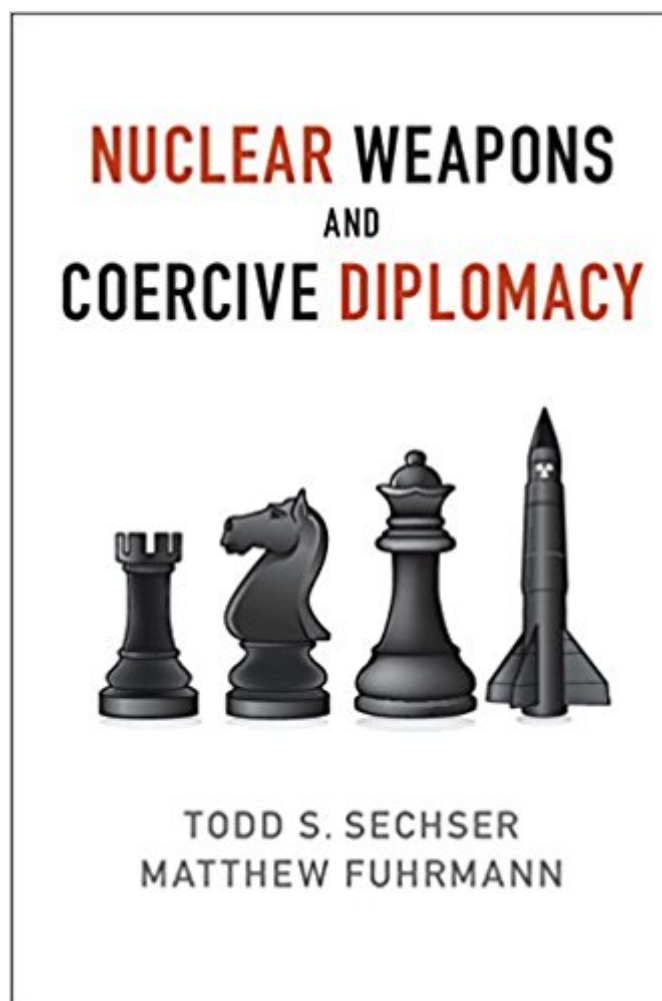


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# Nuclear Weapons And Coercive Diplomacy



## Synopsis

Are nuclear weapons useful for coercive diplomacy? Since 1945, most strategic thinking about nuclear weapons has focused on deterrence - using nuclear threats to prevent attacks against the nation's territory and interests. But an often overlooked question is whether nuclear threats can also coerce adversaries to relinquish possessions or change their behavior. Can nuclear weapons be used to blackmail other countries? The prevailing wisdom is that nuclear weapons are useful for coercion, but this book shows that this view is badly misguided. Nuclear weapons are useful mainly for deterrence and self-defense, not for coercion. The authors evaluate the role of nuclear weapons in several foreign policy contexts and present a trove of new quantitative and historical evidence that nuclear weapons do not help countries achieve better results in coercive diplomacy. The evidence is clear: the benefits of possessing nuclear weapons are almost exclusively defensive, not offensive.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

'This fascinating book is, I believe intentionally, more provocative than merely persuasive, more skeptical than most among us are. It looks at the history of international negotiation, both explicit and by maneuver, in the presence of nuclear weapons and concludes that disparities in nuclear armaments - including zero on one side - make much less difference than they are given credit for. If the argument doesn't persuade you, the forty case studies of nuclear weapons in crisis bargaining (eleven involving the United States) will make you think it over.' Thomas C. Schelling, Winner of the

2005 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences' Todd S. Sechser and Matthew Fuhrmann make a compelling case that, during the Cold War, nuclear weapons played a critically important role in deterring a nuclear attack on the US; but, importantly, they argue that this was the only role they played. They did not deter the many other security crises we had to deal with, including the Berlin crisis, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. And they argue that this historical fact has great significance to today's security issues. This book is an important read, not only for its clear articulation of history, but for its relevance to planning nuclear forces or nuclear policy today.'

William J. Perry, former United States Secretary of Defense' This is the most important study on nuclear compellence since Richard Betts published his landmark book in 1987. In fact, Sechser and Fuhrmann have likely written the definitive study on why nuclear compellence has not worked and cannot work.'

Robert J. Art, Christian A. Herter Professor of International Relations, Brandeis University, Massachusetts' Scholars and policymakers have long debated whether obtaining nuclear weapons would allow powerful states to bully or blackmail weaker adversaries, but previous efforts to address this question have lacked both strong logical foundations and systematic empirical evidence. In this rigorous and clearly written study, Todd S. Sechser and Matthew Fuhrmann explain why nuclear superiority confers far less leverage than hardliners typically believe. It is a model of policy-relevant social science that deserves a wide audience.'

Stephen M. Walt, Robert and Renee Belfer Professor of International Affairs, Harvard University, Massachusetts' How do nuclear weapons shape international politics? Does the possession of nuclear weapons provide states with coercive advantages during a crisis? Many scholars and policy makers assume that they do. In their well-researched, crisply argued book, Todd S. Sechser and Matthew Fuhrmann rely on both historical and quantitative approaches to develop their theory of nuclear skepticism. Nuclear weapons, they argue, remain powerful tools for deterrence but contribute little to successful coercive diplomacy. This is an important book: Sechser and Fuhrmann's arguments have potentially significant consequences for both our understanding of nuclear dynamics and the practice of nuclear statecraft, and deserve great attention and debate.'

Francis J. Gavin, Frank Stanton Chair in Nuclear Security Policy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology' A solid and thorough deconstruction and reconstruction of theories about the utility of nuclear threats. Required reading for anyone interested in nuclear diplomacy.'

Bruce M. Russett, Dean Acheson Professor of Political Science, Yale University, Connecticut

Can nuclear weapons be used to blackmail other countries? The prevailing wisdom is that nuclear weapons are useful for coercion in world politics, but this book shows that this view is misguided.

Nuclear weapons are useful mainly for deterrence and self-defense, not for coercion.

Tough subject. A trifle dry.

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