as India in the hopes of one day achieving the same ends.

In other words, status-seeking states who joined the nonproliferation regime in part to compensate for their lack of international status may be persuaded to abandon their pursuit of status through nonproliferation. Instead, these states may pursue status

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<sup>61</sup> Carter, 6.

through the development of a domestic nuclear weapons program, and hope that they are one day given the same deal that India received: having their subversion of the nonproliferation regime be rewarded with the lucrative title of being a nuclear weapons state due to the potential economic and military benefits they provide. Therefore, in making the nuclear deal with India, the United States changed the way that potential states view the relationship between the costs and benefits associated with the membership of the nonproliferation regime, creating extra incentives for states to bypass membership and improve their domestic nuclear arsenals.

For example, Brazil is a nation in which the United States succeeded in discouraging their nuclear weapons development.<sup>62</sup> Although Brazil never completely developed their nuclear arsenal, they have shown that they are willing to “flirt with nuclear status.”<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, due to the U.S.-India nuclear deal’s negative impacts on the United States’ leadership reputation, the nonproliferation regime, and the cost-benefit calculation of regime membership, Brasilia may be persuaded to question the legitimacy and rigidity of the regime itself. Specifically, they may develop doubt as to whether the statutes they are bound by under the NPT are strictly enforceable, or if there is room to maneuver around certain limitations and restrictions. In doing so, they may attempt to push the boundaries on what are deemed as acceptable nuclear behaviors in the hopes that they will receive preferential treatment as well.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Arturo Sotomayor, “Brazil and Mexico in the Nonproliferation Regime,” *The Nonproliferation Review* 20 (2013): 88.

<sup>63</sup> Carter, 4.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

The United States has successfully promoted the norm of nuclear nonproliferation while simultaneously asserting itself as the international leader of the regime. In doing so, the United States has led the international effort towards nuclear nonproliferation, and has assisted other states in getting rid of their nuclear weapons and material. However, the United States' actions do not always align with their words. Although they continuously pressure states to relinquish their nuclear arsenals, the United States has shown that they are reluctant to make the same sacrifices. This level of hypocrisy can be exemplified in the 2006 U.S.-India nuclear deal, in which the United States granted official nuclear status and other concessions to India, a non-NPT member state. In doing so, the United States sidestepped their obligations as a leader under the NPT. These actions brought damage to the United States' leadership reputation in the nonproliferation regime, the nonproliferation regime itself, and the cost-benefit calculation made by other states who sit on the nuclear fence. As a result, Washington may be weakening the norm of nonproliferation, threatening the power and relevancy of the effort towards global nuclear zero.

### Chapter 3: The Non-Use Norm

In addition to the nonproliferation, there is another norm associated with nuclear weapons that has to do with their use. According to Lawrence Freedman, non-use is defined as a norm which: “sets an internalized moral restraint on detonating a nuclear weapon.”<sup>65</sup> Thus, the norm of non-use seeks to prevent states from launching nuclear attacks against one another in order to mitigate the chance of nuclear war.

However, the norm of non-use is not as solidified as the norm of nonproliferation. Although nuclear weapons have yet to be used in a conflict since 1945, there are no binding international agreements which prevent their use.<sup>66</sup> As a result, in comparison to the NPT, which is signed, ratified, and implemented as an international agreement between member states, there is no objective measure to “send messages about what is and is not officially and unofficially acceptable”<sup>67</sup> with regards to the non-use norm.

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<sup>65</sup> Lawrence Freedman, “Disarmament and Other Nuclear Norms,” *The Washington Quarterly* 36 (2013): 96.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Maria Rost Rublee, “Taking Stock of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime: Using Social Psychology to Understand Regime Effectiveness,” *International Studies Review* 10 (2008): 425.

Consequently, the norm of non-use does not allow for the same level of accountability and enforcement that is experienced with the nonproliferation norm, which could have negative effects on its prominence in the international system. However, the only time that nuclear weapons were used in combat was during the bombing of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. Although the reasons for the states' refusals to use nuclear weapons could be due to the norm of nuclear deterrence or the adverse environmental and international effects, the norm of non-use seems to have played a role in contributing to this result.

Additionally, the United States occupies a central role in its ability to influence the non-use norm. The main reason for the United States' central role revolves around the fact that it was "the first nation to develop and possess nuclear weapons, and refrained from nuclear use at several important points," creating a situation in which "other states paralleled or followed the American development."<sup>68</sup> For example, during the Korean War in 1950, the United States possessed a nuclear monopoly over the rest of the world, giving Washington the opportunity to use or threaten the use of nuclear weapons without fearing the retaliation from another nuclear rival.<sup>69</sup> Despite this inherent advantage, the United States refrained from using nuclear weapons during the conflict even when faced with dire circumstances, such as when the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) pushed U.N. forces back past the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, by exercising responsible

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<sup>68</sup> Paul Avey, "Who's Afraid of the Bomb? The Role of Nuclear Non-Use Norms in Confrontations between Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Opponents," *Security Studies* 24 (2015): 570.

