

1 INTRODUCTION

IN AUGUST 2008, the world observed the sixty-third anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, history's first and only instances of nuclear attack. Since 1945, the nuclear age has generated considerable debate on the utility, morality, and legitimacy of the acquisition, possession, control, and use of nuclear weapons. Buried in the global discourse on the nuclear dilemma is the fact that atomic weapons have not been used militarily by any nuclear state since 1945. While their non-use between nuclear states may largely be explained by the operation of mutual deterrence, it remains a puzzle as to why these weapons have not been used against nonnuclear opponents, who could not retaliate in kind. In some cases, nuclear weapon states (NWS) have lost the wars they fought against nonnuclear weapon states (NNWS). Occasionally, NWS have experienced the temptation to use their atomic arms, yet desisted from doing so. In other instances, nonnuclear states initiated crises or wars, anticipating non-use of atomic weapons by the defending nuclear state. In some other cases, NNWS continued fighting with NWS, and thereby imposed enormous costs on the latter in personnel and resources, even though the NWS had the capability to retaliate with nuclear weapons and thus terminate the war expeditiously.

I argue that the unwillingness to use nuclear weapons can be partially attributed to an informal norm inherent in *the tradition of non-use*, which has gradually emerged since 1945. A tradition in this sense is a time-honored practice of non-use that has been followed by nuclear states since 1945 as an "accustomed obligation."¹ This tradition has largely been shaped by two

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dominant factors: first, an appreciation of the material character of the weapon concerned (i.e., the horrendous short- and long-term impact its use would create), beginning with Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but more powerfully entrenched following the hydrogen bomb tests in the early 1950s; second, the negative reputational effects its use would generate, especially in terms of projecting poor images, signaling wrong intentions, and setting bad precedents. The awareness among nuclear states that the unpredictability and enormity of nuclear weapons use actually reduced their utility for most strategic purposes involving nonnuclear states caused them to practice self-deterrence. Over time, the iterated non-use of nuclear weapons became self-perpetuating through the establishment of an informal norm: that is, later decisions to refrain from nuclear use were based, in part, on previous decisions to desist and a desire to continue the practice.

Tactical/strategic constraints also need to be examined in order to understand why nuclear arms have not been used since 1945. However, an explanation solely based on the tactical and strategic unsuitability of the weapon is unlikely to show us the larger picture of non-use for over sixty years as these considerations are context-dependent. The non-use of nuclear weapons under varying strategic/tactical circumstances suggests that other causal mechanisms might be operating more powerfully or alongside strategy and tactics in the choices of nuclear states. In other words, the story of non-use of nuclear arms is much larger than what a pure strategic/tactical account can offer. This book provides a larger discussion of the politics of nuclear non-use, not only in terms of the crisis decisions made by nuclear powers involving nonnuclear states but also from the perspectives of different states on the usability or non-usability of nuclear weapons in world politics at large.

Although previous works on the subject locate the reasons for non-use largely in either rationalist/materialistic or in normative/ideational considerations, I argue that both sets of factors need to be examined in order to get a comprehensive and more accurate view of the phenomenon of non-use. In that sense, this book approaches the subject on the basis of analytical eclecticism that has been proposed by some social scientists.² This approach also combines the *logic of consequences* and the *logic of appropriateness* as presented by James March and Johan Olsen. The reputational argument developed in Chapter 2 is based on a rational logic of consequences, while the normative argument inherent in the tradition of non-use relies on a logic of appropriateness. I argue that the reputational variables linked to the logic of

consequences are the primary causal factors for understanding the continued non-use of nuclear weapons, but the logic of appropriateness in the form of a normative prohibition inherent in the tradition of non-use has intermingled with the former, especially as the nuclear age has advanced.³ First, reputation arbiters such as scientists, strategists, peace movements, and developing-country leaders helped increase the reputational costs of nuclear use through compelling arguments using a logic of appropriateness as well as a logic of consequences. Second, the practice of non-use became reinforced through iteration over time, through mechanisms that included both the entrenchment of costs for using nuclear weapons (consequences) and the development of ideas about responsible state behavior (appropriateness).

