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STRATEGIC CULTURE AND NON-NUCLEAR WEAPON OUTCOMES: THE CASES OF AUSTRALIA, SOUTH AFRICA AND SWEDEN

by

STUART EDWARD POORE

thesis submitted for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

OCTOBER 2000

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

<u>Doctor of Philosophy</u>

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<u>ABSTRACT</u>

This thesis uses a "strategic culture" approach to gain insights into non-nuclear weapon outcomes in Australia, South Africa and Sweden. Strategic culture refers to the ideational and cultural pre-dispositions possessed by states towards military strategic issues. The theoretical aim for this research is to explore the various conceptions of strategic culture offered in the literature and to evaluate the potential benefits of conducting strategic cultural research.

Strategic Studies has traditionally been dominated by realist theories, which typically provide rationalist materialist explanations for outcomes. This thesis highlights the relevance of domestic strategic cultural context to strategic decision-making and, in the process, explores the potential inadequacies of non-cultural strategic analysis. It will be contended that strategic culture is ill-suited to provide an alternative theory to explain causes of outcomes. Instead it provides an *approach* for investigating the "cultural conditions of possibility" for strategic decision-making. These will be seen as constituting the assumptions made by theories that pursue rationalist materialist ontologies.

Non-nuclear weapon outcomes are potentially problematic for realist explanations by suggesting instances of states not maximising their power by acquiring the most powerful weaponry. This thesis focuses on non-nuclear decision-making in Australia, South Africa and Sweden. In each case it is possible to identify distinctive strategic cultural proclivities which have shaped perceptions of security-material factors. The aim is therefore to provide a thick description of these cultural tendencies and to explore how they affect nuclear decision-making. This will provide insights into why the non-cultural accounts which dominate the literature on these non-nuclear outcomes, might be inadequate. Equally, it will emphasise the value of pursuing a strategic culture approach.

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Acknowledgements

List Of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAEC	Australian Atomic Energy Commission
AEB	Atomic Energy Board
AEC	Atomic Energy Commission
ALP	Australian Labour Party
ANC	African National Congress
ANU	Australian National University
ANZAC	Australia and New Zealand Armed Corps
ANZUS	Australia-New Zealand-United States Treaty
Armscor	Armaments Development and Production Corporation
CD	Conference on Disarmament
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
ENDC	Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee
FOA	Swedish National Defence Research Institute
GNP	Gross National Product
HEU	Highly Enriched Uranium
HIFAR	High-Flux Materials Testing Reactor
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertaccao de Angola
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NNWS	Non-Nuclear Weapon State
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
NWFZ	Nuclear Weapons Free Zone
NWS	Nuclear Weapons State
PNE	Peaceful Nuclear Explosion
PTBT	Partial Test Ban Treaty
RAAF	Royal Australian Airforce
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAP	Social Democrat Party
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organisation
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SPNWFZ	South Pacific Nuclear Weapon Free Zone
SSC	State Security Council
SWAPO	South West African Peoples' Organisation
UCOR	Uranium Enrichment Corporation
UN	United Nations
UK	United Kingdom
UKAEA	United Kingdom Atomic Energy Agency
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Chapter One: Introduction

"We are cultural beings, endowed with the capacity and the will to take deliberate attitude toward the world and to lend it significance".[1]

<div align="right">Max Weber</div>

Can cultural analysis tell us anything significant about strategic outcomes? This question seems to have been ignored by strategists who base their analysis primarily on rationalist materialist explanations. Positivist social scientists are generally unsympathetic towards cultural analysis, mainly because it does not offer directly observable and quantifiable explanations. As Peter Katzenstein suggests, "most students of national security accord pride of place to material forces that define the balance of power between states. They have no place for intangibles like culture".[2] However, the recent interest shown towards culture in International Relations research has brought into question traditional assumptions concerning the utility of cultural analysis and has stimulated a growth of new research into strategic and nuclear decision-making. This thesis seeks to contribute to this development.

Traditional explanations for military strategy are dominated by realist theories. It is difficult to identify exactly what constitutes a realist theory within IR, since there are many different varieties of realist analyses advanced.[3] This thesis does not set out to challenge the theoretical premises of all realist accounts. Instead the task will be to confront those realist theories that fail to give adequate attention to the role of strategic culture.

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[1] Quoted in Peter Katzenstein, Robert Keohane and Stephen Krasner, "International Organisations and the Study of World Politics", *International Organisation* (Autumn 1998) p.681.
[2] Quoted in John Duffield, *World Power Foresaken: Political Culture, International Institutions and German Security Policy After Unification* (Stanford University Press, 1998) p.1.
[3] See Jeffrey W. Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, "Is anybody still a Realist?" *International Security*, Vol.24, No.2 (Fall 1999) and Peter D. Feaver, Gunther Hellmann, Randall L. Schweller, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, William C. Wohlforth, Jeffrey W. Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, "Brother can you Spare and Paradigm? (Or was Anybody ever a Realist?) (A Correspondence)" *International Security* Vol.25, No.1 (Summer 2000)

Many realist explanations assume that states exist in an anarchical international realm and possess fixed, uniformly conflictual preferences that are determined by external material stimuli.[4] This thesis challenges these assumptions by introducing the idea of cultural context. This will involve an investigation into the idea that military strategies are formulated within the context of particular strategic cultural environments that leads states to respond to each other in distinctive ways.

Strategic Culture

Strategic culture refers to the collective ideational tendencies and pre-dispositions of strategic communities. This acts as a perceptual lens through which decision-makers view the material environment, shaping perceptions of other states and the range of possible military strategies that may be adopted.

This might lead to questions as to whether all states respond uniformly to international anarchy in the way that many realists assume. It is the contention of this thesis that a singular focus on material forces is insufficient in explaining strategic outcomes. The aim will be to explore the importance of strategic cultures in constituting and giving meaning to these material forces, in order to gain better insights to these questions.

This thesis begins by exploring the various different conceptualisations of strategic culture offered in the literature. How has it traditionally been defined? How has it been applied? What are the problems with its use? Are there competing conceptualisations?

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[4] According to Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik these are the core assumptions that underlie all realist analyses. Ibid. pp.12-18. However there have been a number of recent attempts to 'soften' or 'relax' some of these assumptions. See for example, Randall Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Stephan Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press); Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, Cornell, 1987).

An attempt will be made to highlight the 'levels of analysis' problem confronting strategic culturalists. The focus for this research will be on domestic strategic cultures and sub-cultures. This is based on an assumption that states continue to exercise a monopoly over the threat and use of force and are therefore the most relevant (but not the only) referent objects of analysis. However, this is not supposed to preclude research into other external strategic cultures. Indeed this thesis should provide a stimulus for further research into the interaction between domestic and external strategic cultures.

By investigating various domestic cultures, a strategic culture approach may bring into question the idea that states are monolithic, rational unitary actors. This issue was first explored by Graham Allison, who sought to break down the notion that there was an "essence of decision" behind US policy during the Cuban Missile Crisis, thereby challenging the idea that states are unitary actors.[5] Allison identified three models of decision: Rational Actor Model, Organizational Process and Bureaucratic Politics, each of which is used to provide three different accounts of the decisions that characterised this crisis. Allison concluded that that there was no rational central control of state decision-making. Investigating strategic culture may open up a similar possibility: states may be comprised of many cultures at many different levels.

It is also necessary to draw attention to the methodological problems confronting strategic cultural research. What is the best way to conduct strategic cultural research? As has already been suggested, cultural analysis is unattractive to many social scientists because of its often vague and imprecise nature. Does this mean that strategic cultures cannot be identified and their effects measured? This may have important implications for how strategic culture is theoretically conceptualised.

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[5] Graham Allison, *Essence of Decision* (Boston: Little Brown, 1970)

A principal aim will be to investigate potential theoretical frameworks for a strategic culture approach. Does it provide a substantive and alternative causal theory? Questions will be raised about whether one can provide a theory of the origins of strategic culture and how it is translated into strategic outcomes. Similar questions must be asked about whether cultural variables have any supplementary capacity for non-cultural explanations. At the core of this research is an attempt to "problematise" traditional accounts for explaining strategic outcomes. This may involve "culturalising" materialist realist theories by "unpacking their implicit cultural baggage". Beyond this, it might be necessary to be conservative in terms of what should be expected from a strategic culture approach.

To investigate the potential uses of strategic culture, this research will focus on one particular aspect of military strategy, namely non-nuclear weapons decision-making. Three cases of states that have chosen non-nuclear weapon outcomes will be explored according to the insights provided by strategic culture. Initially it is worth justifying this focus on non-nuclear outcomes.

The Significance of Non-Nuclear Weapon Outcomes

In 1962, President Kennedy predicted that the United States could be facing the threat of 15 to 25 nuclear-armed states by the 1970's.[6] This argument had previously been advanced in 1958, when the National Planning Association published a study entitled *1970 Without Arms Control.* This study concluded that "by 1970, most nations with appreciable military strength will have in their arsenals nuclear weapons – strategic, tactical, or both".[7] Britain's Defence Minister Dennis Healey remarked at the time "so far, no country has resisted the

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[6] Quoted in T.V Paul, *Power Versus Prudence: Why Nations Forego Nuclear Weapons* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), p.4.

[7] The emergence in the 1960's of a belief that international security was being undermined by the spread of nuclear weapons was characterised by the so-called 'Nth power problem'. In 1961 Hedley Bull suggested that "the problem of preventing the expansion of the nuclear club, or of making adjustments to it, is a single one faced by international society as a whole (*The* problem), and that it is one raised by *any* addition to the club's membership (*N*th power)". Hedley Bull, *The Control of the Arms Race: Disarmament and Arms Control in the Missile Age* (London, IISS, 1961) p.147.

temptation to make its own atomic weapons once it has acquired the physical ability to do so".[8]

Nonetheless, despite the predictions of many proliferation analysts in the 1950's relatively few states have crossed the nuclear threshold. Why is this the case? This question comprises the focus of this thesis and will be addressed through the use of the strategic culture approach outlined in chapter one. Non-nuclear outcomes are potentially problematic for dominant realist explanations, because they suggest instances of states not maximising their power. Might cultural explanations offer better insights?

In one of the first systematic attempts to investigate non-nuclear decision-making, Mitchell Reiss suggested that "domestic disincentives to nuclear weapons acquisition were significant".[9] This challenges the notion that all states respond to external material stimuli in the way many realists assume. Reiss specifically breaks down the assumption that states are compelled to act according to the imperatives of technology.[10] Instead, attention is given to political motivations which "inspire or discourage nuclear weapons acquisition".[11] Thus, it is not the material constraints of technology that determine nuclear decision-making, but the motivations that underlie them. This thesis seeks to give Reiss' ideas some theoretical context, and to take them further by investigating the domestic strategic cultural influences that shape these political motivations.

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[8] Quoted in John Mueller "The Escalating Irrelevance of Nuclear Weapons" in T.V Paul, Richard J.Harknett and James J. Wirtz (eds.) *The Absolute Weapon Revisited: Nuclear Arms and the Emerging International Order* (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

[9] Mitchell Reiss, *Without the Bomb: The Politics of Nuclear Non-proliferation* (New York; Columbia University Press, 1988) p.249.

[10] The idea that technology compels decision-makers, is often referred to as a 'technological determinist' argument. Technological determinists would argue that if the technological capacity to acquire nuclear weapons exists, then decision-makers are compelled to proliferate. Reiss suggests that pessimistic predictions concerning nuclear proliferation have tended to over-concentrate on technological capabilities to the neglect of political motivation. See Mitchell Reiss, *Without the Bomb: The Politics of Nuclear Nonproliferation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) p.247. For a discussion of the technological determinist argument see Stephen M. Meyer, *The Dynamics of Nuclear Proliferation* (University of Chicago Press, 1984); Bradley Thayer, "The Causes of Nuclear Proliferation and the Utility of the Non-Proliferation Regime," in Raju G.C. Thomas Ed. *The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime: Prospects for the 21st Century* (London: Macmillan, 1998) pp. 84-86.; Tanya Ogilvie-White, "Is there a Theory of Nuclear Proliferation? An Analysis of the Contemporary Debate", *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol.4 No.1, (Fall 1996).

[11] Reiss, op cit, p.248.

Despite many criticisms, the traditional means of approaching non-nuclear outcomes continues to be driven by the realist assumption that the state in question is simply acting according to self-interest, in response to material conditions. Much of the literature focuses on the material capabilities of those states that are considered to be threats and those that are considered to be allies. If threats are benign then nuclear weapons may not be necessary; if allies are equipped with large nuclear forces, then they may offer a nuclear protection, which may dampen incentives for independent nuclear capabilities. Yet this leads to questions as to why certain states are considered as threats or allies in the first place, which non-ideational explanations seem ill-equipped to answer. The issue of how fear is generated within states concerning the intentions of "hostile" others, and how states strategic culturally differentiate between friends and foes, will form an integral part of this thesis.

Many instances of non-nuclear outcomes are explained according to financial and technological limitations. Do some states have little or no choice over nuclear weapons acquisition because of the constraints imposed by finance and/or technology? Do material factors automatically determine decision-making? It may be that other political constraints are important in non-nuclear decision-making. Do cultures shape the nature of political constraints?

It is also important to consider strategic cultural pre-dispositions towards nuclear weapons issues. By the early 1950's nuclear weapons were emerging as state of the art weaponry and an important feature of modern military strategy. The need to acquire these weapons thus became an integral part of many states' strategic cultures. By the late 1960's attitudes towards nuclear weapons were changing. The realisation that they could be enormously destructive and that any nuclear confrontation could be globally devastating, began to generate a "normative prohibition" against the use of nuclear weapons.[12] This strategic cultural 'taboo' of

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[12] T.V Paul, "Nuclear Taboo and War Initiation in Regional Conflicts", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 39 (December 1995) p.701.

nuclear non-use may have imposed significant constraints on the strategic doctrines of nuclear weapon states.

Furthermore, the proliferation of nuclear weapons was widely believed to increase rather than diminish the chances of nuclear war. This facilitated the emergence of an international culture of non-acquisition, which ultimately, manifested itself in the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Hence it might also be possible to investigate the possibility of strategic cultural taboo against the acquisition of nuclear weapons, which while not as strong as that relating to non-use, may lead states to reject a nuclear option.

Choosing Non-Nuclear Outcomes

The aim has been to assess the relevance of strategic culture in three cases of non-nuclear outcomes. Having surveyed the available literature, it would appear that Australia, South Africa and Sweden offer suitable case studies. Each of these states appears to present distinctive strategic cultural characteristics and each has chosen a non-nuclear outcome. The task will be to explore whether strategic cultures had any influence over nuclear decision-making.

Chapter one will investigate the extent to which International Relations research has focused on the issue of "strategic culture". The cases of South Africa and Sweden have received rigorous treatment in the proliferation literature and will thus provide a good basis for establishing whether strategic culture is given any attention within proliferation research. With the recent release of historical nuclear policy documents, the Australian nuclear story is beginning to attract the attention of proliferation analysts and in a way that may present opportunities for a strategic culture approach. This thesis will not attempt to empirically uncover new information or evidence of nuclear decision-making. Instead the aim will be to assess the dominant explanations for non-nuclear outcomes, which invariably are

provided by materialist realist theories. If materialist explanations predominate then it will be necessary to expose their inadequacies by investigating the possibility that strategic cultures may constitute material factors.

From the outset it will be acknowledged that the case of South Africa is different to that of Australia and Sweden. Prior to its non-nuclear policy, South Africa acquired nuclear weapons. A non-nuclear outcome thus emerged through a process of denuclearisation. However, the focus of this research is on 'outcomes' and in South Africa's case, the outcome involves an unequivocal non-nuclear status. South Africa is widely cited by proliferation analysts as the first case of a state unilaterally denuclearising and is often promoted as a model for future nuclear rollback elsewhere. This thesis might therefore seem justified in concentrating of South Africa's non-nuclear outcome. Furthermore, the aim of this research is to investigate different cases of non-nuclear outcomes and to see if strategic culture has resonance in all cases, regardless of whether the state concerned has denuclearised or simply abstained altogether.

In approaching each case, the aim will be to uncover the cultural context under-pinning nuclear decision-making. Which strategic cultures are apparent within these states? Are they susceptible to change? Do they shape distinctive national strategic tendencies? How influential are they in shaping non-nuclear preferences? It is important to grapple with the cultural complexities of each of these cases in order to move away from assumptions of universal strategic logic.

It will therefore not be strictly necessary to use a universal methodological framework that can be used identically in each case. However, with each state an attempt will initially be made to outline the relevant nuclear history both from a civilian and a military angle. Having done this, it will be possible to gain an awareness of the main events that led to the decision to restrain (in the case of Australia and Sweden) and retract (in the case of South Africa) the respective nuclear capabilities. The task will then be to sketch the cultural parameters of

each case. As has already been suggested, the focus is on domestic strategic cultures. This could be analysed from an organizational, institutional, national or societal standpoint. However, no attempt will be made to refute the importance of other external cultural influences. The aim is to be inclusive rather than exclusive in terms of levels of analysis.

Having identified what might be considered the main strategic cultural tendencies, the task will then be to make links between these tendencies and nuclear decision-making. What does strategic culture offer in terms of new insights? It might be necessary to make comparisons between those accounts which focus purely on material factors and a strategic culture approach. As was mentioned above, a number of assumptions dominate mainstream accounts and need to be assessed in each of these cases: What underlies perceptions of threats or allies? Do material factors such as technology and finance present insurmountable constraining barriers in these cases, or can culture shape responses? How do these states perceive "nuclear weapons" issues and are states strategic culturally predisposed to conform and contribute to international consensus' on nuclear weapons issues?

Posing these questions will provide the basis for conclusions as to whether strategic culture has any merit or value in offering insights into cases of non-nuclear weapon outcomes. This thesis does not seek to challenge the conclusions of traditional accounts by uncovering new information or by suggesting radically different explanations. The scope for empirical revelations is minimal, just as the theoretical ambitions will be limited. The aim is to critique and problematise existing theoretical explanations of these cases, by investigating how, if at all, references are made to ideational analysis and then to investigate the potential benefits of a strategic culture approach.

Chapter Two:
Conceptualising Strategic Culture

Introduction

The term "strategy" has traditionally been used to refer to the way in which military power is used by governments in the pursuit of their interests.[1] How are these interests defined? A "strategic culture" approach tackles this question by considering the relevance of "cultural context". This implies that strategic preferences are rooted in the formative experiences of the state in question and are influenced, to an extent, by the cultural characteristics of the state and its elites. For an advocate of strategic culture, there are no universal truths in the realm of strategy. Instead, research should be directed towards cultural and strategic relativism.

The concept of strategic culture was initially developed by several strategic thinkers in the late 1970's in the first instance to argue that the Soviet Union approached questions of nuclear strategy very differently from the United States. As will be shown, writers such as Jack Snyder and Colin Gray have illustrated the distinction between the national styles of the United States and the Soviet Union and the importance of culture in accounting for this.[2] But having fulfilled this task, the concept of strategic culture was, for a considerable period, consigned to the academic backwater, with minimal conceptual development beyond its employment by Cold War strategists. Hence, research was mostly confined to empirical analysis of regions and states, with little attention given to theory or method.

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[1] John Garnett, "Strategic Studies and its Assumptions" in John Baylis, Ken Booth, John Garnett and Phil Williams (eds.) Contemporary Strategy: Theories and Policies (Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1975), p.3.
[2] Jack Snyder, The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Nuclear Options.(Rand R-2154-AF, Santa Monica California. 1977) Colin Gray, "National Styles in Strategy: The American Example," International Security, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Fall 1981) Gray, Nuclear Strategy and National Style. (Hamilton Press, 1986). See also, Carnes Lord, "American Strategic Culture," Comparative Strategy, Volume 5, No.3. See also Richard Pipes, "Why the Soviet Union Thinks it Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War," Commentary, Vol.64. No.1 (July 1977). For a good overview of this literature see Alan Macmillan, Strategic Culture and British Grand Strategy, 1945-1952 (PhD, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1996).

In the 1990's there has been a renewed interest in the relationship between culture and military strategy in a way that has re-opened a number of old debates, as well as bringing new issues to the fore. This re-vitalised interest in strategic culture can be accredited to two trends. On the one hand, writers such as Alastair Iain Johnston have sought to re-conceptualise the debate by seeking a comprehensive theory and methodology of strategic culture through the development of a sophisticated and rigorous research design.[3] Concurrently, a broader debate has emerged concerning the potential of cultural theories within international relations research and their credibility as alternatives to dominant realist theories. Contemporary research into strategic culture now forces the analyst to address a number of complex theoretical issues in a way that has pushed the debate well beyond the rather narrow confines of earlier research.

This chapter seeks to outline these contemporary developments and assess their implications for further research. The current debate over strategic culture is characterised by a broad range of research. As Alan Macmillan suggests, the list of writers concerned with strategic culture includes some "strange bedfellows" in Colin Gray, Ken Booth, Charles Kupchan and Bradley Klein.[4] While this is illustrative of a broad acceptance of the importance of strategic cultural discussion, it appears to have led to a diverse and non-cumulative research agenda.

While much recent attention has been given to the flawed nature of early conceptualisations of strategic culture, it is doubtful whether contemporary research has achieved a consensus as to how to overcome these problems. Despite the flawed nature of early research, traditional conceptualisations of strategic culture maintain a focus (albeit rather narrow) which is often lacking in contemporary research. This raises questions about why scholars are currently researching into strategic culture and whether there is any possibility of a consensus as to its purpose.

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[3] Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture", *International Security* 19 (4) 1995.
[4] Macmillan, *Strategic Culture and British Grand Strategy*, op cit, p.33.

This chapter will seek to review the main "generations" of research into strategic culture while addressing three broad areas of concern. *Ontology*: what should strategic cultural analysis concern itself with? *Methodology*: how might strategic research be conducted? *Epistemology*: can there be a theory of strategic culture? In addressing these questions, it is hoped that a more credible conceptualisation of strategic culture can be provided.

In many ways, the lack of consensus and unanimity exhibited by strategic culturalists can be attributed to an avoidance of theoretical discussion. It is the aim of this chapter to sketch the principal theoretical issues at stake, in the hope that scholars can navigate their way towards a more credible conceptualisation of strategic culture. Hence, the task here is not to solve theoretical puzzles, but rather to provide focus to a currently disparate research area.

The Need for Strategic Relativism

Prior to WWII, literature on military strategy was mainly provided by military practitioners who sought to chronicle particular military events and battles or equip armies with tactical manuals.[5] As an academic enterprise, strategic studies "dates from the almost simultaneous occurrence of the nuclear revolution and the Cold War".[6] The work of early writers on nuclear strategy represented an intellectual response to the advent of nuclear weapons.[7] For many, the emergence of nuclear weapons suggested the need for a new strategic approach.

Writing in 1946, Bernard Brodie suggested:

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[5] Booth lists a handful of writers who he considers to have provided "classic" texts including, Sun Tzu, Thucydides, Machiavelli, Clausewitz, Mahan, Douhet and Lidell Hart. Ken Booth, "Strategy" in A.J.R. Groom and M. Light (eds.) *Contemporary International Relations: A Guide to Theory* (London: Pinter, 1994),p.109.
[6] Ibid. p.108.
[7] Barry Buzan, *An Introduction to Strategic Studies: Military Technology and International Relations*, (London: Macmillan, 1987) p.143.

"Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other purpose".[8]

The task of grappling with the problems raised by nuclear weapons was taken away from military personnel and handed to civilian, academic strategists. The subsequent emergence of 'deterrence' literature during the "golden age" of strategic thinking in the 1950's and 1960's provided the conceptual framework for Western nuclear strategy during the Cold War. Theories of nuclear deterrence provided by writers such as Thomas Schelling and Herman Kahn were based on the use of abstract theoretical models such as "game theory'" which provided predictions as to how states as rational actors would act in certain strategic scenarios.[9]

In the 1960's a number of writers such as Anatol Rapaport and Philip Green began to question the abstract formulations provided by game theorists.[10] For writers such as Schelling and Kahn, a timeless rationality could be applied to all states, with no attention given to national history, politics or culture. As a result, strategic theory appeared unable to recognise the diversity of national military strategies.

By the 1970's writers such as Ken Booth were suggesting that the golden age of strategic theory had led to a profoundly ethnocentric outlook which gave little (if any) credence to the idea of "national styles in strategy".[11] For Booth, the use of rational choice analysis as a tool for thinking about the world led to dangerous distortions. To counter this he argued there was a need for "strategy with a human face" and to categorise strategy in contextual rather than universal terms. Booth highlighted the intellectual hegemony of "American strategic man" and rational actor models and thus prepared the ground for a strategic culture approach.

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[8] Bernard Brodie, "The Implications for Military Policy", in Frederick S. Dunn, Bernard Brodie, Arnold Wolfers, Percy E. Corbett and William T. R. Fox, *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order* (New York: Harcourt Brace), p.76.
[9] Garnett, "Strategic Studies and its Assumptions", op cit, pp16-17.
[10] A. Rapaport, *Strategy and Conscience* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965); Philip Green, *Deadly Logic: The Theory of Nuclear Deterrence* (Columbus University Press, 1966).
[11] See Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism* (London: Croom Helm, 1979).

The implication of Booth's analysis was that states do not necessarily respond to external stimuli in the mechanical way implied by rational materialists. Indeed, if they respond at all, then they do so according to national styles and idiosyncrasies. Furthermore, Booth argued that if strategic studies was to be improved, then it was necessary to embrace more completely the idea of strategic relativism. This suggests that "truth" in strategy is relative to the individual or group in question and to the time and place in which the individual or group acts.[12] His conclusion was that we should seek to deconstruct Western strategic assumptions, which he considered were the result of the "methodological fallacy of ethnocentrism".[13]

Thus, according to Booth, the analyst as a strategic anthropologist should move towards the liberating realm of cultural relativism, which acted, he argued, as a useful anti-dote to the grip of "ethnocentrism, ignorance and megalogic".[14]As will be shown, Booth's work provides one example of a general realisation within strategic studies by the late 1970's, of the importance of cultural context to strategic analysis.

Culture and International Relations

What is meant by "culture"? The term is frequently and indiscriminately used and yet it defies a universally accepted definition. Writers appear to disagree as to what "cultures" are, how they can be identified and what they do. As Clifford Geertz suggests, "cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete. And, worse than that, the deeper it goes, the more incomplete it is".[15]

For positivist social scientists who seek observable, quantifiable data, culture appears unattractive as an analytical tool. This is because cultural variables are often hard to define and operationalize. As a result, culture has tended to be used as a residual variable, employed only as a last resort. David Elkins and Richard Simeon have proposed that culture be viewed as a residual

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[12] Ibid. p.139.
[13] Ibid. p.140.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Book, 1973).

explanation towards a set of preferences and cannot explain particular choices: "Culture is unlikely to be of much help in explaining why alternative A was chosen over alternative B - but it may be of great help in understanding why A and B were considered, while no thought was given to C,D or E".[16]

Yet should culture be so easily relegated to a "second order" factor? While culture might defy a precise definition and may not provide clear-cut explanations for outcomes, it might seem premature to dismiss it as a secondary issue. As Eric Herring asks, why should the parameters that culture shapes be seen as less important, when structural factors operate within these same parameters? [17]

Booth has suggested that culture provides "discerning tendencies not rigid determinants".[18] Thus, it might not be useful to consider how cultural variables cause, or explain outcomes. Yet, culture might provide the context in which actors operate, thereby constituting and giving meaning to material factors. As Herring suggests: if the cultural context is taken as given, then there is the risk of "underestimating the potential parameters of action and of change".[19]

The relevance of culture as context can be directly applied to the use of cultural research within IR as illustrated by Keith Krause and Andrew Latham.

These writers maintain that:

"while cultural forces do not directly determine policy responses, they exercise a powerful influence on the shaping of what might be called 'policy reflexes.' In other words, they can help shape an understanding of what constitutes 'normal', 'appropriate', or 'desirable' practices and responses".[20]

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[16] David J. Elkins and Richard E.B. Simeon, "A Cause in Search of Its Effect or what does Political Culture Explain." Comparative Politics 11:2, 1979, p.142.
[17] Eric Herring, Nuclear Totem and Taboo: Or How we Learned to Stop Loving the Bomb and Start Worrying, Paper Presented to the British International Studies Association's Annual Conference, 17 December 1997. p.11.
[18] Ken Booth, "The Concept of Strategic Culture Affirmed", in C. G Jacobsen (eds.) Strategic Power: USA/USSR (London: Macmillan, 1987).
[19] Herring, "Nuclear Totem and Taboo", op cit, p.11.
[20] Keith Krause and Andrew Latham, "Constructing Non-Proliferation and Arms Control: The Norms of Western Practice", in Keith Krause (eds.) Culture and Security: Multi-lateralism Arms Control Dialogues and Security Building (London: Frank Cass), p. 24.

The contextual or "interpretative" framework that culture provides may be different in each case. Michael Desch has suggested that the "new culturalists in security studies focus on the particulars of single cases, rather than factors common to a number of cases, because they assume that each one is sui generis".[21] Without the systematic use of cultural variables across cases it is difficult to establish a predictive or testable cultural theory. However, this should not be the aim for strategic culturalists. Rather, the focus should be on highlighting the relevance of cultural context, which is often absent in rationalist materialist explanations.

John Duffield has identified three points of reference that are common to cultural analyses within IR. First, culture is viewed as the property of collectivities as opposed to the individuals who constitute them; second, cultures are distinctive and profound differences may exist between different collectivities; third, cultures are relatively stable in comparison with material conditions and will change only gradually, if at all, over time.[22] Hence, the task may be to seek to identify distinctive cultural collectives with bounded systemsof assumption, which will remain relatively static over time.

Strategic Culture and International Relations

There have been numerous attempts to define the concept of strategic culture. Snyder is usually credited with introducing the term in 1977 and his understanding has provided a critical benchmark for most later formulations. Beginning with the premise that the Soviet approach to strategic thinking during the Cold War constituted a unique strategic culture, Snyder went on to define strategic culture as :

"the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a national strategic community have

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[21] Michael C. Desch, "Culture Clash: Assessing the Importance of Ideas in Security Studies", *International Security* Vol.23 No.1 (Summer 1998), p.152.
[22] John Duffield, "Political Culture and State Behaviour: Why Germany Confounds Neorealism", *International Organisation*, Vol.53, No.4 (Autumn 1999), p.770.

achieved through instruction and imitation with each other with regard to nuclear strategy".[23]

Whilst few theorists have attempted to refute this notion, later conceptions have both expanded and narrowed his formulations. In a narrow sense, writers such as Yitzhak Klein have defined strategic culture as "the set of attitudes and beliefs held within a military establishment concerning the political objectives of war and the most effective strategy and operational method of achieving it".[24] A slightly broader notion is given by Booth when he suggests that it refers to "a nation's traditions, values, attitudes, patterns of behaviour, habits, symbols, achievements and particular ways of adapting to the environment and solving problems with respect to the threat or use of force".[25]

Johnston invokes an even broader definition in seeking to obtain a notion of strategic culture that is falsifiable. By this he means that it should not only be distinguishable from non-strategic variables, it should also capture the essence of the task, namely to provide decision-makers with a uniquely ordered set of strategic choices from which predictions can be made about behaviour. This leads to the following definition: "An integrated system of symbols (e.g. argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors) which acts to establish pervasive and long lasting preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs".[26]

This diversity of definition is illustrative of the tendency for writers to proceed at a tangent when discussing strategic culture. Where Klein's definition places significance on the operational angle of strategy, Johnston seeks a far broader conceptualisation involving larger security collectives. This raises the issue of what should be seen as the referent group for strategic cultural research? As the organizer and exerciser of military force, should states remain as the essential referent? Macmillan *et.al* have argued that the state should not be

[23] Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture,* op cit, p.8.
[24] Yitzhak Klein, "A Theory of Strategic Culture," *Journal of Comparative Strategy,* Vol. 5, No. 3.
[25] Booth, "Strategic Culture Re-Affirmed", op cit.
[26] Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture", op cit, p.46.

seen as the sole referent, because when considering culture, the notion of "society" has more valid claims than the "state".[27] It must not be assumed that states are culturally monolithic as sub-cultural groupings may exhibit contradictory cultural tendencies. It is thus important to recognise that "a dominant culture may not be associated with a particular national group, some cultural pluralism is possible, even likely".[28]

The suggestion of multiple referent strategic cultural groupings, may explain the proliferation of diverse research into strategic culture. Nonetheless is it is necessary to ask, what the commonalities are within what Hoffman and Longhurst have referred to as an "atomized research agenda"?[29] First, strategic culture approaches identify specific national tendencies that derive from historical experience, hence "cancelling out the notion of a universal assumed rationality".[30] Second, strategic culture refers to *collectives,* be they military organisations, policy communities or entire societies. Thus, strategic culture will provide certain enduring attitudes, assumptions, beliefs that are shared by the collective and will lead to a particular interpretation of material conditions. Third, strategic culture scholars will look to identify "continuities and discernible trends across time and contexts rather than change".[31] Finally, strategic culture assumes the existence of a perceptual lens or milieu through which information is received, mediated and processed into appropriate responses.

Krause suggests that it might not necessarily be useful to draw sharp distinctions between different levels of culture, since "all share overlapping elements".[32] This would support the idea that cultures are amorphous and lack clear boundaries. Krause introduces the concept of "security culture" which he defines as a "subset of broader political, strategic and diplomatic cultures".[33] In

[27] Alan Macmillan, Ken Booth and Russell Trood, "Strategic Culture" in Booth and Trood, *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region*, (Macmillan, 1999), p.8.
[28] Colin Gray "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back" *Review of International Studies*, Vo.25, No.1 1999, p.62.
[29] Arthur Hoffman and Kerry Longhurst, "German Strategic Culture in Action", *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol.20, No.2 (August 1999).
[30] Ibid. p.31.
[31] Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture", op cit, p.31.
[32] Keith Krause, "Security Culture and the Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament Agenda", in Krause (eds.) op cit. p.220-221.
[33] Ibid. p.220

discussing cross-cultural dimensions of multi-lateral non-proliferation, arms control and security building dialogues, Krause considers it necessary to "take a step away from thinking in narrow strategic terms".[34] By utilising the concept of security culture, Krause is able to build upon the work of strategic culture while moving away from a strict emphasis on military affairs and towards broader issues of "security, stability and peace".[35]

Might this downgrade the use or relevance of a *strategic* culture approach? This chapter argues that it is useful to maintain a distinct focus on strategy. The concept of "security" is potentially broad and may embrace a wide range of threats at multiple levels. Broadening analysis to include more than the military dimension may lead attention towards *political* rather than strategic culture.[36] Is it possible to identify strategic decisions that are not in some way political? Clausewitz suggested that war was "an extension of politics by other means":[37] so might the same dictum be applied to the issue of strategy? Just as it difficult to envisage strategists as acultural it seems unlikely that they would be apolitical.