<sup>69</sup> Robert Farley, "Why the U.S. Military Didn't Use Nuclear Weapons During the Korea War," *The National Interest*, August 11, 2017, <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/why-the-us-military-didnt-use-nuclear-weapons-during-the-21863>.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

control over the use of the nuclear stockpile in multiple situations similar to the Korean War, the United States was able to establish appropriate and acceptable standards of behavior with regards to nuclear use. In doing so, the United States solidified its reputation as an actor with substantial influence over the non-use norm.

As a state with substantial influence over the non-use norm, the United States has been historically active in attempting to promote the norm as well. Dubbed “negative security assurances,” the United States first extended their guarantee of nuclear non-use in 1978, stating that they would not use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear weapons state that was a part of the NPT except under extreme circumstances.<sup>71</sup> This policy of negative security assurance was once again brought up in 1995 by the Clinton administration, which altered the policy slightly, stating that the United States would only use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear NPT member state if that member conducted “an attack on the United States, its territories or armed forces, or its allies, by such state allied to a nuclear-weapon state or associated with a nuclear-weapons state in carrying out or sustaining the attack.”<sup>72</sup> In doing so, the United States was able to kill two birds with one stone: Washington encouraged membership to the NPT regime while simultaneously demonstrating its commitment to promoting the non-use norm. By promoting the norm, the United States was able to use its position of influence to strengthen its status and reputation as a leading advocate of nuclear non-use, and

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<sup>71</sup> George Bunn, “Expanding Nuclear Options: Is the U.S. Negating Its Non-Use Pledges?,” *Arms Control Today* 26 (1996): 7.

<sup>72</sup> Patricia Hewitson, “Nonproliferation and Reduction of Nuclear Weapons: Risks of Weakening the Multilateral Nuclear Nonproliferation Norm,” *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 21 (2003): 472.

demonstrated that the country was willing to provide support in order to advance the norm.

More recently, the United States has publically alluded to its support for the norm of non-use. In 2009, President Barack Obama pledged to “reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy” and urged others to do the same.<sup>73</sup> However, the Obama administration, as well as preceding U.S. presidential administrations’ Nuclear Posture Review’s (NPR) reflected a dilemma that has historically impacted the United States’ ability to promote the non-use norm: a policy that would allow the U.S. to threaten a nuclear first strike in certain situations.<sup>74</sup> Although the United States possesses an influential leadership position over the norm of non-use, U.S. nuclear weapons policy has never adopted a policy of no first use. In contrast to non-use, a policy of no first use provides a guarantee that a state will not be the first to preemptively or preventively use nuclear weapons in conflict.

Instead of accepting a policy of no first use, the United States employs a policy of “calculated ambiguity,”<sup>75</sup> allowing the United States to maintain its nuclear deterrent by threatening a nuclear first strike under certain exigent conditions, while simultaneously allowing for flexibility in what it considers to be a threat that warrants nuclear retaliation. This gives Washington the best of both worlds; “[The United States receives] the benefits of leaving open the option of a nuclear response, while committing itself to nothing if deterrence fails.”<sup>76</sup> Although this may present strategic advantages to the United States, it

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<sup>73</sup> Michael Gerson, “No First Use: The Next Step for U.S. Nuclear Policy,” *International Security* 35 (2010): 7.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

also causes the norm of non-use and the United States' rejection of a no first use doctrine to come into conflict with one another. Although the U.S. may lead and promote a norm aimed at non-use, they cannot effectively implement and reflect the norm in their own policy since doing so would eliminate their ability to justify conditions for a nuclear first strike.

According to T.V. Paul, the norm of non-use is subject to change from concepts like iteration and reciprocity. To Paul, the social aspect of the norm creates a situation in which subsequent generations of people expect the behaviors associated with the norm to be upheld by others. However, when one nuclear state like the United States decides to violate this norm, others may follow suit as they may no longer feel bound by reciprocal obligations.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, the United States' behaviors with regards to the non-use norm can have substantial effects on other states' decisions to perpetuate it. Moreover, Paul's claim ties in with Finnemore and Sikkink's claims about the effects that an actor's iterated behavior and habit can have on norms: that iterated behavior and habit have the ability to impact the saliency and appeal of social norms.<sup>78</sup> Thus, by demonstrating consistent behavior that supports the non-use norm, the United States can empower and promote the norm, causing it to become more important to the international system. This places a serious emphasis on the behaviors of the United States, for it has the ability to alter and bring degenerative change to the non-use norm.

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<sup>77</sup> T.V. Paul, "Taboo or Tradition? The Non-use of Nuclear Weapons in World Politics," *Review of International Studies* 36 (2010): 862.

<sup>78</sup> Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52 (1998): 905.

In effect, the United States has consolidated its reputation as a leader and influential member of the norm of nuclear non-use. It has worked to promote the norm through negative security guarantees that seek to promote NPT membership while simultaneously advancing the prominence of normative nuclear non-use. In addition, President Barack Obama publically alluded to support for the non-use norm, and encouraged other countries to follow suit.<sup>79</sup> Despite these efforts, the United States has demonstrated a level of nuclear hypocrisy that is similar to that with regards to the nonproliferation norm: while they may show public support for the norm of non-use, their maintenance of a first strike nuclear doctrine shows that they are not committed to embodying the very norm that they strive to promote. This level of hypocrisy can result in damage to the United States' reputation as a non-use norm leader, and can also cause the degeneration of the non-use norm altogether. In order to analyze this hypocrisy and its effects, it is necessary to examine a case that is prominent to the topic: the George W. Bush administration's 2002 Nuclear Posture Review.

