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EFFECTS OF ALLIANCE CREDIBILITY AND FORCE POSTURE: HOW NON-NUCLEAR STATES UNDER NUCLEAR ALLIANCES STRATEGICALLY MANEUVER WITHIN THE REALM OF PROLIFERATION

How does a non-nuclear weapon state (NNWS) under a nuclear alliance which re-assesses its security calculations— decide whether to absolutely rely on extended deterrence or pursue an independent nuclear weapons program? This article examines the options available to allied NNWS who revisit their extended deterrence arrangements, and how they manoeuvre to adjust their options during transformations in their security environment. When a non-nuclear client state of a nuclear alliance re-assesses the risks and opportunities of its security policy, it is likely to be posed with the question of whether to pursue an independent nuclear weapons programs or completely rely on the deterrence extended by the senior nuclear ally. I argue that a client's decision at this stage is tri-pronged, manoeuvred by three main dimensions a) patron state's posture b) attributes of the guarantee and c) client state's posture. I quantitatively operationalize the three dimensions using determinants found within the existing scholarship. The transitions of client states are mapped for the period of 1949-2022, generating an original universal dataset. Utilizing an event history analysis, I assess the three dimensions against the proliferative ambitions of the NNWS. This research aims at making an original theoretical and data contribution alongside an effort to address the policy concern on the trends of nuclear alliance architecture and its viability in nuclear arms control nonproliferation.

nuclear alliances, non-nuclear client states, nuclear-capable patron states, credible commitment, force posture, independent nuclear weapons programs, arms control and nonproliferation