Can strategic, political and security cultures be distinguished? Booth, Macmillan and Trood have suggested that it might be helpful to think of "*strategy* as the *military* dimension of *security* and *strategic culture* as being the military dimension of *political culture*".[38] However, in using a strategic culture approach it is important not to maintain an overly narrow military focus. When considering non-militaristic societies, it may be necessary to perceive of strategy as more than a purely military phenomenon. Thus, while military issues might continue to retain centre-stage in any discussion of strategic culture, it is important not to be "too dogmatic about the boundaries of what

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[34] Keith Krause, "Cross Cultural Dimensions of Multilateral Non-Proliferation and Arms Control Dialogues: An Overview" in Krause (eds.) op cit, p.14.
[35] Ibid. p.15
[36] John Duffield prefers to focus on "political" as opposed to "strategic" culture in his analysis on German state action. Duffield, "Political Culture and State Behaviour", op cit. See also, John Duffield, *World Power Foresaken: Political Culture, International Institutions and German Security Policy After Unification* (Stanford University Press, 1998).
[37] C. Clausewitz, *On War*, (Translated and edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p.87.
[38] Booth, Macmillan and Trood, "Strategic Culture", op cit, p.11.

might be discussed in order to understand behaviour and attitudes within a particular state and society".[39]

Applying Strategic Culture : Early Formulations

As noted earlier, in the late 1970's, some American defence analysts embraced the view that the Soviet Union did not share many of the ideas that were central to the "American idea of international order".[40] Anglo-American strategic theory at this time was seen as having become obsessed with the preservation of international order according to Western perceptions. This led to the Soviet Union being viewed as a "mirror image" of the United States in strategic terms. At the forefront of this re-assessment of Soviet strategic thinking was Jack Snyder. Snyder introduced the concept of strategic culture in 1977 in what was to become a path-breaking analysis of the Soviet Union. He argued that Soviet decision-makers were being socialised within a distinctive Soviet mode of strategic thinking, and that as a result, "a set of general beliefs, attitudes and behavioural patterns with regard to nuclear strategy has achieved a state of semi-permanence that places them on the level of 'culture' rather than mere 'policy'".[41]

Snyder's introduction and application of the concept of strategic culture was designed to offer an alternative account of the differing approaches towards nuclear strategy of the Superpowers. However, the significance of his thesis is to be located at a broader level. Snyder, made the explicit link between culture and strategy in a way that appeared acceptable to the American strategic community. Equally, he confirmed that Soviet decision-makers did not tailor their behaviour to American notions of strategic rationality. More importantly, Snyder's work provided the catalyst for other writers that formed what Johnston terms the "first generation" of literature on strategic culture.

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[39] Ibid.
[40] Gray, "National Styles in Strategy", op cit, p.21.
[41] Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*, op cit, p.5 See also David T.Twining, "Soviet Strategic Culture," *Intelligence and National Security* Vol. 4, (1989),169-188.

The greatest challenge facing first generation scholars, was to provide evidence that the technological dictates of the nuclear era were not as universal as had previously been suggested. The domination of the technical aspects implicit to the superpower arms race, ensured that mainstream strategic thinking in the West largely ignored the significance of the cultural determinants of nuclear strategy. As such, culture was seen as providing a secondary explanation to strategic issues and was thus rendered meaningless in the face of swift and decisive technological development.

But not all analysts saw it this way. Gray has argued that "many of the western policy errors of the past forty years could have been avoided if a proper respect had been paid both to the uniqueness and to the plain facts of local Soviet conditions".[42] Gray was among those who saw a need for an American nuclear strategy that acknowledged the relevance of the Soviet Union's world-view. To accomplish this he also needed to establish that there was a discernible American strategic culture that might be different from that of the Soviet Union.

Gray's approach has been supported by others who have written on American strategic culture. William Kincade, for example, agrees with Gray that American strategy is determined to a considerable degree by its "geo-strategic situation, resources, history, military experience and political beliefs".[43]

These early attempts to analyse the nature and importance of national style in strategy, helped establish the academic credibility of the concept of strategic culture. In many ways, this research appealed to sound logical foundations: it seemed credible to argue that the historical and geographical conditions confronting states lead to defence issues that were "uniquely defined".[44] Furthermore, a strategic culture approach appeared to offer a guard against ethnocentric mannerisms, which had led to numerous misperceptions and mistakes and to the traditional practice of treating an adversary who adopts an

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[42] Gray, "National Styles in Strategy", op cit, p.65.
[43] William Kincade,"American National Style," in Jacobsen ed., *Strategic Power.* p.10
[44] David Jones, "Soviet Strategic Culture," in Jacobsen (eds.), *Strategic Power* p.35.

alternative strategy to the analyst as irrational and eccentric. As Gray suggests when discussing Soviet policy, strategists had short-sightedly likened the Soviet Union to a "loose gun canon on a rolling ship", when, in reality it merely differed from the American way.[45]These developments served as a call to strategists to embrace diversity and to accept that the international strategic realm was not monolithic and homogenous. Rather, strategy was/is culturally and nationally determined.

The Emerging Debate: Initial Problems, Broader Questions

While the work of Snyder, Gray and others was invaluable in awakening strategists to the importance of culture in the strategic realm, there were many problems associated with these early attempts to develop a workable concept of strategic culture. First, as Johnston suggests, there is the issue of definition.[46] In 1990, David Jones' analysis of Soviet strategic culture suggested there were three levels to a state's strategic culture: a macro-environmental level involving geography, history and ethno-cultural characteristics; a societal level, referring to the socio-economic and political structure of society; and a micro-level consisting of military institutions and the nature of civil-military relations.[47] This conception of strategic culture involves an extremely wide range of variables, and implies that cultures are multi-layered and all-encompassing.

Problems have been identified with Jones' approach. First, as Johnston has commented, each of the many diverse variables employed such as technology, geography, political psychology and national characteristics can stand as separate explanations in themselves. Second, the use of such a wide-range of explanatory variables, makes it extremely difficult to test this model against non-strategic culture approaches since there is little explanatory space for other models, which use different variables to account for strategic choice.[48] Put simply, there is nothing that is not strategic culture.

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[45] Colin S. Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and National* (Hamiton Press, 1986), p.65.
[46] See Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture", p.37.
[47] Jones, "Soviet Strategic Culture", op cit, p.35.
[48] Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture" p.37

Recently Colin Gray has specifically addressed Johnston's criticism of the first generation.[49] For Gray, "strategic culture as context", is that which surrounds and gives meaning to strategic behaviour.[50] Hence strategic culture is "out there", but also within us; "we, our institutions and our behaviour are the context".[51] The point here is that there is nothing within the realm of strategy that is not cultural since strategy is made by individuals that cannot fail but be cultural. Thus the behaviour of a strategic community is affected by culturally shaped or enculturated individuals, organisations, procedures and weapons. Johnston's mistake, in Gray's eyes is to conceive of culture as distinct among conflicting explanations for strategic choice. According to Gray, this is not credible simply because there is no conceptual space for explanations for behaviour beyond strategic culture, because all strategic behaviour is effected by human beings who cannot help but be cultural agents.

Johnston draws attention to an inconsistency in Gray's analysis.[52] Despite suggesting that behaviour should be seen as part of strategic culture, Gray implies elsewhere that one will from time to time see a disjuncture between strategic culture and behaviour and that behaviour can be triggered by many factors in addition to strategic culture. As Johnston asserts, by conceding that behaviour may be distinct from an *apriori* strategic culture, it becomes obvious that there are other, non-strategic culture variables that explain this "deviant behaviour".[53]

Theo Farrell has argued that both Gray and Johnston's approaches have a degree of merit.[54] Gray's notion of strategic culture as context is of value in considering the cultural context of strategic action. However, Johnston's thesis allows for an investigation into whether culture is useful as an explanation of

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[49] Colin Gray "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back" *Review of International Studies*, Vo.25, No.1 1999.
[50] Ibid. p.50.
[51] Ibid. p.53.
[52] Alaistair Iain Johnston, "Strategic Cultures Revisited: A Reply to Colin Gray", *Review of International Studies*, Vol.25 No.3, p.521.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Theo Farrell, "Culture and Military Power" *Review of International Studies*, Vol.24 No.3 (July 1998).

state action.[55] As will be shown, Johnston's work is indicative of attempts to provide a positivist account for how strategic culture can explain cases which materialist models cannot. The emphasis is thus on testability, researchability and methodological sophistication. This is only possible by invoking a distinction between cultural/ideational and materialist variables and in Johnston's eyes "you can never know any of this ... if you accept Professor Gray's definition of strategic culture".[56]

It would seem therefore that there are problems associated with the first generation of research into strategic culture. The suggestion that one can identify a deeply rooted, persistent, consistent and unique strategic culture in a state, ignores three main issues. First, it ignores both the nature and diversity of the strategic problems faced by a state in the international realm. This should not be seen as a move towards systemic explanation, rather it is an acceptance that a state culturally adapts to prevailing international conditions. Second, there is failure to give credence to the heterogeneous nature of modern societies. Strategic choice generally reflects an amalgam of diverse and often competing cultural traditions. As Johnston has observed, "it seems somewhat muddled to argue that a single strategic culture emerges from its multiple inputs when each of these inputs could arguably produce alternative, even contradictory strategic cultures".[57]

Third, it is important not to over-state the "slow-to-change" nature of culture. Cultural theorists tend to agree that cultures remain relatively static and resistant. The more simplistic first generation literature thus analyses strategic choice by identifying a cultural trait and establishing it as a timeless constant. Whilst it would be self-defeating as a strategic culture advocate, to argue that culture is constantly changing and is entirely dependant on exogenous factors,

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[55] Gray invokes the distinction between "explaining" and "understanding" as used by Hollis and Smith, Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context", op cit, p.50; Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford, 1990).

[56] Johnston, "Strategic Cultures Revisited", op cit, p.52. Gray invokes Hollis and Smith's distinction between "explaining and understanding" before promoting strategic culture as a context for understanding rather than an explanatory causality for behaviour". Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford, 1990). This might suggest that Johnston and Gray are using different methodologies and epistemologies.

[57] Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture", op cit, p.38.

it is important not to be too deterministic: cultures evolve and take on new meanings over-time.

As Johnston concludes, the first generation of strategic culture literature is both over-determined in the sense that it takes a large range of variables to indicate the existence of a unique and persistent strategic culture that *will* effect strategic choice, as well as under-determined in the way that it seeks to identify *one* strategic culture to explain *all* choices. Inevitably, this has led to charges of over-simplification. Having initially introduced the concept of strategic culture, Snyder has since sought to emphasise the limitations associated with its usage.[58] While he re-asserts his earlier claim that strategic culture is useful in averting the dangers of ethnocentrism, he is keen to stress that it should not be used to exaggerate differences, and can in many ways be used too casually.

On a broader level, Snyder also asks some searching questions about the utility of cultural approaches. Snyder is sceptical of the value of using cultural approaches since they tend to be vague and are often used to account for outcomes "that cannot be explained in a concrete way".[59] Snyder's aim is to stress the importance of structural and situational explanations in providing a sharper, more specific and quantifiable method. What he refers to as "different factor endowments or comparative advantages" may give rise to different strategies.[60] Snyder does not distance himself entirely from cultural explanations as he intimates that it might be possible to explain strategic doctrine in terms of elite political culture and from the way in which strategic patterns take on a cultural persistence as a result of socialisation and institutionalisation. However, with regard to the latter, which he sees as far more significant, Snyder emphasises that this may involve an analysis of organisational theory of doctrinal preferences, rather than strategic culture.

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[58] Jack Snyder, "The Concept of Strategic Culture: Caveat Emptor," in Jacobsen, (eds.), *Strategic Power* op cit.
[59] Ibid.p.4.
[60] Ibid. p.5.

Other first generation scholars have been more inclined to re-assert their original position. Booth for example, has re-affirmed his conception of strategic culture by stressing that it does not lead to a strategic preference automatically, and instead we should look for cultural tendencies that will influence policy outcomes.[61] The argument here is that while culture is indeed a "shadowy region", there are ways of using it to provide more subtle explanations to strategic outcomes. This would imply a role for culture as an *influence* rather than as a determinant. The perceptual lens provided by cultural conditions will thus be powerful in some circumstances, weaker in others, but should not be ignored altogether.

Delimiting the "Second Generation": The Relationship Between Strategic Culture and Behaviour

As Johnston has argued, the most fundamental issue raised by the early work on strategic culture is the relationship between attitude and behaviour. Most of the early literature implies a direct link between strategic thought and behaviour. The literature assumes that "strategic culture has a measurable effect on strategic choice, that it exists 'out there', a monolithic, independent, and observable constraint on all actors' behaviour".[62] The inability to account for the possibility of a disjuncture between strategic culture and behaviour has thus been regarded as a distinct weakness in first generation analysis. The suggestion is that strategic culture may be manipulated for the purposes of creating a strategy which upholds or promotes particular interests. Strategy can be used to justify the competence of decision-makers, divert criticism and channel the terms of debate. But while this may be regarded as a more critical appraisal of the workings of the decision-making process, the first generation literature is forced to conclude that "if a link between strategic culture and behaviour is not found, then strategic culture does not exist, a conclusion that strategic culture is loath to make".[63]

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[61] See Booth, "The Concept of Strategic Culture Affirmed" in Jacobsen, ed., and *Gray Nuclear Strategy and National Style*. op cit.
[62] Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture", op cit. p.38.
[63] Ibid. p.39.

The issue of instrumentality also became a key factor in later writings on strategic culture as a number of theorists began to look at the way the rhetoric employed by elites and decision-makers often did not correspond with underlying intentions. The work of Bradley Klein is a good example of this research's orientation. For Klein, strategic culture refers to the way a modern hegemonic state depends upon the use of force to secure its objectives. According to this view, it is necessary to look at the infrastructure of the technology and armaments sector in order to locate a strategic culture.[64] Furthermore, to study strategic culture is to study the "cultural hegemony of organised state violence".[65]

Klein concentrates on the way the US has sought to project its social, cultural and military power on a global level. Deterrence doctrine during the Cold War functioned perfectly for American needs by combining two contradictory modes, one operational and one declaratory. On the one side, was a strategy based on defence, retaliation and deterrence, and on the other an active counter-force, war-fighting policy. Declaratory strategy was used purely in an instrumental manner by elites to establish a cultural justification for operational strategy. This had the dual purpose of suppressing dissent and garnering support for overtly aggressive foreign policies.[66]

In a similar vein, Robin Luckham has identified the existence of an "armament culture" and a "weapons fetishism" which, he argues, is instrumental in maintaining the importance of a weapons culture which serves to perpetuate the hegemony of western interests.[67] Luckham maintains that the influence of the armaments culture follows directly from the repressive apparatus of the state and from the consolidation around the armament complex of a class alliance within the dominant bloc. Furthermore, because the alliance has access to state power, "it can influence the ideological state apparatus ... notably the media and the educational system ... and use them to spread it's

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[64] See Bradley Klein, "Hegemony and Strategic Culture: American Power Projection and Alliance Defence Politics," *Review of International Studies*, Vol.14, No.2 1988.
[65] Ibid. p.136.
[66] See Bradley Klein "The Textual Strategies of the Military: Or, have you Read any Good Defence Manuals Lately?" in James Der Derian & Michael J. Shapiro, eds., *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics* (Lexington, 1989).
[67] Robin Luckham, "Armaments Culture," *Alternatives*. Vol.10, No. 1(Summer 1994).

own values and to legitimise it's hold over authority".[68] This theme of instrumentality is particularly salient with respect to the West where the armaments culture rearranges symbols and meanings in order to harmonise opposites and to justify war through the symbols of peace.[69]

Writers such as Klein also emphasise the capacity for elites to rise above strategic cultural constraints which they manipulate.[70] However, more contemporary research suggests that elites too can be socialised within the myths that they themselves create. Snyder discusses the idea of "blow-back" or "echo-effect" whereupon elites become internalised by the strategic culture symbols that they themselves manipulate.[71] Similarly, Charles Kupchan has indicated the constraining and constricting role of strategic cultures on elites.

From the outset, Kupchan states that his aim is to move away from an extensive focus on material notions of power and relax assumptions of state rationality. Instead the emphasis is on probing the beliefs that inform elites and the domestic forces that constrain how elites react.[72] Kupchan's hypothesis involves the contention that great powers pursue self-defeating behaviour because state vulnerability causes elites to become entrapped in a strategic culture of their own making. Three time periods are used to plot this scenario: In time period one, elites are pushed towards extremist and overly competitive policies as a result of prevailing uncertainty and vulnerability. In time period two, elites propagate images and conceptions within the body politic that will generate support for these aims. As a result, attitudes and perceptions are instrumentally altered. However, by time period three, the state is experiencing the ill-effects of its extremist stance and is faced with strategic over-expansion.

While a rational strategic response to this situation would be to follow a policy of retrenchment and diplomacy, elites find themselves entrapped within the

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[68] Ibid. p.14.
[69] Ibid. p.15.
[70] Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture", op cit, p.40.
[71] See Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1991); see also, Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War; Power and the Roots of Conflict*, (Cornell University Press, Ithaca: New York, 1999)..
[72] Charles Kupchan, *The Vulnerability of Empire* (Ithaca: New York, 1994), p.8.

strategic culture that they themselves initially created and which restricts strategic adjustment. Kupchan thus identifies a situation where the instrumental use of strategic culture leads to adjustment failures and the creation of an intellectual paradigm that overrides strategic logic in the long term.

One observation that can be made from the work of those interested in the issue of instrumentality is that while states appear superficially to speak different strategic culture languages, operation is essentially similar. For Klein, this operation merely reflects the interests of the hegemonic political order. However, this does raise a number of interesting questions: First, does strategic culture operate simply at the level of myth, that merely serves to legitimise policy-making or can we identify instances where there is no disjuncture between attitude and behaviour? Second, do elites make a conscious decision to act instrumentally or is this a semi-conscious, culturally dependent act in itself? Finally, where does this leave the issue of cross-national comparison?

Luckham's analysis appears to suggest the existence of an armament culture in all globalised industrial countries. Equally, it could be inferred from Klein's analysis that as the western strategic project attempts to extend it's influence on a global level, then there is a potential for more states to be regenerated by accentuating the "other-ness" of adversaries and through a culture of violence that leads to a wholesale adoption of *realpolitik* policies. Johnston suggests, that while the potential for cross-national comparison appears strong here, no real efforts have been made within the literature to fulfil this task. This is because "most of this work has not looked enough at comparative cases to trace whether certain discourses and symbolic languages have actually narrowed debate".[73] Nevertheless, this second generation research into strategic culture raises some important questions about the relationship between strategic culture and behaviour.

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[73] Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture", op cit, p.41.

Locating a Third Generation of Research?

Johnston has identified a "third generation" of research on strategic culture that shows an awareness of the inadequacies of earlier work in this area. The research of scholars in this wave is said to be both more rigorous and eclectic in its approach, and more narrowly focused on the case of particular strategic decisions.[74] These writers are united in their challenge to realist theories, but they do this by invoking a more diverse set of cultural variables including organisational, military and political culture. Johnston suggests that while in terms of definition, the third generation differs little from earlier expositions, there is a distinction in the way this generation of writers look to more recent cultural factors. As he points out, their preference has been to concentrate on those variables that effect contemporary experience and practice.

A good example of third generation research is provided by Elizabeth Kier, who has undertaken an analysis of the relationship between culture and military doctrine, with specific reference to the case of France between WWI and WWII.[75] Kier's research is based on the premise that neither civilians nor the military behaves as hypothesised by structural or functional analysis. Instead "changes in military doctrine are best understood from a cultural perspective".[76]This will "provide us with a better understanding of how states choose between offensive and defensive military doctrines".[77] Kier's work acts as a challenge to writers who have argued that military organisations inherently prefer offensive doctrines.[78] Instead military organisations differ in how they view the world, with organisational culture constraining choices between offensive and defensive doctrines. Kier's thesis places particular emphasis on the way organisational culture effects how the military responds to the limitations imposed by civilian decision-makers; "domestic politics set

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine: France Between the Wars", *International Security*, vol. 19:4, (1995), pp. 65-93.

[76] Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and French Military Doctrine", in Peter Katzenstein, (eds.) *The Culture of National Security*, (Columbia University Press, New York, 1996), p.186.

[77] Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine", op cit, p.66.

[78] see Jack Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive: Military Decision-Making and the Disasters of 1914*. (Ithaca, New York, 1991).

constraints; the military's culture interprets these constraints; the organisational culture is the intervening variable between civilian decisions and military doctrine".[79] It is therefore necessary to consider the importance of "political-military subcultures".[80]

How does Kier's discussion of organisational culture relate to the broader notion of strategic culture? Kier describes organisational culture as "the set of basic assumptions, values, norms, beliefs and formal knowledge that shape collective understandings".[81]The idea of organisational culture shaping perceptions and constraining interpretations appears compatible with definitions of strategic culture. However, Kier argues that just as this is not a reference to military mind and does not refer to a general set of attitudes that all militaries share, we should not confuse organisational culture with strategic culture. The former refers to particular military organisations, not to the beliefs held by civilian policy-makers.

Kier suggests that while the military can be influenced by some aspects of the wider culture, its powerful assimilation process can displace the influence of the civilian society. This is not to suggest that the same military culture is universal and homogenous across states. Rather it is necessary to consider the idea of national military cultures, whose doctrinal preference will depend on particular national circumstances. It would appear therefore that Kier is attempting to move the focus away from strategic culture and towards the sub-culture of civil-military relations. This forces a return to the issue of definition. Whereas Yitzhak Klein refers to strategic culture as the "attitudes and beliefs held within a military establishment", [82] Kier's definition deals with the attitudes and assumptions prevalent in the civilian sector. Thus it would seem that what is organisational military culture to Kier is strategic culture to Klein.

Elsewhere Jeoffrey Legro seeks to account for the role of military culture in accounting for inadvertent escalation in WWII. Again, this is an attempt to

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[79] Kier, "Culture and Military doctrine", op cit, p.68.
[80] Ibid. p.69. Kier defines this as "civilian policy-makers beliefs about the role of armed force in the domestic arena."
[81] Kier, "Culture and French Military Doctrine", op cit, p.202.
[82] Yitzhak Klein, "A Theory of Strategic Culture" p.5

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promote the importance of organisational culture. While the main theories explaining inadvertence such as Clausewitz's theory of friction, the security dilemma or organisational theory provide good predictions, Legro suggests that organisational culture provides a better one.[83]

Legro also suggests that where specific means of warfare are compatible with the dominant war-fighting culture of a state's military branches, then that state will be more inclined towards actions that contribute to escalation. However, when a type of warfare is antithetical to a state's military culture, then that state will exercise restraint even in the event of provocative enemy activity. Thus, "organisational culture leads to dynamics in use and restraint that are not predicted by the randomness of friction, the security dilemma, or traditional organisational theory".[84] Legro's conceptualisation of organisational culture is certainly not dissimilar to that of Kier. Furthermore, both stress the importance of looking at culture as a collectively held phenomenon that cannot be reduced to the level of the individual either in terms of those who guide military organisations, or the belief systems of elites within the broader strategic culture.

What does this "so-called" third generation literature contribute to research into strategic culture? An obvious implication of Kier and Legro's research is that it is better to glean cultural evidence from the empirical realm and through an analysis of organisational culture. However, this approach has a limited potential in accounting for society-wide, culturally inclusive, civilian attitudes towards the issue of military strategy. A more comprehensive account could be given by examining socio-cultural influences on civilian policy-makers before assessing how they interact with the military establishment in formulating doctrine. Having done this it is then possible to establish when it is appropriate to consider the impact of organisational culture at a purely military level.

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[83] Jeoffrey W. Legro, "Military Culture and Inadvertent Escalation in World War II", *International Security*, vol. 18:4, 1994, p.109.

[84] Legro "Military Culture..."p.110. Legro uses Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston 1981); Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain and Germany Between the Wars* (Cornell Uni. Press, 1984); and Richard Betts, Richard *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crisis*, (Harvard University Press, 1977).

A broader cultural analysis is provided by Thomas Berger who has investigated the cases of Germany and Japan in relation to political-military cultures.[85] While realist theories may have predicted that Germany and Japan would pursue large, defensive military forces having re-emerged as major powers in the 1960's and 1970's, neither has sought to develop the military capability commensurate with their burgeoning economic power. On the contrary, Berger states that "they are profoundly ambivalent about any increase in military power".[86] He argues that this anti-militarism can be explained by analysing the significance of the creation of national identities, historical experience and domestic-institutional cultural context. Hence although Germany and Japan have faced contrasting structural conditions and appear socially distinct, similarities in their respective political-military cultures result in similar strategic choices.

However, a fundamental problem remains: what about instances where individuals or small groups of individuals appear to make the decisions that guide strategy? Are these individuals socialised within the broader culture? It is conceivable that the relevant individuals within a military organisation or as part of the wider community will not be culturally reliable as units of analysis. The prospect that these individuals may not reflect the prevailing culture, downgrades the relevance of strategic and organisational culture.

Again it is necessary to return to the issue of definition. Elkins and Simeon refer to culture as characteristic of groups, but not individuals: the latter have ideas, values and beliefs and personalities rather than cultures.[87] Kupchan distinguishes between inference based suppositions (or beliefs) and image-based conceptions. Strategic culture refers to popular attitudes, embedded conceptions and national self-image. Thus we need to look at images and symbols that shape how a polity conceives of national security to ascertain societal strategic culture, before we deal with the intricacies of material suppositions held by elites. It is important to investigate whether elites are

[85] Thomas Berger, "Norms, Identity and National Security in Germany and Japan," in Katzenstein ed., *The Culture of National Security*, op cit.
[86] Ibid. p.320.
[87] Elkins and Simeon, op cit, p.127-145.

socialised within the broader strategic culture and whether this is translated into strategic beliefs that take root within the elite community.

Research that fails to distinguish between images and suppositions held within the elite community and the conceptions held within the broader polity, will according to Kupchan, be rendered analytically useless. Without acknowledging this distinction it is impossible to ascertain whether a strong and persistent strategic culture exists, to infuse the elite community with an all-encompassing conception of national security or whether there is a disjuncture between the two, suggesting a degree of instrumentality. By ignoring the issue altogether, the third generation of strategic culture might deprive itself of some valuable insights.

Much of the third generation research outlined above, can also be found in Peter Katzenstein's edited volume, *The Culture of National Security*.[88] Its contributors are in agreement that the dominance of realist theories in the study of national security is unwarranted. They argue that ideational, rather than material factors explain particular national security policies. As Kier, Rosen and Legro indicate, this research provides a fresh impetus towards explaining old empirical puzzles and in a way that re-asserts the centrality of culture in explaining trends in international relations. However beyond this initial premise, the contributors do not appear to advance an alternative theory of national security, and have no agreed theoretical framework on which to base their work.[89] This leads to questions about how much can be expected from strategic culture in terms of analysing strategic outcomes and whether such research can actually provide better insights than those that have previously taken as given.

The Katzenstein volume provides evidence of the distinct lack of coherence within the culturalist programme, which may undermine its potential as an alternative to realist theories. While Kier examines organisational culture,

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[88] Peter Katzenstein, The Culture of National Security (eds.) (New York; Columbia University Press, 1996).
[89] See Jeffrey Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory", *World Politics* 50 (January 1998), p.333.

Johnston and Thomas Berger identify national cultural trends while Martha Finnemore, Richard Price and Nina Tannenwald look at the way global cultural norms affect state behaviour. Distinct ontological differences are evident here. Hence, as Desch argues, the new strategic culturalists have been so preoccupied with their challenge to realism that they have largely ignored very important differences within their own camp.[90] It is also apparent that some cultural approaches are closer to realist theories than they are to other cultural accounts. For example, some globalist cultural accounts bear closer resemblance to structural realist approaches than to cultural accounts that stress domestic cultural and ideational factors.

The question this raises is whether these cultural assessments, based at different levels of analysis, are as "potentially contradictory" as Desch implies. Farrell argues that there is a similar trend in realist discourse, which he suggests exhibits many "contradictory predictions about state behaviour".[91] Farrell suggests that it is "perfectly legitimate for a research program to contain theories that make contradictory predictions".[92] The concept of strategic culture offered in this chapter refers to that at the level of the state. This is based on an assumption that military strategy is still the preserve of states and their respective security communities. However this should not lead to a neglect of trans-national or global cultural norms, which undoubtedly will have a marked effect on state behaviour. Rather, the aim should be to uncover the processes by which global cultural norms are internalised by particular states and how states and societies subsequently reconstitute these external cultures.

It is this inter-subjective, mutually constitutive relationship between cultures at different levels that requires the attention of culturalists in IR. By accepting that strategic cultures exist within states, but that these strategic cultures have a mutually constitutive relationship with external cultures, scholars can become more attuned to the enduring relevance of culture at a multiplicity of levels.

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[90] Desch, "Culture Clash", op cit, p157.
[91] Theo Farrell in John Duffield, Theo Farrell, Richard Price and Michael Desch, "Isms and Schisms: Culturalism Versus Realism in Security Studies (A Correspondence)" *International Security* Vol.24 No.1 (Summer 1999) p.163.
[92] Ibid.

Desmond Ball provides an account of strategic culture in the Asia-Pacific, where he lists a number of regional strategic cultural tendencies.[93] While there is a danger in making regional generalizations that restrict the possibility of national differences, research should progress through exploring the relationship between regional, global and national cultures.

The Issue of Methodology

Devising a workable method for identifying the existence and possible influence of a strategic culture in effecting strategic outcomes is not a simple task. Because of the many competing conceptualisations of strategic culture there is minimal agreement within the literature on how to devise a framework for analysis. Nevertheless, Macmillan and Booth have sought to provide an analytical framework, which they use to identify strategic cultures in the Asia-Pacific region.[94] From the outset, the authors state that they do not perceive cognitive orientations as determining strategic behaviour. Rather these are thought to play a role in "shaping" the margin of choice that is left for the structure of the situation. This suggests the authors are searching for a modest role for strategic culture. However, by using sophisticated theorising, they argue that there is a potential for strategic culture to describe, explain and forecast strategic behaviour.

Macmillan and Booth do not appear to advance an explicit theory of strategic culture. In contrast Johnston seeks to develop a sophisticated theory of strategic culture in order to investigate whether culture (at least in the realm of strategy) can be rescued from its traditional status as a residual variable.[95]In order to attain this goal, two issues require attention: first, it must be established whether strategic culture exists across time and across actors within a society, in such a way that it may constitute a dominant variable in

[93] Desmond Ball, "Strategic Culture in the Asia-Pacific Region," *Security Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Autumn 1993).
[94] Alan Macmillan and Ken Booth, "Strategic Culture- Framework for Analysis", in Booth and Trood (eds.) *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region,* op cit.
[95] Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture", op cit, p.44.

decision-making; second, one must determine whether strategic culture affects behaviour.

To be successful, Johnston acknowledges that at the very least he needs to show that strategic culture limits in some way the options considered. The best way of achieving this is to trace strategic culture "from its sources, through the socialisation process, to the values and assumptions held by particular decision-makers".[96]

This involves establishing exactly what objects are to be used in order to identify a strategic culture and how to analyse them. The amount of potential objects of analysis that could be used is enormous, even when examining a short historical period. Johnston suggests that the most useful objects are likely to be writings, debates, thoughts and words from so-called "culture bearing units" such as strategists, military leaders, security elites, weapons designs, media images of war, military ceremonies and military literature.[97]If the preference rankings are congruent across these objects of analysis and across time, then strategic culture is strong and persistent.

How might these strategic cultural objects of analysis be analysed? Johnston pursues the use of cognitive mapping which is "designed to capture the causal assertions of a person with respect to a particular policy decision and generate the consequences that follow from this structure".[98]By using this method, the researcher is then able "to uncover deeper causal arguments that may be obscured by the surface logics and perfunctory language."[99] Ultimately these cognitive maps might be compared across texts, in order to establish the possibility of congruence.

To supplement this methodology, Johnston looks to incorporate symbol analysis. The importance of symbols is widely acknowledged in the field of political science. Charles Elder and Roger Cobb suggest that symbols may be

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[96] Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture", op cit, pp.50-54.
[97] Ibid. p.49; and Luckham, "Armaments Culture", op cit.
[98] Robert Axelrod, (eds), *Structure of Decisions: The Cognitive maps of Political Elites* (Princeton 1976).
[99] Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture", op cit, p.51.

regarded as "important and characteristic elements of a political culture" by giving "definition to a political community, indexing common understanding and relatively stable patterns of reference".[100] Symbols are important to an analysis of strategic culture, simply because they are socially recognised objects of more or less common understanding.[101] What sort of symbols might the researcher seek to identify? Johnston suggests that we should look for "frequently used idioms or phrases which are axiomatically accepted as valid descriptions of a strategic content, (e.g 'if you want peace, prepare for war')".[102] Equally, it is important to look for key words which take on a behavioural meaning, for example "diplomacy", or "deterrence".

Johnston concludes that a methodology which is inclusive when choosing symbols, and corroborates these findings through the use of cognitive maps, will reveal much about the existence of strategic culture.[103] However, caution is urged in assuming a direct link between strategic culture and strategic behaviour. Johnston prescribes three steps for testing the relationship between strategic culture and behaviour. The first is to test for the congruence between preference rankings across objects of analysis in the formative time period; second, it is necessary to compare preference rankings in a sample of documents (for example) taken from the decision process in the period of interest and then to compare these with the original objects of analysis. Third, it is necessary to test for the effects of elites' preference rankings on politico-military behaviour.

This final step raises a number of issues. It is necessary to control for the effects of non-cultural variables. Strategic culture may simply provide a range of tendencies, but another intervening variable "determines which tendency kicks in and when".[104]Thus exogenous conditions determine when and how a certain strategic culture becomes dominant. It would be possible to test the importance of the strategic culture by holding the exogenous variable constant

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[100] Charles D. Elders and Roger W.Cobb, *The Political Uses of Symbols*, (Longman, New York1983). p.82.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture", op cit. p.52.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid. p.53.

across all cases and varying the strategic culture to determine the independent effects of the latter.

As indicated earlier, the issue of separating cultural and non-cultural variables is a problematic one. Johnston remains resolute on this point, because he is concerned with developing a coherent method with which to show that strategic culture can determine strategic choice. This can be gleaned from his reply to Gray's "strategic culture as context" argument: "if my definition of and methodological approach to strategic culture are so flawed, so utterly mistaken, then my empirical findings must surely be wrong?.... but how would Professor Gray know if they were wrong empirically if not by testing for the effects of an alternative strategic culture on behaviour ?"[105]

The ultimate objective of Johnston's strategic culture methodology, is to move towards cross-national comparison. If states share common strategic behaviours then this is not a result of structural forces but rather because states share similar historical and cultural experiences that lead to a common process of identity creation.[106]

The implication of this conclusion is that in order to establish how a strategic culture is created it is necessary to consider the way in which states are socially constructed. It is within this context that Johnston considers the construction of group identities, or "in-groups" and "out-groups". Those states exhibiting strong "in-group" identification will be inclined towards *realpolitik* characteristics. In contrast, states which exhibit relatively weak in-group characteristics will be more pacific in their external relations. These observations are supported by Alexander Wendt's argument that anarchy is shaped by the way that states identify themselves, with *realpolitik* strategic cultures being a product of the way in which states are constructed socially.[107]

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[105] Johnston, "Strategic Culture Revisited", op cit, p.523.
[106] Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture", op cit, p.56.
[107] See Alexander Wendt "Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics", *International Organization* 46:2 (1992).