As previously mentioned, prior to the George W. Bush administration, the Clinton administration's nuclear policy extended negative security guarantees to non-nuclear weapons states that were a part of the NPT as a quid pro quo measure for the treaties' indefinite extension.<sup>80</sup> This guarantee essentially reaffirmed and strengthened the United States' commitment to nuclear non-use, as well as their position of leadership in promotion of the norm. Moreover, the Clinton administration's 1993 Nuclear Posture Review refrained from deviating from the precedent set by former President George

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<sup>79</sup> Gerson, 7.

<sup>80</sup> Bunn, 7.

H.W. Bush through rejecting “any significant changes in the nuclear weapons policies pursued by the [George H. W.] Bush administration.”<sup>81</sup> This resulted in the continuation of the nuclear weapons status quo that was perpetuated by the United States.<sup>82</sup> Thus, it is clear that the Clinton administration pursued measures in an attempt to strengthen the norm of nuclear non-use, and also worked to maintain a level of consistency with its nuclear weapons policy.

The George W. Bush administration’s 2002 Nuclear Posture Review took several deviations from the precedent set by President Clinton. Of these deviations, the significant change which can serve to seriously harm the United States’ reputation as a leader and supporter of the nuclear non-use norm are the expanded plans for the use of nuclear weapons.

One of the most concerning developments in policy was the United States’ expanded plans for nuclear use, which occurred through two main avenues: the creation of nuclear contingency plans, and plans for nuclear retaliation against chemical and biological weapons. Included in the Bush administration’s Nuclear Posture Review was the creation of contingency plans for nuclear strikes against seven countries, including five non-nuclear weapons states (Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, and Syria) that were party to the NPT.<sup>83</sup> In doing so, the United States demonstrated that it had preemptively planned and prepared for nuclear strikes that would violate its negative security assurances by striking non-nuclear weapons states that were members to the NPT even if they were not allied or participated in an attack with a nuclear power.

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<sup>81</sup> Hewitson, 470.

<sup>82</sup> Hewitson, 470.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 471.

In addition, the nuclear posture review also allows for the U.S. to conduct a nuclear strike “in retaliation for attack with nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons.”<sup>84</sup> Although the use of nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack may seem warranted, the question of whether the use of nuclear weapons is justified in response to a chemical or biological attack is debatable. However, the negative security assurances made by the Clinton administration in 1995 “do not include any exceptions that would allow the first use of nuclear weapons in response to a chemical or biological weapon attack.”<sup>85</sup> Therefore, the United States once again demonstrated that it was willing to value their security over the terms of its negative security assurances that it had previously committed to.

By altering the United States’ nuclear policy to target non-nuclear states party to the NPT, as well as increasing the justifications for the deployment of nuclear weapons, the U.S. clearly showed that it was not willing to abide by the international agreements that it had previously committed to. This once again weakens the reputation of the United States as a leader and advocate of the nuclear non-use norm, and erodes the trust that non-nuclear states have in the United States. Moreover, in both instances, the United States specifically indicated to the rest of the world that the negative security assurances it provided were meaningless, and that countries could no longer assume that they were protected under the guarantees of the United States.

It is also worth mentioning that while breaking from negative security assurances harmed the United States’ reputation as a non-use norm leader, international perception

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 473.

of the authenticity of U.S. contracts, and the norm of nuclear non-use itself, it also adversely impacts the nonproliferation norm. According to Patricia Hewitt, “negative security assurances play an important role in the nuclear nonproliferation regime: By protecting non-nuclear weapons states against nuclear attack, they lessen proliferation incentives.”<sup>86</sup> The logic behind this concept revolves around the idea that states who seek to develop nuclear weapons in order to balance the nuclear power of the United States or deter the U.S. from conducting nuclear strikes will be persuaded to avoid doing so, as they need not fear a nuclear conflict with the United States. However, in rejecting negative security assurances, the United States inadvertently provided potential proliferators with another reason to develop nuclear weapons: to deter a preemptive or preventive nuclear strike from the United States. Therefore, in addition to harming the United States’ reputation and perceived trustworthiness as a leader and promoter of the non-use norm, the United States also subsequently damaged the nonproliferation norm by reneging on its negative security assurances.

Despite these negative effects, the United States’ actions were not in complete violation of the norm because it has still refrained from using nuclear weapons in a conflict. However, the Bush administration’s Nuclear Posture Review which expanded its plans for nuclear weapons use served to erode the United States’ reputation as a leader and supporter of the non-use norm, and adversely impacted its credibility in the eyes of the international community. These behaviors can cause states to reconsider their positions on nuclear non-use by altering their views on the non-use norms’ concepts of iteration and reciprocity. Put simply, displaying that it is unwilling to honor its

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

commitments under the non-use norm is a failure of the United States to reciprocate the dealings it has with non-nuclear NPT states: U.S. guarantees of non-use in exchange for nuclear nonproliferation. As such, states that are skeptical of the United States' guarantees may be persuaded to violate their obligations under the NPT as well. This can lead to a tit for tat situation in which non-nuclear states undermine their commitments under the NPT and thereby delegitimize the nonproliferation regime.