This book approaches the subject from a puzzle-driven perspective as opposed to a purely paradigm-driven approach. While paradigms offer disciplinary coherence, allowing scholars to devote their energies to research programs that share common assumptions, premises, dominant variables, and units of analysis, they also limit the prospects for answering pressing policy issues or intellectual puzzles that do not have black-or-white answers. Further, when analysts attempt to pigeonhole explanations to fit one paradigm or another, they tend to leave out the nuances involved in the explanation for the phenomenon they study. The effort in this book is to offer a richer analysis and not to create a grand theory but an intermediate theory, in order to explain the puzzle of nuclear non-use.⁴

The tradition seems to have emerged due to the realizations that nuclear weapons are radically different from conventional weapons and that their use would show the user in an excessively bad light in international public opinion. However, beyond reputation, there exists a practical value of non-use to the NWS, especially for the United States and the Soviet Union. The reputation for non-use served the twin goals of U.S. international security policy during the Cold War, that is, preserving peace through mutual deterrence but at the same time preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union had similar objectives vis-à-vis the West and the developing world. In this sense, this has been a partially “invented tradition” (a practice that is deliberately constructed) in order to impart legitimacy for the major powers’ monopoly over nuclear weapons.⁵ Moral, ethical, and legal factors are important to the extent that they enter into reputational considerations. Since it is not a formal, enforceable legal norm, but a practice followed by the nuclear states, I use the term *informal norm* to denote the normative restraint inherent in the

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tradition of non-use. Moreover, most nuclear states proclaim that they intend to use their weapons only under certain circumstances—for example, to deter or retaliate against challenges to the vital interests of their nation-state, including survival. In contrast, when it comes to the use of chemical or biological weapons, most of these states have made legal commitments, and tend to deny any deterrence or retaliatory intent. In that respect, the nuclear non-use norm is legally less enshrined than the norms against the use of chemical and biological weapons (although, ironically, these norms have been more widely violated). Therefore, until it becomes a full-fledged legal prohibition, the nuclear non-use norm will remain an informal norm rooted in a tradition.

In order to gain a broader understanding of the tradition of non-use, this book examines several interrelated questions. First, what have been the reasons for the unwillingness of nuclear weapons states, both new and old, to use their capability against nonnuclear adversaries in war? Second, what have been the calculations of nonnuclear states that confronted nuclear powers on the battlefield? Third, if nuclear use is constrained by reputational considerations, what are the implications for theories of deterrence and compellence, as well as for the political utility of these weapons as instruments of power? Fourth, does the existence of the unequal nuclear nonproliferation regime partially depend on the maintenance of this tradition? Specifically, what role did it play in the bargain between nuclear haves and have-nots, especially in the conclusion of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and its continued existence? Fifth, how resilient or fragile is this informal norm? Do new political and technological developments have the potential to unravel the restraining power of the tradition? If so, what precisely are these forces in the contemporary and emerging international system? Finally, does the preservation of the tradition of non-use serve any fundamental interests of the global community (involving both nuclear and nonnuclear states)? If yes, what are they?

TABOO OR TRADITION?

Many analysts explain the non-use of nuclear weapons by referring to a “taboo” that arose against their use.⁶ Others refer to the practice of non-use as a “tradition.” The terms are often used interchangeably, although they have different meanings. The presence of a taboo-like prohibition against nuclear use has been noted by important scholars and policy makers such as Thomas Schelling, McGeorge Bundy, and Robert McNamara. Former American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles initially used the term *taboo* to describe

the unwritten prohibition against the use of nuclear weapons. On October 7, 1953, Dulles was reported to have said: "Somehow or other we must manage to remove the taboo from the use of these weapons."⁷ Dulles was in favor of developing usable nuclear weapons to obtain the key battlefield military objectives of the United States in Korea. George Ball presented a stringent prohibition when he contended that the revulsion against nuclear use "has enveloped nuclear weapons in a rigid taboo," and that the nation that first broke it "would suffer universal condemnation."⁸