In Johnston's case, the example of China is used to illustrate how state formation biases strategic cultures towards *realpolitik* strategies. However, he maintains that within Chinese military thought there are two strategic cultures. The first derives from the Confucian-Mencian paradigm, which places non-violent, accommodationist grand strategies before violent offence or defence. This train of thought can be identified with those classic Chinese military texts, which reflect this stress on harmony, virtue, order and righteousness. The second strategic culture, as identified by Johnston, derives from the *parabellum* paradigm which places an emphasis on the use of forceful and offensive strategy. This paradigm "characterises the environment as dangerous, adversaries as dispositionally threatening, and conflict as zero sum".[108] It is this second strategic culture that has mostly dominated Chinese strategic thinking according to Johnston, as illustrated by a high frequency of state violence in Chinese history. In effect, the operative element of Chinese strategic culture does not differ radically from the Western *realpolitik* tradition.[109]

A Theory of Strategic Culture?

Most writers appear to embark upon theoretical research into strategic culture with an assessment of where it might be situated vis-à-vis realist theories. This might be inevitable given the continuing predominance of realist theories in strategic studies. Many culturalists have been looking towards empirical casework to refute realist explanations and re-assert the centrality of culture in explaining national security policy.[110] Yet critics such as Desch consider this a wholly inappropriate endeavour: Desch argues that,

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[108] See Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, (Princeton University Press, 1995). Andrew Latham's analysis of Indian security policy uncovers a similar dualism: the Kautilyan tradition, which portrays the external domain as inherently violent, and the Gandhian tendency which emphasises a commitment to peaceful change. Andrew Latham, "Constructing National Security: Culture and Identity in Indian Arms Control and Disarmament Practice," in Krause (eds.) *Culture and Security*, op cit.

[109] For an equally thorough critique of the apparent dualisms in Chinese strategic culture see Jing-Dong Yuan, "Culture Matters: Chinese Approaches to Arms Control and Disarmament," in Krause (eds.) *Culture and Security* op cit, However, Yuan appears less inclined to suggest that the *parabellum* is deeply rooted in Chinese history. He argues that for most Chinese dynasties, the historical record seems to show that ideational, non-violent strategies were favoured over *realpolitik*, violent ones.

[110] See for example, Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine", op cit; " Price and Berger, "Norms, Identity and National Security in Japan", op cit; Richard Price and Nina Tannenwald "'Norms and Deterrence: The Nuclear and Chemical Weapons Taboos", in Katzenstein (eds.), *The Culture of National Security*, op cit.

"when cultural theories are assessed using evidence from the real world, there is no reason to think that they will relegate realist theories to the dustbin of social science history. The best case that can be made for these new cultural theories is that they are sometimes useful as a supplement to realist theories".[111]

Desch suggests that part of the reason why cultural theorizing will not supplant realist theories is that it typically involves a selection of cases that "do not provide crucial tests that enable us to distinguish which theories are better".[112] This has led to a debate between Desch and a number of writers from within the culturalist programme, as to whether culture provides the researcher with more explanatory potential than realist theories.[113]

How fruitful are comparisons between strategic culturalism and realism likely to be? Three issues need to be addressed when answering this question. First, attempts to assess the relationship between strategic culturalism and realism must confront the difficult question of what constitutes a realist explanation. Within the realist camp there are significant differences such that it is impossible to identify any one explanation as typical of a "realist" account, to then be compared against strategic culture explanations.[114] Furthermore, many realist approaches might be seen as offering accounts, which are not necessarily acultural.[115]

Second, the conceptualisation of strategic culture offered in this chapter does not refute a realist ontology: strategic culturalists focus on states as the main organisers and exercisers of power in the form of military force, in international politics. As a result many strategic culturalists might also consider themselves to be realists. Colin Gray pursues a strategic culture approach while simultaneously attaching significant importance to material factors such as geography and weapons technology in a way that is likely to satisfy many self-professed realists.[116] Thus, there might be some considerable overlap between strategic cultural and realist approaches.

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[111] Desch, "Culture Clash", op cit, p.142.
[112] Ibid. p.158.
[113] See Duffield, Farrell, Price and Desch, "Isms and Schisms", op cit.
[114] For a discussion of variations in realist theorizing see Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?" International Security, Fall 1998, Vol.24, No.2 (Fall 1999).
[115] "Isms and Schisms" op cit, p.158.
[116] Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context", op cit.

Third, realist theories typically use a positivist epistemology, which implies that truth is pre-existent and that it is the task of the researcher to uncover it. Positivists seek to arrive at an objective truth through reason and with the use of scientific evidence. Realist theories thus seek objective truths about international relations through the accumulation of empirical evidence, which can then be used as a causal theory to universally explain and predict state behaviour.

A strategic culture approach seeks to identify the collective ideas that shape states' understanding of objective material conditions. The principal concern therefore is to show how strategy is culturally constructed. Considerable attention has been given to the emergence of "constructivist" research in IR theory, although there is broad disagreement as to what it should involve. Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smit argue that in general, constructivists advance three propositions. First, the importance of normative and ideational structures as well as material structures; second, the role of identity in the constitution of interests and action; third, the mutual constitution of agents and structures.[117]

However, beyond the slogan, "ideas and discourse matter"[118] there is a lack of consensus as to how constructivism should be used within IR research. Considerable attention has been given to the many different variants of constructivism advanced, with a number of writers attempting to categorise various strands of research. For the purposes of this chapter it might be useful to invoke Ted Hopf's distinction between "conventional" and "critical" constructivist approaches, while acknowledging the potential pitfalls of rigorously attempting to bracket and label particular accounts.

Hopf suggests that, to the extent that constructivism distances itself epistemologically from its origins in critical theory, it becomes "conventional"

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[117] Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smit, "Dangerous Liaisons? Critical International Theory and Constructivism", *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 4:3, (1998), pp.266-267.
[118] David Dessler, "Constructivism Within a Positivist Social Science", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 25, 1999, p.124.

constructivism.[119]Conventional constructivists deny an interpretivist methodology, preferring instead to commit themselves to "mainstream", "conventional" or "normal" social science academic research. John Ruggie refers to a similar category of research when discussing "neo-classical constructivism" which he suggests maintains a "commitment to social science-albeit one more plural and more social than that espoused in mainstream theories".[120] An example of this sort of research might be found in *The Culture of National Security* where it is suggested that the contributing authors deny "any special interpretivist methodology".[121] Writers such as Johnston, Kier, Legro and Berger appear to use positivist research methodologies and epistemologies in their cultural accounts. Johnston in particular seems eager to devise a methodological framework that would satisfy the stipulations of positivist social science.[122]

In contrast, "critical" constructivist approaches use a constitutive epistemology and reject a positivist methodology. For these critical theorists the aim is not to ascertain how certain identities imply certain actions, but rather to elucidate the myths, which underlie this identity formation, hence challenging the notion of a naturalized truth. At the extreme end of critical or "radical" constructivist discourse are post-positivists, who seek to deconstruct the notion that there are any foundations for knowledge. For post-positivists the task is to deconstruct and "de-naturalize" the proposition that there are universal truths.[123] Hence these writers shun the sovereign stance of judgement in favour of "unmasking" the power relations that are integral to discursive practices.[124]

Including references to post-positivist research might run the risk of over-broadening a conceptualisation of constructivism. A number of post-positivists

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[119] Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory", *International Security*, vol. 23:1, (1998), p.181.
[120] John Ruggie, What Makes the World hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge", *International Organisation*, Vol.52, No.4, Autumn, 1998.
[121] Ronald Jepperson, Alexander Wendt and Peter Katzenstein, "Norms, Identity and Culture in National Security", in Katzenstein, (eds.) *The Culture of National Security*, op cit, p.67.
[122] See Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture", op cit.
[123] See Richard Ashley and R.B.J. Walker, "Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and Question of Sovereignty in International Studies", *International Studies Quarterly* 34(3), 1990; David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, (Manchester University Press, 1992).
[124] Ashley and Walker, "Reading Dissidence", op cit, p.368.

are certainly at pains to distance themselves from conventional constructivist research which are considered to be nothing more than masked rationalism and positivism.[125] As Mark Neufeld suggests, "the debate within the camp of (constructivists) may prove to be as vigorous as that between (them) and their positivist critics".[126] However, Bradley Klein's discussion of strategic culture indicates that post-positivist constructivist approaches provide some valid insights that should not be ignored.

Klein's concern is with the realist assumptions on which strategic studies is based, namely that states are taken for granted as the prime and legitimate actors in the strategic realm. For Klein, the notion of the "states-system" and "the West" are not universal truths but are cultural constructs. The important question to ask is: how have they acquired their meaning? Klein's strategic culture approach is therefore concerned with how strategic concepts are constructed by elites for their own ends, thereby uncovering the cultural use of power by hegemonic states.[127]

It might be possible to apply the conventional/critical dichotomy in constructivism to strategic culture research. Hence there are conventional and critical strategic culturalists. Johnston's conventional strategic culture approach is geared towards offering a positivist cultural challenge to realist theories.[128] The critical strategic culture approach of Klein is geared specifically towards exposing the distinction between ideas and behaviour in strategy and more generally towards deconstructing the notion that there are universal truths and explanations as implied by realist theories.

Most strategic culture approaches appear to share a common dissatisfaction with realist theories, yet differ in how they seek to make comparisons. The approach favoured for this thesis is a modest one, which cuts a middle path

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[125] Jim George and David Campbell, "Patterns of Dissent and the Celebration of Difference: Critical Social Theory and International Relations", *International Studies Quarterly* 34, 1990; Campbell, *Writing Security*, op cit.

[126] Mark Neufeld, "Interpretation and the 'Science' of International Relations", *Review of International Studies* 19, 1993, p.40.

[127] See Klein, 'Hegemony and Strategic Culture', op cit; see also, Bradley Klein, *Strategic Studies and World Order*, (Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[128] Johnston is actually reluctant to go down this route. He has intimated that his aim was to test whether strategic culture was a useful independent variable for explaining strategic choice and has acknowledged his lack of a "theory of the origins of strategic culture". Correspondence with Alastair Iain Johnston, March 2000.

between conventional and critical conceptions of strategic culture.[129] How suitable would such a conception of strategic culture research be in providing a theory to challenge realist explanations? Emanuel Adler suggests that "constructivism, unlike realism or liberalism is not a theory of politics per se".[130] Ted Hopf argues that if constructivism is a theory, then "it is a theory of process, not substantive outcome. In order to achieve the latter, constructivism must adopt some theory of politics to make it work".[131] Hence constructivist strategic culture might provide insights, and can illuminate important features of strategic decision-making, but it cannot provide a theory to universally explain the causes behind identity constructions. Strategic culture might therefore be considered as an *approach* rather than a theory.

In utilising a constructivist approach, it is possible to question a number of assumptions often made by realist theories. Constructvism has frequently been used to deconstruct the notion of "rationality" commonly employed in realist explanations of state behaviour which assume states to be unitary actors with fixed preferences that are exogenously determined.[132] A constructivist would seek to understand how preferences are formed by uncovering endogenously constructed identities. These identities are based on inter-subjective beliefs and shared or collective understandings that mutually constitute agents and structures.

A constructivist strategic culture approach also allows the researcher to dispute explanations that rely exclusively on a rationalist materialist ontology. States are not identical and do not respond to material constraints in the same way. To assume they do is to ignore the relevance of national distinctiveness and cultural context which shape the way in which material factors are interpreted. States may possess different identities such that strategies cannot be pre-supposed simply by considering material factors.

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[129] This objective is not dissimilar to Emanuel Adler's suggestion that constructivists should seek to occupy a middle ground between positivists and interpretivists. Emanuel Adler , "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics", *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 3 :3, 1997, p.323.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism", op cit.
[132] See Miles Kahler, "Rationality in IR", *International Organisation*, Vol.52, No.4 (Autumn 1998).

By rejecting a materialist ontology, strategic culture can offer us little more in terms of explanatory theory. This is because one cannot use a causative theory to explain the construction of particular identities and strategic cultures. To establish strategic culture as a substantive explanatory theory of strategic culture, it would be necessary to identify the causal mechanisms that give social structures constitutive effects and to account for the process whereby a cultural identities are translated into strategic outcomes. What is missing here is a cover-all general theory that is applicable in all states at all times, and that will satisfy the "if-then" stipulation implicit to positivist social science.

Realist theorists might argue that although ideational approaches may have described what a strategic culture might look like, they are unable to establish that these ideational factors are more than epiphenomenal to anarchical material structure. Those focusing on strategic culture can offer responses to this argument. Johnston promotes the use of a critical test between material and ideational explanation, whereupon one derives additional but opposite empirical predictions from these alternative explanations and then investigates which additional predictions can be proved empirically. An alternative response, (and one advocated in this chapter) is take the emphasis away from the issue of causality and consider the way in which cultural and ideational factors *constitute* the material structure.

Wendt suggests that constitutive approaches account for the property of things by reference to the structures in virtue of which they exist: "the relationship between the factors constituting the social kind 'Cold War' and a Cold War is one of *identity* in the sense that those factors define what a Cold War is, not one of causal determination".[133] Thus the factors which constituted the Cold War, did not exist independent of it, nor did they precede it in time, rather when they came into being, so the Cold War came into being.[134] In other words, material factors in themselves tell us nothing about states' strategy, unless we identify the constitutive ideas that condition them.

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[133] Alexander Wendt, "On Constitution and Causation in IR", *Review of International Studies*, vol. 24, Special Issue, 998, p.106.
[134] Ibid.

Ruggie supports the case for constitutive analysis. He suggests that ideational factors simply do not function causally in the same way as brute material factors: ideas fall into a category of *"reasons for action*, which are not the same as *causes for actions"*.[135] Ruggie continues, "thus the aspirations for a United Europe has not *caused* European integration as such, but it is the *reason* causal factors (presumably bipolarity and economic interests) have had their specific effect".[136]

Hence strategic culture as constitution should be seen less in terms of supplementing or supplanting realist theories, and more in terms of constituting its materialist assumptions. The importance of strategic culture comes in challenging realist explanations of choice that describe ahistorical, acultural calculations of interests by states that act purely in response to material constraints. The principal aim should thus be to explore the "cultural conditions of possibility" for realist theories.

Realist theories typically predict that inter-state relations are inherently conflictual. Kenneth Waltz argues that "in the absence of an external authority, a state cannot be sure that today's friend will not be tomorrow's enemy".[137] This reference to the causal effects of international anarchy and the propensity for states to pursue "self-help" strategies, can be found in many realist explanations and implies that strategic preferences are determined by immutable external forces.

A strategic culture approach opens up the possibility that states may well interpret the external environment in culturally similar ways, such that strategies are ultimately similar. Johnston has used social identity theory to show how group identities rest inherently on differentiation with outgroups. This differentiation forms the basis for competition and mistrust that leads to *realpolitik* behaviour as illustrated by the Chinese *parabellum* and the Afrikaner

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[135] Ruggie, "What Makes the World hang Together?" op cit. p.869.
[136] Ibid. p.869.
[137] Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War", *International Security*, 25:1 (Summer 2000,) p.10.

laager strategic cultures. For Johnston, these socially generated effects of uncertainty provide the link, frequently made by realists, between anarchy and arming. Hence anarchy leads to *realpolitik* strategic behaviour because of the production of "fear and loathing" between groups, not because of anarchy itself. As Wendt suggests,

"the distribution of power may always affect states' calculations, but how it does so depends on the inter-subjective understandings and expectations, on the 'distribution of knowledge,' that constitute their conceptions of self and other".[138]

Hence states may engage in hostile relations as a result of the construction of domestic group identities which are inherently "oppositional" or "confrontational". Peaceful inter-state relations may emerge in the event states possessing cooperative, "non-oppositional" identities. As identities and strategic cultures change, so the potential boundaries of strategic behaviour are liable to change. Theories that assume strategic outcomes to be determined by immutable external forces such as international anarchy may therefore be insufficient.

Conclusion

The appeal of a strategic culture approach appears obvious. As Colin Gray has emphasised, states will confront "distinctive geo-strategic problems through the prisms of their individual historical circumstances, and with unique sets of assets and liabilities, will make somewhat individual choices".[139] Hence this chapter has sought to re-assert the relevance and value of strategic cultural research.

However, this chapter has advanced the proposition that it is unlikely that a strategic cultural theory can be devised in order to explain how strategic culture causes particular strategic outcomes. Having conducted a review of the

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[138] Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of it", op cit, p.397.
[139] Colin Gray, "The American Revolution in Military Affairs: An Interim Assessment," *The Occasional*, Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, 1997, p.28

strategic culture literature it appears that writers differ in how to approach this issue and as a result offer a diverse and non-cumulative body of research.

Consequently this thesis does not seek to provide cumulative and causal knowledge of the case studies through the use of a theory of strategic culture. Instead an attempt will be made to offer broad or "thick" strategic cultural descriptions of each case by highlighting particular tendencies and pre-dispositions.

At a minimum, a strategic culture approach should be used to expose the inadequacies of explanations of strategic choice, which fail to account for culture. Typically this involves confronting the assumptions of realist theories. Many strategic culturalists take this as a starting point, but then proceed at a tangent, with some writers offering ambitious predictions about strategic culture's potential as an alternative to realist theories.

Strategic culture allows the researcher to uncover the cultural assumptions made by realist theories, which focus on the primacy of material factors. Without attending to the cultural context in which strategic communities approach the material environment, few meaningful insights can be gleaned. Equally, states should not be seen as undifferentiated rational actors as many realist theories assume. States are potentially comprised of multiple cultures and sub-cultures which lead to distinctive strategic preferences. A strategic culture approach should not seek to overly focus on any one cultural level or undermine the possibility of significant cultural overlap.

A number of the analyses discussed in this chapter treat strategic culture as referring to military doctrine and style and as a result, equate strategic culture specifically to military organizational culture. While this may be an integral element of strategic culture it is necessary to also consider broader cultural influences. Strategic communities do not operate in a cultural vacuum. Broader national and/ or societal cultural influences may reflect military strategic decision-making. Furthermore, while this thesis is concerned with

national strategic cultures, it does not preclude the possibility of external cultural influences.

The next step for strategic culturalists might be to draw comparisons between different strategic cultures. For Johnston, the possibility of making cross-national cultural comparisons may strengthen the case for arguing that a strategic culture account can be used in all cases to explain outcomes. If strategic culture could be used to universally explain cross-national cultural differentiation then its credentials as a theory may be enhanced. Yet the question remains: how can a theory be devised to explain the emergence of different cultures across cases?

Elsewhere, cultural comparisons have been used to explore the possibility of cross-cultural dialogue. For example Krause has investigated the importance of cross-cultural dialogue in promoting multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament (NACD) policies and practices. However, as Krause acknowledges, "any attempt to frame general conclusions runs into the basic point about security culture (and cultural influences in general): all achievements in NACD and security building are contextual and all policy initiatives must be tailored to local circumstances and requirements".[140]

Making cultural comparisons can thus be difficult. The issues and questions that arise in different states (or organizations, societies, regions) are liable to be culturally contextual, such that comparisons become problematic. Equally, the overlapping nature of cultural boundaries makes it difficult to identify a culture, as distinct from another, and then to compare the two. Equally, the capacity for cultures to undergo change and transformation should not be underestimated. Yet at a minimum, strategic culturalists should seek to identify persisting or recurring cultural trends that do not change without major disruption. Having done so, the task will be to investigate the interaction of multiple cultures as different levels.

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[140] Krause, "Security Culture and Non-Proliferation", op cit, p.237.

As a result of particular historical experiences and cultural development, states may exhibit distinctive military strategies, which might allow the researcher tomake subtle comparisons. Yet this should not preclude the possibility that the strategies of different states may be similar, since states may be socially and culturally constructed in similar ways. The point is that strategy is not universally explained by material factors alone. Instead, it is necessary to consider the cultural dimension. Krause suggests that "between the poles of 'culture is everything' and 'culture is irrelevant' lies a wide middle ground in which a whole host of 'cultural' factors may be at work".[141] It is in this 'middle ground' that a strategic culture approach may be best situated.

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[141] Krause, "Cross Cultural Dimensions of Multilateral Non-Proliferation and Arms Control Dialogues", op cit, p.2.

Chapter Three: Australia

Introduction

Research into examples of states that have disavowed nuclear weapons options, typically focuses on a series of well-documented cases. The case of Australia, as a possible nuclear proliferant, is virtually unknown amongst proliferation analysts and has attracted almost no theoretical attention. Three possible reasons might be presented for this: first, a belief in the enduring significance of political, technical and strategic barriers to proliferation; second, a scepticism as to Australian motivation to acquire nuclear weapons and third, a lack of documentary evidence on which to base a proliferation story. Furthermore, Australia's current international standing with regard to non-proliferation matters and its public disapproval of nuclear weapons as a feature of global politics, might explain the minimal regard shown to the Australian case.

However, with the recent release of historical nuclear policy documents in Australia, and the emergence of research into the so-called "surprise down under", fresh impetus has been given to the need for a more rigorous analysis of the Australian case.[1] Indeed, there is every reason to suspect that, for a time, a number of key decision-makers within the Australian elite advocated the acquisition of a nuclear deterrent against perceived strategic threats in the Asia-Pacific region. This chapter seeks to confirm the belief that the pursuit of an Australian nuclear weapons capability remained an open issue throughout the late 1950's and 1960's, with a number of prominent individuals pushing Australia towards a weapons option. Crucially, an attempt will be made to gain insights into the question of why a weapons option was rejected and remains a closed issue today.

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[1] See Richard McGregor, "Revealed: Cabinet's Nuclear Arsenal Plan" *The Australian*, 1st January 1999; David Jenkins, "How we Nearly Went Nuclear," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1st January 1999.

Recent analyses offered by Jim Walsh and Jacques Hymans offer encouraging insights into the role of ideas in accounting for Australia's nuclear restraint and in a manner which challenges realist theories which focus purely on external material factors.[2] This chapter seeks to confirm the relevance of culture to Australian strategic decision-making. The focus will be on identifying the strategic culture that shaped and gave meaning to material conditions facing decision-makers and which eventually led to a rejection of nuclear weapons. Ultimately, an attempt will be made to identify the weaknesses of traditional explanations, which account for the Australian decision-making by focusing purely on material conditions. By utilising a strategic culture approach, the aim will be to outline the cultural conditions of possibility that constitute the material structure which realists rely on for explanation.

So what comprises Australian strategic culture? Identifying the cultural milieu which underpins how Australia perceives itself in the world involves an investigation into formative historical experiences and cultural development. Specifically, it is necessary to consider the cultural prism or lens through which the Australian elite came to view its strategic environment and which shaped the contours of nuclear decision-making. In Alan Renouf's words, Australia has traditionally been a "frightened country", suffering a sense of isolation as a Western colony within an Asian theatre. Australian strategic culture has thus shaped a need to remain close to "Great and Powerful Friends" in order to guarantee its security.[3] The need for Australia to retain its position within a Western strategic alliance reflects a broader "dependency", which has inhibited the relative development of a distinct national consciousness and cultural distinctiveness. Australian nationalism and cultural independence are far more prevalent as we enter into the 21st Century, yet this should not disguise the slow and stumbling process whereby Australia has sought to establish its own identity. In terms of locating the relevant period during which Australian nuclear weapons

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[2] Jim Walsh, "Surprise Down Under: The Secret History of Australia's Nuclear Ambitions" *The Nonproliferation Review* 5 (Fall 1997); Jacques E.C Hymans, "Isotopes and Identity: Australia and the Nuclear Weapons Option, 1949-1999", *The Nonproliferation Review* (Spring 2000).
[3] Alan Renouf, *The Frightened Country* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1979).

were considered, it is necessary to focus on the 1950's and 1960's. Yet as will become clear, it is possible to identify a number of cultural themes that have prevailed both before, during and after this period. Whilst an argument will be advanced as to the changing nature of Australian strategic culture during the 1970's, it is still possible to identify a set of core cultural pre-dispositions which have been influential in shaping strategic perceptions and assumptions from the 18th Century to the present-day.

Three interlocking themes will be investigated here: first, the notion of Australia as a "frightened country"; second, the Australian need for "great and powerful friends"; third, the development after 1972, of a distinct and independent Australian national identity. Attention to these sequential themes will provide a good understanding of the ideas which shaped how Australia viewed its nuclear options and in a way that challenges accounts which rely exclusively on rational responses to material conditions. Undoubtedly, Australian threat perceptions which led to a consideration of a weapons option correlated to its international and regional situation. Yet these externalities tell us almost nothing without an investigation into the culture and ideas that make them meaningful. In this sense, strategic culture can provide us with some valuable new insights into the 'surprise down under'.

Australian Nuclear History

Nuclear Energy and British Atomic tests

Following WWII, subsequent Australian governments became interested in the opportunities presented by atomic energy and the possibility of contributing to a Commonwealth atomic project. Atomic energy was considered important, "not only because of its military applications but because of the vast industrial possibilities, so important to a country which was believed to have no indigenous

oil and limited coal".[4] Australia possessed large deposits of natural uranium and thus the establishment of a uranium mining industry quickly became a priority, with the dual aim of selling uranium abroad and of exchanging uranium for foreign nuclear technology. Roy Macleod argues that it is possible to consider Australia's early interest in atomic energy "in terms of the optimism and opportunism of a small group of political leaders, mining interests, scientific administrators and nuclear physicists".[5] The latter included the so-called "nuclear knights" – Sir Leslie Martin, Sir Philip Baxter, Sir Ernest Titterton and Sir Mark Oliphant.[6] Wayne Reynolds, suggests that Prime Minster Chifley received crucial advice from Oliphant in 1946, which prompted work on a nuclear power project in Australia with British assistance.[7]

The Federal Government established a number of nuclear advisory bodies and promoted limited research into nuclear physics at the Australian National University, which was close to the projected centre of the nuclear power industry, the Snowy Mountains scheme.[8] In 1947, the government co-opted State assistance to prosecute a vigorous uranium search resulting in the discovery in 1949 of substantial uranium ore deposits at Radium Hill and Rum Jungle in the Northern Territory.

In 1952, the Australian Atomic Energy Commission (AAEC) was established as a statutory body responsible for operations in all fields of nuclear energy. As Jim Green suggests, this constituted part of an attempt to reorganise scientific and nuclear institutions and advisory bodies in anticipation of nuclear co-operation with the UK.[9] Essentially the AAEC was "entrusted with the task of promoting the

[4] Margaret Gowing, *Independence and Deterrence: Britain and Nuclear Energy, 1945-1952*, Volume 1(Macmillan, 1974) p.147. Gowing suggests that subsequent exploration made a nuclear power programme unnecessary on these grounds.
[5] Roy Macleod, "Resistance to New Technology: Optimists, Opportunists and Opposition in Australian Nuclear History", in Martin Bauer (eds.) *Resistance to New Technology: Nuclear Power, Information Technology and Biotechnology* (Cambridge University Press, 1995) p.167.
[6] See Brian Martin, *Nuclear Knights* (Canberra: Rupert Public Interest Movement, 1980).
[7] Wayne Reynolds, "Rethinking the Joint Project: Australia's Bid for Nuclear Weapons 1945-1960". *Historical Journal*. 41, No.3 (1998) p.858.
[8] Ibid. p.859. See also Reynolds, "Atomic War, Empire Strategic Dispersal and the Origins of the Snowy Mountains Scheme", *War and Society* 14 (1996).
[9] Jim Green, "Australia's Nuclear History", Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Wollongong, <http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/pgrad/phdthesis/JimGreen/history.html> p.3.

discovery, mining, treatment and sale of uranium; operating and constructing plant for the liberation and conversion of atomic energy; and the training of scientific researchers".[10] With funding from the federal government and the support of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Agency (UKAEA) the AAEC began construction of a research reactor at Lucas Heights in 1954. The reactor was a 10 MW heavy-water, high-flux materials testing reactor (HIFAR), with enriched fuel rods supplied by the UKAEA. The HIFAR reactor, located at Lucas Heights, went critical on "Australia Day" in 1958 and was in operation by 1960.

Australia hoped that it could offer a genuine contribution to a Commonwealth atomic project, thus strengthening the imperial alliance. This was to be pursued in conjunction with a high level of co-operation in defence planning, referred to as the "Joint Project", which began with the testing of rockets at Woomera in February 1946.[11] Britain's desire to co-operate with the Australians appears to have been genuine, but was ultimately frustrated by British commitments to the United States, specifically the Quebec Agreement (1943) and later the modus vivendi of 1948.[12] Furthermore, the US appears to have been concerned about Australian security arrangements with regard to nuclear information.

Nonetheless, Australia continued to strengthen her strategic partnership with Britain as was illustrated in the early 1950's by Prime Minster Menzies' agreement to British proposals to conduct nuclear weapons tests in Australia. The first atomic test was held in 1952 on Monte Bello Island, off the coast of Western Australia,

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[10] Ann Mozley Moyal, "The Australian Atomic Energy Commission: A Case Study in Australian Science and Government", Search Vol.6, No.6 p.366.

[11] Anglo-Australian defence co-operation at Woomera consisted of the testing and development of guided missiles and long-range weapons. Reynolds suggests that this was an extensive programme that was "aimed ultimately as far as the Australians were concerned, at the possession of nuclear deterrent weapons and their delivery systems". Reynolds, "Rethinking", op cit, p.854. For a detailed study of the Joint Project see Peter Morton, Fire Across the Desert: Woomera and the Anglo-Australia Joint Project, 1946-1980. (Canberra, 1989).

[12] Lorna Arnold, A Very Special Relationship, British Atomic Weapons Trials in Australia (London, 1987) p.25. The Quebec Agreement bound the US and the UK "never to transfer atomic information obtained as a consequence of the agreement to third parties without the others acquiescence". John Simpson, The Independent Nuclear State: The United States, Britain and the Military Atom (Macmillan, 1986) p.25. The modus vivendi made provision for "areas of co-operation between members of the Commonwealth" but would not allow for the transfer of information from Britain to Australia in the area of plutonium technology. See Reynolds "Rethinking", op cit, p.860 and Arnold, A Very Special Relationship Appendix B.

with subsequent tests conducted at Emu Field and Maralinga in South Australia. The British continued with nuclear weapons tests at Maralinga until 1963.[13]

Why did Menzies consent to British tests in Australia? For "traditionalists" such as Menzies, Australian and British security policies were inextricable: one was merely an extension of the other. The hosting of British nuclear weapons tests was thus seen as a demonstration of Australia's support for the British crown as well as a commitment to inter-Commonwealth co-operation. But Australia's loyalty to Britain also possessed an element of self-interest: with the emergence of regional communist threats in the early 1950's, most notably in China, Australia came to rely on "great and powerful friends" for defence. By hosting the weapons test in addition to continuing defence co-operation at Woomera, Menzies sought to perpetuate the Anglo-Australian defence alliance.

Was Australian co-operation in this area motivated by a desire to gain access to nuclear weapons information and technology? There does not appear to be a definitive answer to this question. Green argues that Menzies acquiesced to the British tests partly out of a hope that Australia would gain some nuclear expertise in return; Cawte suggests that the Australian government saw the tests as part of an intuitive if not contractual reciprocal arrangement; Reynolds on the other hand argues that Menzies decision to allow the tests was driven by a desire to obtain nuclear weapons.[14]

Procuring Nuclear Weapons

Material now released indicates that calls for the acquisition of nuclear weapons first arose in Australia during the mid-1950's.[15] Weapons proponents anticipated that nuclear weapons would spread in a similar way to conventional weaponry

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[13] See J.L Symonds, *A History of British Atomic Tests in Australia* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1985).
[14] Green, op cit, p.2; Alice Cawte, *Atomic Australia, 1944-1990* (Sydney 1992) p.41; Wayne Reynolds, *Menzies and the Proposal for Atomic Weapons* in Frank Cain ed. *Menzies in War and Peace* (St Leonards, New South Wales: Allen & Unwin, 1997) p.116.
[15] Walsh, op cit.

and would therefore soon become a standard feature of modern defence. Support for the nuclear option was evident within conservative Democratic Labour Party and Liberal Party circles; defence officials, especially within the airforce and the ministry of supply and personnel within the AAEC.[16] Walsh suggests that the actions of NATO countries appear to have had an impact on the nuclear issue in Australia: "at the time the Australian Defence Committee made its original recommendation to seek nuclear weapons, the United States had begun stationing tactical nuclear weapons in Europe and a number of American allies – including Britain, France, Italy and West Germany – were declaring their interest in gaining greater access to nuclear weapons".[17] Whilst it seemed highly unlikely that the US would transfer nuclear weapons to Australia, the potential for some form of "nuclear sharing" with its Western allies remained a possibility.