Therefore, although the United States has not fully undermined the non-use norm, it has served to harm its reputation as a leader and supporter of it. While this does not necessarily have the potential to lead to an all-out nuclear war, it certainly can lead to the breakdown of other nuclear norms like nonproliferation, resulting in the creation of a more unstable and volatile international environment.

#### Chapter 4: The Deterrence Norm

As the third norm related to nuclear weapons, deterrence plays an extremely important part in determining the role that nuclear weapons play in the international system. According to Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, to deter means to “stop people from doing something by frightening them” through possessing the ability to severely punish them past acceptable levels.<sup>87</sup> This concept can be related to non-nuclear interactions between states, however this examination will entail nuclear deterrence, which posits that the “punishment” that is enacted comes in the form of a nuclear strike. Ultimately, the nuclear deterrence norm aims to prevent incursion against a states’ vital interests or national security through the threat of nuclear retaliation.

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<sup>87</sup> Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: An Enduring Debate* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2013), 5.

The normative value of deterrence seeks to define appropriate behaviors related to nuclear weapons. According to Lawrence Freedman, the deterrence norm is “the assumed default position of nuclear powers, [and] implies that there are circumstances so extreme that they would remove all inhibitions on nuclear use. The most obvious contingency is in the aftermath of nuclear use against one’s own state.”<sup>88</sup> Thus, the norm of deterrence defines appropriate behaviors and creates expectations that are associated with a nuclear weapons state; specifically, that a state will only use nuclear weapons under circumstances that are unusually severe. As a result, Freedman is led to posit that nuclear restraint, or “the inability to contemplate actually using nuclear weapons,”<sup>89</sup> is a consequence of deterrence. Therefore, due to the normative nature of nuclear deterrence, states are encouraged to engage in behaviors that support the norm, thereby perpetuating its spread.

The reason for the deterrence norm’s existence relates to the differences that exist between nuclear and conventional weapons. According to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, conventional weapons are “the most common type of armament” which include, but are not limited to “armored combat vehicles, combat helicopters, combat aircraft, warships, (and) small arms and light weapons”.<sup>90</sup> Due to the vast history surrounding their use, these conventional weapons are thus what we assume to comprise the “normal” or “traditional” types of arms that a state is able to use in conflict, making their use in conflicts seem more acceptable or routine. In contrast, the consequences of

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<sup>88</sup> Lawrence Freedman, “Disarmament and Other Nuclear Norms,” *The Washington Quarterly* 36 (2013): 97.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> “Conventional Weapons,” United Nations Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, accessed November 12, 2017, <http://unrcpd.org/conventional-weapons/>, paragraph 1.

the use of nuclear weapons are vastly greater than that of conventional weapons. Things like collateral damage, radioactive fallout, and radioactive contamination have all contributed to nuclear weapons falling into a distinct category that distinguishes them from conventional weapons. In order to further reinforce that distinction, the deterrence norm helps to establish a barrier that differentiates behaviors and uses that are associated with conventional and nuclear weapons. Thus, the norm of deterrence plays a vital role in contributing to the stability and security of nuclear weapons and the international system.

As the first state to develop and employ nuclear weapons, the United States has played a large role in assisting in the emergence and support of the deterrence norm. The deterrence norm got its start during the Cold War as a result of the nuclear policies and practices of the United States and USSR. Despite being involved in multiple tense situations like the Cuban missile crisis, both sides restrained from using nuclear weapons due to the lack of “extreme circumstances” that would have warranted their use under the deterrence norm. In other words, by choosing to de-escalate conflicts instead of preemptively conduct a nuclear strike, the United States displayed iterated behavior and habit that reaffirmed the deterrence norm.

In addition to their displays of nuclear restraint during the Cold War, the United States has developed multiple alliances with states across the globe, and established a “nuclear umbrella” of extended deterrence by guaranteeing those states protection under the nuclear arsenal of the United States.<sup>91</sup> The creation of the nuclear umbrella assisted the United States in slowing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as it removed the incentives for non-nuclear states to develop nuclear weapons in order to establish their

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

own deterrent value. Moreover, it reinforced the normative value of nuclear weapons: instead of using nuclear coercion to encourage non-nuclear states to halt proliferation, the United States took the burden of nuclear deterrence upon itself and its position as a leading supporter of the deterrence norm. Thus, as a result of both the United States' role in creating the norm and its role of offering extended deterrence to their allies, the United States has established itself as a leader and promoter of the deterrence norm.