While scholars such as Bernard Brodie saw no purpose in nuclear weapons other than deterrence, Thomas Schelling popularized the concept of a "tradition of non-use" in his writings in the 1960s. In his words, what makes atomic weapons different is a powerful tradition for their non-use, "a jointly recognized expectation that they may not be used in spite of declarations of readiness to use them, even in spite of tactical advantages in their use."⁹ A tradition in this respect is based on a habit or disposition that prevents the use of nuclear weapons as a serious option for consideration by decision makers.¹⁰ Schelling argues that the main reason for the non-use of nuclear weapons is the perception that they are unique and that once introduced into combat they could not be "contained, restrained, confined, or limited."¹¹ Although prolonged conventional war can also cause somewhat similar levels of casualties, the difference is in the perception of the impact.¹² The swiftness with which widespread destruction can take place and the lingering aftereffects in the form of radiation hazards are the distinguishing marks of nuclear weapon use vis-à-vis attacks relying on conventional weapons.

Social Taboos

While it is possible that some elements of a taboo-like prohibition might exist, the tradition of non-use does not contain a strict prohibitory norm. Let us explore what a taboo means in order to assess whether the literal use of the term is justified in this instance. The term *taboo* is derived from the Polynesian word *tabu* or *tapu* which means "prohibition." In its sociological aspects, it refers to "a system of prohibitions observed as customs."¹³ A taboo arises from the fear of something "mystically dangerous," and generally its authority is based on custom. As Webster states: "The authority of a taboo is unmatched by that of any other prohibition. There is no reflection on it, no reasoning about it, no discussion of it. A taboo amounts simply to an imperative thou-shalt-not in the presence of the danger apprehended."¹⁴ Taboo

denotes the prohibitions arising from the mysterious attributes of a person, thing, or place, or a transitory condition. To Freud, it connotes attributes such as “sacred,” “consecrated,” “above the ordinary,” “dangerous,” “forbidden,” “unclean,” and “uncanny.”¹⁵ It thus refers to a social prohibition on a human activity considered as forbidden or sacred.

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, a taboo is a “prohibition of an action or the use of an object based on ritualistic distinctions of them either as being sacred and consecrated or as being dangerous, unclean, and accursed.” Taboos “include prohibitions on fishing or picking fruits at certain seasons; food taboos that restrict the diet of pregnant women; prohibitions on talking to or touching chiefs or members of other high social classes; taboos on walking or traveling in certain areas, such as forests; and various taboos that function during important life events such as birth, marriage, and death.”¹⁶ Assumptions of danger and fear of repercussions of the particular act committed characterize most social taboos. For some social taboos, the anticipated repercussions could be in the form of disease or death or an incalculable trauma to the victim, the violator, and his or her associates, while for others, it could be shame, embarrassment, and social isolation.¹⁷ For some social taboos, the violator is stigmatized as “eccentric” and “abnormal,” although the level of punishment and redemption could vary from one social taboo to another.¹⁸

In modern societies, there are a number of well-established social taboos in evidence. They include restrictions on diets, sexual activities, and exposure of particular body parts. Two of the most significant ones are the taboos against incest and cannibalism.¹⁹ These two acts are not only forbidden by law, but people rarely discuss them in regular conversations. In other words, ordinarily people do not wish to talk about them, and when they hear that transgressions have occurred, reactions are usually those of horror and disgust; the transgressor is characterized as a “psychopath” who is in need of urgent psychiatric intervention. People in general observe these and other social taboos not simply because of the legal prohibitions against them, but because of the socially accepted understanding of their prohibition. Taboos are also powerful instruments of social order, although some of them may not have a clear rational basis.

Why Is Nuclear Non-Use a Tradition?