Nuclear advocates considered that if nuclear weapons were to become part of the regular armoury of modern, advanced industrialised countries, then Australia would need to keep pace in order to participate and contribute to its collective security arrangements. Central to this equation was the suggestion that nuclear weapons could be used in conflict situations. Reynolds points to an Australian defence review conducted in June 1956 whereby an indication is given of the need to prepare for both global and local wars and that "in such limited wars the potential use of nuclear weapons cannot be excluded".[18] This notion of "usability" held added significance for Australia as its Western nuclear allies appeared to be less inhibited in planning for the use of nuclear weapons in Asia as they did in Europe.[19]

Faced with what it perceived to be an encroaching communist threat and with the prospect of regional nuclear outbreak looming large, the Australian government began to consider the possibility of gaining access to a nuclear capability. The

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[16] T.V Paul, *Power Versus Prudence: Why Nations Forego Nuclear Weapons* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000) p.74
[17] Walsh, op cit, p.2. Walsh locates the original recommendation for nuclear weapons in a defence committee report submitted in 1958.
[18] Reynolds, "Menzies and the Proposal for Atomic Weapons", op cit, p.121.
[19] Reynolds suggests that at the SEATO military planning talks in Melbourne in January 1956 it was concluded that nuclear weapons would be used in the event of overt communist aggression. Ibid. p.119.

main thrust towards nuclear acquisition was provided by the defence establishment, most notably the Royal Australian Airforce (RAAF), the AAEC and the Ministry of Supply. In September 1956, Athol Townley, the minister for air wrote to Defence Minister Philip Mcbride requesting nuclear weapons for the RAAF. This was followed in November, by a Defence Committee meeting in which it was suggested that "the effectiveness of all three Australian services would be considerably increased if they were equipped with low-yield kilo-ton nuclear weapons".[20]

The suggestion was that Australia approach the British in the hope of securing nuclear weapons transfers. Under pressure to investigate this possibility, Menzies discussed the issue of the transfer of nuclear weapons with British Prime Minster Harold Macmillan in a meeting in 1958, whereupon it became clear that the United States wanted no new nuclear powers and therefore Britain could offer information only.[21] It is unclear how enthusiastic Menzies was on the question of weapons acquisition. Both Cawte and Walsh remain doubtful about whether Menzies was genuinely enthusiastic about a nuclear project. As a staunch traditionalist Menzies preference was for the maintenance of the nuclear status quo. However, according to Reynolds, Menzies became increasingly concerned about nuclear weapons in the mid-1950s and as a result, "wanted nuclear weapons for Australia".[22]

Walsh has suggested that British archival documents reveal that "the United Kingdom was favourably disposed to Australian requests for assistance with Nuclear Weapons".[23] British sympathies might also have been a consequence of more parochial interests including a desire to sell Australia British aircraft as

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[20] Walsh, op cit, p.3
[21] National Archives of Australia (NAA): A7942/1, N78-1; Meeting between Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Menzies at Parliament House, Canberra on 29th January, 1958, Supplementary record for strictly limited circulation, Nuclear Weapons (Top Secret). Document provided by Jim Walsh.
[22] Reynolds, "Menzies and the Proposal for Atomic Weapons", op cit, p.133.
[23] Walsh, op cit, p.5

delivery systems.[24] Britain was keen to strengthen its Commonwealth ties wherever possible, however, it was also keen to avoid confrontation with the US, and thus damage the potential for nuclear information sharing with its American allies.[25] As Arnold suggests, the British were constrained in supplying information from the tests as a result of the "unquenchable hopes of renewed Anglo-American partnership".[26] If they felt they could not provide information on reactor technology, then it was "impossible to tell them anything on atomic bombs".[27]

This situation was probably as frustrating for the British as it was the Australians: Britain wanted to ensure access to supplies of uranium and was concerned about the prospect of being excluded by closer Australian-American co-operation in this area. Equally, Britain felt indebted to Australia for its assistance with weapons testing. Having assisted with the Australian research reactor and with the joint project proceeding at pace, Britain negotiated the Maralinga tests in 1956 on the understanding that it would provide data on "the effects of atomic weapons for both civil defence and military purposes".[28]

However the principal objective for Britain was to re-ignite Anglo-American nuclear co-operation. The successful development of a British nuclear deterrent in 1956-1957 opened up the possibility of a renewal of nuclear relations with the US. Following the Bermuda summit in March 1957, Britain was offered a limited atomic partnership with the US which brought to an end the joint project and began to limit its transfer of atomic information to Australia. The US was not favourable towards Australian nuclear weapons. With the Soviet Union producing and stockpiling its own nuclear weapons, the US were keen to begin non-proliferation discussion with the Soviets, which involved confronting the problems associated with the global diffusion of nuclear weapons technology. In July 1957,

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[24] Australia originally inquired about British V Bombers in the 1950's. By 1960 interests had shifted to the TSR-2. However, due to technical difficulties, the TSR-2 was cancelled in 1965 by which time the Australians had approached American's for F-111's. Ibid. p.7. Walsh also discusses Britain's interest in the British Bloodhound missile as a delivery system.
[25] Reynolds, "Menzies and the Proposal for Atomic Weapons", op cit, p.132.
[26] Arnold, A Very Special Relationship, op.cit. p.26.
[27] Ibid. p.26.
[28] Symonds, op.cit, p280; Reynolds, "Rethinking the Joint Project", op cit, p864.

Australia signed a defence agreement with the US and re-asserted its requirement for the maintenance of a nuclear defence. The US agreed to assist Australia with "passive" defence measures against atomic weapons, but made no commitment to provide Australia with nuclear weapons.[29]

Nonetheless, by the late 1950's a small, yet committed "bomb lobby" had emerged in Australia. In addition to sections of the Armed services, a number of parliamentarians including liberals such as William Wentworth and the future Prime Minster, John Gorton began offering support for nuclear acquisition. Furthermore, the chief of the AAEC, Philip Baxter, was emerging as an enthusiastic nuclear advocate. Baxter was frustrated in his efforts to promote a reactor capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium. Weapons advocates fed on Australia's Cold War paranoia concerning security threats, most notably the prospect of a Chinese and an Indonesian nuclear capability.[30] However, by 1959, the Australian government appears to have succumbed to political reality and recognised the intractable difficulties in acquiring nuclear weapons.[31]

Hymans has suggested that Menzies position changed somewhat in 1961, following Macmillan's request for Australian support in pursuing a global nuclear test ban. Menzies recommended to cabinet that Australia offer support only in return for "recognition now of the United Kingdom's obligation to provide Australia, if ever necessary, with a nuclear capability".[32] In a subsequent letter to Macmillan, Menzies offered a reminder that a "nuclear tests treaty" could prove to be a "serious limitation on the range of decisions open to a future Australian government".[33] Hence Britain should agree to "the supply of ready-made weapons".[34]

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[29] Reynolds, "Menzies and the Proposal fore Atomic Weapons", op cit, pp.126-127.
[30] For a discussion of Indonesian nuclear aspirations see Robert M. Cornejo, "When Sukarno Sought the Bomb: Indonesian Nuclear Aspirations in the Mid-1960's" The Nonproliferation Review, Vol.7 No.2 (Summer 2000).
[31] NAA: A 7941/2, N15; Note by Defence Department, Question of Nuclear Capability for the Australian Forces, June, 1961, pp. 2-3 (Top Secret). Document provided by Jim Walsh.
[32] NAA: Cabinet Minute, Decision No.1383 marked "Secret", June 13, 1961, "Nuclear Tests Conference: Control Posts in Australia", Series A5818/2. Document provided by Jim Walsh.
[33] NAA: A1838/269, TS852/10/4/2/3; Letter from Prime Minister Menzies to Prime Minister Macmillan, June 29, 1961, p.1 (Secret). Document provided by Jim Walsh.
[34] Ibid. p.2.

This represented a distinct change of approach: Australia was now seeking to acquire "weapons on demand" by drawing on the UK's nuclear weapons stockpile in the event of a deterioration of Australia's security environment. Can this be seen as an explicit attempt to acquire an independent deterrent? Hymans argues that this should be seen more as an indication of Australian concern and paranoia over the credibility of the nuclear guarantees of Australia's allies. [35]

Hymans also raises the question of why Australia did not re-iterate its demands when signing the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) in 1963. For Hymans this is directly related to changing perceptions as to the existence of a Chinese nuclear threat. Whereas in 1961, the Australian government acted upon pessimistic predictions as to Chinese nuclear intentions, these fears had slightly receded by 1963, which would explain a lessening of Australia's nuclear demands on its allies.[36]

An Indigenous Nuclear Weapons Programme?

The testing of a Chinese nuclear device in October 1964 prompted a resurgent paranoia amongst Australian defence analysts. Communist China was considered to be potentially hostile to Australia. Chinese nuclearisation was thus used as a strong argument by Australian weapons proponents, to justify nuclear acquisition. Australian insecurities were further compounded in 1965, with suggestions of Indonesian nuclear ambitions.[37]Australia's strategic position was to deteriorate further with the British decision to withdraw all troops from East of Suez and American disengagement from Vietnam. Australian sensitivities were also accentuated by discussions in UN committees of arms control and non-

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[35] Hymans, op cit, pp.5-6.
[36] Ibid. p6
[37] See "Britain Accused by Dr Sukarno," *Times* 26th July, 1965 "Australia Denies Nuclear plans" *Times*, 31st , July 1965; "Indonesian Atom Test 'in November'" 29 July 1965.; "Indonesian Tests of Missiles", *Times* 7th August 1965.

proliferation proposals. This presented the prospect of greater restrictions on Australia's nuclear option.

From an Australian perspective, the prospect of British withdrawal coupled with non-proliferation proposals, represented a severe double-blow. Following the Chinese nuclear test, Australia turned once again to the question of acquiring its own nuclear weapons. With the prospect of nuclear weapons transfers floundering, certain sections within the Australian elite began to think in terms of an indigenous nuclear programme.[38] With Australia's security situation deteriorating by 1965, the AAEC, together with the Department of Supply were commissioned by the Government to investigate all aspects of Australia's policy towards nuclear weapons and the possible costs of establishing a weapons programme.[39]

In 1966, the US requested that its safeguards arrangements with Australia be submitted to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The then Prime Minister Harold Holt, offered initial resistance to these proposals out of fear that Australia's nuclear weapons option would be jeopardised.[40] From a security perspective, Australia felt weak and vulnerable and thus was unprepared to tackle adversaries on its own and with conventional weapons. The traditional response to this sense of insecurity was to look to "great and powerful friends". However, with both the British and later the Americans turning their attention away from Asia, the impulse to develop an independent nuclear capability was gathering momentum.

The appointment of John Gorton as Prime Minister in December 1967, signalled a crucial turning point in Australian nuclear policy. Gorton represented a departure from the "traditionalism" of Menzies by embracing a more independent "nationalist" outlook. Both Gorton and Baxter epitomised the popular Australian

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[38] Walsh, op cit, p.10.
[39] Ibid. p.7.
[40] See "A-Bomb Option was Prized by Canberra", *Daily Telegraph*, January 1, 1997.

nationalist perception of the external environment: paranoia of a resurgent Japan, anxiety as to Indonesia's intentions and general fear of Chinese and Soviet imperialism. More importantly, both were firm supporters of nuclear weapons acquisition and in favour of enlarging Australia's indigenous nuclear capabilities.[41]

However, in 1968, Australia was asked to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), thus renouncing all nuclear weapons options. While conservatives in government urged Australian acquiescence on this issue, Gorton showed a determination not to sign. According to Hymans, a Defence Committee meeting in March 1968, "set the tone for a raging battle that was destined to last for several years".[42] David Jenkins notes that Cabinet Ministers had a four-page costing of a possible nuclear weapons programme before them at this meeting, which suggested that Australia possessed the independent capability to annually produce upto thirty (20 KT) nuclear weapons, at an initial cost of $13 million per annum, within seven years.[43]

Gorton's negative response to the NPT was supported by Baxter, who argued that "this treaty could only be ineffective and would place 'non-nuclears', such as Australia, in economic, technological and military bondage".[44] Furthermore NPT opponents argued that Australia would suffer financially through a retardation of its nuclear development, its uranium trade and any further nuclear research and development. In addition much was made of the need to maintain the capability for peaceful nuclear explosions (PNEs) for civilian engineering projects.[45]

Whether there was any substance to these claims is open to debate. Ian Bellany has argued that "these were arguments of not inconsiderable gall given the

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[41] Hymans, op cit, p.12; Walsh, op cit, p.11.
[42] Hymans, op.cit, p.9.
[43] David Jenkins, "Seven Years to make an A-Bomb" *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 January 1998 p.6. See also, Jenkins "How we nearly went nuclear", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 January, 1999; Richard McGregor, "Revealed: Cabinet's Nuclear Arsenal Plan." *The Australian* 1 January, 1999.
[44] See X (aka Baxter), "Australian Doubts on the Treaty" *Quadrant*, Vol 12, No.3 , 1968, p.34.
[45] Green, op cit, p.25.

rudimentary nature of Australia's nuclear programme".[46] The more plausible reason for Australian intransigence over the NPT was a desire to keep a nuclear weapons option open. Gorton and Baxter favoured a policy of not signing the NPT, while constructing an indigenous fuel cycle that would allow for the eventual manufacture of nuclear weapons. The proposed cornerstone of this policy would be a 500 MW nuclear power reactor at Jervis Bay on the New South Wales coast. Baxter was adamant that the reactor should use either natural uranium or that an additional enrichment facility be constructed, in order to avoid reliance on foreign suppliers.

In addition, the government initiated a major project whereby PNEs would be used to excavate a harbour off the northern coast of Western Australia at Cape Kerauden. Both the Cape Kerauden project and the Government's delay in signing the NPT, were driven by Baxter and the AAEC. The AAEC maintained a near monopoly on the relevant technical expertise and thus went unchallenged in decision-making circles, which remained closed to outside pressure. Officially, there was "silence and evasion" concerning the prospects for nuclear weapons.[47] Yet it seems highly likely that both Baxter and Gorton envisaged a dual-purpose nuclear programme.

Nonetheless, in February 1970, Gorton announced that Australia would sign the NPT. Officially, Gorton was still unfavourable towards the Treaty. At the time he insisted that "we wish to make it plain that our decision to sign is not to be taken in any way as a decision to ratify the treaty".[48] Why did Gorton sign the NPT? Numerous answers are possible.

Walsh suggests that particular provisions within the NPT, may have allowed for a continuing nuclear option.[49] This might imply that Gorton believed he could sign

[46] Ian Bellany, *Australia in the Nuclear Age: National Defence and National Development* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1972) p.106
[47] Green, op cit, p.27.
[48] Stan Hutchison, "Australia to Sign Atom pact" *Sydney Morning Herald*, February 19th, 1970.
[49] Walsh, op cit, p.13.

but not be bound by the treaty, hence allowing for the further progression of the nuclear programme. In effect Gorton's signature of the NPT may simply have been a change of tactic which would allow for the continuation of the construction of the new reactor at Jervis Bay.

However, the most likely explanation for Australia's NPT signature is the influence exerted by the US. Gorton suggested to the British High Commissioner to Canberra, Charles Johnston, that "he expected that both [the US and UK] governments would try to "twist his arm off to get him to sign and ratify".[50] Hymans suggests that in reality there was very little American "arm-twisting" and that President Nixon "resisted private entreaties for his intervention by Australian government NPT supporters."[51] Nevertheless, an Australian rejection of the NPT raised the possibility of jeopardising US-Australian relations and thus the availability of a nuclear guarantee. For many, this may have presented an unacceptable risk.

Gorton was deposed as Prime Minster in March 1971, which effectively doomed the development of the nuclear reactor. Gorton's successor, William McMahon favoured a policy of non-acquisition and supported the NPT. In effect, McMahon "put the brakes on" Australian nuclear ambitions, prior to the arrival of Gough Whitlam's Labour Government in December 1972. The Australian Labour Party (ALP) had been firm opponents of weapons acquisition in opposition. Having reached office, Whitlam therefore sought a swift end to lingering suggestions of a nuclear option. The decisive turning point came with the ratification of the NPT in January 1973, after which the issue of nuclear weapons rarely arose. From 1973, successive governments appear to have followed a relatively consistent policy of nuclear restraint.

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[50] Public Records Office, Kew, United Kingdom (PRO): Letter marked "secret and personal" from High Commissioner to Canberra, Charles Johnston, to Sir Edward Peck, Foreign Office, August 2, 1968.
[51] Hymans, op cit, p.10.

Analysing the Nuclear Option

The debate within Australia over the NPT forced the Government to consider once and for all the issue of nuclear acquisition. What were the main issues at stake? Nuclear weapons proponents focused on Australia's deteriorating security environment, which by 1968 was perceived as threatening. Jenkins suggests that the Cabinet papers point to China as the country that gave Australian ministers the most pause for thought.[52] The fact that China had acquired nuclear weapons may have accentuated the belief that the region could descend into a condition of nuclear anarchy, with Australia as a possible target for communist attacks. Equally, Australia is likely to have remained fearful of possible Indonesian aggression, despite the fact the Suharto's government appeared to be less threatening than its predecessor.

Australian perceptions of insecurity were further exacerbated by the late 1960's with the apparent retraction of British and US strategic commitments to South-East Asia. The government feared that this would leave Australia "home alone" and therefore vulnerable to attack from Asian communist forces. The crucial question was whether this military retraction would affect nuclear guarantees. In relation to Anglo-Australian relations, questions remain: Did the Australians have reason to believe that their security was guaranteed by British nuclear weapons stationed in East Asia and/or that they could secure access to these weapons "on demand"? In the absence of answers to these questions, it is difficult to ascertain the degree of insecurity that Britain's military retraction may have stimulated within the Australian Government.

The dominant assumption, as favoured by realist theories, appears to have been that it was in the US' interest to maintain the strategic balance with the Soviets and the Chinese and hence to retain a commitment to defend Australia against

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[52] Jenkins, "Seven Years to make an A-Bomb", p.6.

communist expansionism.[53] Australia may therefore have concluded that given this security guarantee, Australian nuclear weapons were strategically unnecessary. However, this leaves open an important strategic cultural question, which is typically left unanswered by realist theories: What were the ideas under-lying assumptions about the threats to be addressed, and the allies to be trusted? This question will addressed later.

It is worth considering the possibility that the US' nuclear commitment may not have been as unequivocal in a situation where US vital security interests were not at stake. In the event of a dispute between Australia and a regional adversary, which was not allied to the USSR (or China), it is unlikely that the US would have offered nuclear (or military) support, especially given its experiences in Vietnam. For weapons proponents this provided a case for arguing for the acquisition of an independent nuclear capability with which to deter local threats. Yet how strategically advantageous would an Australian nuclear force been in any scenario?

The sort of nuclear force which Australia would have been able to construct would almost certainly have had a negligible second-strike capability against the Soviet Union (and possibly the China) by virtue of its lack of size and sophistication. It is doubtful therefore whether Australia could have produced a comprehensive deterrent against its communist adversaries. Nonetheless it would have afforded Australia some measure of retaliatory capability that could have been more decisive in deterring smaller non-nuclear powers in the region.

Ian Bellany has identified two categories of military situation in which Australia might have deployed a small tactical nuclear force with the minimum requirement of range, invulnerability and flexibility: first, for use against an invading fleet on the high seas; second, against troop concentrations of an invading force before, or

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[53] Some weapons advocates in Australia may have clung to the notion that the expansion of China's nuclear programme would have led to the US sponsoring the development of new nuclear-weapon states (including Australia) around China's perimeter as a counter-balance.

while embarking or after disembarkation on Australian soil. In both instances the aim would be to redress any conventional imbalances that Australia may face while in conflict with a more capable adversary.[54]

Considerable attention was paid to the potential for an Indonesian attack, possibly with nuclear weapons. However, as has already been suggested, it is doubtful whether Indonesia possessed the capability to acquire nuclear weapons. Any Indonesian aggression is therefore likely to have taken the form of low-level subversion, insurgency and confrontation. An Australian nuclear defence would have been of negligible tactical utility in such as scenario.

What would have been the costs of Australian nuclear acquisition? The likely repercussions of Australia acquiring nuclear weapons can be considered according to financial, strategic and political costs. Financially, there is little doubt that Australia could have afforded to acquire nuclear weapons, either by purchasing externally or in initiating an indigenous programme. In 1957, Menzies told Parliament that Australia could not develop an independent nuclear capability "because of the prodigious costs involved", yet by the 1970's this argument held much less weight.[55] However problems may have resulted from the diversion of limited scientific and technical manpower towards a weapons programme. Australia's deficiency in this area may well have led to economic dislocation.

Strategically, the costs of acquiring nuclear weapons were likely to have been severe. While it is difficult to predict with any great accuracy it is likely to have precipitated an acceleration in China's nuclear programme as well as setting off a possible proliferation chain within the region and further afield, that would have seriously undermined Australia's security position. Consequently, this may have facilitated a further acceleration of its programme towards a more sophisticated capability, in spite of limited access to the relevant technologies.

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[54] Ian Bellany, "Nuclear arms for Australia?" *Current Affairs Bulletin*, 1970, Vol.46 (1) p.11.
[55] Paul, *Power Versus Prudence*, p.81; Bellany, *Australia in the Nuclear Age*, p.81.

The Australian government appears to have given consideration to the likely political consequences of acquiring nuclear weapons. A Defence Committee memorandum in 1958 suggested that "the acquisition of a nuclear capability by Australia, if it could not be concealed, would no doubt be exploited by Communist propaganda and result in some loss of sympathy for Australia on the part of the neutralists".[56] However it was also suggested that "the United States and the United Kingdom have already publicly revealed their nuclear capability in the event of war in Asia, so the acquisition by Australia should materially increase Asian fears".[57]

How would the US have reacted to Australian nuclearisation? The Australians reasoned that much depended on the manner in which it presented its case for nuclear weapons and the political and military circumstances at the time of the acquisition.[58] Nonetheless, the US appears to have maintained a consistently negative policy with regard to the Australian nuclear option, in line with its policy of insuring against the emergence of new nuclear weapon states (NWS). That Australia considered a nuclear option is evidence that doubts may have surfaced about the credibility or wisdom of nuclear guarantees. The US withdrawal from Vietnam may well have unsettled the Australian government by raising questions about where US priorities lay. This came at a time when new NWS were emerging in Asia, which raised the issue of whether nuclear weapons would actually be used in the region: could nuclear war be played out in South-East Asia?

Ultimately Australia appears to have relied on the assumption that it possessed nuclear guarantees from its allies. This may have been based as much on assumptions about the costs of not adhering to American wishes as to the potential advantages of being under the nuclear umbrella. Equally, an Australian

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[56] NAA: A1209/80, 58/5155; Minute by Defence Committee at Meeting Held on Thursday, 6th February, 1958, No.18/1958, Nuclear Weapons for Australian Forces- Plutonium Production in Australia, Agendum No.16/1958 & Supps 1 & 2 (Top Secret)
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.

decision to proliferate while facing no major threat to its security, would most likely have stimulated widespread condemnation by the international community and would have seriously compromised Australia's standing as a "good international citizen". Thus, Australia opted to remain non-nuclear in adhering to the NPT and has retained a firm and active non-proliferation stance subsequently.

Crucially one must ask whether Australia's nuclear restraint was, and is, based on the strength of its alliance relationships and the lack of a serious threat to its security. It would seem plausible to argue that, given the likely costs of proliferation, Australia's security-material circumstances did not warrant the acquisition of nuclear weapons and that ultimately it was in its security interest to remain non-nuclear. However, there are a number of problems with relying purely on security-materialist factors for explanation. As Walsh maintains, the level of security threat does not correspond to interest in nuclear weapons in this case: Australia made its most strident attempts to procure nuclear weapons during a period of relatively low insecurity.[59] Equally an attention to technological material arguments fare little better: as an advanced, industrialised country with plentiful natural resources there were few technological barriers to Australian proliferation and yet the technological imperative does not appear to have been decisive.

There are however more general problems in relying on rationalist materialist explanations. This chapter will highlight the need to look beyond simple cost-benefit equations and to highlight the way in which material circumstances were constituted by a distinct Australian strategic culture, which shaped nuclear decision-making. The claim here is that it is not sufficient to consider Australia's nuclear restraint purely according to rational responses to external material conditions in the way that realist theories invite. Rather we need to consider the cultural pre-dispositions that constitute how decision-makers interpreted their environment and arrived at a non-nuclear decision.

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[59] Walsh, op cit, p.14.

It is not the aim to undermine the importance of the material factors. However, these material factors tell us nothing without an identification of the ideas that constitute them and give them meaning. Thus it was Australia's strategic cultural perceptions which shaped how threats were assumed, why allies were deemed important and why nuclear weapons were considered and then ignored. Without these insights it is impossible to gain a fuller picture of the Australian case.

In discussing Australian strategic culture, two main avenues will be explored. First, the notion of Australia as a "frightened country", both paranoid and fearful; second, the reactive need for "great and powerful friends" to secure Australian security. This is in line with Graeme Cheeseman's assertion that Australia's strategic culture is centred around the twin pillars of "fear and dependence".[60] By attending to these themes it will possible to establish how and why Australia deliberated over the nuclear question. More importantly, by identifying the changing nature of strategic culture into the mid 1970's, it is possible to gain valuable insights into why ultimately, Australia restrained its nuclear intentions.

Australian Strategic Culture

The aim here will be to divide the discussion of Australian strategic culture into two parts. First, it will be necessary to consider the essence of the strategic culture, which constituted strategic perceptions during the period when nuclear weapons were under consideration. This will involve, on the one hand an examination of the culture of fear and anxiety that has pervaded Australia's view of the world, and on the other, attention to the culture of dependence, which has driven Australia into the arms of "great and powerful" friends. As will be shown, these two strategic cultural tendencies are mutually re-enforcing.[61] Second, it will be necessary to consider the emergence of a new strategic culture from the mid-

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[60] See Graeme Cheeseman, "Australia: the White Experience of Fear and Dependence" in Ken Booth and Russell Trood (eds.) *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Macmillan, 1999)
[61] The discussion offered here of Australian strategic culture is related specifically to the culture of "White Australia" or "the largely European community dating from the arrival of the 'first fleet' from Great Britain in 1788". Ibid. p273. This should not be seen as an indication of a lack of interest in indigenous or aboriginal culture, but rather a reflection of the centrality of the White population to strategic, and specifically nuclear decision-making.

1970's, which shaped a new conception of Australia's role in global and regional affairs.

Attention will therefore be focused on these changing trends in Australian strategic culture and their influence on the nuclear debate. Subsequent analysis should contribute to a further questioning of dominant realist accounts which fail to acknowledge the role of cultural factors at multiple levels and rely exclusively on materialist analysis. It is Australia's strategic culture that constitutes the materialist assumptions upon which realist accounts of Australian strategy are based.

The "Frightened Country"

It was Alan Renouf who first introduced the notion of Australia as a "frightened country": isolated from its European origins and experiencing a constant fear of attack from Asian adversaries.[62] These themes of isolation, vulnerability and endangerment are a persistent feature of Australian strategic culture and have been instrumental in shaping strategic policy, particularly the reliance on alliances. Australia's strategic culture owes much to its rather unique position as a large South Pacific Island with a numerically small population of Western origin.[63] Xavier Pons has suggested that Australia's European identity has traditionally made it very difficult for it to feel at one with its Asia-Pacific environment, especially during the colonial period, when the British empire was its only real source of identity.

Originally established as a penal colony for "British miscreants",[64] White Australia quickly developed a distinct sense of isolation within its regional environment. As Valerie Hudson suggests:

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[62] Renouf, *The Frightened Country.*
[63] Xavier Pons, *A Sheltered Land*, (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1994), pp..xi-xii.
[64] Cheeseman, op cit, p.275.

"few in number, an awfully long way from the protective power of the home state, adjacent to regions being colonised, or already colonised by other and potentially hostile European empires, and fearful of a very foreign Asia, the British colonists in Australia developed attitudes which were re-enforced rather than questioned by successive generations of migrants from Britain".[65]

The early Australian settlers thus developed a sense of estrangement, remoteness and alienation; "out of place, awkward and extremely vulnerable", in a region dominated by hostile Asian hordes. [66]

The fear and anxiety which pervaded Australia's perception of its external environment, was driven by distinct racial considerations. With the influx of considerable numbers of Asians in 19th Century, Australia's sense of "whiteness" was quickly re-enforced, with notions of racism gradually coming to the fore. Increasingly, Australia came to see itself as a "white island in a sea of colour".[67]

With the introduction of the Immigration Restriction Bill in 1901, a distinct "White Australia" policy emerged, which informed Government policy with regard to other Asian races and became embedded in Australian strategic culture. A clear illustration of the racial attitudes which informed discussion at the time is provided by J.C Watson, first national leader of the ALP, who proclaimed that "the objection I have to the mixing of these coloured people with the white people of Australia ...lies in the main in the possibility and probability of racial contamination."[68] Just as Asians were seen to be insidiously intent of assimilating themselves into Australian society, so the external menace of the "Yellow Peril" became the "spectre haunting the Australian imagination," presenting an ever-present threat of invasion.

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[65] W.J Hudson, "The Australian People and Foreign Policy", in F.A. Mediansky and A.C Palfreeman (eds.) *In Pursuit of National Interests: Australian Foreign policy in the 1990's*, (Sydney: Pergamon Press, 1988) p.6.
[66] Pons, op cit, pp.xi-xii.
[67] J.A. Camillieri, *An Introduction to Australian Foreign policy* (Jacaranda Press, 1973) p.12.
[68] Cited in Neville Meaney, "The End of White Australia and Australia's Changing Perceptions of Asia, 1945-1990", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.49, No.2, p.174.

Until WWII, Japan was perceived as the "chief and almost only source of Asian threat to the national ideal".[69] While there were fears concerning the prospect of an "awakening China", it was not seriously seen as a threat. However Japan's modernisation and its military predominance of the Western Pacific represented a real threat in the minds of many Australians. With the Japanese defeat of Russia, the first victory of an Asian nation over a European one, "all Australia's fears about Asia and the 'Yellow Peril' came to be focused on that country".[70]

In the minds of many, Japan's aggression during WWII provided justification for Australia's preoccupation with the "peril from the North". Subsequently, efforts were made to guard against future Japanese imperialism through regional collective defensive arrangements. With the disappearance of the Japanese threat, Australia's threat perceptions became focused on the spread of communism in South East Asia. As the Japanese yellow peril evaporated from the Australian consciousness, so the "red peril" of Chinese communism came to dominate threat perceptions. Thus, in addition to the racial distinction of colour, Australia attached another category to its perceptual scheme: the ideological division between communism and anti-communism.[71] In the case of China, the double fear of the yellow and red perils combined very neatly.

Cheeseman has argued that racial and ethnocentric concerns have informed most of the perceived threats to Australia: "initially invasion by yellow hordes, followed by the fear of communist reds, and then following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Arab and Muslim terrorists and religious fanatics".[72] Australian identity thus developed according to them/us, self/other orientations based on an accentuation of the difference between white Australians and "Asian others". Richard White describes the manner in which Australian identity can be seen as continuously besieged by foreign evils. White's investigation of dominant images

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[69] Ibid. p.175.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Camillieri, op cit, p.28.
[72] Cheeseman, op cit, p.278.

and identities in the 1920's presents a picture of the Australian people attempting to retain their integrity whilst being "assailed by foreign evils". [73]

James Camillieri argues that the notions of white Australia and the yellow peril were not accidental developments: "these ideas were fashioned, whether consciously or unconsciously in order to accommodate Australia's organic links with Britain".[74] As long as Australia viewed itself as part of the British Empire, it would continue to emphasise its racial and cultural differences with its Asian neighbours and the maintenance of a close link with Britain. Australian strategic culture thus came to reflect a requirement for the maintenance of the status quo or "things-as-they are", involving a constant attention to possible threats and radical changes in the external environment, which in turn was based on a distinct racial prejudice. This in-built "traditionalism" within Australian identity, exemplified by the post-war Government of John Menzies, stressed the need for consistency and continuity.

These were the ideas which informed threat perceptions prior to the end of the White Australia policy in the 1970's. With the Whitlam and Fraser governments embracing without reservation the notion of Australia as a "multicultural and multiracial society", a new, more accommodating attitude permeated the prevailing strategic culture. Nonetheless, throughout the period when nuclear weapons were considered, successive governments were guided by a distinct racial outlook, which shaped the perception of threats and the consideration of responses.

As the Japanese threat receded, so it was quickly and effortlessly replaced with the fear of the Communist menace. In addition to concern as to Soviet influence in the region, the focus switched to the threat posed by Communist China. Despite having supported each other against Japan during the Pacific War, the Australian

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[73] Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1981) p.144.
[74] Cammilieri, op cit, p.14.

Government initially refused to recognise the establishment of the People's Republic of China in October 1949. By 1950, increasing American influence ensured that anti-communism had become a cornerstone of Australian foreign policy as well as emerging as an electoral necessity. The virulently anti-communist stance exhibited by the Menzies Government ensured that Australia retained a negative attitude towards China throughout. The Korean War (1950-1953) merely served to strengthen this anti-Chinese resolve. The despatch of troops to Vietnam in 1965 was considered to be part of Australia's effort to contain communism in South East Asia. Menzies himself argued in 1965 that the strength of the radical left in South Vietnam would present a "direct military threat to Australia and all the countries of South and South East Asia" and should be seen as "part of a thrust by communist China between the Indian and Pacific Oceans".[75]

This anti-communist, anti-Chinese posturing was supported by a majority of the population, as evidenced by the landslide victory attained by the Holt Government in the 1966 elections.[76] These perceptions were undoubtedly accentuated by the initiation of China's nuclear weapon programme from 1964, which accentuated fears as to Chinese intentions. Whether the reality of the Chinese threat ever corresponded to the level of fear driving Australia's threat perceptions is open to question. As long as China retained co-operative relations with the Soviet Union, thereby presenting a united communist front, then the threat may have been genuine. However, with the Sino-Soviet split and domestic instability resulting from the "cultural revolution", this threat may have receded.

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[75] Quoted in Alan Dupont *Australia's Threat Perceptions: A Search for Security* (Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No.82, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, 1991), p.59.
[76] This is not to suggest active political participation of the general public in foreign policy. As Hugh Smith suggests, only a small proportion of the Australian population takes a serious a continuing interest in foreign policy. While political parties achieved much electoral success during the 1950's and 1960's from "kicking the communist can", in general Australians have displayed apathy towards foreign policy issues. Interestingly, Smith attributes this to a number of factors which run deep in the nation's history, including: geographical remoteness, reliance on allies for security and a broad bi-partisanship in foreign policy. Hugh Smith, "Foreign Policy and the Political Process", in F.A.Mediansky and A.C. Palfreeman (eds.) *In Pursuit of National Interests* op cit, p.34.

Australia's other great fear was Indonesia. As Meaney suggests, Indonesia remained the only unpredictable element in Australian strategic thinking, unpredictable both as to where it stood in the East-West conflict and how the Western allies would react to Australia becoming involved in hostilities with its near neighbour.[77] By the end of WWII, the South East Asian region was facing deep instability. Only Australia, New Zealand and Thailand could claim to be independent and free from either foreign military intervention or civil war. While Indo-China, Malaya and the Philippines all experienced a progression towards independence, Australian attention turned to Indonesia, which was emerging as a major security concern.[78]

By the early 1960's Indonesia began to mount a campaign to "liberate" West Guinea, a move aimed at destabilising the Dutch colony and laying the foundations for an Indonesian take-over. Alan Dupont suggests that New Guinea was considered to be of vital strategic interest to Australia's defence: "a lesson burned into collective consciousness by the Japanese advance through the island during World War II".[79] Ultimately, Menzies was forced to acquiesce to the incorporation of West Guinea into Indonesia, mainly as a result of a lack of support from Australia's allies. However by 1963, Sukarno's Indonesia was actively opposing the formation of Malaysia, with the assistance of Soviet military equipment. Menzies responded in 1964 by providing Malaysia with military support.

As Coral Bell suggests, "this was the period of President Sukarno's doctrine of 'new emerging forces' which were allegedly predestined to sweep away 'the old established forces'".[80] This represented a genuine source of insecurity for Australia, an insecurity accentuated in the early 1960's with suspicions about Indonesia's nuclear intentions. The fear uppermost in the minds of most

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[77] Meaney, op cit, p.181.
[78] David Horner, "The Security Dimension of Australian Foreign Policy" in F.A Mediansky (eds.), *Australia in a Changing World: New Foreign Policy Directions* (Macmillan, 1992) p.89
[79] Dupont, op cit, p.51.
[80] Coral Bell, *Dependent Ally: A Study in Foreign Policy Oxford* (University Press, Melbourne, 1988), p.80.

Australians revolved around the prospect of an alliance between China and Indonesia: a so-called Beijing-Jakarta axis".[81] This would present the prospect of danger on all fronts: areas of tension and conflict, both communist and nationalist inspired had moved closer to Australia, fuelling the national neurosis which revolved around external threats.

By the 1960's, Australian strategy was geared to addressing a fear of "falling dominoes" in South East Asia. It was this concern that precipitated Australian involvement in Vietnam. In November 1961, President Kennedy requested assistance from Australia in the form of equipment and advisors, which was followed a year later with the deployment of troops. Dupont suggests that Australia's initial involvement in Vietnam was shaped by its conflict with Indonesia.[82] However despite an improvement in relations with Indonesia from 1965, Australia found itself heavily involved in Vietnam, ostensibly in defence of American interests.