The deterrence norm is also reflected in the policies of multiple nuclear weapons states as well. For example, France has declared that nuclear deterrence is the “ultimate guarantee of French sovereignty” that aims “to protect [the country] from any form of state actor aggression against the [country's] vital interests, regardless of its origin or its form.”<sup>92</sup> In addition, the United Kingdom's nuclear deterrent maintains a posture that reflects a level of calculated ambiguity, a policy that allows the U.K. the ability to remain unclear about which situations they see as warranting nuclear use.<sup>93</sup> This deterrent strategy serves the interests of protecting and defending NATO,<sup>94</sup> and increases the deterrent abilities of the U.K., as potential threats are encouraged to remain extremely cautious with their actions so as not to trigger a retaliatory nuclear strike. Thus, in addition to the United States demonstrating its support for the deterrence norm, multiple countries have also showed that they embody the norm by codifying it as part of their nuclear doctrines. Although the aforementioned countries' nuclear doctrines contain different levels of nuclear restraint, they all carry undertones that reflect their

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<sup>92</sup> “France,” Nuclear Threat Initiative, accessed November 12, 2017, <http://www.nti.org/learn/countries/france/nuclear/>, paragraph 10.

<sup>93</sup> “United Kingdom,” Nuclear Threat Initiative, accessed November 12, 2017, <http://www.nti.org/learn/countries/united-kingdom/nuclear/>, paragraph 13.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

internalization of the deterrence norm: that nuclear weapons can only be used in response to an infringement on their states' vital interests. This reveals that the deterrence norm has become internalized to various degrees in different states, giving the norm influence over state action.

Therefore, similar to its position in previous normative regimes, the United States serves as a leader and major influencer over the deterrence norm. As a result, by further displaying "iterated behavior and habit,"<sup>95</sup> the United States could actively work to further develop support and acceptance of the norm. However, U.S. actions have not worked to fully back the deterrence norm. The ways in which the United States has undercut aspects of the norm can be split into two categories: extended deterrence, and deterrence itself.

Although extended deterrence was previously identified as one of the ways in which the United States was able to promote the deterrence norm, over time the United States has shown that it has used extended deterrence to justify the expansion of their nuclear arsenal. Out of all the major nuclear weapons states, the United States is the only country that "cites the requirements of extended nuclear deterrence as justifying the size of its nuclear arsenal."<sup>96</sup> In doing so, the United States is able to take advantage of a factor that distinguishes the deterrence norm from the nonproliferation and non-use norms: the subjective nature of deterrence necessities.

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<sup>95</sup> Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52 (1998): 905.

<sup>96</sup> Benoit Pelopidas, "The Nuclear Straitjacket: American Extended Deterrence and Nonproliferation" in *The Future of Extended Deterrence*, ed. Stefanie Von Hlatky and Andreas Wenger (Georgetown University Press, 2015), 77.

At its core, nuclear deterrence's sole purpose is to prevent potential hostile actors from infringing on a state's homeland or vital interests. What a state sees as a potential hostile actor, though, is subjective. For example, due to its extensive extended deterrence guarantees to multiple countries, as well as its global military and economic presence, the United States is able to possess a more expansive definition of what it views as a potential threat to its vital interests. As a result, the United States is able to justify the size of its nuclear arsenal by saying that is necessary to maintain the stability and security that U.S. extended deterrence guarantees. On the other hand, a state like Pakistan might only view deterrence as a way to deter an attack from its Indian rivals due to its lack of relative geopolitical interests. Therefore, what Pakistan defines as a credible deterrent force is not as expansive and broad as that of the United States.

When viewed in this way, the theory of extended deterrence presents a unilateral benefit to the United States: in addition to allowing non-nuclear states to remain secure under the U.S. nuclear umbrella, the number of U.S. alliances, global presence, and expansive interests allow the United States to stand on a moral high ground that legitimizes the advancement of its nuclear weapons programs. Although the United States has a vested interest in maintaining the integrity of its nuclear deterrence capabilities, its conventional superiority along with its large nuclear stockpile constitute an arsenal that surpasses the requirements of a credible extended deterrent. Put simply, "the requirements of extended deterrence justify the existence of a larger arsenal than the one that would have been assigned to the defense of the national territory only."<sup>97</sup> Thus, the global expansion of the U.S. nuclear arsenal has begun to stray from its intended purpose

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 80.

of providing extended deterrence, instead reflecting U.S. efforts to enhance its geopolitical influence and balance other nuclear powers.

The second way in which the United States undercuts its leadership position and reputation as a supporter of the deterrence norm is through the evolution of U.S. nuclear doctrine. This evolution of U.S. nuclear doctrine can be exemplified in the George W. Bush administration's 2002 Nuclear Posture Review. The 2002 Nuclear Posture Review represented a significant shift from traditional security rhetoric involving the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>98</sup> Although the Review contained several shifts in nuclear policy, there were two alterations that impacted the deterrence norm the most: the call for the development of low yield, "conventional-type" nuclear weapons,<sup>99</sup> and the threat of preemptive strikes coupled with goals of regime change. In doing so, the Bush administration unilaterally enhanced the strategic value of their nuclear deterrent while simultaneously damaging the long-term value of the normative value of deterrence.

