

Bomb Scare



Book by Joseph Cirincione

Presentation by William Barber and Jose Romero

About The Book

- Argues in favour of nuclear non-proliferation movement
- Primarily provides utilitarian arguments
 - Focuses on practicality of nuclear weapons and non-proliferation
- Identifies five drivers/barriers of proliferation:
 - Security
 - Prestige
 - Domestic Politics
 - Technology
 - Economics
- Each factor can be a driver or a barrier

Security

Driver

- Nuclear weapons protect sovereignty
- Nuclear states are more threatening to non-nuclear states

Barrier

- Proliferation drives proliferation
- Non-nuclear enemies are more threatening than nuclear enemies
- Nuclear allies can provide protection

“Unilateral possession of nuclear weapons may provide security; a region of many nuclear weapon states increases insecurity.” (page 79)

Prestige

Driver

- Nuclear states can be “great powers”
- National identity

Barrier

- International norms against nuclear weapons
- Leadership/acceptance in international community

“Possession of nuclear weapons...makes these states feel more powerful, relevant, and respected.” (page 84)

“Over time...the majority of governments came to view nuclear weapons as dangerous and unnecessary” (page 87)

Domestic Politics

Driver

- Individual government departments seek prestige
- Public demand

Barrier

- Public opposition
- Regime/prioritization changes

“The nukes were a matter of prestige to the artillery...I was asking his branch to give up a part of itself.” (page 97)

Technology

Driver

- A state has the skills to develop them
- A state has the materials to build them
- Scientific achievements (science for itself)

Barrier

- A state doesn't have the skills to develop them
- States cannot acquire the materials to build them

“If we know these bombs can be built, then they will be built, some said, since every weapon that could be made, has been made.” (page 98)

“There are forty-four ‘nuclear-capable’ states...Less than one-fourth of these nation have nuclear weapons or are attempting to develop them.” (page 102)

Economics

Driver

- Can be cheaper than conventional forces

Barrier

- Nuclear weapons programs are expensive
- Economic sanctions by other states
- Opportunity cost: what could be done with the money instead?

“In the 1950s, for instance, U.S. nuclear policy was driven in part by the belief that nuclear weapons...provided a ‘bigger bang for a buck.’” (page 106)

“Nuclear weapons...are always deployed in addition to conventional forces, not as substitutes for those forces.” (page 106)

What do different ethical frameworks say?

For proliferation

- Utilitarianism
 - Not used in battle since WWII
 - Might prevent wars (as deterrent)
 - Enforcement of non-proliferation is difficult, and might result in a single nuclear power dominating all nations
- Contractualism
 - States have an obligation to follow the will of the people, and protect those people
 - If people want nuclear weapons, and they will protect them, then it should be done
- Egoism
 - Nuclear states get benefits (security, power, etc.), so development is in their self-interest

Against proliferation

- Utilitarianism
 - Nuclear weapons use causes great harm to many people
 - Development of nuclear weapons costs money that should be spent on providing benefits to citizens
- Kantianism
 - Nuclear weapons are developed not out of a strong conviction that it is the right thing to do, but out of national self-interest, which is not universalizable
- Egoism
 - Development of weapons spurs other nations to develop weapons, which hurts national security