Thus, the culture of fear contributed to a succession of strategic engagements culminating in the involvement of Australian troops in Vietnam. Prior to the evolution of a new strategic cultural mentality in the 1970's, Australian threat perceptions and strategic assumptions have been governed by a profound anxiety and obsession with threats. Australians have believed themselves to be "threatened" at one time or another by France, Russia and Germany in the 19th Century and more recently, by Japan, China, the Soviet Union and the proliferation of communism, most especially in Korea, Vietnam and Indonesia.[83] Thus, be it a focus on particular states or a fear based on ideological or racial aversion, Australian strategic culture has been characterised by an all-encompassing attention to threats. To this end, Renouf seems quite accurate in referring to white Australia as "the frightened country".

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[81] Cornejo, op cit, p.31.
[82] Dupont, op cit, p. 57.
[83] T. Matthews and J. Ravenhill, "ANZUS, the American Alliance and External Threats: Australian Elite Attitudes". *Australian Outlook*, 41 (3) p.162.

'Great and Powerful Friends': The Strategic Culture of Dependence

The retarded development of individuality and independence from the imperial core had direct ramifications on the nature of Australia's defence and security policy and thus the development of its strategic culture. Much of the following analysis will emphasise how Australia came to rely on the British for defence, thus illustrating the almost holistic nature of Australian dependence on its imperial benefactors. More significantly, the way in which Australia switched to a reliance on the US following the retraction of the British empire, indicates the existence of a "dependence mentality" which is a central feature of Australian strategic culture.

The historical Australian tendency to assume the constancy of threats from Asian adversaries, coupled with a lack of belief in its own ability to defend itself, led to a need to rely on "great and powerful friends" for security. Hence there is an inextricable link between the culture of fear that has pervaded Australia's perception of its external environment, and a culture of dependence, which has arisen as a response. To use Cheeseman's words, "Australia has become a 'dependent ally', borrowing from, and ever supportive of policies and practices of its principal benefactors and ready to dispatch its military forces overseas in support of their imperial objectives".[84] Until recently, there has been little attempt to develop independent strategic doctrines, or to devise indigenous solutions to the insecurities, which have pervaded threat assessments.

The culture of dependence can easily be attributed to material factors such as the geographical remoteness of a numerically small population on a large land mass, together with the dictates of economic necessity, military inferiority and the attraction of abundant natural resources to potential adversaries. Each of these factors might be used by realists to explain why Australia was dependent on Britain. However, these factors must be considered within a cultural context.

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[84] Cheeseman, op cit, p.273.

Australia's geographical remoteness and military insufficiency would have been an irrelevance had it perceived its external environment to be co-operative and non-threatening. In such a situation, Australia may have quickly divorced itself from its imperial protectors and embraced more co-operative relations with its Asian neighbours. Instead, the early settlers quickly acquired a strategic culture which led to an accentuation of distance, an exaggeration of threats and a "demonization" of Asian neighbours. This perceptual prism led to distorted assumptions concerning the need to remain dependent on others: if not Britain, then America.

Much of the fear present in the Australian consciousness throughout the 19th and early 20th century was based on a lack of individuality and independence from imperial protectors. The early colonists were essentially British, and looked to London for governance, support and security. For most of its early period, Australia's fate was thus decided overseas, creating in the process, a sense of reliance that did not disappear following the creation of an autonomous Commonwealth state. As Hudson argues, the early colonists lacked the intellectual and material resources to go their own way, and were content to adapt British institutions in their politics, law and religion.[85]

Stephen Alomes has attributed Australia's historical inability to develop a sense of independence to the nature of its colonial experience. Alomes suggest that the roots of deference to "traditional centres of power whether described as 'provincial respect' for metropolitan expertise or as contemporary neo-colonial servitude" are specifically related to a sense of colonial inferiority.[86] This is based on the idea that Australian life was both culturally and socially inferior to its British equivalent, an idea compounded by the English elite which perceived Australians to be the very antithesis of all things cultural and sophisticated. Alomes suggests that the over-bearing dominance of imperial culture both stunted Australian self-

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[85] Hudson, op cit, p.7.
[86] Stephen Alomes, *A Nation at last? The Changing Character of Australian Nationalism 1890-1988*, (Angus ND Roberston, 1988) p.209.

confidence and retarded the development of a distinctly Australian character. Equally however, this might be seen as in inevitable feature of the "colonial experience" with the "denigration of Australian language, culture and history... comparable with imperial-colonial relations elsewhere".[87]

Throughout the 19th Century, Australia viewed the imperialist ambitions of Britain's European rivals as the principle threat to Australian security. Australia's first official threat assessment provided by General Hutton in 1901, suggested that while its geographical remoteness offered it a degree of protection against Britain's imperial enemies, it was necessary for Australia to "defend those vast interests beyond her shores upon the maintenance of which her present existence and future prosperity must so largely depend".[88] With the outbreak of WWI in 1914 there was little question of Australia's commitment to the cause: Prime Minister Fisher confirmed that Australia would "stand behind the Mother Country to help and defend her to our last man and our last shilling".[89] This commitment proved to be costly, with 59,000 Australian troops losing their lives; a heavy sacrifice for a country with a population of five million.[90]

The rise of Japanese militarism in the 1930's resurrected the fear of the "yellow peril" that had first arisen in the 1890's. Japan's aggression in Manchuria, and its withdrawal from the League of Nations set alarm bells ringing in Australia and raised questions as to Britain's ability to offer defence against Japanese expansionism. Until WWII, Australians perceived Japan as the principle Asian threat to Australian security. Nonetheless, Australia continued to look to Britain and its Western allies to act as a *cordon sanitaire* between Japan and Australia and "to provide a guarantee against the swarming hordes of Asia".[91]

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[87] Ibid. p.221.
[88] Dupont, op cit, p.13.
[89] Cited in T.B Millar, *Australia's Defence* (Melbourne University Press,) 1985 p.17.
[90] These figures come from Ross Babbage "Australian "Foreign policy ; The Security Objectives", in Mediansky and Palfreeman (eds.) *In Pursuit of National Interests* op cit, p.108.
[91] Ibid. p.176.

This trust proved to be mis-placed: the Japanese were to overrun the colonial powers in Australia's neighbourhood, including the British, and struck at Australia itself by bombing Darwin, Broome and even penetrating Sydney Harbour. With Britain no longer able to provide security, Australia turned to the United States. John Molony states that the failure of Britain to come to Australia's aid following the fall of Singapore and subsequent turning to America was of unparalleled importance in the history of Australian foreign relations, "the result was another form of dependence, which given the long record of reliance on great powers for protection, was inevitable".[92]

This is not to suggest that the transition of reliance from the UK to the US proceeded smoothly with universal acceptance. While the strategic culture of reliance was strong, there were many conflicting responses to Australia's security situation. WWII undoubtedly turned Australia's attention away from Europe and towards South East Asia. This provided the impetus for much debate throughout the 1950's and 1960's concerning how Australia should strengthen its security. Nationalists advocated self-reliance and independence, in many cases providing a case for nuclearisation. Others called for Australia to remain neutral and non-aligned, and to concentrate on its own forms of self-defence. For those advocating an "Asianization" of Australia's foreign policy, a case was put forward for regional defence arrangements distinct and separate from external powers. The persistent theme throughout was a reliance on "collective security".

Australia's security interests following WWII were firmly located within South East Asia. Initially, the focus was on containing the potential for a resurgent Japanese threat. Having accepted a softer peace treaty with Japan than it had wanted, Australia managed to secure an "Australia-New Zealand-United States" alliance, referred to as the ANZUS treaty (1951), which effectively guarded against future Japanese aggression. The advent of the Cold War in the late 1940's, dictated the future of Australian foreign policy. Its commitment to the defence of South Korea

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[92] John Molony, "Australia's Historical Legacy" in D. Ball (eds.) *Australia and the World: Prologue and Prospects* p.11

during the Korean War (1950-1953) and its contribution to the British campaign against communist insurgents in Malaya set the tone for what would become a staunch anti-Communist strategy.

Central to Australia's response to external threats during the Cold War, was a policy of "forward defence".[93] This might be defined as the deployment of forces along the approaches to Australia to prevent a potential enemy from reaching Australian territory, based on the notion that it was better to fight potential opponents in advanced theatres than on Australia's own shores. According to this definition, Australian military deployments to Malaya, Timor, New Britain and New Guinea in WWII indicated forward defence. Following WWII, this policy became synonymous with that of collective defence, or security through alliances. This led to a succession of Australian military commitments alongside Britain and the US. Australian forces participated in the Malaysian Emergency, the Korean War, the defence of Malaysia against Indonesia and ultimately the Vietnam War. Forward defence in conjunction with defensive arrangements with its allies, was considered to be a useful mechanism whereby Australia could demonstrate its importance to American interests in the region and thereby ensure US protection in the event of a direct threat.

Thus, by the early 1960's, it was clear that Australia saw the US and not the UK as its principal protector. This transition of reliance was not without its problems. In the minds of many Australians, the situation had been forced upon them because of strategic circumstances, rather than chosen as a desirable policy option. As Pons argues, this transition proceeded with "much foot-dragging, for in the eyes of many Australians, Britain was still 'home'".[94] Menzies continued to place his faith in "our great and powerful friends", meaning the UK and the US, emphasising Australia's role as a bridge in the Asia Pacific region between "those two great Atlantic powers". In reality however, it was the United States that

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[93] Cheeseman, op cit, p.280.
[94] Pons, op cit, p.67.

provided the security guarantees, as Britain sought to retract its interests in Asia, as evidenced by its "no forces East of Suez" decision. This was demonstrated by Holt's suggestion in 1966 that Australia should go "all the way with LBJ".

The alliance with the US was underlined by the purchase of American planes, ships and other military hardware. Furthermore, Australia's agreement in 1963 to allow the Americans to establish a naval communications station at North-West cape in Western Australia, followed by further facilities at Pine Gap and Nurrungar, re-emphasised the close nature of this alliance. From an American perspective, these developments provided valuable strength to its anti-Communist strategy in the Asia-Pacific. From an Australian perspective, the hosting of these bases served to perpetuate American interest in safeguarding its security.

And yet there was a price to pay for hosting American bases. Would this policy invite unwelcome and unnecessary attention from the Soviet Union? Equally, such a high profile contribution to the anti-Communist effort in South East Asia may well have provoked hostile reactions from the Chinese. Nonetheless, Australia retained a firm belief in the ability of the American alliance to safeguard its security. Australian strategic culture shaped an enduring perception of a requirement for external military protection. This part had been played by the British until WWII, and subsequently by the US.

Certain sections within Australia maintained an ambivalence towards the US. As Pons suggests, the US was seen as familiar because of the similarity in language and attitudes, as well as being different because, unlike Australia, it had divested itself of its original Britishness.[95] However, it was difficult to ignore America's military power, which effectively helped push the Japanese away from Australia. As well as heightening Australian sensitivity to regional threats, this experience re-enforced the strategic cultural tendency to assume absolute reliance when facing attack. However, for some, this reliance was more problematic. By

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[95] Ibid. p.69.

maintaining a high profile alliance with the US, Australia was both elevating and drawing attention to itself as a bastion of anti-Communist resistance, which, in turn, further accentuated its reliance on its ally. Furthermore, the policy of forward defence in support of alliance commitments, appeared to be drawing Australia into costly military commitments. Having provided military assistance to the British in numerous instances up to and including WWII, Australia found itself contributing forces to the American effort in Korea and Vietnam. For David Horner this is evidence of what is referred to as a "expeditionary force mentality" which has pervaded Australian strategic culture.[96]

Superficially, the contribution of Australian troops in support of US operations during the Cold War were seen as part of an overall effort to contain communism in South East Asia. In reality, this had more to do with the desire to protect and perpetuate US-Australian relations by demonstrating how ready Australia was to subscribe to US foreign policy, irrespective of its content. This requirement for reassurance and protection had become deeply embedded within Australian strategic culture, thus inhibiting the development of an independent spirit. Competing tendencies were in evidence. For some, Australia needed to pursue a policy of neutrality and non-alignment with a reliance on self-defence, while many nationalists called for strength through independence. Others stressed the need for a more co-operative relationship with other Asian states, regardless of political affiliation, and the benefits of regional economic inter-dependence.

The importance of these competing strategic cultural tendencies should not be under-stated. As will be shown, by the mid-1970's, Australian society and its foreign policy was undergoing a process of transformation with a new strategic culture emerging which would challenge both the dominant perception of Asia and the requirement for "great and powerful friends". However, one should not under-estimate the enduring nature of the cultures of fear and dependence. The instantaneous support offered by Australia to the US during the Gulf War (1990-

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[96] Horner, op cit, p.81.

1991) provides one indication of the continuing predominance of these strategic cultural tendencies.

It was the strategic cultures of fear and dependence which shaped Australian perceptions and assumptions in the debate over nuclear weapons up to the signing of the NPT in 1973. Initially, it was the culture of fear that stimulated a desire to obtain nuclear weapons as a means of defence. Subsequently it was Australia's culture of dependence that shaped a belief that Australia's security could and should be provided by other NWS. The Australian approach to the British for nuclear weapons, followed by a consideration of an indigenous nuclear programme, may have reflected a fear experienced by decision-makers of regional threats. However, the additional strategic cultural tendency to rely on alliances for security, ensured that Australia was determined not to jeopardise its relationship with the Americans.

There were many other competing strategic cultural tendencies which, if stronger, may have over-ridden those outlined above and thus shaped an entirely different outcome, possibly involving the acquisition of nuclear weapons. However, the strategic cultures of fear and dependence were decisive in constituting the non-nuclear outcome and shaping the nature of debate in the crucial period upto the early 1970's. Australia considered a nuclear weapons option out of fear as to the intentions of its perceived adversaries but opted to refrain from nuclearisation because of the likely responses of these adversaries. Equally, Australia believed itself to protected by its alliances and saw little additional benefit in pursuing an independent path through a nuclear deterrent. Australia's nuclear restraint could thus be seen as a response to the material constraints of the external security environment, as well as driven by self-interest. But why did Australia perceive threats in the way that it did? What shaped its perceptions of nuclear weapons and the likely strategic consequences of obtaining them? Why was Australia so ready to rely on its alliances? Only through attention to ideational, historical and

cultural context can we gain answers to these questions and thus gain fuller insights into this case.

By the mid 1970's Australian strategic culture became infused with new ideas as to Australia's regional circumstances and international standing, and in way that ensured the perpetuation of nuclear restraint. The new strategic cultural pre-dispositions towards Asianization, internationalism and the cultural norm of non-proliferation merely re-confirmed a policy of non-nuclearism shaped by the earlier strategic culture.

Fear, Dependence and Nuclear Weapons

The strategic culture of fear, which ensured a threatening Australian vision of its Asian neighbourhood, was decisive in generating interest in nuclear weapons. Mindful of the encroachment of communism in Southeast Asia, Australia sought nuclear weapons as a deterrent to possible aggressors, namely Indonesia and China. After the Chinese nuclear tests in 1964, it was clear that China possessed a nuclear threat, while Indonesia was suspected of going down the same path. For many strategic analysts in Australia, this provided a clear case for the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

Whether the Chinese actually intended to use force against the Australians is, in terms of Australian strategic perceptions, largely irrelevant. This fear of China was based more on the strategic cultural tendency to search for potential threats and exaggerate the possible dangers than it was on a. The experience of Japanese aggression during WWII, ensured that the Yellow Peril would remain the principle menace in the minds of Australians whether it came in the form of Japanese fascism or Chinese Communism.

A similar equation can be used to account for Australian fear about Indonesian intentions. It is unlikely that Indonesia possessed the conventional superiority

necessary to overrun Australian forces. A more serious issue, was the suggestion that Indonesia might seek nuclear weapons.[97] Given this scenario it seemed imperative that Australia be in a position to nuclearise before the Indonesians, or risk pre-emption. Again, such a strategic forecasting would be based on the assumption that it was Indonesia's intention to challenge Australia, which was constituted by the strategic cultural predisposition to assume the constancy of the threat and the vulnerability to it, rather than the material existence of such a danger.

These were the pre-dispositions that drove the nuclear issue onto the agenda. How should Australia go about acquiring nuclear weapons? The answer to this question was shaped by the dependence mentality. The first impulse was to approach the British and seek access to its nuclear weapons.[98] With the transfer of nuclear weapons appearing to be politically unfeasible, attempts were made to secure "weapons on demand", thereby testing the integrity of nuclear guarantees.[99] The question of the credibility of Australia's nuclear guarantees was at the heart of the Australian debate over nuclear acquisition.

The dependence mentality was challenged by the arrival of the nationalistic Gorton as Prime Minister. Unlike his predecessors Menzies and Holt, Gorton held a different vision for Australia, one based on strength through independence. While Gorton maintained Australia's anti-Communist stance, he believed that Australia could meet this threat on its own and should strengthen its security by independent means. The development of a nationalist sentiment was strongly influenced by increasing resentment at Australia's involvement in Vietnam, which by the late 1960's was becoming a costly burden. Inevitably, this nationalist drive involved a change in policy emphasis with regard to nuclear weapons: away from weapons transfers and towards an indigenous programme. Thus, while the

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[97] See Cornejo op cit.
[98] Walsh, op cit, p.3.
[99] Hymans, op cit, p.5.

culture of fear was still very much shaping perceptions of desired outcomes, a new nationalist impulse was challenging the strategic culture of dependence.

Ultimately, Gorton and Baxter failed in their bid to establish Australia as a NWS. In narrow, political terms, the drive towards weapons acquisition met with considerable resistance, most notably from within Gorton's cabinet.[100] Gorton's nationalist revolution was forced to confront a strong "traditionalist" element within government, which favoured a preservation of the status quo through the retention of strong alliances and a non-nuclear policy. With the replacement of Gorton by the conservative McMahon, Australia entered a period of stalemate over the nuclear issue, with the fate of Baxter's proposed reactor project and NPT being the main focus of discussion. The eventual victory of Whitlam's Labour Party in December 1972 provided the decisive thrust towards an acceptance of the NPT and an end to nuclear aspirations.

This might provide an indication of the predominance of an Australian strategic culture which favoured conservatism, alliances and a preservation of the status quo. Equally, we might suppose that the nationalist impulse was insufficiently strong enough to take Australia away from a reliance on Britain and America, and towards an independent strategic posture. An independent Australia, without the protection of security guarantees, but remaining fearful of its external situation, would have presented a genuine proliferation prospect. This leads to an interesting question: did the emergence of Australian nationalism automatically equate to a requirement for nuclear weapons?

The answer to this question may lie in Hymans discussion of Australian identity and the nuclear weapons question. Hymans points to the significance of the national identities of various Australian leaders that have been crucial in shaping their perceptions of national security requirements and thus the debate over nuclear weapons. Menzies' Australia was characterised by an "oppositional" but

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[100] Ibid.

not nationalist identity, based on the assumption that Australia was facing a hostile environment, but that it should not approach threats independently.[101] During this period, Australia expressed interest in acquiring nuclear weapons in opposition to Australia's adversaries, but does not appear to have sought an independent, sovereign nuclear deterrent.[102]

Gorton's Australia was dominated by an "oppositional nationalism" which shared a similar perception of threat to its predecessor, but implied that Australia should act independently and should acquire its own nuclear weapons through an indigenous programme. The arrival of Whitlam's Labour Party to power in 1972, signalled the development of a new identity based on "non-oppositional nationalism", which combined an independent, self-assured stance with a less threatening perception of Australia's regional environment. This would involve an institutionalisation of a policy of nuclear restraint together with an active participation in international non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives. It is through reference to these ideational categories that Hymans makes the link between Australian identity and nuclear decision-making.

It might be assumed from this that there is not a direct link between the rise of Australian nationalism and the quest for nuclear weapons. Both Gorton and Whitlam were guided by a nationalist impulse, but only Gorton considered nuclear acquisition. Equally, while pursing a non-nationalist policy, Menzies investigated the possibility of acquiring nuclear weapons albeit in the form of a transfer. The case for nuclear weapons did not therefore depend on a nationalist sentiment. Rather it would appear that the drive for nuclear weapons was at its strongest during periods of extreme "oppositionalism", in other words, when the perception of the threat was at its greatest. Throughout the 1950's and 1960's Australian decision-makers appear to have perceived the external environment as both hostile and threatening: the case for nuclear weapons arose as a response. With

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[101] The term "oppositional" refers to the "fear and loathing" or 'them/us" orientations of one nation or group towards another.
[102] Both Walsh and Hymans agree that Menzies only investigated the possibility of weapons transfers and never seriously entertained the possibility of an indigenous nuclear weapons programme. The latter would have been inconsistent with Menzies anglophilic tendencies.

a new "non-oppositional" strategic culture emerging in the 1970's, based on a less threatening vision of Asian states, Australia abandoned its nuclear pretensions. It was thus the strategic culture of fear, which constituted the terms of the debate relating to nuclear acquisition.

Equally, however, it was the strength of the dependence mentality that ensured that Australia would remain non-nuclear. Initially, the strategic culture of dependence ensured that Australia under Menzies considered the transfer and not the production of nuclear weapons. These proposals were rejected because of pressure exerted by the US and its non-proliferation policy. Australia chose not to challenge this equation. The development of an indigenous weapons programme under Gorton, might have entailed a severance of the US-Australian relationship. Faced with this prospect, Australia opted for a non-nuclear policy. These decisions were shaped by a particular conception of national interest that stressed the enduring requirement for alliances. Ultimately therefore, the strategic culture of dependence proved decisive in counter-balancing the culture of fear which may have mediated in favour of nuclear acquisition. The dependence mentality slowly evaporated under Whitlam, but with a diminution in fear, there was little need for nuclear weapons.

Inevitably, questions need to be asked about the relevance of broader cultural tendencies and ideational influences in a situation where nuclear decision-making appears to have been guided, ostensibly by a succession of prominent individuals. Ultimately, it might be concluded, as Hymans does that Australia's non-nuclear weapon outcome was shaped by the "identities of various Australian statesman".[103] This might lead to a questioning of the relevance of broader cultural collectives or groupings. Given the apathy shown by the Australian public towards foreign policy issues and the relatively closed nature of security, and nuclear decision-making in particular, it might seem pointless to look beyond the

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[103] Hymans, op cit, p.2.

identities of significant elites. The task for a strategic culturalist is to investigate the possibility that individuals may reflect cultural influences.

Menzies strategic decision-making generally reflected the strategic cultural mentality of both fear and dependence, with Gorton epitomising the cultural evolution of an independent pre-disposition. Whitlam, in contrast, provided an indication of the development of a less oppositional strategic culture. Personal idiosyncracies and individual beliefs cannot be denied, yet nor can the impact of broader ideational and cultural developments, which at times constitute strategic perceptions and assumptions.

In addition, it is important to recognise the influence of external cultural and ideational factors. This research seeks to focus on cultural influences at the level of the state, yet there are other external cultures, which at various times may compete or compliment these domestic cultures. One example of an influential external/ international culture is the tendency, which arose following 1945, whereupon states came to regard nuclear weapons as a desirable military asset. Certainly, Australian strategic analysts began debating the issue of weapons acquisition at a time when the development and transfer of nuclear technology and armoury was becoming a regular feature of international security. Equally, although driven and inspired by US and Soviet interests, an alternative culture of non-proliferation was emerging, which may have shaped Australian perceptions concerning the desirability of weapons acquisition as opposed to NPT acceptance. Australia's strategic culture of dependence may have shaped an easy internalisation of ideas emanating from US sponsored non-proliferation efforts.

It is also important to consider the impact of Australian military organizational culture. As a result of Australia's close association with Anglo-American strategic policy, it is difficult to elucidate a distinct Australian military culture with a distinct national doctrinal discourse. As Cheeseman suggests, Australia has relied heavily

on "allied military concepts and practices".[104] Military strategy and force structure have thus been heavily influenced by the practical experiences of military personnel whose doctrinal preferences have been shaped by Anglo-American concerns.

A reliance on "great and powerful friends" has led to an Australian military history founded on expeditionary military forces.[105] Before WWII, Australia deployed troops in support of British global interests; following 1945, support gradually switched to US interests in the Asia-Pacific. In effect, many of Australia's core strategic interests have been abrogated to the US: with Australian defence decision-making relegated to dealing with "2nd level questions". Contemporary Australian military history has been characterised by the debate between those advocating a policy of forward defence and those preferring defence self-reliance. Beyond these doctrinal categories, Australia has "generally eschewed alternative or unconventional military strategies".[106]

The organizational culture of the military does not appear particularly unique in the Australian case. Inevitably there are traditional inter-service rivalries, with each of the three services stressing the importance of land, maritime and air power to Australian national security. In terms of the debate over nuclear weapons, the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) appears to have been most prominent in attempting to utilise a nuclear deterrent as part of its doctrine of "Independent Strategic Warfare".[107] Again, contemporary strategic debate over Australia's regional security partnerships, reflects the preferences of particular services which devise their own solutions to these issues.

The Australian defence decision-making process itself has traditionally been of a closed nature, with the military playing virtually no political role. Millar has

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[104] Cheeseman, op cit, p.285.
[105] Horner, op cit, , p.85; R. Babbage, *A Coast too long, Defining Australia Beyond the 1990's*, (Allen and Unwin, 1990), p.2; J. Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, (Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1990), p.43.44.
[106] Cheeseman, op cit, p.286.
[107] See J.O Langtry and D. Ball, "The Development of the Australian Defence Force" in Ball (eds.) *Strategy and Defence: Australian Essays* (George Allen Unwin, 1982).

suggested that if one was to put a scale on the extent to which the military control of Government, Australia would be almost at the bottom of the scale, which might suggest that the military has been marginalised in strategic decision-making.[108] Nonetheless the long-standing pre-occupation with the fear of invasion has ensured that Australia has always maintained a interest in military forces and capabilities.

A predominant feature of emergent Australian nationalism was a sense of military prowess, commitment and honour which emerged from WWI. The experiences of the Australian Imperial Force and the New Zealand Army Corps (together known as ANZAC) became a celebrated part of Australian military history. Equally the image of the "digger", (a name given to Australian soldiers who fought in WWI) generated a sense of patriotism and pride and came to "stand for all that was decent, wholesome and Australian".[109] For many Australians the reaction to WWI was more extreme as illustrated by Geoffrey Serle's statement that "two generations of Australians have had it drummed in from the rostrum and pulpit that we became a nation on 25 April 1915 or at least during the First World War".[110] Australia achieved a sense nationhood based on pride and self-belief that had not been experienced following its establishment of as an independent state and which became etched into the national psyche.

Thus, Australian military organisational culture appears to have reflected the broader strategic culture of dependence. This has shaped a series of conventional doctrinal preferences that have been geared to the needs of collective security. Australian society has traditionally relied heavily on the military in order to sedate its own anxieties. With the emergence of new conceptions of security, the predominance of military concerns has receded in the public consciousness. Nonetheless, the continuing requirement for access to state-of-

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[108] Millar, *Australia's Defence* op cit.
[109] White, op cit, p.125. For an alternative critique of the myth of the "digger" and the ANZAC tradition, see John Pilger *Hidden Agendas*. Far from representing a glorious military episode, Pilger describes ANZAC operations in Galipoli as a "typically pointless blood sacrifice". pp.249-254.
[110] Geoffrey Serle, "The Digger Tradition and Australian Nationalism" *Meanjin* Vol. 24 (2) 1965, p.149

the-art weaponry provides evidence of an enduring belief in the need for military solutions to core security threats, as well as ensuring that Australia remains reliant on the US for technical support.

The role of organisational military culture in Australia therefore plays an important though not crucial role in terms of strategic outcomes. Equally, there may be other organisational and bureaucratic cultures which might be worthy of consideration. Hence a range of cultures, operating a multiplicity of levels, often offering contradictory tendencies, are of relevance when considering the Australian case.

The Evolution of Australian Identity

The preceding analysis has sought to identify the dual strategic cultural tendencies of fear and dependence, which are considered to have shaped the debate over nuclear acquisition. However, this chapter is predicated on the notion that Australian strategic culture underwent a transformation following the victory of the ALP in the elections of 1972. Under the instruction of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, Australia fundamentally re-interpreted its strategic interests based on a new set of threat perceptions and assumptions. Whitlam's term in office was a short one (1972-1975) and yet he succeeded in promoting and nurturing a new Australian identity based on a less fearful perception of Asia and the need to remain self-reliant and independent. More significantly in terms of this research, the ALP moved swiftly to end Australia's interest in nuclear weapons and thus forge a future based on nuclear abstinence. It is therefore important to consider the new strategic cultural dynamic, which emerged under Whitlam, when analysing Australia's long term (and contemporary) policy of nuclear non-acquisition.

Whitlam's vision of Asia was based on a re-interpretation of the threat posed by China and Asian communism in general. In effect, the Whitlam government came to recognise that the threat of the "red menace" and the "yellow peril" had been

exaggerated. Australia's experiences in Vietnam had forced a fundamental rethink of its relationship with its Asian neighbours and its involvement in regional military conflicts, of negligible interest to Australian national security. To a degree, the changing balance of power within the region towards the end of the Vietnam War "favoured Australia's benign view of its new position".[111] The emergence of an anti-Communist regime in Indonesia, divisions between Vietnam and China and the Sino-Soviet split all contributed to a highly divided region, thus presenting less of a unified communist threat to Australia. However, it was a changing strategic cultural perception of Asia, rather than a change in the existential threat, that facilitated the emergence of a new strategic outlook.

The changing perception of Asia was accompanied by a repudiation of the White Australia policy and an end to racial discrimination in immigration procedures. Whitlam's aim of creating a new "multicultural" and "multiracial" society, represented a radical departure from previous policy and culminated in the influx of large numbers of Northeast and Southeast Asian migrants into Australia. This new racial regard went beyond immigration policy, as Australian national identity came to be less guided by racial imagery, and more by the need for economic co-operation, political compromise and cultural assimilation. The cultural prism through which Australia had traditionally viewed its Asian environment was thus replaced with a new, less frightening and anxiety-inducing one.

The embracing of a new "Asian" identity, was accompanied by the further development of a nationalist consciousness. The emergence of a "non-oppositional" nationalism under Whitlam, led to a fundamental re-orientation of the Australian political landscape, away from traditional alliances and towards new regional relationships. Thus, Australia should "no longer view itself as an Anglo-American outpost, a transplanted European nation in Asia. Rather, Australians should come to terms with their geography, and admit their country was part of

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[111] Meaney, op cit, p.183.

the Asia region".[112] This would engender both freedom and self-reliance, together with a capacity to redefine Australian identity according to its own historical, social and cultural experiences, rather than those imposed by its imperial protectors.

This is not to suggest that the development of Australian nationalism, was unique to Whitlam's Australia.[113] The nationalist spirit was both strong and influential under Gorton, who shared Whitlam's commitment to independence and self-reliance. The significance of Whitlam's nationalism was that it assigned a new individual and independent role for Australia, without an oppositional view of its external environment. This ensured a swift and decisive re-orientation of Australian interests and commitments, away from "great and powerful friends" and towards its Asian neighbours.

The reorientation of Australian identity under Whitlam, thus entailed a revisionist foreign policy. In contrast to the virulent anti-communism exhibited by previous administrations, Australia officially recognised the People's Republic of China, North Korea and North Vietnam. Whitlam also brought to an end Australia's policy of forward defence which "sat uneasily with the conciliatory, internationalist image the Government wished to cultivate".[114] After Australian troops were brought home from Vietnam, Whitlam signalled further retreat by withdrawing ground forces from Singapore. In sum, Whitlam sought to disengage Australia from its imperial commitments and its unequivocal support of American foreign policy. With the emergence of a new independence, individuality and maturity in international affairs, the ALP "shattered the pattern of Australian politics and Cold

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[112] Richard A. Higgot and Kim Richard Nossal, "Australia and the Search for a Security Community in the 1990's" in Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds.) *Security Communities* (Cambridge University Press, 1998) p.272.
[113] The development of Australian nationalism originally emerged as a direct reaction to British control of Australia. As Millar argues, this nationalism gained a fresh impetus during WWI because of the ineptitude of the British commanders and the apparent waste of Australian lives. Russel Ward has discussed the development of a "national mystique" based on the many aspects which made Australians distinctive, such as "mateship", egalitarianism, contempt for authority, and religious indifference. Millar, *Australia's Defence* op cit. Ward suggests that most writers agree that the Australian spirit is somehow intimately connected with the experience of the early settlers in the "bush" and specifically the bushworkers of the Australian pastoral industry. Russel Ward, Australian Legend (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1958). Pons suggests, the "harsh social and natural environment which prevailed in 18th and 19th century Australia was a source of danger and it forced early settlers – convicts or bushmen – to stick together for safety, thereby giving an unusual prominence to the concept of 'mateship' which became one of the country's major cultural icons". Pons, op cit, p.8.
[114] David Martin Jones and Michael L.R. Smith, "Advance Australia- Anywhere" *Orbis*, (Summer 1999), p.447.