According to Lawrence Freedman, the key to a successful deterrence strategy revolves around a "product of clear foreign policy, confirming what you care about, (and) declaring and demonstrating vital interests."<sup>100</sup> Moreover, Carl Sagan and Kenneth Waltz claim that the strategic value of deterrence rests on the "capabilities and the will to use them."<sup>101</sup> Therefore, an effective deterrent strategy needs to make a clear connection between the conditions that a nuclear weapons state believes warrants a nuclear strike, and the capabilities that they will employ in such a situation. For the Bush administration,

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<sup>98</sup> Patricia Hewitson, "Nonproliferation and Reduction of Nuclear Weapons: Risks of Weakening the Multilateral Nuclear Nonproliferation Norm," *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 21 (2003): 475.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 474.

<sup>100</sup> Lawrence Freedman, "Framing Strategic Deterrence," *The RUSI Journal* 154 (2009): 46.

<sup>101</sup> Sagan and Waltz, 7.

their efforts to enhance the U.S. strategic deterrent began upon arriving into office. Bush administration officials shared a common belief that the Clinton administration had reduced the United States' ability to make credible threats, causing the Bush administration to take a stance that intended to revitalize U.S. credibility.<sup>102</sup> This effort only increased after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, as the Bush administration employed the idea that "the United States could no longer afford to let others strike before taking action."<sup>103</sup>

In order to accomplish this goal, the Bush administration's nuclear doctrine reflected two key strategies: U.S. willingness to conduct preemptive strikes against enemies which it viewed as a threat to U.S. national security and its interests, as well as the development of new "conventional-type" low yield nuclear weapons. According to Amy Woolf, the Nuclear Posture Review stated that the United States needed to be prepared to preempt the threats posed by non-state actors or terrorist groups in possession of weapons of mass destruction by "launching strikes against adversaries before the adversary attacks the United States, its allies or its interests."<sup>104</sup> Moreover, Jeffrey Knopf notes that while the Bush administration was in power, there were "recurring suggestions that the United States will pursue regime change as a way to end tyranny, especially in the remaining two members of the 'axis of evil'."<sup>105</sup> According to Woolf, this nuclear posture has led multiple analysts to presume that "the administration foresees the possible

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<sup>102</sup> Jeffrey Knopf, "Wrestling with Deterrence: Bush Administration Strategy After 9/11," *Calhoun* (2008): 235.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>104</sup> Amy Woolf, "U.S. Nuclear Weapons: Changes in Policy and Force Structure," *Congressional Research Service* (2008): 10.

<sup>105</sup> Knopf, 252.

preemptive use of nuclear weapons against nations or groups that are not necessarily armed with nuclear weapons.”<sup>106</sup>

In addition to including an option for preemptive strikes against potential enemies, the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review also called for the development and introduction of new types of nuclear weapons. According to Sharad Joshi, the Bush administrations nuclear posture review “recommended that newer types of nuclear weapons be introduced, including those that could reduce collateral damage and that are able to penetrate deeply buried targets . . . [and] recommends the introduction of newer varieties of nuclear weapons that would give more flexibility to U.S. policy options.”<sup>107</sup>

Both of these declarations, that the United States would potentially conduct preemptive strikes against non-state actors and non-nuclear states, and that the United States was actively pursuing the development of low-yield nuclear weapons, ultimately enhanced the strategic value of U.S. deterrence. In making clear what threats the United States viewed as warranting nuclear retaliation, the Bush administration effectively expanded the scope of situations that they felt warranted a nuclear response. By establishing a red line, the United States were thus able to clearly communicate to their adversaries what they took to be a vital interest, and discouraged potential enemies from infringing upon them. Moreover, the increase of their nuclear arsenal to include low-yield nuclear weapons enhanced the capabilities of the United States, thereby expanding the potential of nuclear weapons to be used. Thus, these developments in nuclear weapons

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<sup>106</sup> Woolf, 10.

<sup>107</sup> Sharad Joshi, “Unilateralism and Multilateralism: Analyzing American Nuclear Nonproliferation Policy,” *World Affairs* 167 (2005): 151.

technology would enhance U.S. strategic deterrence because it increased the credibility of a United States nuclear response.

Although these policies increased the strategic value of U.S. nuclear deterrence, they also served to damage the U.S.'s reputation as a leading promoter of the deterrence norm. Even though the threat of preemptive strikes can cause potential enemies to practice restraint, it can also have the opposite effect. Using nuclear weapons to preemptively strike a threat indicates a significant change in a states' approach to their use, signaling that the state no longer views the weapons as a means to deter threats, but rather as weapons that are offensive in nature. Moreover, threatening nuclear use against non-state actors who do not possess nuclear weapons also contributes to the view that the United States is using nuclear weapons in an offensive manner. It is hardly believable that a non-state actor who does not possess nuclear weapons can pose an existential threat to the United States. As such, threatening the use of nuclear weapons against them signals that the United States is not fully embodying the deterrence norm's "assumed default position of nuclear powers."<sup>108</sup>

The development of new low-yield nuclear weapons also has the ability to undermine U.S. support of the deterrence norm. By developing nuclear weapons that have a wide range of applications and whose use is interchangeable with their conventional counterpart, the United States essentially worked to "blur the distinction between conventional and nuclear weapons."<sup>109</sup> The blurring of the difference between conventional and nuclear weapons eventually leads to the lowering of the circumstances

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<sup>108</sup> Freedman (2013), 97.