As discussed above, the tradition of non-use of nuclear weapons has been characterized as equivalent to a taboo, although many scholars and practitioners use the term *taboo* in a figurative and a loose sense, as an unwritten

and uncodified prohibitory norm against nuclear use. The term is also used to the extent that both social and nuclear taboos are based on the fear of consequences of a given course of action. Similarly, both may be reinforced by legal and nonlegal restraints and considerations as well. Thus, like social taboos, the nuclear taboo is likely to have been influenced by a number of considerations—moral and legal norms and rational calculations in particular. The nuclear taboo might have arisen as a response to a realization of the danger or the unforeseeable consequences of a nuclear war. The mysterious attributes of the weapon might have played a role in the creation and persistence of the taboo. States George Quester: “The very notion of a ‘taboo’ involves a ban on human behavior that is not subjected continuously to a rational balancing of costs and benefits, but that settles in, through wide-spread social acceptance, as an axiomatic redefinition of what constitutes legitimate behavior.”²⁰

But the differences between well-entrenched social taboos and the nuclear taboo are many. Most social taboos are punishable acts—punishable either by the community (through customs) or the state (through law), each expecting observance by its members. The legal and moral opprobria are so strong that transgressors of powerful social taboos, if caught, would be punished seriously, and their fundamental rights could be curtailed drastically. This is also the case with many social taboos practiced in tribal societies. Some such societies imposed the death penalty on transgressors of deeply held taboos.

In contrast, the prohibition against nuclear use is not as absolute as in the case of many social taboos. International law does not explicitly prohibit the use of nuclear weapons, especially if it is in retribution or in the protection of a state in danger of being overrun. This is clear in the judgment on the legality of nuclear weapons offered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in July 1996, holding that neither customary nor conventional international law explicitly prohibits the use of nuclear weapons, although nuclear use could be considered to be a violation of international humanitarian law under most circumstances. The majority opinion stated: “The threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law.” It continued: “However, in view of the current state of international law, and of the elements of fact at its disposal, the Court cannot conclude definitively whether the threat or use of nuclear weapons would be lawful or unlawful in an extreme circumstance of self-defense, in which the very survival of a State would be at stake.”²¹ The court did not clarify what constitutes

an extreme circumstance of self-defense, thereby leaving its judgment open to interpretation by the national leadership during times of crisis. Moreover, the court did not “address the status of self-defence claims in circumstances where no nuclear weapons are threatened, used or even possessed by an aggressor state that has put the survival of its adversary at risk.”²² Despite the apparent lack of stringent legal sanctions, nuclear states still have been reluctant to use these weapons, and this has been viewed as due to a taboo-like prohibition.²³ However, the regulatory aspect in this respect is ambiguous, as there is no formal punishment mechanism for violation of the nuclear taboo, while the effects of informal punishments such as shame and humiliation are at best uncertain. Social taboos will not persist without expectations of severe punishments if the taboo is broken.²⁴

In some other aspects as well, the tradition of non-use of nuclear weapons is not as powerful as social taboos such as the ones against incest or cannibalism. The difference is that nation-states have contingency plans to use nuclear weapons under certain circumstances. Individuals do not even consider breaking deeply held social taboos (as the concept implies no rational consideration of performing a forbidden act), such as those against incest or cannibalism—unless the perpetrator is a psychopath or is facing extreme circumstances such as extinction. In contrast, supposedly rational military planners of responsible states have considered and continue to assess the possibility of nuclear use. The doctrines and strategies, especially those of the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, and France, have kept open the option of nuclear use against nonnuclear states under certain contingencies. The procurement and deployment of nuclear weapons by rational military organizations suggest that they envision nuclear use. Deterrence against conventional and nonconventional attacks prompts most nuclear states to keep the first-use option open, but the expansion of possible use for purposes beyond deterrence, including maintaining the credibility of power status, compellence, prevention, preemption, signaling resolve, getting allies and adversaries to intervene on one’s side, and domestic political calculations, suggests the wide range of uses for nuclear weapons perceived by decision makers of nuclear states. For most nuclear states, the redlines for nuclear use have been changing, especially in the post-Cold War era as deterrence against nuclear attack is no longer the only consideration for the threat of nuclear retaliation. The chance of use, however improbable, lies beneath the threat of use, even when the threatening party, in reality, does not want to consummate the

threat. Even if, in the first instance, there is no intention to carry out a threat, such an intention can change if the target does not comply and the sender perceives high credibility costs in not following the threat through. Therefore, the threat of use also is a form of violation of the taboo against nuclear use. Using a strict definition of the term *taboo*, a leader is not supposed to even contemplate the option.