War thinking about foreign policy in Australia".[115] A year into office, Whitlam proclaimed, "we are no longer a cipher or a satellite in world affairs. We are no longer stamped with a taint of racism. We are no longer a colonial power".[116]

Despite a relatively short term in office, the ALP under Whitlam succeeded in fundamentally transforming the essence of Australian identity. The ideologies of "Australianization" and "Asianization" that emerged under Whitlam became imbued within Australian strategic culture, such that succeeding administrations, irrespective of political persuasion, did not seek to question its primary assumptions. Without doubt Australia's new regional orientation was based on economic imperatives. With the economic success of the East Asian economic model becoming obvious by the 1980's, there was a clear case to place a more regional emphasis on Australian economic activity. Inevitably this would dictate a more "constructive contact" with Asian powers throughout Asia, through a range of confidence and security-building initiatives. The emergence of a policy of "defence self-reliance" which came out of the Dibb report in 1986 and the subsequent defence White Paper, *The Defence of Australia 1987*, ensured that Australia would look to refrain from dispatching troops in support of alliance commitments, as well as establishing closer defence links with its nearer neighbours.[117] The Strategic Review of 1993 proposed a "strategic partnership" with Southeast Asia in order to "enhance that region's capacity to exclude potentially hostile influences that could also threaten Australia's security".[118]

The improvement in Australia's relationship with Indonesia from the mid-1960's can be seen within the context of this policy of "constructive contact". Under general Suharto's military dictatorship Indonesia formed a crucial bulwark against communist expansionism and social unrest, and particularly in the 1980's and 1990's, became a conduit for Australia in its growing economic ties with the Asia

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[115] Gareth Evans and Bruce Grant, *Australia's Foreign Relations in the World of the 1990's* (Melbourne University Press, 1995) p.26-27.
[116] Gough Whitlam's speech to the House of Representatives Dec. 13 1973, cited in Jones and Smith, op cit. p.449.
[117] Cited in Cheeseman, op cit, p.280
[118] Ibid.

region. The solidity of this relationship was demonstrated in March 1994, when Prime Minister Keating described Australia's relations with Indonesia as "a model for partnership between developed a developing partnerships".[119] However, this arrangement may have come at a price. Australia's decision to ignore Indonesia's invasion of East Timor in 1975 and subsequent violent suppression of the Timorese could be regarded as one of the more controversial episodes in Australian foreign policy. Despite Australia's contribution to humanitarian intervention in East Timor in 1999, it has received much criticism for its lack of support for plight of the Timorese people.[120]

Perhaps the most significant and enduring theme to have emerged after 1972 was the redefinition and re-conceptualisation of Australian security. As Higgot and Nossal contend, throughout much of the 20th Century, concern has focused on the threat to sovereignty presented by those who might challenge or invade Australian territory, "most palpably seen in the invasion scares of the early 1940's".[121] The tendency to think of security in primarily political-military terms still remains in some quarters. However, from the early 1970's many Australians began to define security according to broader categories, with threats seen as located in the economic realm than in the military sphere. Former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans has suggested that these new trends represent a significant departure from traditional Cold War thinking of security against potential adversaries in favour of seeking security with others.[122]

However, Australian strategic culture has continuously exhibited a tendency to seek collective responses to security threats. The change has come in its choice of security partners and its definition of threat. As Cheeseman suggests, by the early 1990's official documents relating to Australian defence and related issues

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[119] Pilger, *Hidden Agendas*, op cit, p.264.
[120] Pilger suggests that the Australia's policy on East Timor was motivated by a pursuit of oil and gas deposits in the Timor Sea. Ibid, p.256.
[121] Higgott and Nossal, op cit, p.274.
[122] Ramesh Thakur, "Defence by Other Means: Australia's Arms Control and Disarmament Diplomacy" in Robert G. Patman (eds.) *Security in a Post-Cold War World* (Macmillan, 1999) p.183.

began discussing "security communities, confidence and security building mechanisms, multi-lateralism and so on".[123]

Australia has thus sought to promote a regional security dialogue as a means of containing intra-regional tension and promoting stability and development. The Asianization of Australia's security policy in conjunction with defence self-reliance has entailed a greater independence from the US. However, it would be wrong to assume that Australia has completely disengaged itself from US security interests. Most of Australia's regional security initiatives have involved attempts to perpetuate America's continued commitment to the region and to minimise any effects of American military withdrawal. Thus, while Australia has liberated itself from the constraints of traditional alliance commitments and pursued a new, broader security agenda, based around the idea of collective regional security, its reliance on US military power to protect core interests in the event of a breakdown in regional relations, is still in evidence. In a region experiencing distinct economic disparity, cultural and religious cleavages, territorial disputes and high levels of militarization (potentially including nuclear weapons), Australia has remained reliant on American security guarantees as a last resort. Thus, while Australia has acquired many elements of a new strategic culture since the early 1970's there are still competing traditional tendencies in evidence.

The Emergence of a Non-Nuclear Strategic Culture

The ALP entered office in 1972 with a "well developed and unequivocal policy on nuclear proliferation".[124] Whitlam took little time in ratifying the NPT and cancelling the Jervis Bay reactor project. In addition, Baxter and Titterton, two of the most prominent nuclear weapons advocates, were removed from various technical advisory committees.[125] In effect, this signalled the end of Australia's interest in

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[123] Cheeseman, op cit, p.290.
[124] Desmond Ball, "Australia and Nuclear Policy" in Ball (eds.) *Strategy and Defense: Australian Essays* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982) p.322.
[125] Hymans, op cit, p14.

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nuclear weapons. While Whitlam retained an interest in the economic benefits of uranium mining and exports, the issue of nuclear weapons remained closed. Nonetheless, there are a number of references in the literature to the weapons option remaining open up for some time after. The *Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy* in 1975 argued that Australia should make sure that it maintained enough technical capability to reinvigorate a nuclear weapons option in the event that the "country might be forced to consider turning to them for protection at some indeterminate time".[126]

In his autobiography, Bill Hayden, (Foreign Minister to Prime Minster Bob Hawke) has suggested that in 1984, he proposed the maintenance of limited activities designed to reduce the lead time in acquiring nuclear weapons, should the need arise.[127] Hayden indicates that he was concerned as to the intentions of Australia's near neighbours, which led him to suggest that Australia move to the "threshold of being able to assemble nuclear weaponry... in the shortest possible time".[128] As T.V Paul postulates, this may have been a reaction to Japan's accumulation of plutonium, yet there appears to have been minimal interest shown to Hayden's advice within government.[129] Nonetheless, this has led to suggestions elsewhere that Australia had "joined the ranks of the opaque proliferators".[130]

It may therefore have been the case that Australia sought the establishment of a civilian nuclear industry inside the NPT, which could have been harnessed to a military effort in the event of a deterioration in Australia's security position. This would have done nothing to improve Australia's access to, or development of delivery systems or the engineering aspects of weapons development. But as an NPT signatory, Australia could generally strengthen its civilian nuclear programme

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[126] Ball, "Australia and Nuclear Policy", p.325.
[127] Bill Hayden, *An Autobiography* (Pymble, NSW: Angus & Roberston, 1996) p. 422.
[128] Ibid. pp. 422-423.
[129] Paul, op cit, p.77
[130] Reynolds, "Rethinking the Joint Project", op cit, p.867.

thus shortening the weaponization process without jeopardising its alliance relationships.

Whether Australia did retain any genuine interest in nuclear weapons following accession to the NPT is open to speculation. It could be assumed that Australia indirectly retained information and technology, through its civilian activities and research, that would allow it to acquire nuclear weapons in a relatively short space of time. This might lead to suggestions that Australia has retained a "virtual" nuclear weapons capability. This raises the question of intentions. While much emphasis has been placed on the changing nature of Australian strategic culture into the 1970's, it might be wrong to assume a wholesale and immediate transition to a new strategic cultural mentality. There were many traditionalists within Australia who maintained a distrust of Asia and clung to a Cold War ideological mentality throughout the 1970's and 1980's. In a contemporary sense, proliferation threats in Northeast Asia and nuclear realities in South Asia, might lead realist theorists to suggest the enduring nature of Australian nuclear intentions.

However, these material realities have been interpreted in a progressively non-threatening way by successive Australian governments. While there has been a retention of more traditional perceptions of threat, the dominant strategic cultural mentality since 1972 has been "non-oppositional", resulting in benign nuclear intentions. While it is possible to identify a number of competing strategic cultural tendencies which may persuade decision-makers to continue to stress the importance of military deterrence and possible aggressive intentions of some Asia states, these have not been sufficiently strong enough to re-open the nuclear question. In effect, the Australian strategic culture of non-nuclearism has become strong and enduring. Equally enduring is Australia's apparent reliance on US nuclear guarantees, which ensures that Australia has no requirement for its own nuclear deterrent. It would therefore seem far from conclusive that Australia has deliberately and intentionally retained a virtual nuclear arsenal.

The "Good International Citizen": Australia's Contribution to Nuclear Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

Having signed the NPT and committed itself to a long-term policy of nuclear abstinence, Australia began to consider a pro-active role in nuclear arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Under Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, Australia imposed rigorous safeguards on its uranium exports as well as continuing its call for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to the United Nations. However, it was the activities of Hawke's Labour government in the realm of nuclear and conventional disarmament and arms control, which gave Australia's its high profile status in this area. Throughout the 1980's, Australia pressed the US and the Soviets to halt the nuclear arms race; continued its campaign for a CTBT, and promoted the global norm of non-proliferation.[131] In 1983, Australia appointed its first Minister for Disarmament to represent the country in various international bodies such as the Conference on Disarmament (CD).[132] In 1984, Australia provided the initiative for the conclusion of a South Pacific Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SPNWFZ), which culminated a year later in the signing of Treaty of Rarotonga.[133]

Australia's support of the SPNWFZ was based on resistance to French nuclear testing in the region. This became a hot issue upon the French announcement in 1995 that it was to resume underground nuclear testing at Muraroa Atoll in the South Pacific. The strong public reaction which the French tests aroused forced Australia into a diplomatic stand-off with France and led to the formation of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.[134] The report produced by the Commission in 1996, proposed a series of immediate and long term steps for the NWS' to eliminate their arsenals.[135]

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[131] See Thakur, op cit.
[132] Cheeseman, op cit, p.284.
[133] Findlay pp.172-173 and Michael Hamel-Green, "The South Pacific-The Treaty of Rarotonga", in Ramesh Thakur (eds.) *Nuclear Weapons-Free Zones* (Macmillan, 1998).
[134] Hymans, op cit, p.15.
[135] Report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 1996), http://www.dfat.gov.au/dfat/cc/cchome/html.

Australia's resistance to French nuclear testing, fitted well with its pursuit of "good international citizenship" based on the belief that "for both moral and practical reasons" Australia should "actively pursue the rule of law, common security and a just division of rights and responsibilities".[136] In a similar vein Australia sought to use the Canberra Commission to "establish itself as the 'bridge' between the nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states".[137] Thus, Australian strategic culture had developed a new dimension which stressed the need for Australia to act as "the good guy" in international affairs and to take a moral standpoint on nuclear weapon issues. In one sense this may be a reflection of the development of the independence mentality which pushed Australia into expressing its individuality and forging a new, distinctive role for itself.

Equally, however the impact of public opinion cannot be understated here. As Trevor Findlay suggests, both the Australian and the New Zealand governments were caught offguard by the severity of the public response to French nuclear testing. The Australian Foreign Minister was thus forced to "mount more robust response".[138] Public revulsion at the French Tests engendered a vociferous demand for a tough Australian anti-nuclear weapons policy, which undoubtedly stimulated the Government into creating the Canberra Commission.

It might be suggested that there is an irony in Australia's creation of the Canberra Commission and its promotion of a SPNWFZ, whilst continuing to rely on US nuclear guarantees. This may reflect competing strategic cultural tendencies. While Australia exhibits a strategic cultural preference for fulfilling a role as the "good international citizen", and facilitating regional dialogue and cooperation, the traditional strategic culture of fear continues to influence decision-making. Hence while Australia is keen commit itself to nuclear arms control and disarmament, it continues to be mindful of the need for nuclear protection.

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[136] Trevor Findlay, "Explaining Australasian Angst: Australia, New Zealand and French Nuclear Testing", *Security Dialogue*, 1995 Vol. 6. 4, p. 377.
[137] Hymans, op cit, p.15.
[138] Findlay, "Explaining Australasian Angst", op cit, p.378.

Conclusion: The Relevance of Strategic Culture to Australia's Non Nuclear Weapon Outcome

Realist theories would account for Australia's non-nuclear weapon outcome according to external material factors. A good example is provided by Paul who explains Australia's "nuclear forbearance" according to the benign security environment facing Australia and the deterrent effect provided by the ANZUS alliance.[139] According to Paul, the "low conflict environment and the lack of credible security threats"[140] led Australia towards a less intense requirement for defence. The acquisition of nuclear weapons would thus have encouraged potential adversaries to acquire their own nuclear weapons. Ultimately, given that Australia was facing the more likely possibility of low level, insurgency-type activities, the acquisition of nuclear weapons was seen as offering minimal utility. Indeed such a policy would likely provoke adversaries and aggravate the US, who would support a non-nuclear Australia in the event of nuclear hostilities. It was thus in Australia's interest to sign the NPT and promote the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. From a realist perspective the non-nuclear outcome can therefore be' explained according to cost-benefit reactions to external material circumstances.

This chapter has brought into question the accounts, which rely exclusively on security-materialist variables for explanation and ignore cultural factors. It has not been the aim to bring into question the relevance of material factors. However, these factors only become meaningful when we consider the strategic cultural context in which decision-makers approached them.

Australia initially considered, the nuclear option because it felt threatened. This assumption of threat was shaped by the Australian strategic culture of fear, which accentuated the perceived danger associated with the "yellow peril" and the

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[139] Paul, op cit, p.78.
[140] Ibid. p.79.

spread of communism. Thus, in the minds of many Australian's, the regional security environment of South East Asia was far from benign. These insecurities provided the catalyst for a nuclear debate in Australia.

The Australian decision to abstain from nuclear acquisition centred around its relationship with the US. The proposals for the transfer of nuclear weapons from Britain to Australia and the idea of an indigenous programme, both fell victim to US non-proliferation policy. Ultimately, Australia was guided by the belief that the US would provide it with a nuclear defence and that to proliferate itself, was to endanger US-Australian relations.

Why did Australia regard the US as an ally and its nuclear weapons as a source of security? This chapter has advanced the argument that Australia has been strategic culturally pre-disposed to consider the US as a friend and ally. Furthermore, the strategic culture of fear and insecurity has driven Australia into a reliance on the security and protection afforded by its "great and powerful friends". While the lure of a nuclear option may have been tempting to many, this strategic culture of dependence ensured that Australia would rely on US nuclear weapons rather than risk acting alone. The manner in which Australia distinguished between threats/ enemies and friends/ allies was thus a crucial factor in shaping the non-nuclear outcome.

This chapter has also illustrated the relevance of other external cultural influences. Australia's initial interest in nuclear weapons may well have been stimulated by an emerging international proliferation culture, which suggested that nuclear weapons were to become a common and integral feature of modern military arsenals. However, a policy of nuclear restraint might have been shaped by an international non-proliferation culture, which shaped negative perceptions concerning the spread of nuclear weapons.

The recent release of official documentation relating to the Australian case may stimulate a wealth of new research into the so-called "surprise down under". Writers may be encouraged to dig deep within the archives in order to provide the same rigorous empirical research that is available with regard to other proliferation cases. Yet without attention to strategic cultural context, such research can offer only limited insights.

Chapter Four: South Africa

Introduction.

As an example of a non-nuclear weapon outcome, the South African case is problematic. In March 1993, President F.W De Klerk announced that South Africa, had previously assembled six gun-assembly nuclear weapons that had subsequently been dismantled, following a decision, taken in 1990, to denuclearise. Thus, unlike Australia and Sweden, who restrained their nuclear ambitions, South Africa crossed the nuclear threshold and acquired a weapons capability, prior to its non-nuclear decision. Nonetheless, South Africa has signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and established a safeguards agreement with the IAEA which concluded in 1993 that there was no indication that there remained "any sensitive components of the nuclear weapons program".[1] It is therefore feasible to conclude that South Africa is a non-nuclear weapon state (NNWS). As a non-proliferation case the South African nuclear story is both well-documented and widely researched by virtue of providing the only example of a state which has voluntarily and unilaterally dismantled its nuclear weapons capability.[2]

The focus of this study is to provide a strategic cultural insight into South Africa's decision to revert to a non-nuclear status. However, the same factors that underpinned the initial decision to proliferate are relevant when analysing the decision to denuclearise. South African nuclear history is dominated by a series of persistent strategic cultural themes, which were as prevalent at the inception of the nuclear programme as they were at its close. If the identification of an Afrikaner strategic culture can provide insights into the nuclearisation process then equally, it will lead towards a

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[1] Karmchund Mackerdhuj, *Towards a World Free From Nuclear Weapons: Why South Africa Gave Up the Nuclear Option*, United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA), Occasional Paper No.1, July 1999, p.1.
[2] See Mitchell Reiss, "South Africa: Castles in the Air" in Reiss, *Bridled Ambition: Why Countries Constrain their Nuclear Capabilities* (Washington, D.C:Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995) p.7

more comprehensive understanding of the non-nuclear outcome. From a strategic cultural standpoint, South African nuclearisation and denuclearisation cannot be divorced. The South African case thus provides a different, yet no less relevant, example of how a strategic culture approach can provide new insights into non- nuclear weapon outcomes.

Any analysis of South African strategic decision-making from 1948 must concentrate on the Nationalist Party which served as the mouthpiece for the White minority Afrikaner population and governed South Africa until the first democratic elections in 1994. It is the contention of this research that strategic decision-making throughout the nuclearisation and denuclearisation process, directly corresponded to the interests of the White minority Government, which in turn reflected the historical, psychological, social, political and cultural development of the Afrikaner nation. The Afrikaner *laager*[3] mentality, which directly correlates to the Afrikaner obsession with the idea of facing 'total onslaught', had become deeply embedded in the White South African psyche by the mid 1970's. The "total national strategy" designed as a response to the "total onslaught", developed into a comprehensive societal response to this perceived threat, in a way that illustrates the connection between the Afrikaner cultural worldview and South African strategic and nuclear decision-making.

However, as will become apparent, the decision to dismantle South Africa's weapons capability must be seen as part of a broader process of social and political transformation in South Africa. Central to this process was the growth of an enlightened, liberal movement within the National Party, which recognised the failure of the apartheid system and acknowledged the need for reform. South Africa's nuclear rollback was thus a response by the White Government to what many within the Afrikaner movement, saw as impending doom. The non-nuclear decision was very much a product of the same strategic cultural mentality that prevailed through the period when nuclear weapons were seen as conducive to the Afrikaner State's survival. This

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[3] The term *laager* can be traced to the early Boer settlers. It refers to the circle of wagons that the Boers constructed in order to repel native attacks as they trekked into the interior. See David Fischer, "South Africa" in Mitchell Reiss and Robert Litwak *Nuclear Proliferation after the Cold War* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1994) p.230.

research will seek to analyse the cultural pre-dispositions that underlay the Afrikaner strategic preoccupation with a "total onslaught" and the resulting "total national strategy". Such was the centrality of strategic and military matters to the South African state by the 1980's that it is possible to discuss the notion of "total strategic culture". Inevitably, the role of individuals such as P.W. Botha and F.W. De Klerk will be important in this process and it will be necessary to establish how representative these individuals were of the dominant Afrikaner culture.

It is not the aim of this chapter to provide a new explanation of South Africa's non-nuclear weapon outcome. Furthermore, no attempt will be made to refute the centrality of material factors, which realist theories rely upon for explanation. The aim is to challenge accounts which seek to regard South African non-nuclear decision-making as a simple cost-benefit equation based on rational, calculated assumptions as to national interest. The South African elite acted according to the national interest, but particular perceptions and assumptions that correlated to an Afrikaner strategic cultural mentality shaped this interest.

From Acquisition to Dismantlement : The Rise and Fall of South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Programme.

As Robert Jaster has suggested, South Africa's nuclear weapon programme must be seen "within the framework of its general nuclear development program".[4] This programme originated in South Africa's abundant uranium reserves, which were sought by the United States and Great Britain for the Manhatten Project.[5] In 1950, the US and the UK signed a purchasing deal with South Africa which turned it into one of the World's biggest uranium

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[4] Robert S. Jaster, "South Africa" in Jed C. Snyder and Samuel F. Wells, Jr (Ed.) *Limiting Nuclear Proliferation* (Ballinger: Cambridge, MA) p.148

[5] J.W. de Villiers, Roger Jardine, and Mitchell Reiss "Why South Africa Gave up the Bomb", *Foreign Affairs* 72 (November/December) 1993, p.99.

producers. According to William Long and Suzette Grillot, by the 1960's South Africa was the world's third largest producer of uranium and a partner with the US and the UK on many nuclear energy matters.[6] In 1957, the US made a co-operative agreement with South Africa whereby the US provided a nuclear research reactor, SAFARI-1, which went critical in 1965.[7] The processing of indigenous uranium and the acquisition of the reactor provided the possibility of South Africa enriching its own uranium, described by Jaster as "the most important step toward achieving an independent nuclear capability".[8]

In July 1970, Prime Minister John Vorster announced that South Africa had developed a "unique" process whereby it could enrich uranium.[9] At the time, Vorster was quick to stress that this technological breakthrough would be used only for peaceful purposes and not for weapons acquisition. Having obtained sufficient quantities of enriched uranium, the South African Minister of Mines authorised investigations into producing nuclear explosives in 1971. Following a report by the Atomic Energy Corporation (AEC) in 1974, which suggested that the development of a nuclear explosive device for peaceful uses was feasible, Vorster approved plans for the construction of a test site in the Kalahari Desert.

The highly enriched uranium (HEU) required for a nuclear explosive device was provided by a pilot enrichment plant, named the Y-Plant, which began producing small amounts of HEU in January 1978.[10] The Y-Plant yielded 45 percent enriched uranium for the SAFARI reactor as well as providing low-enriched uranium for the Koeberg nuclear power reactors near Cape Town.[11] Although these facilities were not involved in the direct application towards weapons, the South Africa government possessed the necessary materials and know-how to proceed with the development of an independent nuclear weapons capability, should the political will exist.

[6] William J. Long and Suzette R. Grillot, "Ideas, Beliefs, and Nuclear Policies: The Cases of South Africa and Ukraine" The Nonproliferation Review (Spring 2000) p.29.
[7] See Frank V. Pabian "South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Programme: Lessons for US Nonproliferation Policy," The Nonproliferation Review (Fall 1995) p.2.
[8] Jaster, "South Africa", op cit, p.150.
[9] David Fischer, "South Africa" op cit, p.207, and Reiss "Castles in the Air," p.8.
[10] Reiss, "Castles in the Air" p.8
[11] See David Albright, "South Africa's Secret Nuclear Weapons" ISIS Report (May 1994) p.6 and Michele A. Flourney and Kurt M. Campbell, "South Africa's Bomb: A Military Option?" Orbis (Summer 1988), p.387.

Identifying the point at which South Africa actually decided to switch the emphasis from peaceful nuclear explosives (PNEs) to constructing nuclear weapons remains contentious. The official explanation offered by de Klerk in his March 1993 announcement suggests that the decision to weaponize was taken in 1974 in response to the deteriorating security situation in Southern Africa. However, according to Waldo Stumpf, the decision was not taken until 1977, with the Prime Ministers approval given in 1978.[12] For others, the official explanation fails to account for the fact that the option of a South African nuclear deterrent was seriously discussed well before 1974.[13]

David Albright suggests that following Vorster's approval of construction of a test site in 1974, the Atomic Energy Board (AEB), which merged with the Uranium Enrichment Corporation (UCOR) to form the AEC in 1982, spent the next three years experimenting with the propellants for a gun-type device.[14] The development of this device proceeded at a quicker pace than the Y-Plant could produce fissile material. Hence the planned test in the Kalahari in 1977 was to have been conducted without HEU. The detection of the test site by a Soviet satellite on July 30 1977, forced South Africa to abandon its testing programme. A second incident in September 1979, whereby a US Vela satellite detected a "double flash" over the South Indian Ocean, also alerted international attention towards the possibility of South African nuclear ambitions.

By November 1979, sufficient HEU was available for a gun-type device.[15] The design of this device was similar to the US bomb that exploded over Hiroshima in 1945, whereupon a HEU bullet is propelled through a metal tube

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[12] See Albright, "South Africa's Secret Nuclear Weapons," op cit, p.8.
[13] See for instance Tanya Ogilvie-White, who argues that the decision was probably taken early in the 1960's in response to Soviet-led, Black liberation forces in Southern Africa. The emphasis here is on refuting the notion of a sudden "knee-jerk" reaction" to developments in 1974. See Tanya Ogilvie-White, *Theorising Nuclear Weapons Proliferation: Understanding the Nuclear Policies of India, South Africa, North Korea, and Ukraine*, PhD. Diss. (University of Southampton, 1998.)
[14] David Albright suggests that the first full-scale model of the gun-type device, using natural uranium projectile, was tested in 1976. See Albright, "South Africa's Secret Nuclear Weapons" op cit, p.6.
[15] Ibid. p.7

towards a larger mass of HEU, "thus ensuring high reliability without testing".[16] Reiss maintains that having assembled the first device to "see if everything fitted properly ... the device was then disassembled and handed over to ARMSCOR, the state-owned arms manufacturing corporation, for safekeeping".[17] The second nuclear device was manufactured in 1982. By this time, it had been decided that the main task·of designing and building the gun-type design would be passed to ARMSCOR, with the AEC providing the HEU and theoretical support.[18] A new ARMSCOR building, the Kentron Circle (later renamed Advena) was constructed near Pelindiba. Subsequently, the weapons arsenal increased every year and a half, until six were available by the late 1980's. A seventh device was in the process of being manufactured when the programme was terminated in 1989.[19]

There has been much discussion as to whether ARMSCOR was looking to eventually replace the gun-type devices with advanced gun-type and implosion devices. The development of an implosion device would have been the "first step towards more advanced designs using thermonuclear materials and suitable for warheads".[20] However, Albright suggests that although research into implosion-type devices had been conducted since the initiation of the nuclear explosive programme, this research was not considered to be a priority. Albright argues that weapons designers did not believe that an implosion weapon was necessary unless South Africa was looking to construct a thermonuclear weapon. Such a possibility was, in Albright's opinion, never taken seriously.[21]

The extent to which South Africa proceeded with the development of thermonuclear devices prior to the decision to terminate the programme in 1989 is open to speculation. A report compiled by the United Nations in 1991, suggested that, "so far, there is no evidence that South Africa has taken this

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[16] Darryl Howlett and John Simpson, "Nuclearisation and Denuclearisation in South Africa," *Survival*, Vol.35, No.3, Autumn 1993, p.156.
[17] Reiss, "Castles in the Air," p.11
[18] Waldo Stumpf, "Birth and Death of the South African Nuclear Weapons Programme," in Fifty Years of Nuclear Weapons: A Report on the Sixth Castiglioncello Conference, (Union of Scientists for Disarmament, 1995) p.100.
[19] Reiss, "Castles in the Air", op cit, pp.12-13.
[20] Howlett and Simpson, op cit, p.161.
[21] Albright, "South Africa's Secret Nuclear Weapons," op cit, pp.14-15.

final step".[22] However, the revelation of a missile test at Overberg in May 1989 and the subsequent confirmation by the South African authorities of the successful launch of a "booster rocket", heightened fears of a South African intention to develop "nuclear-tipped missiles".[23]

On 14th September 1989, F.W de Klerk was elected President of South Africa. De Klerk immediately summoned Waldo Stumpf (Chief Executive of the AEC) and Wynand De Villiers, (Executive Chairman of the AEC) and informed them of his intention to terminate the nuclear weapons programme and sign the NPT.[24] By July 1990 the Government had begun the implementation of the dismantlement process. By September 1991, all of ARMSCOR's HEU had been removed from the weapons, melted down and sent back to the AEC for storage. Soon after, the Advena building was decontaminated and its equipment sent to the AEC. Although not all of the HEU had been passed to the AEC by the time of South Africa accession to the NPT on the 10th July 1991, it had all been sent prior to the establishment of IAEA safeguards on 16th September 1991.[25] By the time de Klerk announced the existence of South Africa's nuclear weapons programme, most of the evidence relating to weapons construction had been destroyed.

South Africa's Nuclear Strategy

Having sketched the details of the events and decisions that characterised the birth and death of the South African nuclear programme, it is now necessary to gain insights into the possible motivations, perceptions and assumptions underlying this process. Two basic questions require answering: 1) For what purpose did South Africa seek a weapons capability in the first place? 2) Why, eventually, was the decision taken to dismantle this capability? The dominant approach towards addressing these questions has been offered by the realist theories which seek to explain the nuclearisation process according to the

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[22] United Nations, *South Africa's Nuclear-Tipped Ballistic Missile Capability.* Report of the Secretary General (New York: UN, 1991), p.30.
[23] Ibid, p.30
[24] Zondi Masiza "A Chronology of South Africa's Nuclear Weapon Programme" *The Nonproliferation Review* (Fall, 1993) p.43
[25] David Albright, "South Africa's Secret Nuclear Weapons," op cit, p.16.

hostile international environment, which initially forced South Africa to increase its own security through weapons acquisition. Subsequently, an improvement in the international political and strategic environment by the end of the end of the 1980's, suggested that a conventionalization of South African military capabilities would be in its security interests.

From a realist perspective, South Africa's acquisition of nuclear weapons might therefore be seen as a direct consequence of a degeneration in its external security environment in the 1970's. A nuclear deterrent would be considered a rational response to an increase in threat. However, as David Fischer argues, this raises questions as to who the South Africans were looking to deter with a nuclear capability and how they expected this deterrent to operate.[26] As Fischer notes, the greatest threat to the South African government came from within its own frontiers and in a manner that rendered the threat or use of nuclear weapons as irrelevant.[27] Equally, it is necessary to ask how probable it was that Moscow, would have considered South Africa as a strategic target, worthy of an inter-continental nuclear attack. It might therefore seem tenuous to stress the deterrent function of a South African nuclear capability in terms of deterring against a Soviet nuclear attack.

The official and most widely accepted explanation is that the South African Government sought a nuclear capability as a political bargaining tool in its relationship with the West. Long and Grillot conclude that "it is within the context of South Africa's search for a Western guarantee of its security that the acquisition and dismantlement of nuclear weapons can best be explained".[28] The aim was therefore to develop a limited weapons capability that would force the West to provide a nuclear guarantee to "offset the Soviet Union's capacity for nuclear dominance".[29] This is a clear indication of the uncertainty that pervaded South Africa's nuclear relations with the West. As has already been suggested, South Africa's relationship with the West and

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[26] David Fischer, "South Africa", op cit, p.24.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Long and Grillot, op cit, p.30.
[29] Howlett and Simpson, op cit, p.158.

particularly the US, oscillated during the 1960's and 1970's as the US struggled to justify its continuing nuclear co-operation with the South African Government in the face of mounting international condemnation of the South African apartheid regime. Moreover, Pretoria came to doubt the availability of a security guarantee from the US. By the late 1970's, the West was considered, from a White South African perspective, to have abandoned the South African State to Marxist forces in Southern Africa and thus formed an integral part of the total onslaught facing the White regime. President Botha declared in 1986 that South Africa was facing a challenge from the capitalist West as much as from the Communist West.[30]

Nonetheless, Pretoria recognised that while the US could not be relied upon for an explicit nuclear security guarantee, the development of an ambiguous nuclear capability would heighten US strategic sensitivities in the Southern African region and force the US Government to recognise the importance of South Africa to the global strategic equation. A suspected but undeclared South African nuclear capability to deploy nuclear weapons would thus force the US to incorporate South Africa into its security sphere and so offset any Soviet intentions in the region. Through this calculated ambiguity, Pretoria sought to manipulate the strategic calculations of both the US and the USSR. The notion of a "catalytic deterrent" perhaps best sums up the aim of a South African weapons capability designed to play on Western proliferation fears.[31]

Most commentators agree with the official suggestion that the South Africa Government never intended to use its nuclear weapons. De Klerk himself suggested that "it was never the intention to use the devices and from the outset the emphasis was on deterrence".[32] A policy of neither confirming nor denying a nuclear capability was considered to be the first option open to defence planners. A second phase was envisaged whereby, in the event of South African territory being threatened, a covert acknowledgement of South Africa's nuclear capability would be made.[33] If this step failed to illicit a

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[30] Flourney and Campbell, op cit, p.394.
[31] Ibid. p.397; Howlett and Simpson, op cit, p.158; Pabian, op cit, p.7.
[32] Speech by De Klerk to Parliament , 24 March, 1993.
[33] Stumpf, "Birth and Death of South Africa's Nuclear Weapon Programme", op cit, p.99.

response then a third stage, whereby one or more nuclear devices would be detonated, would become a reality, thereby confirming publicly a nuclear capability.

The extent to which South Africa's nuclear deterrent was ever conceived by decision-makers in terms of its usability, is open to discussion. The official line, as outlined by Stumpf, centres on the notion that Pretoria never reached a stage where it contemplated the use of nuclear weapons. According to Stumpf "no offensive tactical capability was ever foreseen or intended as it was fully recognised that such an act would bring about international retaliation on a massive scale".[34] This would seem to re-assert the notion of a nuclear deterrent designed to exact political concessions rather than to ensure a tactical advantage in Southern Africa. For others, the official explanation of South Africa's nuclear doctrine is evidence of post hoc rationalisation. As Darryl Howlett and John Simpson suggest, there are grounds for suspecting rationalisation after the fact when considering the rather "naive, if not incredible thinking behind this doctrine".[35]

Kenneth Adelman and Albion Knight have suggested in their list of possible roles for South African nuclear weapons, that "in a worse-case scenario, nuclear weapons could help against a large-scale conventional build-up – to break-up a concentration of conventional forces against South Africa's industrial and population centres".[36] Yet how likely was a large scale conventional assault on South Africa and why could this not be repelled using conventional forces? Equally, who would South African nuclear weapons have been targeted at and according to what strategic assumptions?

Without small, clean, sophisticated and reliable nuclear devices, it was difficult to envisage a clear battlefield role for South Africa's nuclear capability. This would seem to support the notion that the Afrikaner bomb was very much a politico-strategic tool, by which Pretoria could demonstrate its resolve against

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Howlett and Simpson, op cit, p.159. See also Ogilvie-White, op cit, pp.103-106.
[36] Kenneth L. Adelman and Albion W. Knight, *Impact Upon U.S. Security of a South African Nuclear Weapons Capability* (SRI International, Strategic Studies Center, 1980) p.15-16.

the Soviet military build-up in the region and the strategic importance of South Africa to the US. The ambiguity surrounding South Africa's intentions and the apparent mystery surrounding incidents such as the possible Kalahari nuclear test in 1977 and the Vela Satellite incident in 1979, provide testament to the assumption that Pretoria sought to awaken the West to the strategic importance of South Africa, which would remain defiant as an international pariah.

It is the contention of this research that the same factors which operated in favour of nuclear weapons acquisition are of crucial importance in explaining the decision to denuclearise. The requirement for a nuclear deterrent almost certainly receded with an improvement in South Africa's external relations. On the one hand, regional insecurity was alleviated following Soviet retreat from Angola and a co-operative arrangement, which ensured Namibian independence.[37] Equally, the break-up of the Soviet Union and the ending of the Cold War suggested a less threatening global geo-strategic environment for Pretoria. With the alleviation of fears concerning a Soviet sponsored, assault by a Front-Line State in Southern Africa, the strategic imperative for a conventionalization of military capabilities was decisive. The decision to abandon a nuclear weapons programme was thus influenced by the need to adjust to external developments, which undermined any role for a nuclear deterrent.

Furthermore by the mid-1980's South Africa was faced with debilitating economic and political isolation. Between 1985 and 1988, over 100 companies pulled out of South Africa and all Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries (OECD) imposed sanctions against the regime.[38] By the late 1980's Pretoria began to recognise the economic and political costs of its racial policies and made efforts to rejoin the international community. Signing the NPT and asserting a commitment to global nuclear non-proliferation were seen by Pretoria as an essential part of this process.

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[37] See Graham Evans, "Myths and Realities in South Africa's Future Foreign Policy", *International Affairs*, 67:4 (1991), pp.712-714.
[38] Flourney and Campbell, op cit, p.394.

Thus Pretoria may have concluded that the solution to South Africa's problems lay in the "political rather the military area and the nuclear deterrent, along with strategic ambiguity, was becoming a burden rather than a benefit".[39] Subsequently South Africa would look to embrace new conceptions of security, which suggested a move away from narrow military and strategic concerns, and towards broader definitions of regional and global security.

This chapter does not set out to refute the argument that by the late 1980's, South Africa considered nuclear weapons to be less of a help and more of a hindrance based on assumptions as to likely political, economic and strategic costs of a nuclear capability. Furthermore, South Africa responded to the end of the Cold War and an improvement in regional security conditions by seeking political and economic re-integration into the international community through internal reform; which included a rollback of its nuclear capabilities.

