



# The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation: Identity, Emotions and Foreign Policy

By Jacques E. C. Hymans

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Dozens of states have long been capable of acquiring nuclear weapons, yet only a few have actually done so. Jacques E. C. Hymans finds that the key to this surprising historical pattern lies not in externally imposed constraints, but rather in state leaders' conceptions of the national identity. Synthesizing a wide range of scholarship from the humanities and social sciences to experimental psychology and neuroscience, Hymans builds a rigorous model of decisionmaking that links identity to emotions and ultimately to nuclear policy choices. Exhaustively researched case studies of France, India, Argentina, and Australia - two that got the bomb and two that abstained - demonstrate the value of this model while debunking common myths. This book will be invaluable to policymakers and concerned citizens who are frustrated with the frequent misjudgments of states' nuclear ambitions, and to scholars who seek a better understanding of how leaders make big foreign policy decisions.

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*By Jacques E. C. Hymans*

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**The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation: Identity, Emotions and Foreign Policy** By Jacques E. C. Hymans **Bibliography**

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### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

"A novel, compelling challenge to the conventional wisdom on why some states obtain nuclear weapons. This systematic study provides important ideas regarding nuclear proliferation that will receive serious consideration."

Alexander George, Stanford University

"Hymans has written an exceptionally good book. He asks why states choose to develop nuclear weapons and finds that most of what we think we know about this critical decision is wrong. Challenging interpretations that rest on strategic calculations, norms in the international system and bureaucratic considerations, Hymans develops a novel theory emphasizing how individual leaders conceive of their nation's identity. He explores the power of his theory by analyzing the French, Argentine, Australian, and Indian decisions regarding nuclear weapons. His case-studies are rich histories in their own right, delving deeply into first-source documents and original interviews. Beyond the impressive theoretical and empirical contribution, Hymans also offers important policy lessons for the future that should be read widely."

Richard K. Herrmann, Ohio State University

"The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation is a sophisticated effort at theory building that draws together contemporary debates about identity and the latest research on affect/emotions to arrive at an explanation of why states go nuclear. This is also an excellent work of comparative foreign policy at its best: Hymans' execution of his comparative cases reveals the causal dynamics convincingly."

Yuen Foong Khong, University of Oxford

Overall, The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation is a bold, challenging, and important book. The theory is intriguing and supported by careful research, both quantitative and qualitative. It is a welcome addition that should spark further thought and research.

Robert Jervis, Columbia University, Political Psychology

Jacques Hymans offers an important cognitive model to the short library list of psychology-based literature in the field of nuclear proliferation.

The Nonproliferation Review

#### About the Author

Jacques E. C. Hymans is Associate Professor of International Relations at the University of Southern California. An expert on the politics of nuclear proliferation, he has published two single-authored books with Cambridge University Press, and numerous articles in peer-reviewed academic journals. Hymans received his bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees from Harvard University.

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#### **Edna McArdle:**

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### **Lou Marshall:**

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