Given the fact that some nuclear states maintain the option of nuclear first use, I argue that the tradition of non-use is not yet a taboo or a fully developed formal norm. Rather it is an informal social norm. Conceptually, norms are characterized by “regularities of behavior” containing “sanctions for failing to follow them.”²⁵ Social norms are “widely internalized patterns of behavior, deviation from which is likely to meet with social disapproval . . . law often indirectly influences such action by shaping social norms.”²⁶ Martha Finnemore defines norms as “shared expectations about appropriate behavior held by a community of actors. Unlike ideas which may be held privately, norms are shared and social; they are not subjective, but inter-subjective. Ideas may or may not have behavioral implications; norms by definition concern behavior.”²⁷ But different social norms have varying strengths, and hence have different impacts on national choices in disparate realms. Legal support may be necessary for a norm to be called a hard or formal norm. Those norms that lack a strong legal basis are soft or intermediate norms derived from informal customs and practices. Legal norms, even though they can also be violated, nevertheless raise the bar for infringement.

If fully developed as a hard legal norm, the practice of non-use would be treaty-based, and the principal norm in this regard would read: “nuclear states shall not use their nuclear weapons against nonnuclear states,” under circumstances in which survival is not immediately threatened. No nuclear state has made an unequivocal legally binding commitment to this effect. They have made partial assurances to NPT signatories, but in recent years have changed those pledges to allow for nuclear weapons use against nonnuclear states holding and threatening to use chemical and biological weapons. They have opposed any formal agreement on non-use. In fact, nuclear states do not want to accept the formal existence of such a norm, lest the credibility of their policies of nuclear deterrence and compellence suffer. Their unwillingness may also result from a fear of further raising the bar for nuclear use, suggesting that legality does have an impact in their calculations. However, they have made limited pledges of no first use toward members of the NPT in good standing.

If the tradition of non-use were a full-fledged norm, an associated proposition would read: “nuclear states shall not make loose nuclear threats against non-nuclear states.” Threats, by their very nature, presume a contingent use. This dimension of the norm has been violated, especially by the United States and Israel, in the context of conflicts in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. Further, if it is a full-fledged taboo-like prohibition, a third associated norm would read: “nuclear states shall not introduce nuclear weapons into theaters of conflict with non-nuclear states.” Such introduction implies a potential willingness to use, however improbable it may be. This norm has also been violated in the Korean, Falklands, and Gulf conflict zones. In other words, the norm needs to be unconditional in order for it to qualify as a hard norm. For the norm of non-use of nuclear weapons to be robust, resembling a taboo-like prohibition, the above-mentioned three components should be observed continuously by nuclear states.

The discussions by legal scholars of formal and informal laws are useful here in clarifying the concept of the tradition of non-use even further. Formal laws are equivalent to hard laws that are “created using precise constitutional processes,” as opposed to “norms that are not produced through specific sources or processes.” Hard law is assumed to be more “precise,” “inevitably more effective,”²⁸ and binding, whereas informal law is “based upon the premise that certain principles are important, and should ideally shape international law and policy even if they are not binding.”²⁹ International lawyers also “speak of a progression along a continuum from soft to hard law, though this progression is by no means inevitable or invariably desirable,” and “identifying the point on the continuum where the ‘soft norm’ becomes a ‘hard’ is notoriously challenging.”³⁰ Some scholars also believe that social norms, by definition, are different from legal norms. Legal norms are “created by design—usually through some kind of deliberative process, precisely specified in written texts, linked to particular sanctions, and enforced by a specialized bureaucracy. Social norms, by contrast, often are spontaneous rather than deliberately planned (hence, of uncertain origin), unwritten (hence, their content and rules for application are often imprecise), and enforced informally.”³¹ This does not mean states cannot break norms enshrined in international law. But breaking a legal norm becomes harder (but not impossible) as a norm is enshrined in precise legal terms. Legal texts add another layer to the strength of a norm, and in that sense legal norms are superior to social norms that do not have legality attached to them. However, even informal social norms

have restraining power on states, as in the nuclear area, the main theme of this book.