However, this chapter seeks to challenge the notion that decisions were taken according to rational, cost-benefit equations that apply to all states facing these conditions. Rather we need to consider the relevance of the cultural context. The case presented here seeks to gain insights into these processes by looking into the strategic cultural context, which constituted how decision-makers reacted to material circumstances. To do this it is necessary to investigate the strategic culture that shaped the perceptions and assumptions that guided the Afrikaner elite through the nuclear decision-making process. Afrikaner strategic culture acted as a perceptual prism through which security and material conditions were observed. It was through this cultural lens that questions relating to external and internal threats, security arrangements and nuclear weapons were viewed.

The Strategy Of "Pariah-hood"

For structural realists, South Africa's nuclear weapons acquisition can be attributed to its position in the international system as a diplomatically isolated

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[39] Reiss, Jardin and De Villiers, op cit, p.103.

and strategically threatened state.[40] South Africa possessed no security guarantees from another state and, following the termination of the Simonstown agreement with Britain, had no formal defence ties with any other state.[41] Furthermore, its apartheid policy had engendered widespread international condemnation in such a manner as to isolate South Africa from the international community.

As a diplomatically isolated state, South Africa belonged to a select group of states, which Robert Harkavy has described as *pariahs*. Harkavy defines a Pariah State as "a small power with only a marginal and tenuous control over its own fate, whose security dilemma cannot easily be solved by neutrality, nonalignment or appeasement".[42] For this reason South Africa has been bracketed with states such as Israel, Taiwan and South Korea. Moore refers to the "league of the desperate" or the "alliance of the disenchanted" when identifying the tendency for pariah states to establish informal arrangements between each other for the transfer of supplies, technology and raw materials. This is used to explain the allegedly close co-operative relationship between Israel and South Africa in the military field.[43]

Moore suggests that the common characteristic of these pariah states has been their "paranoia about being deserted by the West".[44] While South Africa remained close to the United States in terms of nuclear co-operation, diplomatic relations remained strained throughout as a result of South Africa's

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[40] The work of Alexander Johnston might been seen as indicative of a structural realist approach towards the South African case. Alexander Johnston, "Weak States and National Security: The Case of South Africa in the Era of Total Strategy," *Review of International Studies* (1991)

[41] Mitchell Reiss, *Without the Bomb: The Politics of Nuclear Nonproliferation* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1988) p.192.

[42] Robert Harkavy, "The Pariah State Syndrome" *Orbis* (Fall 1977), p.627.

[43] J.D.L. Moore suggests that the relationship between Israel and South Africa was based on more than short term self-interest, which most other research into nuclear co-operation suggests. Moore points to the fact that Afrikaners and Israelis have "deep religious roots; both view themselves as 'chosen people'; both may be portrayed as minorities struggling for survival in their homelands". J.D.L.Moore, *South Africa's Nuclear Capabilities and Intentions in the Context of International Non-Proliferation Policies*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1987), p.67. Moore draws a direct comparison between the Afrikaner *laager* mentality and the Israeli "Massada Complex". Richard K. Betts makes a similar point in "A Diplomatic Bomb for South Africa?" *International Security* Vol.4, No.2, 1979, p.91.

[44] Moore, op cit, p.46.

racial policy.[45] In 1975, South Africa, with covert US support, intervened in the Angolan Civil War in the fight against the Soviet-supported *Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola* (MPLA).[46] The operation itself was a disaster and proved to be a costly for South Africa.[47] US official disassociation with these events forced South Africa to rethink its relationship with the West. Prior to the Angolan episode South Africa had viewed itself as a Western bulwark against Communism in Southern Africa. The Angolan episode "fuelled a grim determination to wage an anti-Communist crusade alone".[48]

US-South African relations deteriorated significantly following the Soweto riots in 1976, whereby thousands of Blacks took to the street in protest at economic conditions and racial discrimination. Over Six hundred people were killed and thousands injured as the Government fought to suppress the demonstrations.[49] The Soweto episode led to further international diplomatic isolation for Pretoria. Prime Minister Vorster concluded in his 1977 New Year's Day Address that "if therefore a Communist onslaught should be made against South Africa, directly or under camouflage, South Africa will have to face it alone".[50] By the late 1970's South Africa's participation in the UN General Assembly and its specialized assemblies was suspended. In addition the Security Council imposed an arms embargo, which came into force in 1977. In the same year, South Africa was denied its designated seat at the IAEA Board of Governors.[51]

Did South Africa acquire nuclear weapons as a result of its international ostracization? De Klerk has referred to the importance of Pretoria's relative international isolation and the fact that it could not rely on outside assistance

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[45] A number of Western states, while officially condemning the apartheid regime and supporting the principle of sanctions and the UN arms embargo, may have been actively involved in supplying South Africa with the materials and technology it required. Much of the equipment used in the construction of South Africa's gun-assembly and second-generation nuclear weapons manufacturing infrastructures came from European suppliers. See Pabian "South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Programme". As Betts argues, France continued to sell arms to South Africa for many years after arms embargo was established in 1977 and a considerable amount of other material arrived through "clandestine routes." See Betts, op cit, p.99 . Such support remained low key for fear of the negative effects that association with the apartheid regime would bring.
[46] Steven Metz , "Pretoria's 'Total Strategy' and Low-Intensity Warfare in Southern Africa" *Comparative Strategy*, Vol.6 No.4, 1987, p.453; Moore, op cit, p.49.
[47] S ee Robert Jaster, *South Africa's Narrowing Security Options*, Adelphi Paper No.159, (London: IISS, 1980) p.25.
[48] Flourney and Campbell, op cit, p.396.
[49] Moore, op cit, p.51.
[50] Quoted in Jaster "South Africa", op cit, p.160.
[51] Pabian, op cit, p.5.

in the event of an attack in explaining the requirement for a weapons capability. South Africa's sense of Western abandonment was exacerbated by what it saw as a serious Marxist threat in Southern Africa. South Africa's failed venture into Angola in 1975 resulted in the new Luanda Government's open hostility toward Pretoria and the arrival of fifty thousand Cuban Troops. With a pro-Soviet Marxist regime assuming power in Mozambique, South Africa considered its borders to be at risk, if not in the form of full-scale scale conventional assault, then through counter-insurgency guerrilla activity.

For realist theorists, such a situation would seem to provide a clear catalyst for proliferation. Facing what it perceived as multiple strategic threats and without a security guarantee, South Africa was forced to maximise its security through the acquisition of a nuclear deterrent. South African nuclearisation was thus born out of state insecurity. Subsequently, with the break up of the Soviet Union and signing of the Tri-partite agreement in 1988, whereby Cuban and Soviet troops withdrew from Southern Africa, the security threat facing South Africa receded. This presented a clear strategic incentive to denuclearise and restore diplomatic and political relations with the international community.

However, it is inadequate to refer to this process as a rational cost-benefit response to external conditions. Instead, South African's nuclear decision-making process must be considered within the context of a distinct Afrikaner worldview. Hence another state with different strategic cultural pre-dispositions, may have interpreted the same external environment in a different manner. The White South African government interpreted the external environment according to a strategic culture, which tended to exaggerate threats and demonize enemies. Central to this strategic culture was a *laager* mentality, which characterised the besieged nature of Afrikanerdom's internal and external relations. It was through the perceptual lens provided by Afrikaner strategic culture that decisions relating to nuclear weapons were taken.

The notion of a total onslaught facing the Afrikaner Government was predicated on more than just the fear of attack from external attack. The threat was also real internally, as the White Government sought to maintain the status quo and defend the apartheid regime against internal dissent. By the mid-1980's the *laager* was faced with increasingly violent Black Nationalist protest, led by the African National Congress (ANC), which sought an end to the apartheid system. The notion of a total onslaught thus encapsulated more than the fear of Soviet-led attack from the Front Line African States. It also came in the form of an internal challenge from a disenfranchised majority, threatening the overthrow of White minority rule.

Again, it is important to consider the way in which Afrikaner strategic culture predisposed the White Government to interpret this internal threat. As will be shown, in terms of the perception of a total onslaught posed by the anti-apartheid movement, the Government did not distinguish between domestic and external threats: both were seen as part of the overall challenge to White South Africa. Equally, the anti-apartheid movement, both internally and externally was considered to be in collusion with Communist forces throughout Southern Africa, which sought the revolutionary overthrow of the South African state. Whether these fears were real or justified is, in terms of strategic outcomes, largely irrelevant. The Government reacted to the threat posed by anti-apartheid resistance within its own borders according to a genuine fear of revolutionary overthrow, which may explain the repressive counter-measures. This was characteristic of its strategic cultural mentality, which sought to defend what it saw as the morally correct path for South Africa: that of "separate development".

This is not to suggest that the strategic threats facing South Africa were in some way imagined. The threat posed by anti-apartheid resistance was certainly very real. Rather it is to suggest that the threats that confronted the Afrikaner government were viewed through a distorted perceptual lens that tended to multiply the danger in the minds of the Afrikaner elite. Western estrangement and Soviet imperialism thus struck at the heart of a paranoid

Afrikaner worldview, characterised with an obsessive fear of its own demise. South African nuclear weapons provided a means of alleviating these fears.

Afrikaner Threat Perceptions and Strategic Assumptions

Upto the mid-1970's South Africa's security was assured by a "white *cordon sanitaire*" composed of South African occupied Namibia, Ian Smith's Rhodesia, and the Portuguese dominions of Mozambique and Rhodesia.[52] However, from 1974 onwards, South Africa's security position seriously deteriorated. The creation of a pro-Soviet regime in Angola, cross-border guerrilla attacks in Namibia and South Africa and the collapse of the White government in Rhodesia, served to create a serious regional threat in the minds of the Afrikaner Government.[53]

From the Afrikaner perspective, the threat posed by Communism in Southern Africa, was defined in terms of a threat to survival in the form of a total onslaught of South Africa.[54] In 1981, Defence Minister Malan described this onslaught as "Communist inspired, Communist planned, and Communist supported".[55] Equally, the 1982 Defence White Paper suggested that "the ultimate aim of the Soviet Union and its allies is to overthrow the present body politic in the Republic of South Africa and to replace it with a Marxist-oriented form of government to further the objectives of the USSR".[56] This threat was considered to be total in that it challenged South Africa in political, social, economic and technological areas.

Coupled with this fear of Soviet imperialism was the perception of a genuine threat posed by Black Nationalist forces in Southern Africa. In Pretoria's eyes, this threat was a direct result of Communist agitation. It was assumed that the African Nationalist forces alone would not mount an effective attack on South Africa. However, the Soviet Union had the means and the motives to mount

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[52] Metz , op cit, p.438.
[53] Ibid. p.438-441.
[54] Jaster, "South Africa," op cit, p.158.
[55] Ibid.
[56] K.W Grundy, *The Militarization of South African Society*, (Indiana University Press), 1986, p.11.

an opportunist campaign in South Africa. As Steven Metz suggests, the belief in Pretoria was that a Soviet inspired campaign would be waged through low-intensity warfare, "utilizing elements of the anti-apartheid movement and Black Nationalism".[57]

South African insecurity was fuelled by what it saw as Western abandonment to Marxist forces. Botha spoke of a "paralysis in the mind of the West", which prevented it from acknowledging the importance of South Africa to Western interests.[58] As a result, the political and ideological of aspirations of the West, which sought to isolate South Africa, were seen as part of the total onslaught.[59] By pressuring the South African Government, the Western powers were seen as "handymen of the Communists; indirectly contributing to the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of world communism".[60]

The tendency of successive Nationalist Party Governments to group diverse critics together in this manner was indicative of a strategic culture, which stressed the "apocalyptic and holistic" nature of the total onslaught.[61] Alexander Johnston argues that the concept of total onslaught was both ethnocentric and global in its focus. The South African conception of security was based on a world view which viewed itself, as a nation, at the centre of an international system which was inherently hostile and intent on the overthrow of the Afrikaner nation.[62] This Afrikaner conception of security has strong historical and cultural roots, which are worth considering.

Afrikaner history is replete with references to the Afrikaans, as the chosen people with a divine mission, facing persistent hostility and danger. Prime Minister D.F Malan suggested in 1942 that

"It is through the will of God that the Afrikaner People exists at all. In his wisdom He determined that on the Southern point of Africa...a People should be born who would be the bearer of Christian culture and civilisation. He

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[57] Metz, op cit, p.440.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Deon Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation* (Johannesburg, 1981) p.209.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Alexander Johnston, "Weak States and National Security", op cit, p.151.
[62] Ibid.

surrounded this People by great dangers...God also willed that the Afrikaans People should be continually threatened by other Peoples".[63]

The emphasis on the "divine calling" and special position of the Afrikaner people has lead to a particular interpretation of Afrikaner history that makes repeated reference to certain events such as the Anglo-Boer War and the "Great Trek". [64]

The notion of Afrikaners as the chosen people can be traced back to the first European settlers who arrived at the Cape in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. With Dutch as a common language these Europeans shared a strong Christian, Protestant, White identity which was distinct from that of the indigenous population. As Adam and Gilomee note, "in the daily struggle for survival in the midst of an overwhelming majority of people who were different in colour and culture, some colonists developed the notion that they were the chosen people".[65] Over time, this group developed a distinctive character and culture that developed into a sense of independence and individualism. This identity was perpetuated by the Afrikaner struggle against British imperialism, which "brought the concept of a distinct white political entity to the fore".[66]

The development of the Afrikaner *volk* was based on a strong sense of "in-group identification" which sought to distance White, Dutch-speaking Afrikaans from other racial, ethnic and cultural groupings in South Africa. The institutionalization of the National Party's racial ideology following its election in 1948 can thus be attributed to the Afrikaner conception of "group-

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[63] Quoted in T.Dunbar Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid and the Afrikaner Civil Religion* (University of California Press, 1980) p.248.
[64] Vernon February suggests that the image of the Boer was firmly established after the Great Trek, where ten thousand "god-fearing, hardy, tenacious and resplendent human beings" trekked from the Cape Colony between 1836 and 1840, providing the Afrikaner nation with a mythology that was not easy to discard. See Vernon February, *The Afrikaners of South Africa* (Keegan Paul Intl. Ltd. 1991). Equally, Pierre Van Der Berghe suggests that the Great Trek can be considered as the "starting point of Afrikaner nationalism." P. Van Der Berghe, *South Africa : A Study in Conflict* (University of California Press, 1965) p.28. See also, J. Alton Templin, "The Ideology of a Chosen People: Afrikaner Nationalism and the Ossewa Trek," *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol.5, No.3 1999; Mottie Tamarkin, "Nationalism or 'Tribalism': The Evolution of Cape Afrikaner Ethnic Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century", *Nations and Nationalism* Vol.1, No.2 1995.
[65] H. Adam and H.Gilomee, *Ethnic Power Mobilized: Can South Africa Change* (Yale university Press, 1979), p.89.
[66] Ibid. p.100

belongingness, group mobilization and the defence of group position" that justified its distinct place in the social structure.[67]

Just as the Afrikaner *volk* believed in its own exclusive position within South African society, so the South African state, under White control, conceived of itself as a strategically important to global and regional affairs. The acquisition of a nuclear deterrent was seen in terms of prompting the global community as to the centrality of South Africa to geo-strategic affairs. The Afrikaner notion of life as a constant survival against insurmountable enemies akin to a Hobbesian state of war was equally applicable in the external realm as it was to the domestic environment. The fear of total onslaught was governed by a *laager* mentality, which emphasised the strategic encirclement of a besieged Afrikaner nation, facing multiple threats on all fronts. This is well illustrated by the 1973 Defence White Paper which lists among the threats facing South Africa:

"Leftist activists, exaggerated humanism, permissiveness, materialism and related ideologies ... black racism, exaggerated individual freedom, one-man-one vote... boycotts, isolation, demonstrations...undermining activities and limited violence".[68]

This "everything but the kitchen-sink" approach towards identifying threats, suggests that South African politico-strategic perceptions were intertwined with a strategic culture which tended to distort dangers and accentuate fears. The strategic rationale underlying South African nuclear decision-making must be considered within this context.

Total Strategic Culture

Just as the threat facing White South Africa was perceived to be *total* in terms of the apocalyptic danger facing Afrikanerdom, so the requirement for a *total* strategy emerged as a response. The enemy was perceived to be ubiquitous, the threat, all encompassing. South Africa was not only diplomatically isolated,

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[67] Ibid. p.84
[68] Johnston, "Weak States and National Security", op cit, p.151.

but also territorially threatened. A Total Strategy was designed to awaken the South African people to the severity of the impending onslaught. Having championed the doctrine of Total Strategy as Defence Minister, P.W Botha sought its full operationalization as South African Prime Minister. The 1977 Defence White Paper defined Total Strategy as "The Comprehensive Plan to utilize all means available to the state". Thus, with a "more efficient use and mobilization of available resources" and an increased societal tolerance to the requirements of low-intensity conflict, South Africa could look to defend itself against the multitude of enemies, both internal and external.[69]

Johnston highlights the manner in which the doctrine of total strategy sought to fuse the notion of threats to territorial integrity and internal threats to the established order as there was no clear delineation between civil violence within South Africa's borders and the threat posed by external forces.[70] Those threatening the integrity of the state from within were assumed to be collaborating with outside Marxist, Black Nationalist forces whose sole purpose was the overthrow of Afrikanerdom. By the mid-1970's, the Afrikaner Government came to accept the notion that while the level of opposition facing the apartheid regime would "ebb and flow", the threat was likely to be a long term one and likely to escalate.[71]

The Afrikaners perceived themselves as God's chosen people, whose divine destiny it was to survive in a world with insurmountable dangers.[72] As Gerald Brown argues, the Afrikaner sense of isolation and discrimination had a lengthy history:

"for almost two centuries the Afrikaner Power Elite has lived in a world they have perceived - rightly or wrongly - as fundamentally hostile to Afrikanerdom. Although the enemy has changed over the years .... the trauma and obsession have not".[73]

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[69] Metz, op cit, p.442.
[70] Johnston, "Weak States and National Security", op cit. pp.153-155.
[71] Metz, op cit, p.441-442.
[72] D.F.Malan, quoted in Adelman and Knight, op cit, p.14
[73] Gerald Brown "The Afrikaner Empire Strikes Back: South Africa's Regional Policy" in John D. Brewer (eds.) *Can South Africa Survive?* (Macmillan, 1989), p.83.

The concept of a total strategy designed to meet a total onslaught was thus based on a strong sense of historical and cultural experience, which created a distinct Afrikaner worldview. The significance of this linkage between strategy and historical, spiritual and cultural precepts becomes evident when considering that the ideas underlying total onslaught and total strategy came to "codify, justify and articulate the entire range of government policy".[74] The principles underlying the doctrine of total strategy and its full operationalization under the Botha administration, can thus be seen as a cultural response by Afrikanerdom to the strategic dangers facing White South Africa.

The idea of a total national response to Afrikaner insecurity in the realm of *strategy* rather than *policy* is indicative of the severity of the Government's threat perceptions. It also accords with an Afrikaner conception of security, which stresses the zero-sum nature of external relations. In this sense realist theories are correct in assuming that South African foreign policy would adjust to the vicissitudes of international anarchy and the need for self-help. However, this strategic behaviour was constituted by the Afrikaner cultural worldview rather than being a simple rational materialist calculation. As Grundy attests, Afrikaners exhibited a combative mentality that came to see so many issues of public affairs bound up in the defence of the White regime.[75]

The politics of South Africa were thus based on what Adam and Gilomee have termed an "ideology of survival" with the Afrikaner nation as the referent object. According to Adam and Gilomee, the ideology of survival implies an unquestioned threat and a universal response.[76] South Africa's Total Strategy thus utilized a "language of survival" which created "respectable code words, vague enough to allow the leadership to manipulate their specific meaning".[77] Metz follows up this theme when suggesting that Pretoria undertook a concerted campaign to manipulate public perceptions and images of the

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[74] Johnston, "Weak States and National Security," op cit, p.151.
[75] Grundy, p.2
[76] Adam and Gilomee, *Ethnic Power Mobilized*, op cit, p.133.
[77] Ibid. p.134

threat facing White society.[78] From a tactical angle this would alert people to the inevitability of violence, which would toughen the people to forthcoming dangers. Equally, from a political perspective, total strategy sought to prepare the public for "the more unsavoury features of low-intensity conflict such as assassination, torture, sabotage and pre-emptive cross-border strikes".[79]

The mobilization of the South African people according to the doctrine of Total Strategy was accompanied by wide-ranging institutional reform. As State President, Botha sought to instigate an organisational revolution in South Africa, by streamlining what he saw as an unwieldy bureaucracy, and centralising political power in the executive branch.[80] Whereas the previous Vorster administration sought a slow building of consensus at all levels of the Party and supporting organisations, in a fairly uncoordinated, ad hoc manner, the National Party under Botha became more vanguardist, with the Cabinet being less responsible to parliamentary caucuses.[81] Under Botha's organizational revolution, the decision-making process became tighter and more centralized, with power placed firmly in the hands of the State President, the State Security Council (SSC) and the Secretariat.[82]

The threat of total onslaught was seen to be a military problem and total strategy, a military solution. It was perhaps, therefore, inevitable that the Government turned to military personnel for assistance. Barney Horowitz has argued that "any analysis of South African politics will remain inadequate, incomplete and misleading without an understanding of the inextricable and inevitable role the military is playing in the formation and execution of policy".[83] From the Governments point of view, the South African Defence Force (SADF) offered personnel with expertise in the control and exercise of coercion, central to the objectives of the total strategy. The Defence Force was modernised and given an expanded role under Botha who maintained

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[78] Metz, op cit, p.442.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Grundy, op cit, pp.34-55.
[81] Hermann Gilomee, "Afrikaner Politics 1977-1987: From Afrikaner Nationalist Rule to Central State Hegemony", in Brewer (eds.) op cit, p127.
[82] Grundy, op cit, p.55.
[83] Barney Horowitz "An Investigation into the Recruitment of Non-Whites into the SADF and a Consideration Thereof in Light of the 'Total Strategy' to meet the 'Total Onslaught.'" Paper Prepared for the Southern African Research Programme (Yale University Press, April 1981) p.4.

close personal and professional links with the SADF.[84] Domestically the SADF was committed to the preservation of White rule and thus the suppression of organised Black resistance. Equally, however it sought to "win the hearts and minds" of Blacks, Coloureds and Asians, who might be persuaded against resistance. The SADF thus acted as an instrument of political mobilization as well as security management.

Philip Frankel has provided an interesting insight into the role of the SADF and military institutions in general, within the functioning of the Afrikaner State.[85] Two important questions arise: 1) To what extent did the SADF exhibit its own organizational culture? 2) How did this culture relate to the broader Afrikaner worldview/ mentality? In this manner it will be possible to identify the link between military organisational culture and the broader Afrikaner societal culture, in a manner which justifies investigations into an Afrikaner strategic culture.

Frankel argues that while the South African military may have derived its own interests and characteristics as an "exclusive body", from the late 1970's it became "irrevocably tied to the defence of special sectional interests associated with the perpetuation of South Africa's racial State.[86] This would suggest that the SADF's organizational culture has developed according to the role assigned to it by the National Party. Military culture would thus develop in line with broader Afrikaner cultural trends. Under the auspices of Total National Strategy, the military occupied a central position within the strategic decision-making process, such that the division between military organisational culture and broader societal culture became increasingly blurred. A strategic culture, which reflected the cultural style of the military, as well as that of politicians, both of which were guided by a broader Afrikaner cultural mentality, thus influenced the acquisition of nuclear weapons. In explaining nuclear decision-making, this might distinguish South Africa from other states such as Sweden, where the military were marginal in terms of the

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[84] Grundy op cit.
[85] Philip H. Frankel, *Pretoria's Praetorians* (Cambridge University Press, 1984).
[86] Ibid. p.18.

final decisions over nuclear questions. Nonetheless, in all cases, to discuss strategic culture is to discuss military organisational culture *and* broader national or societal culture, irrespective of whether the military actually has the final say over strategic decisions.

It is possible to identify a number of specific military historical experiences which have shaped the development of the SADF and that might be important in shaping civil-military relations. In order to understand the development of South African civil-military relations, it is, according to Frankel, important to understand the role of British imperialism in shaping South African perceptions of military and social relations.[87] Frankel describes British imperialism as "a mechanism for cultural projection".[88] In effect the organising values and institutions found in the SADF are seen as the result of exposure to British military traditions.

However, Frankel identifies a distinct Afrikaner civil-military tradition based on the experiences of the early White Settlers, which developed long before the implantation of a British civil-military tradition. The "Kommando" or "citizen soldier" based on the idea of small, lightly armed and highly mobile units geared to irregular and individual action appropriate to the environment confronted by the Frontier Boers thus exemplified a distinctive Afrikaner tradition. The notion of a Kommando was tied in with the idea of individuals forming their own individual defensive mechanisms, most notably with the circling of wagons in a *laager* defence. Frankel suggests that the spiritual impulse of the Kommando was re-awakened by the international isolation engendered by South Africa's apartheid policy. This rejuvenated the historical notion of frontiersman,

"far away from colonial authority, or Trekkers isolated in their fight for survival in the great interior reaches of South Africa - the same feelings of distance and threat have been regenerated as South Africa has been pushed to the margins of the global community".[89]

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[87] ibid. p.13.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid. p.63.

The Kommando thus encapsulated the specific historical development of the Afrikaner people and came to symbolise the distinct character of Afrikaner civil-military relations.

As Frankel argues, the ethic of the Kommando proved to be influential in the development of civil-military relations in the way that it came to break down the boundaries between these two realms. Where the British tradition suggested a distinct segregation between civilian and military organisations and personnel, the notion of a Kommando implied the free-flow of influences across civil-military boundaries, with the distinction between soldier and citizen becoming more unclear. The development of a Total National Strategy in the 1970's was predicated on this notion of the Afrikaner people waging a "Peoples War" by integrating the military within the broader society so that they were united and mobilized behind common objectives. In a sense, this explains why the Afrikaner elite followed a national strategy rather then a national policy. Such was the dissemination of a military ethos within the social fabric of White South Africa that civilians and soldiers were as one in relation to the problems, challenges and strategies relevant to South African politics. An appeal to strategic requirements would have the most resonance among the Afrikaans. Equally, this re-emphasises that a discussion of Afrikaner strategic culture must involve an assessment of Afrikaner culture beyond that of simple military doctrinal style. Military strategy thus lies at the heart of the Afrikaner worldview.

The use of civilians in a people's army through conscription infused military ideals and attitudes within civil society. Equally, however, the reverse was true: national service entailed the intrusion of civilians into military affairs, in a way that may have politicized the role of the armed forces in South Africa. Much is said about P.W Botha's relationship with the SADF in terms of forging close relations between civilian and military organisations. As Frankel suggests, perhaps the most important factor in this respect, was the way Botha's approach, involving careful planning and a rationalized form of action,

coincided with the more professionalized elements of the SADF corps.[90] There was thus a close assimilation between the civil and military realms in a manner that may have affected the organizational culture of institutions in both spheres. Together with a mounting feeling of international isolation and a fear of a regional attack, Pretoria developed a "Garrison State Psychology" to address its threat perceptions.[91] This involved a total mobilisation of South African society, with military and security organisations coming to play an increasing role in the running of the State.

The concept of a total strategy was driven by an Afrikaner strategic culture, which shaped the perception of a total onslaught facing the South African State. In terms of actual military operation, Total Strategy draws inspiration from a wide variety of historical and cultural sources. Military advisors were influenced by the counter-revolutionary experiences of the US in Vietnam, the British in Malaysia and the French in Algeria. In terms of identifying a classic text, the writings of André Beaufre are seen by Frankel as pivotal in the development of South Africa's total strategy. In reading Beaufre's *An Introduction to Strategy* it is possible to see a direct correlation between his conception of a total strategy and that employed by the Afrikaner elite.[92]

Beaufre discusses total strategy in the sense of "aligning military policy with political policy, with financial, foreign and economic policy".[93] This would suggest a single, coherent and unitary response of a society to the threats it faces. Strategy must be based on an exploitation of "the results expected from military operations by suitable operations in the psychological, political, economic and diplomatic fields".[94] Beaufre also states the need for national opinion to be politically and psychologically prepared well before the actual initiation of hostilities and the morale of the population to be kept constant at all times.[95]

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[90] Ibid. p.34.
[91] Ibid. p.31.
[92] Andre Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy: With Particular Reference to Problems of Defence, Politics, Economics and Diplomacy in the Nuclear Age* (Faber & Faber: London, 1965).
[93] Ibid. p. 47-48
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid, p.51.

In terms of raising public awareness and mobilising public opinion behind the Government, a propaganda campaign, which stressed the severity of the communist threat to South Africa, became more prominent. Equally the SADF came to utilize the State controlled media and numerous other civilian organisations to propagate the message of total strategy. This is another example of the way in which military strategic issues moved towards the centre of civilian affairs in South Africa. As the internal situation worsened and the regional threat seemed more prominent, so strategic issues moved to the forefront of the public policy agenda and military personnel came to occupy leading positions within the National Security Management System.

The South African elite appears to have embraced the ideas of Beaufre, in terms of mobilizing the people through a winning of hearts and minds, towards the needs of counter-revolutionary warfare. This is reflected in numerous and successive Defence White Papers: in 1973, National Defence is described as "not a matter for the defence forces only, but also for each department and citizen: It demands dedication, vigilance and sacrifice".[96] Equally, in 1977, the call is for "interdependent and co-ordinated action in all fields".[97] As Frankel suggests, total strategy was based very much on Beaufre's ideas, but it was interpreted through the prism of South African conditions. Thus the South African elite gained insights into Beaufre's universal strategic logic through a particular strategic culture which provided a perceptual lens through which South Africa's specific circumstances were viewed. Pretoria adapted Beaufre's theory and the experiences of the French and US in Algeria and Vietnam respectively, according to its own historical experiences, and particular strategic landscape; one based on a fear of revolutionary onslaught.

The South African military consequently borrowed heavily from the tactical examples offered by the US and France and looked towards the strategic experiences of other "Pariah States" such as Taiwan and Israel for inspiration. Frankel also makes the point that prominent Defence personnel, such as

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[96] Frankel, op cit, p.55.
[97] Ibid.

Magnus Malan received military training in Defence Colleges in the US (Malan was a Fort Leavenworth Graduate). This raises the question of whether South African strategy reflected US notions of military strategy and nuclear deterrence thinking or whether elites such as Malan adapted his education to the South African situation. Were such individuals strategically enculturated through their training elsewhere? It is likely that individuals, such as Malan, schooled in the West would bring to the South African decision-making a process Western notions of deterrence. Equally, however, it is likely that decision-makers would have conceived of the deterrent function of South Africa's weapons capability through the prism of Afrikaner strategic culture.

Rethinking South African Nuclear Strategy

Afrikaner strategic culture proved to be highly susceptible to the lure of a nuclear weapons capability. Faced with a fear of total onslaught, the Afrikaner elite sought to maximise national security through nuclear acquisition. Just as Afrikaner strategic culture led the South African Government towards nuclear weapons acquisition, so a strategic doctrine was devised that correlated with Afrikaner threat perceptions and strategic assumptions. As part of South Africa's total national strategy, a nuclear deterrent was most likely to have been seen as a weapon of last resort, to be used in an ultimate crises. If the Afrikaner nation was facing a genuine threat of total onslaught then the deployment of such a weapon could "render a measure of hope, buy time, or destroy some of the opposition as they destroy the Afrikaner people".[98] A nuclear weapon may therefore have been considered by Afrikaners as a device for an apocalyptic scenario, whereupon White South Africa was facing capitulation. This might have then acted as deterrent to those enemies of Afrikanerdom, which were perceived to be intent on its destruction. Again, it is open to question as to how and where this last-ditch use of nuclear weapons would take place.

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[98] Adelman and Knight, op cit, p.15-16.

A number of other accounts stress the importance of South African's relationship with the West in determining its nuclear decision-making. For Long and Grillot, the pursuit of nuclear weapons "only makes sense if one understands it as a strategy meant to best serve South Africa's preference of remaining part of the West to ensure its survival". [99] It was thus South Africa's ideas about its relationship with the West which shaped nuclear decision-making. White South Africa's Western orientation was the "unshakeable core of its worldview" which led to an "enduring invitation to Western nations to include South Africa in their collective security arrangements".[100] Faced with international isolation and a deteriorating security environment, the acquisition of nuclear weapons was, according to Long and Grillot, part of a blackmail strategy to prevent Western abandonment. This view is supported by Moore who suggests that South Africa sought to use its nuclear capability "as a diplomatic lever to extract concessions of a military, strategic or economic nature from the West or, at worst, prevent relations from deteriorating too far".[101]

Why would South Africa identify so strongly with the West? Grillot and Long suggest that the origins of South Africa's western identity can be located in the period 1919 to 1945 when it was an active contributor to the predominantly white collective security arrangements.[102] Having supported the allies during WWII, South Africa made a number of attempts in the 1950's and 1960's to create a Western defence alliance that would guarantee its own security. Having failed in its attempt to join NATO, Pretoria succeeded in signing the 1955 Simonstown agreement with the British, whereupon a naval base at Cape Town would be used by the British navy in return for arms and munitions transfers to South Africa. However, by the early 1960's, the international community was becoming increasingly condemnatory of South Africa's domestic policies. Faced with UN sanctions and diminishing co-operation with foreign suppliers of nuclear technology and conventional arms,

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[99] Long and Grillot, op cit, p.31.
[100] Ibid. p.30.
[101] Moore, op cit, p.153.
[102] Long and Grillot, op cit, p.30.

South Africa opted for a nuclear weapons programme to manipulate Western interest in South African security.

However, an analysis of the history of white South Africa might suggest a far less resilient Western identity. While the early white settlers in South Africa sought to retain and strengthen their European identity, culture and religion, rather than assimilate themselves with their African neighbours, they also quickly developed a sense of individuality and independence from their colonial origins. This manifested itself in a nationalist impulse which came to challenge British imperialism most violently during the Boer War. Nonetheless, Afrikanerdom has maintained many of elements of a Western identity and culture and has utilised this as a source of internal strength and a mechanism for mobilising support against the total onslaught facing the Afrikaners.

The suggestion that white South Africa has developed a strong sense of individualism and self-reliance might bring into question the notion of a long-standing dependence on the security provided by Western states. Nonetheless, having established its first Government in 1948, the National Party perceived an alliance with the West as offering the best means of guaranteeing South African security. While this policy preference may have been strengthened and partly motivated by South Africa's cultural affinity with the West, it was also shaped by the enduring strategic cultural proclivity to feel insecure and threatened. By the 1970's this fear was becoming accentuated by Soviet activities in South Africa. An anti-communist, Western alliance was seen from an Afrikaner perspective as a welcome tonic for the pain of insecurity. Nuclear weapons acquisition may have been motivated more by a perception of the threat posed by Soviet sponsored forces, than a need to attract the attentions of the West. Ultimately this might imply that South Africa's western orientation was dictated by pragmatic self-interest in response to a culturally distorted fear, rather than a belief in common identities.