<sup>109</sup> Joshi, 151.

for their use.<sup>110</sup> This has the ability to shift the views of nuclear weapons use from something that is meant purely for deterrence to something that is a valid option to deploy in conventional combat,<sup>111</sup> turning nuclear weapons into something that function “not as devices of deterrence, but as weapons of war.”<sup>112</sup> In other words, by lowering the amount of damage that nuclear weapons can do, the prospects for their use becomes more attractive. As a result, the United States once again undercut the deterrence norm by choosing to develop nuclear weapons that decrease their propensity to exercise nuclear restraint, and increase the chances of an offensive or preemptive nuclear strike.

Due to its behaviors during the Cold War and various other conflicts, the United States has supported the norm of deterrence, and has propelled itself to position of leadership in promotion of the norm. The deterrence norm is reflected in the nuclear doctrines of multiple nuclear weapons states, signaling the extent of the norm’s influence and prominence in the international system. However, the United States’ actions have not reflected behavior that is in full support of the norm. It is clear that the United States uses their policy of extended deterrence to justify the size of its nuclear arsenal, allowing it to keep an unnecessarily large stockpile of nuclear weapons. In addition, the actions of the George W. Bush administration served to undermine the deterrence norm, subsequently damaging the reputation of the United States as a norm supporter and weakening the norms of non-use and nonproliferation.

As a result of the United States’ failure to lead by example with respect to the deterrence norm, other states may be encouraged to question their decisions to

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Woolf, 11.

<sup>112</sup> Hewitson, 475.

automatically possess a nuclear doctrine that is solely based on deterrence. This can cause states to move further away from practices of nuclear restraint, thereby leading to nuclear weapons being used in an increasingly coercive manner. As a result, the international system can become increasingly unstable and dangerous, as it increases the chances of nuclear weapons' use, and can also lead to the start of an arms race between countries who feel an increasing need to provide for their protection.

### Chapter 5: Conclusion

In the international environment, social norms exist in order to regulate state behaviors and maintain a level of uniformity with interstate interactions. Although these norms may fade in and out of existence, certain norms have retained their relevance throughout time due to their continued promotion or their salience to the international context. Since the detonation of the first nuclear weapons in 1946, nuclear weapons have retained a central point of relevancy in the international community, and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. The norms related to them have thus retained a high level of relevancy in global security issues, making their implementation vital to their existence. Although there may be many international norms related to nuclear weapons, the three that were examined were the norms of nonproliferation, non-use, and deterrence.

Sitting at the center of this nuclear weapons normative regime is the United States. As the leading global superpower possessing vast amounts of international

influence and capital, as well as a possessor of almost half of the world's nuclear stockpile, the United States has considerable influence over the support and implementation of nuclear norms. This influence can be asserted through the implementation of social pressure upon states,<sup>113</sup> giving a pressuring state the ability to increase or decrease the popularity of the norm they are promoting. Therefore, the level of support and promotion that the United States displays towards these three norms can be considered to have a substantial effect on their international salience.

According to Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, one of the most effective ways for a leading state to exercise this norm promotion is through displaying “iterated behavior and habit.”<sup>114</sup> In other words, by repeatedly demonstrating behavior and habits that are in alignment with the values of the norm, a state can work to actively promote the norm's integration and acceptance within the international system. Thus, for the United States to successfully promote the three nuclear norms of nonproliferation, non-use, and deterrence, behaviors and actions should be taken that show support and consolidation with the norms and their values.

However, the actions taken on behalf of United States nuclear doctrine seem to highlight a key disparity between the United States' position as a normative leader, and the policies that are actually implemented. This has led to the creation of “nuclear hypocrisy” on behalf of the United States: although the United States has the position as a normative leader in the nuclear weapons regime and attempts to encourage other states to abide by them, the United States' behaviors simultaneously oppose the norms that they

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<sup>113</sup> Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,” *International Organization* 52 (1998): 895.

<sup>114</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink, 905

promote. As a result, weaker states who might look to the United States for direction on issues related to nuclear weapons due to the conflict between U.S. words and actions. This can create uncertainty and distrust about the value of nuclear norms among members of the international community, and result in the weakening of the norms themselves.

In order to exemplify this effect, this paper examined some of the George W. Bush administration's actions with respect to the U.S. nuclear doctrine, and applied it to the three aforementioned nuclear norms. In doing so, several key issues were revealed that highlighted the U.S. practice of nuclear hypocrisy. With regards to the first norm of nuclear nonproliferation, the United States has established itself as a normative leader of the nonproliferation regime due to its central role as a member of the NPT,<sup>115</sup> as well as its historical efforts to curb global nuclear proliferation.<sup>116</sup> However, although the United States may encourage other states to curb their efforts towards nuclear proliferation, the U.S. effort towards committing themselves towards nonproliferation is weak at best.

