Response Week 10

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HST 415 / Alex Wellerstein

What other nations did the US threaten to pull out support for that settled with the NPT? Who would North Korea sell knockoff technology to? When is the book coming out?

The song “Who’s next” by Tom Lehrer seems to have aged well at least to me. The countries that have pulled out of the NPT deal have gotten their bombs easily. It seems that if a country wants to get a bomb or bomb making equipment they can if they want. The US fears that this proliferation would spread is well founded, however it does not look like they did the right thing in terms of stopping proliferation with some of these countries. Israel is a good example, the situation was complicated to start with, and then they went and built their own bombs secretly against the NPT deal. The US instead of punishing them, did absolutely nothing. This kind of proves that the US technically cannot control proliferation. I personally thought that the song exposed this in a new way, countries can do whatever they want, and the US can only guess who will be next.

For the arguments more is better vs. less is better, they both seem compelling in different ways. The more is better argument is a good argument because it is not only the US that gets to dictate international policy. A country that has no nuclear weapons cannot bargain or ask the US to get rid of their own. Only when the countries get nuclear weapons like France and India, is when they can ask for a seat at the table. The nuclear weapon treaty banning nuclear weapons that the non-nuclear countries have signed will have no effect on countries like the US or China. I can’t see the US ever giving up their nuclear arsenal. However, if all countries has a few weapons of their own. They would all be on the same playing field and theoretically mutually assured destruction will be just as relevant as it was during the cold war. An issue with this are politically unstable regions like India and Pakistan, but even they understand the implications if a bomb was ever set off.

This brings me to the less is better point. The less countries that have nuclear capabilities, the less of a threat there would be of one being set off. The cold war was pretty tense and was terrifying to think about how little control the statesmen had over the situation. I am pretty peaceful and would go with the less is better argument for the sake of not having to worry about being bombed every day. Which thankfully I haven’t had to worry about. Then of course the problem would be some rogue entity building a bomb like North Korea and being able to threaten us without us being able to defend ourselves. I don’t know these arguments both have pros and cons that have major political implications.