The tradition of non-use of nuclear weapons has not made the progression from an informal norm to a legal norm because of the desire of nuclear states to maintain ambiguity in their nuclear policies for deterrence and compellence purposes. The key test for the robustness of the non-use norm is whether it has only limited declaratory or rhetorical value or whether states observe it in the face of compelling circumstances. Are nonnuclear states fairly confident that the threat of use of nuclear weapons is not going to be executed due to the presence of the norm? Historically, how has the norm affected the choices of the concerned states, both nuclear and nonnuclear, in crisis and noncrisis situations? Is it possible that the ambiguity inherent in the informal norm of non-use is both a weakness and a strength, because it allows a certain amount of malleability for deterrence purposes? Does it offer partial legitimacy to the unequal nuclear possession allowed by the NPT, since the permanent five (P-5) major powers of the United Nations (UN) Security Council are permitted to keep their weapons as custodians of international security while assuring other states that they would not be attacked with nuclear weapons and that they do not need to possess nuclear weapons in order to deter NWS? In this sense, can the preservation of the informal norm be explained by the considerable strategic advantages that it offers to nuclear and nonnuclear states?

Although it is not a fully developed legal norm, the non-use of nuclear weapons has been a standard expected behavior of nuclear states over an extended period of time. The non-use of nuclear weapons due to deterrent threats is to be excluded from the purview of the tradition, as it is often difficult to distinguish whether nuclear weapons were not used because of the tradition or because of a fear of retaliation. This study therefore strictly limits the tradition to the non-use of nuclear weapons by nuclear states against nonnuclear states. In addition, nuclear states have so far desisted from using their nuclear weapons for preventive purposes (i.e., the rise of a new nuclear state) despite threatening to do so, suggesting that the tradition may have broader relevance.

As I demonstrate in Chapter 2, the tradition of non-use has developed due to both rational-materialistic and reputational considerations, and has emerged as a key source of self-deterrence practiced by nuclear states vis-à-vis nonnuclear powers. Historical examples, largely drawn from U.S. policy, suggest

that nuclear use has been considered but rejected. At times, this was due to instrumental strategic and tactical reasons, that is, nuclear attack would not have achieved stated strategic and tactical objectives. However, the empirical evidence, as presented in Chapters 3 and 4, demonstrates that the larger reasons appear to be reputational and norm-driven, as self-deterrence was practiced by leaders even in contexts where they perceived tactical suitability of nuclear use.

The awesome destructive power of nuclear weapons gave the basic impetus to the rise of the tradition of non-use, as the potential for total destruction gives nuclear weapons an all-or-nothing character unlike any other weapon invented so far. This means a nuclear state may not use its ultimate capability unless a threshold is crossed, for example, when a vital issue, such as the survival of the state itself, is threatened. The notion of a “weapon of last resort” is crucial here. Decision makers and the public at large in most NWS believe that there is great danger in the use of nuclear weapons with respect to casualties and aftereffects, in both psychological and physical terms. Breaking the tradition would elicit the revulsion of generations to come, unless it was for a question of extremely vital importance, such as the physical existence of the nuclear state or its key allies. It would bring severe reputational costs to the user and result in an extremely bad precedent. Nuclear use could also push some of the hitherto nonnuclear states to attempt to acquire nuclear weapons capability as their own independent national deterrent.