A good example of this contrast between words and actions is shown in the 2006 nuclear deal between the United States and India, in which the United States effectively undercut aspects of the NPT by allowing a non-nuclear weapons state (India) to be have the perks and recognition afforded to nuclear weapons states under the NPT.<sup>117</sup> Although the deal may have brought benefits to the United States, it ultimately demonstrated that the United States was willing to bend the tenants of the NPT when the situation presented benefits to them. As a result, the United States failed to demonstrate behaviors that were

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<sup>115</sup> George Perkovich, "Global Implications of the U.S.-India Deal," *Daedalus* (2010): 20.

<sup>116</sup> Richard Lugar, "Nunn-Lugar-A Tool for the New U.S.-Russian Strategic Relationship," *Mediterranean Quarterly* (2001): 5.

<sup>117</sup> Kate Heinzelman, "Towards Common Interests and Responsibilities: The U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Deal and the International Nonproliferation Regime," *Yale Journal of International Law* 33 (2008): 458.

in accordance with the nonproliferation norms' tenants, subsequently undermining their position as a leader and supporter of the norm. Moreover, states viewing the deal could reevaluate their commitments to nonproliferation under the NPT due to the normative leader of the NPT's displayed behavior that essentially violated its obligations. Therefore, the United States' decision to partake in the 2006 India nuclear deal undermined the U.S.'s reputation under the nonproliferation norm, and provided NPT member states with a reason to question their membership to the NPT.

The second norm that was examined was the nuclear non-use norm. As the first state to develop nuclear weapons, the United States has historically demonstrated that they support the non-use norm by abstaining from using nuclear weapons in multiple conflicts.<sup>118</sup> The United States' implementation of negative security assurances, or guarantees that they United States will not use nuclear weapons on states party to the NPT except under extreme circumstances,<sup>119</sup> only helps to solidify the importance and prominence of the non-use norm in the international system. However, the Bush administration's 2002 nuclear posture review included several aspects (predesignated nuclear strikes against five state that were party to the NPT, and nuclear retaliation in response to a chemical or biological weapons attack),<sup>120</sup> which served to undermine the non-use norm. By using nuclear weapons to preemptively target states that were party to the NPT, the United States undermined their commitments to negative security

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<sup>118</sup> Paul Avey, "Who's Afraid of the Bomb? The Role of Nuclear Non-Use Norms in Confrontations between Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Opponents," *Security Studies* 24 (2015): 570.

<sup>119</sup> George Bunn, "Expanding Nuclear Options: Is the U.S. Negating Its Non-Use Pledges?," *Arms Control Today* 26 (1996): 7.

<sup>120</sup> Patricia Hewitson, "Nonproliferation and Reduction of Nuclear Weapons: Risks of Weakening the Multilateral Nuclear Nonproliferation Norm," *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 21 (2003): 471.

assurances, and displayed behavior that increased their propensity to use nuclear weapons. In addition, the threat of nuclear retaliation to chemical and biological threats was a drastic turn from previous nuclear weapons' policy, and signaled the United States' shift towards becoming more prone to using nuclear weapons.<sup>121</sup> As a result of the two previously mentioned policies, the United States damaged their reputation as a leader of the non-use norm due to their inability to display behavior that was in accordance with the norm. This could lead some states to reevaluate the level to which they abide by the norm in the future, and cause the abandonment of the practice of some states' nuclear restraint.

The last norm examined was the deterrence norm. Similar to previous examples, the United States has played a large role in supporting and promoting the deterrence norm through its practices of retaining a deterrent posture through some extremely volatile situations, and through its creation of an international nuclear umbrella.<sup>122</sup> The norm is also reflected by other nuclear states as well, signaling its prominence and saliency within the international system. However, by possessing a nuclear stockpile whose size greatly surpasses that which is needed to maintain a credible extended-deterrent, the United States projects an image of a state that is using its extended-deterrence guarantees to justify the expansion of its nuclear arsenal.

Additional ways in which the United States undercuts the deterrence norm can be exemplified by the George W. Bush administration's 2002 Nuclear Posture Review, which called for the creation of new "low-yield" nuclear weapons, as well as declaring

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> "Conventional Weapons," United Nations Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, accessed November 12, 2017, <http://unrcpd.org/conventional-weapons/>, paragraph 1.

Washington's ability to use preemptive nuclear strikes.<sup>123</sup> Although these two policies enhanced the strategic value of U.S. deterrence, it ultimately harmed the normative value of deterrence by adopting nuclear policies that increases the chance of U.S. nuclear use. As a result, the United States damaged its own reputation as a leading supporter of the deterrence norm, and created a slippery slope which could result in the decrease of other states' practices of nuclear restraint.

Although this paper used the George W. Bush administration's nuclear doctrine in order to exemplify the United States' practice of nuclear hypocrisy, the examples used are not meant to be comprehensive. Instead, they are meant to serve as examples in order to highlight the U.S. disparity between their words and actions related to nuclear norms. These practices of nuclear hypocrisy have been present in multiple presidential administrations, and have the potential to arise in future administrations as well. Thus, when examining the international relations of states related to nuclear weapons, it is crucial to consider the strength of the norms surrounding the issue, and the extent to which these norms can influence state behavior. In doing so, we can grasp a more complete understanding of how the international system operates and of the ways in which the United States can positively or negatively influence states' behaviors.

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<sup>123</sup> Hewitson, 475.

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