The tradition has been observed by all established and new nuclear states thus far. Nations with different ideological and political systems and military traditions—the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, and Israel—have not used them in conflict, pointing toward the emergence of a global “recognition that nuclear weapons are unusable across much of the range of traditional military and political interests.”³² The unwillingness of the United States to use them in Korea and Vietnam to obtain a decisive military victory, and the Soviet demurral from using them to avert defeat in Afghanistan (although it would have been difficult in the context of the guerilla resistance they were facing),³³ suggest the entrenchment of the tradition among the superpowers even during the peak years of the Cold War era. Paradoxically, both the United States and the Soviet Union used chemical weapons (in Vietnam and Afghanistan, respectively) even though they were waging war against guerilla forces.³⁴ The Chinese aversion to using nuclear

weapons against Vietnam to obtain victory in the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War indicates that other nuclear powers have observed the tradition of non-use as well.

THE CHAPTERS

In Chapter 2, two perspectives are presented, one that rejects the tradition and the other that views nuclear non-use as a strict taboo-like prohibition. The former is based on *realpolitik* skepticism, while the latter is developed by Constructivist scholars. After looking at the strengths and weaknesses of both perspectives, I develop an eclectic model of non-use, combining reputational and normative factors that cause the practice of self-deterrence among nuclear states. This rationalist-normative analysis attempts to capture how and why the tradition emerged and became acceptable to a wide variety of states of different ideological coloration, while elucidating its rational/instrumental value for both nuclear and nonnuclear states. Chapters 3 and 4 look at how the tradition developed in the United States and how it was sustained, despite pressures on or temptations for successive American presidents to use nuclear weapons in different regional conflicts. Chapter 5 focuses on the other P-5 powers—Russia, Britain, France, and China—and examines their policies toward nuclear use and their contributions toward the development and sustenance of the informal norm. Chapter 6 explores the nuclear policies of India and Pakistan and the undeclared nuclear state, Israel, and their approaches toward nuclear use in general and the tradition of non-use in particular. Chapter 7 focuses on NNWS and their perceptions of the tradition while engaging in wars with nuclear powers. It probes the calculations of NNWS that initiated wars against NWS and the unwillingness of NNWS to give up their conflicts once they were well underway, even when their opponents held nuclear weapons. In Chapter 8, the relationship between the tradition and the nonproliferation regime is discussed. Of particular interest are the efforts by the NNWS to convert the informal norm into a formal enforceable legal norm by demanding negative security guarantees, and through their efforts at the UN General Assembly, the NPT bargaining table, and the World Court (on a decision on the legality of nuclear use). With respect to nonproliferation, it is crucial to see why 184 NNWSs (of whom several are technologically capable) have, by signing the NPT, given up their option to acquire nuclear weapons, while allowing the five declared states to possess them. Are they assured that

there exists a normative prohibition against nuclear use and that these weapons are only intended for deterrence? If so, why do NNWS then constantly demand a formal no-first-use commitment from nuclear weapon states? Is this demand a reflection of a lack of complete faith in the tradition? It appears that they are eagerly pursuing a formal norm through the creation of a legal instrument because of their desire to make the tradition of non-use a robust legal norm.

Chapter 9 analyzes the changing nuclear policy of the United States in response to the complex security environment since the end of the Cold War, and especially after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. It is argued that the current U.S. nuclear policy and possible development of new weapons may undermine the tradition. The concluding chapter presents the findings of the study and implications of the tradition of non-use. The key implications are for deterrence theory and policy, as well as for compellence and coercive diplomacy. There are other implications as well, both for the prospects of nuclear war and for nuclear disarmament. The chapter concludes with a cost/benefit assessment of the preservation of the tradition and its utility in a wide range of areas of national and international security interests. I conclude that the informal norm's survival in perpetuity is highly desirable, but is contingent on several factors, including the specific destructive character of the nuclear weapons available today and in the foreseeable future. The policy implication is that if the informal norm is to achieve higher potency, unambiguous legal sanctions will have to be developed and decision makers will have to internalize the norm fully and nurture it so that nuclear weapons, be they small or large, will never again be used as an instrument of interstate war and intimidation.