Whatever conclusion is offered about the cultural premises of South Africa's policy towards the West, the dominant explanation for its nuclear weapons

programme continues to focus on Pretoria's intention of cajoling the Western states. This has led many to conclude that South Africa's nuclear weapons were ostensibly for political use. As Albright contends, "in essence the weapons were the last card in a political bluff intended to blackmail the United States or other Western powers".[103] South Africa thus envisaged minimal military uses for its nuclear weapons and made no concerted attempt to devise a doctrine for their use.

However, if one accepts the notion of an Afrikaner strategic culture, which distorted Pretoria's considerations of the strategic environment in which it operated, then it is possible to envisage a more adventurous role for a nuclear capability. Just as the idea of a total onslaught was predicated on exaggerated sensitivities to threats, so a nuclear strategy may well have followed a similar pattern. Territorially threatened, and diplomatically isolated, the South African government came to view its survival according to a particular worldview, which distorted strategic reality. To assume that South African nuclear strategy was subject to universal standards in the nuclear sphere is to underestimate the uniqueness of the Afrikaner pre-disposition. This is not to suggest that South African decision-makers intended to use nuclear weapons when the opportunity presented itself. Pretoria was aware of and acted upon the material strategic factors, which faced them. Rather, the point here is to challenge those who seek to explain South African nuclear strategy automatically by referring to universal strategic standards, which would assume nuclear non-use.

Much speculation has surrounded the extent to which ARMSCOR moved beyond the creation of a simple gun-type device and towards more sophisticated usable designs. As has been asked elsewhere, should we consider the research conducted into thermonuclear weapons by the time of the abandonment of the programme, as evidence that South African nuclear intentions may have been more ambitious than the official account would lead

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[103] Albright, op cit, pp.8-9.

us to believe?[104] Explaining nuclear strategy according to the Afrikaner strategic cultural mentalities forces the researcher to pose question such as this.

A clear indication of the centrality of the Afrikaner worldview in terms of nuclear decision-making is provided by Adelman and Knight who identify the importance of Lukas Daniel Barnard in the formulation of South Africa's nuclear strategy.[105] Barnard was head of the Department of National Security and was representative of the views of many within the upper echelons of the national security apparatus. As is the case with many prominent Afrikaners, Barnard's worldview was strongly influenced by Christian beliefs and teachings. Central to Barnard's intellectual development was the work of Dooyewierd, a Dutch philosopher who "considered all areas of life directly under the authority of the kingdom of God".[106] As a result, Barnard was led towards a belief that a Christian State such as South Africa had to be militarily prepared and "must not recoil from waging necessary and just war".[107] This provides a clear indication of the centrality of spiritual persuasion to Afrikaner strategic culture.

Barnard's writings on nuclear strategy reflect a correlation between the notion of a total onslaught and the purpose of a South African nuclear deterrent. While no indication is given that Pretoria would have considered the actual use of its nuclear weapons, the nuclear debate within the South African elite seems to have proceeded according to a distinct cultural worldview which emphasised the politics of survival. The nuclear strategic rationale employed by decision-makers was guided, to a degree, by a distinct spiritual and cultural pre-disposition. It would therefore seem misguided to automatically apply a universal standard when assessing South African nuclear strategy. The official account of South Africa's nuclear weapons programme suggests that the tactical use of nuclear weapons in the regional theatre was ill-suited to South

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[104] Ogilvie-White poses this question and raises the issue of whether the National Government had come to view nuclear weapons as strategic equalisers during the 1980's, thus abandoning earlier deterrence doctrines. Ogilvie-White, op cit, p.145.
[105] Adelman and Knight, op cit, p.17.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.

Africa's strategic interests, hence the development of a crude, gun-type device, designed purely as a political statement. However, it is possible that high-level security personnel, close to the nuclear decision-making process, had become imbued with a *laager* mentality, which distorted their strategic perceptions. The stronger the strategic cultural persuasion of the *laager* mentality, the more likely that Pretoria may have considered a positive and active strategic role for its nuclear weapons to meet the paranoid Afrikaner obsession with imminent attack.

The Stratification of Afrikanerdom : A New Strategic Culture?

The emphasis for the Afrikaner nation has traditionally been on the need for unity. The nature of "survival" politics has dictated that the Afrikaner people close ranks and embrace the *laager* mentality to deal with a continuing, encircling threat. As Adam and Gilomee suggest, the entrenchment of racial laws in the first decade of White Nationalist rule in South Africa was designed to solidify Afrikaner unity in order to minimize internal stratification.[108] Tightening group identity and affinity with the Afrikaner cause, by distancing White South Afrikaans from other ethnic and racial groupings, strengthened the unity of the Afrikaner nation. In its purest form, this exclusivism involved making a distinction between Dutch speaking and English-speaking Afrikaners. Identity was thus based on lingual association as well as racial groupings. Increasingly, as the needs of the Total National Strategy became paramount by the end of the 1970's, Afrikaners were forced to associate themselves with other racial, lingual, and cultural groups in order to ensure the defence of the Republic, as evidenced by the SADF's recruitment of non-whites.[109]

As Gerhard Maré notes, cultural identity formed the cornerstone of Afrikaner identity: culture, including language was deliberately used to strengthen a specific definition of what it meant to be an Afrikaner.[110] Through an emphasis

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[108] Adam and Gilomee, *Ethnic Power Mobilized*, op cit, p.41.
[109] See Greg Mills and Geoffrey Wood, *The South African Armed Forces: Ethnicity and Integration Bailrigg Paper* (Centre for Defence and International Security Studies) No. 17, 1993.
[110] Gerhard Maré, *Ethnicity and Politics in South Africa* (London: Zed books, 1993) p.33

on *Kulturpolitiek* (cultural politics) rather than *Partypolitiek* (party politics), the Afrikaner movement was able to distance itself from other cultural groups and strengthen itself through internal mobilisation.[111]

Much has been written about the importance of the Afrikaner *Broederbond* in relation to cultural politics.[112] Grundy has defined the Broederbond as a "closed and self-perpetuating secret debating society that seeks to contain divergence among Afrikaner leaders".[113] Williams and Strydom have suggested a central role for the *Broederbond* in the political development of White South Africa:

"The South African Government *is* the Broederbond and the Broederbond *is* the Government. No Afrikaner Government can rule South Africa without the support of the Broederbond. No Nationalist Afrikaner can become Prime Minster unless he comes from the organisation's select ranks".[114]

The implication of this is that the *Broederbond* disseminated a unifying cultural message throughout White South African society. Whilst it is impossible to gain an accurate measure of the influence of an unofficial relatively secret organisation such as this, it would seem credible to consider the importance of organisations such as the *Broederbond*, the National Party, Church, and Business amongst others, as part of the Afrikaner *volksbeweging* (national movement). These organisations supported each other through an "independence-through-commitment" process which supported and perpetuated the development of the Afrikaner state.[115]

The notion of "Civic Action" as an integral part of the Total National Strategy was based on the mobilization of a unified Afrikaner community. A total strategy was predicated on a belief that Afrikaners thought and acted in a cohesive manner in response to an accepted threat. This would suggest minimal divergence of attitudes, beliefs and perceptions between the White

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[111] Ibid.
[112] For a comprehensive account of the role of the Broederbond in South Africa see Ivor Williams and Hans Strydom, *The Broederbond* (Paddington Press, 1979).
[113] Grundy, op cit, p.5.
[114] Williams and Strydom, op cit, p.1.
[115] See Brown, op cit, p.126-127.

elite and the rest of Afrikaner society. In terms of matters of national security and foreign policy, decision-making was entrusted to those with the expertise, on the understanding that these elites would act according to a consensus within the National Party which in turn directly reflected the needs and aspirations of the wider polity. Thus, as Geldenhuys suggests, when looking at the foreign policy process during the Botha administration, public opinion in its unorganised amorphous form, played a marginal role in the making of foreign policy.

Equally, political parties, including the National Party played only a marginal role in the making of foreign policy. Ultimate responsibility fell to the Cabinet and the SSC which recommended the course of action. There is nothing particularly unique about this set-up. It is the norm in both democratic and non-democratic states to refer issues of national security and foreign policy decision-making to elites within the ruling party. However, the South African case is distinguished by the long period during which one political party, namely the National Party, maintained hegemony and what appears to be a high degree of consensus amongst White South Africans concerning foreign policy issues. According to a 1982 public opinion poll, 80 per cent of Whites and 87 per cent of Afrikaans speakers, felt that the Government was not exaggerating the Communist threat.[116] It would appear therefore that in regard to issues of foreign policy and military strategy, the elite proceeded in tandem with the broader Afrikaner society. This would add confirmation to the notion that to identify a South African strategic culture is to uncover the facets of the broader societal culture as well as military organizational culture.

It is important not to automatically consider the Afrikaner nation as a monolithic entity. As Grundy argues, the National Party never succeeded in achieving a wholly unified Afrikaner movement. Whilst the Government was able to dampen divisions within the Afrikaner ranks, there continued to be considerable organizational clashes between the National Party, *Broederbond*, Press, Universities, Business and Unions. Although successive

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[116] Deon Geldenhuys, *What do we think? A Survey of White Opinion on Foreign Policy Issues*. Occasional Paper, South African Institute of International Affairs, Nov. 1982.

National Party leaders sought to alleviate the problems caused by ideological cleavages, the schism within the Afrikaner ranks became pronounced by the 1980's.

In terms of ideology the principal division within the National Party was between the *verligte* (enlightened liberal reformist) and the *verkrampte* (conservative, anti-reformist).[117] It was the *verligte* element, which proved to be the decisive factor in the eventual political transition of South Africa towards the political enfranchisement of the black majority and the collapse of the apartheid system. Pauline Baker suggests that a significant number of urban, well-educated and economically secure Whites, began to recognise the need to break away from the more conservative elements of the National Party and press for the reform necessary to end domestic instability and return South Africa to the international community.[118] These "New Afrikaners" had grown increasingly unresponsive to appeals of ethnicity and race and were more responsive to the notion of identity according to class, which stressed the need for national economic well being. Underlying this development was a feeling among many whites that the accumulated pressures of international isolation, racial turmoil and ethnic factionalism were destroying the South African State and discrediting the National Party. Solomon Terreblanche, a leading South African academic epitomised the attitude of the New Afrikaner when he described the National Party as "a worn out party, which has to be replaced in order to save South Africa from disaster".[119]

It would seem credible to consider the decision to abandon the nuclear programme according to these cultural and political developments within the National Party. Where previously it was possible to identify a clear *realpolitik* strategic culture, based on the notion of total onslaught and survival politics, the ascendancy of the *verligte* elements within the National Party suggested a development towards a more idealistic strategic cultural disposition. Thus the

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[117] Pauline H. Baker, "South Africa: The Afrikaner Angst", *Foreign Policy*, No.69, Winter 1987-1988.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Solomon 'Sampie' Terreblanche, "A New Government" *Leadership* No.2, 1987 p.21.

notion of a *laager* mentality may have been overridden by the new priority of conflict resolution in terms of peaceful co-existence at the domestic level and diplomatic co-operation in the regional and international sphere. This dichotomy has parallels with other States such as China, which exhibits both Confucian *realpolitik* and Mencian *idealpolitik* strategic cultural dimensions.[120]

However, according to another perspective, the decision to denuclearise can be seen as an integral part of the *realpolitik* Afrikaner strategic culture and a re-assertion of the *laager* mentality. According to this view, the decision to denuclearise was part of a broader process of political and strategic reaction to the fear of the collapse of White Power and the spectre of a "Black nuclear inheritance". Hence this would suggest that rather than view South African denuclearisation according to a shifting strategic culture which emphasises new strategic perceptions and assumptions, this process was based on a reconstitution of the *laager*, which was forced to adjust or risk capitulation.

Anti-Apartheid Resistance

Despite attempts by the White South African Government to win the hearts and minds of Black South African's through a Total National Strategy, resistance to the Government's apartheid policy mounted significantly between 1980 and 1985. By the end of 1984, "unrest" had become a "euphemism for a country in turmoil" with violence escalating throughout 1985.[121] In contrast to the serious disturbances in 1976-77, these incidents were co-ordinated by organised Black resistance movements, which sought to mobilize increasingly large numbers of Blacks behind the aim of undermining state authority. From the White Government's perspective, the activity of organisations such as the ANC were conducted within South Africa's borders, but were inspired by regional Black Nationalist and Marxist forces which formed the basis of a "revolutionary onslaught" facing the South African State.

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[120] See Alaistair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
[121] Flourney and Campbell, op cit, pp.388-389.

The deterioration of South Africa's domestic situation had a severe effect on the South African Government. A belief arose amongst a number of whites that the country was reaching a point where it was ungovernable. This exacerbated the split within the National Party; on the one hand, hard-line conservative elements called for a tougher security measures to quell the resistance, whilst on the other, liberal elements within the Party identified a need to pursue wholesale reform, if the State were to avoid total collapse. Opinions were thus severely divided as to how Pretoria should respond.

As Steven Mufson notes, the Afrikaner people have always regarded themselves as a moral nation with apartheid originally justified as an opportunity for people of different cultures to fulfil their aspirations separately.[122] However the harsh measures used to suppress Black demonstrations between 1984 and 1986 were, in the eyes of liberal Afrikaners, anathema to Afrikaner morality. Having been forced to increasingly tighten the security apparatus of the State, Botha was forced to declare a full state of emergency on 12 June 1986, in order to deal with the severity of the disturbances.

For many within the National Party, the intensity of the civil unrest signalled the need to move quickly towards negotiations with the ANC. As Mufson argues, the White Government's bargaining position was becoming weaker over time, partly through pressure exerted by the demonstrations, and partly because of the hostile international reaction to the methods used to deal with unrest. From the perspective of the international community, the oppressive measures employed by the State to deal with resistance provided a clear indication of the inequities of the apartheid system. Furthermore, the prospect of meeting these challenges through a tightening of the *laager*, seemed unlikely given the crumbling consensus in the Afrikaner ranks.

Right-wing elements within the Afrikaner movement were by the late 1980's amassing support through the Conservative Party. This Party became the

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[122] Steven Mufson, "South Africa 1990" *Journal of Foreign Affairs* (1990), p.124.

official opposition party following the 1989 elections, where it gained seventeen seats in parliament.[123] Nonetheless, the tide was turning towards reform. The crisis of confidence amongst Afrikaners had spread throughout the elite institutions of Afrikanerdom. As Mufson notes, by the time De Klerk was elected, the Dutch Reformed Church had confessed that apartheid was a sin, while the *Broederbond* had established contacts with the ANC for the first time.[124]

Ultimately liberal-minded personnel within the National Party succeeded in setting South Africa towards a new course by embracing the need for a new South African identity. By pursuing a path towards the dismantlement of the apartheid system, Pretoria sought to reconcile its differences with the international community and thus normalize its external political and economic relations. With a diminution of the threat to South Africa in the region, it was considered important for Pretoria to declare its commitment towards peaceful relations in South Africa. By dismantling its nuclear capability and subsequently signing the NPT, a signal would be sent to the international community that South Africa was ready for a reconvening of diplomatic relations.

The official explanation given for South Africa's denuclearisation seeks to emphasise a logical, action-reaction dynamic underlying South Africa strategic calculations. A nuclear deterrent was seen as superfluous given the improvement in external circumstance, which persuaded decision-makers towards international co-operation through a non-nuclear posture. In effect, so the official account goes, the political benefits that had initially driven the Government towards a nuclear deterrent, were no longer relevant to Pretoria's policy agenda, which sought a transformation in its internal and external relations. There is however another aspect to the policy of nuclear rollback that is unlikely to appear in any official account of the denuclearsiation

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[123] Baker, op cit.
[124] Mufson, op cit, p.124.

process: the notion that White South Africans maintained a deep and profound anxiety concerning the possibility of a Black nuclear inheritance.

It is important to remember that Pretoria embarked upon a nuclear policy in response to what it perceived to be the threat of total onslaught. This onslaught included the domestic pressure exerted by Black Nationalist forces such as the ANC. It would therefore seem likely that the White Government would have suffered acute anxiety at the prospect of a nuclear capability in the hands of the ANC. As Leonard Spector suggests, the fear that nuclear weapons or nuclear material could fall into the hands of a radical ruling faction, which might then have used this potential for extremist objectives, was evident amongst the White elite.[125]

As the domestic situation worsened in the mid 1980's and the collapse of White Power became a real possibility, the prospect of a White right-wing faction seizing control of power and hence a nuclear weapons capability, concerned many within the National Party. As Hough has suggested, the possibility of some attempts at "rebellion or 'counter-revolution' by certain white right-wing groups" could not be excluded.[126] The pressure on the National Party to guard against nuclear weapons falling into the wrong hands was becoming intense by 1989. Given the highly unstable domestic situation, a weapons capability had become a burden for a Government struggling to maintain order. This might explain President De Klerk's swift decision to denuclearise following his election to office.

Much attention has been focused on De Klerk's role in the transformation of South Africa and the process of denuclearisation. In terms of this research it is necessary to address the issue of whether De Klerk was representative of broader cultural trends within the National Party and White South African society in general or whether he followed his own individual path according to his own personal beliefs. An analysis of De Klerk's political career suggests a

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[125] Leonard Spector, *Going Nuclear: The Spread of Nuclear Weapons 1986-1987* (Cambridge, Mass.:Ballinger,1987), p.218 .
[126] M. Hough, "National Security and Strategic Doctrine in the RSA" *Paratus*, October 1990, p.55.

distinctly conservative political background. In an autobiography of De Klerk, written by his brother Willem, he is described as first and foremost an Afrikaner, with deep national roots. According to Willem De Klerk, F.W. was "driven by his concerns for the survival of his own people in their fatherland".[127] Equally, as a member of the National Party, De Klerk developed a reputation as a conservative, a reputation that, from time to time became "an albatross around his neck".[128]

This would seem to dispel any image of De Klerk as an enlightened crusader with a long-standing moral commitment to transform the fabric of White South Africa. De Klerk's career prior to his election as State President appears to be characterised by conservatism, remaining in the central ground within the National Party, while building a firm reputation as a mediator and consensus-building politician. De Klerk's awareness for the need for reform appears to have developed as a pragmatic response to the needs of the Government and the future of South Africa. As De Klerk himself suggested, "by the end of 1989 it had become clear to me that the Government's emphasis had landed it in a dead-end street. We had to escape from a corner where everything stagnated into confrontation".[129]

De Klerk's position was thus indicative of a trend within the National Party towards wholesale reform. The so-called "New Afrikaner" had come to recognise the impracticality, unaffordability and unacceptability of an apartheid system that was tearing South Africa apart. With an economy being slowly eroded by economic and financial isolation, it was essential for the National Party to make positive moves towards power sharing with the rest of South African society. De Klerk's support for this policy did not become apparent until his first speech as State President on the 8th February 1989, when he elucidated a need to shift from an accent of segregation to an accent on unity. Identifying the point at which De Klerk made a political conversion to the *verligte* section within the National Party is open to debate. Equally, it is easy

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[127] Willem De Klerk, *F.W.De Klerk*, (Johannesburg, 1991) p.8.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid, p.25.

to speculate as to whether a different President would have responded the situation in an alternative manner. It seems that a trend developed within the National Party towards incremental political reform. Hence it is unlikely that an ultra-conservative Afrikaner would have succeeded Botha as State President.

The Conservative Party under the leadership of Treuernicht pursued the interests of the right wing, *verkrampte* elements of White South Africa rigorously from 1982. The Conservative Party saw the development of an enlightened disposition within National Party as an indication that the Government was bowing down to its enemies and succumbing to the total onslaught facing Afrikanerdom. Treuernicht's Conservative movement sought a continuation of the past and a perpetuation of traditional Afrikaner values. In this sense the *realpolitik* Afrikaner strategic culture lived on. However, the Conservative Party failed to disrupt the process of reform undertaken by the Government. Step by step, the enlightened values gained respectability as the National Party came to recognise the inevitability of multi-racial co-existence. This may have represented a distinct cultural development within Afrikanerdom, which persuaded the Government away from what rapidly became a morally unjustified political and social system. This would seem to suggest that De Klerk rode upon on a wave of social and political transition rather than being the wave himself.

Within this re-appraisal of Government policy, a nuclear weapons capability was seen as part of an anachronistic worldview that had led to the impasse which the Government found itself in. The denuclearisation process was based on a re-assessment of the Government's strategic objectives, the most important of which was a political accommodation with Black Nationalists and a rejuvenation of South Africa's external diplomatic relations. A nuclear weapons capability was seen as detrimental to both of these goals.

The question remains: to what extent did the reformist policies of National Party, which acted as a driver behind the decision to abandon the nuclear programme, represent a genuine and fundamental cultural transition within Afrikanerdom? The development of a *verligte* disposition within the National

Party would imply a cultural movement within a politically relevant sector of Afrikanerdom, away from a *laager* mentality and a *realpolitik* strategic culture and towards a more co-operative, idealistic domestic and foreign policy, whereupon a nuclear deterrent was seen as a hindrance rather than an asset. However, it is possible to see the changing policy emphasis of the National Party as a product of a state under siege, with nowhere left to turn and thus forced to meet the demands of internal foes by peaceful accommodation. Equally, the pressure of international isolation was leading to discontent within the Afrikaner ranks, with the dominant trend being towards a swift ending of South Africa's status as an international pariah, in political and economic terms.

According to the Afrikaner worldview, the increasing untenability of the Government's position by the late 1980's may have represented the apocalyptic scenario implicit in the traditional Afrikaner notion of an insurmountable attack by the enemies of Afrikanerdom, intent on its destruction. Had the National Party progressed towards an ultra-conservative path during the 1980's then a nuclear weapons capability may have been considered as a last-ditch expression of Afrikaner resistance.

As it was, the levers of power appears to have rested with liberal-minded Afrikaners whose response to the total onslaught was based more on the need for peaceful reconciliation in the face of extreme domestic pressure and international persuasion, rather than through violent intransigence. The strategic cultural premise underlying National Party policy continued to be that exemplified by the *laager* mentality but it was based on a realisation that the *laager* was about to be breached and therefore needed to bargain rather than fight to protect a lost cause. De Klerk and his liberal compatriots such as Viljoen, Pik Botha, Du Pleissis and De Villiers, who guided him through the reform process, were first and foremost Afrikaners and were guided by the same Afrikaner cultural mentality that had influenced their predecessors. However, this mentality had embraced new features by the late 1980's and it persuaded the Afrikaner elite towards peaceful accommodation with anti-

apartheid resistance and a realisation of the need to rejuvenate South Africa's relations with the international community.

It is important not to automatically regard the apparently accommodationist strategy of De Klerk as evidence of a departure from Afrikaner strategic culture towards pragmatic reactionary politics. De Klerk was a political pragmatist, basing his policy objectives on the situation as it arose. The fluid and constantly changing nature of South Africa's highly unstable environment by the late 1980's precluded a rigid, immovable political style. Nonetheless, De Klerk's decision to reform and the need to denuclearise, were indicative of a cultural trend within the ruling National Party away from the ultra-conservative Afrikaner position and towards a new, more idealistic conception of South Africa's security interests. This reflected broader trends within the Afrikaner movement as a whole, which was becoming increasingly disenchanted with the apartheid system and increasingly unresponsive to Afrikaner calls for unity on the grounds of ethnic exclusivity. The New Afrikaner sought an identity based on class rather than race.

The development of the Government's policy into the 1990's can be seen in terms of the new conceptualisation of security that became predominant throughout the international community following the end of the Cold War. South Africa's conception of security was thus moving away from a reliance on military acquisition in the form of a nuclear weapons capability and towards new security issues. Hence the same cultural tendencies that operated in a manner that persuaded the South African Government towards nuclear weapons, was instrumental in the eventual dismantlement of this capability.

Conclusion: The Relevance of Strategic Culture to South Africa's Non-Nuclear Weapon Outcome

The arguments offered in this chapter have been predicated on the assumption that the processes of nuclearisation and denuclearisation in South Africa have been shaped by the same strategic cultural influences. Hence, the same factors that shaped the decision to initially acquire nuclear weapons

were crucial in the decision to abandon the nuclear programme. The dominant explanation of South Africa's nuclear decision-making, as offered by realist theories involves the contention that South Africa responded to a degeneration in its security environment in the 1970's by seeking a nuclear deterrent to alleviate insecurity. The logic underlying this weapons capability was to construct a "catalytic deterrent" which would both offset the Soviet military build-up in the region and heighten US sensitivities to South African security. The South African nuclear deterrent was thus a political bomb designed to manipulate and cajole the US and the Soviets. With an improvement in regional relations and with the ending of the Cold War, a nuclear deterrent was seen as superfluous to South Africa's political and strategic requirements; hence the abandonment of the weapons programme. This was the official explanation issued by the South African government in 1993 and it is that favoured by realist theorists who would look to explain this process according to security-material constraints.

However, realist theories are unable to account for a wide range of cultural factors, which constitute the material variables that it relies upon for explanation. In order to construct a more revealing account of South Africa's nuclear decision-making, this process must be considered in terms of broader social and political developments within South Africa. The Afrikaner elite were imbued with a *laager* mentality based on the political, social, cultural and historical development of Afrikanerdom, which forced them to consider strategic issues through a distinctive perceptual lens. Decision-makers thus viewed the strategic environment through a strategic cultural prism, which tended led to an exaggeration of threats and an accentuation of responses.

The Afrikaner notion of a total onslaught facing South Africa was influenced by a strategic culture, which had historically predisposed Afrikaners towards a paranoid fear of strategic encirclement and destruction at the hands of insurmountable enemy forces. The Afrikaner worldview was shaped, in part, by a particular spiritual belief in the centrality of Afrikanerdom to world affairs and the inevitable challenges that this status engendered. A Total National Strategy was initiated in accordance with these threat perceptions and

strategic assumptions. By the 1980's Pretoria considered itself to be diplomatically isolated and territorially threatened such that only through a total mobilisation of the South African people and a militarization of South African society could the South African State remain intact. The development of a nuclear weapons capability must be considered within the context.

The critical thrust of this research is to uncover the ideas, and specifically, the strategic culture, which has shaped nuclear decision-making. Much of the contemporary literature has approached the South African case through empirical analysis, which asks familiar and conventional questions. Equally, the dominant explanation looks to explain the South African case by applying universal strategic logic and assuming a rational, "ends-means" decision-making process. This chapter has sought to offer a more insightful account of South African decision-making by seeking to uncover ideational factors, which force the observer to deconstruct generally accepted notions and arguments. Strategic cultural analysis allows the researcher to ask new questions. For example, can we be sure that the Afrikaner elite did not intend to develop usable weapons (as the official account suggests), when considering the Afrikaner obsession with strategic encirclement and the politics of survival implicit to the "siege-psychology"? Equally, is it possible that the Afrikaner elite were culturally disposed to a profound anxiety at the prospect of a Black nuclear inheritance and hence sought a swift abandonment of the nuclear programme prior to the democratic elections, based on these fears? These are questions that the official account fails to address.

That the abandonment of South Africa's nuclear weapons programme came as a reaction to external developments, is not in question here. The dismantlement of a weapons capability was a facet of a broader social and political process of transformation whereby Pretoria sought to re-assimilate itself within the international community. A weapons capability was therefore very much superfluous to the future needs of South Africa. In this sense, realist theories are on firm ground. However, it is important to also look closely at the nature of the domestic turmoil and the response of Afrikanerdom to these pressures. The severity of anti-apartheid resistance, particularly during

the period 1984-86, led many Afrikaners to question the oppressive measure used by the security forces and to recognise the need for compromise if the South African State were to survive. For many "New Afrikaners" who were becoming largely unresponsive to calls for unity based on ethnic affinity, the domestic unrest was evidence of a need for wholesale liberal reform in South Africa.

The gradual transition of the National Party from a traditional conservative position towards new priorities may well have represented a cultural shift in Afrikanerdom, such that a new strategic culture was emerging by the late 1980's. However, it is important not to overplay this idea. De Klerk and his liberal, reformist colleagues were first and foremost Afrikaners, interested primarily in the peaceful development of the Afrikaner nation. The policy of reform was thus based on a practical realization of the need for change if the Afrikaner nation was to survive, rather than a wholesale cultural transition. This process can therefore be seen as a re-assertion of the *laager* mentality rather than a movement toward a completely new Afrikaner strategic culture.

An analysis of South African strategic culture also illustrates the importance of considering the importance of broader societal culture as well as military organizational culture. Although, there was considerable ideological divergence within the Afrikaner ranks by the 1980's, it was still possible to identify a clear Afrikaner worldview based on the perception of an independent and isolated nation, which pervaded both the civil and military realms. Thus the distinction between civil and military matters became increasingly unclear. The Total National Strategy called upon all Afrikaners, both military and civilians, to think and act as one, in defence of the State. Whereas analyses of other states' strategic cultures might involve asking complex questions as to whether decision-makers are representative of broader national cultures and thus what our referent object of analysis should be, the South African case is less problematic. Although individuals may well have acted according to organizational biases and styles, to identify a strategic culture in a meaningful sense is to look for cultural insights within Afrikanerdom as a whole.

In terms of levels of analysis, it is interesting to note the relationship between South African strategic culture and external cultural developments, in relation to nuclear decision-making. Initially, the domestic strategic cultural stimulus to acquire nuclear weapons overrode the emergent international cultural norm of non-proliferation that was guiding the policy of many other states by the 1970's. South Africa failed to be influenced by a number of external political, social and moral cultural developments throughout this period. However, by the late 1980's South African strategic culture was becoming infiltrated by a number of external cultures, which influenced the pursuit of a non-nuclear option.

The South African case has often been approached according to the lesson that can be learnt in terms of non-proliferation policy.[130] As the first state to unilaterally abandon a weapons capability, it is perhaps inevitable that the South African case attract this sort of attention. This chapter concludes that any attempt to construct a comprehensive account of the South African case must seek to gain insights into the Afrikaner mentality, which amounted to a strategic cultural pre-disposition. Any lessons that are to be extracted from the South African case must consider the relevance of strategic cultural context.

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[130] See for example Pabian, op cit.

Chapter Five: Sweden

Introduction

The case of Sweden provides an interesting example of a decision not to acquire nuclear weapons, when technological imperative and international pressure might suggest otherwise. Following the advent of the nuclear era, it appeared inevitable that Sweden, as a modern, well armed, technologically advanced state with a large military establishment and plentiful natural resources, would seek to obtain nuclear weapons. Furthermore, as Sweden became increasingly concerned about the danger posed by the Soviet Union to its territory, the pressure to modernize its military capacity suggested swift and comprehensive nuclear acquisition. As Jan Prawitz suggests, by the late 1950's it appeared to be a case of *when*, rather than *if*, Sweden would become a nuclear weapon state (NWS).[1] Having constructed the capability to become self-sufficient in the production of nuclear energy, the Swedish military envisaged a dual-purpose nuclear programme that would allow for the construction of a small tactical nuclear force by the mid-1960's. Nonetheless, despite pressure exerted by defence officials, the Swedish Government opted to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1968, thus establishing Sweden as a non-nuclear weapon state (NNWS).

It is this strategic decision that will occupy attention in this chapter. In a short space of time, Sweden moved from being a threshold NWS, to a state basing its security on conventional defence and the importance of the non-proliferation regime. Why did Sweden consider nuclear acquisition in the 1950's and early

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[1] Jan Prawitz, *From Nuclear Option to Non-Nuclear Promotion: The Swedish Case.* (The Swedish Institute for International Affairs. Research Report 20. 1995) p. iv.

1960's? Why did Sweden arrive at a non-nuclear weapon outcome? Research aimed at addressing these questions has typically focused on security-material factors, characteristic of realist theorizing. Realists are likely to conclude that the nuclear debate in Sweden was shaped by a rational calculation of interest based on cost–benefit assumptions that reflect material considerations, which led Sweden to prefer a conventional capability.

This chapter does not set out to refute the importance of material factors. Rather, an argument will be developed to show how security-materialist assumptions are constituted by ideational influences, such as Swedish strategic culture. This will not lead to radically new assumptions concerning why Sweden opted for a policy of nuclear restraint. The conclusion will be that Sweden considered nuclear acquisition to be against the national interest because of the likely reaction of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, Sweden appears to have assumed that it was covered by the US nuclear umbrella. However, what were the ideas shaping these perceptions and assumptions about threats and allies? By attending to strategic culture it is possible to give greater meaning to the decisions that led to a non-nuclear outcome.

An investigation into Swedish strategic culture and its influence on the nuclear debate involves an investigation into cultural factors at a multiplicity of levels. In terms of a national identity, Sweden has exhibited a distinctive neutralism which as been strong and pervasive. At an organisational level, the Swedish military has displayed a proclivity towards nuclear acquisition. Equally, in terms of political parties, the culture of the Social Democratic Party (SAP) was highly influential in shaping ideas concerning the costs and benefits of nuclear acquisition and thus the course the nuclear debate. It is worth considering the impact of these cultural trends and their relative impact in shaping the non-nuclear outcome.

Swedish Nuclear History

The Initiation of a Nuclear Programme

In 1945, the Swedish Government established a study group to investigate the possibility of a nuclear energy programme.[2] Sweden's interest in nuclear energy arose from concern at its over-reliance on external energy supplies as well an attempt to provide a cheap alternative to coal or petroleum for the energy-intensive industrial sector. The study group concluded that it was necessary to establish a civilian agency for the development of nuclear energy. Consequently, in November 1947 *AB Atomenergie* (AE) was established. While the AE was a strictly civilian institution concerned with the research and development of nuclear technology, a Swedish National Defence Research Institute (FOA) was given the task of pursuing military-oriented nuclear research.

From the outset it was decided that the civilian nuclear energy programme should be based on the development of heavy-water reactors, which allowed Sweden to utilise its abundant supplies of natural uranium as fuel, thereby avoiding a reliance on foreign suppliers.[3] Mitchell Reiss suggests that while Sweden's use of heavy-water reactors was rationalized in terms of benefits for civilian purposes, "Swedish officials were not unaware of the potential military applications of this choice of technology".[4] With a fuel cycle based on heavy water and free of foreign controls, it was possible that weapons-grade plutonium could be produced.[5]

Sweden's first research reactor, R1, went critical in July 1954 and was the only operative Swedish reactor for the next five years.[6] Larsson suggests that "while a

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[2] Lars Van Dassen, *Sweden and the Making of Nuclear Non-Proliferation: From Indecision to Assertiveness* Swedish Nuclear Power Inspectorate (SKI) Report 98:16, (March 1997), p.10.

[3] Mitchell Reiss, *Without the Bomb: The Politics of Nuclear Nonproliferation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) p.39.

[4] Ibid. p43.

[5] Ibid. pp. 43-44.

[6] Tor Larsson, "The Swedish Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Postures", *Storia Delle Relazioni Internationazionali,* (Anno XIII, No.1 1998), p.111.

useful research tool, R1 did not supply any plutonium for military purposes".[7] The centre-piece of Sweden's nuclear programme was to be the 65 MW heavy-water reactor at Agesta, completed in 1958 and producing plutonium and generating district heat as a by-product.[8] Eric Arnett suggests that Agesta reactor was designed as dual-use facility that "could be used for a small amount of weapons material in a crisis".[9] Plans to build a more powerful reactor at Marviken on the Baltic coast, capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium, were tabled in 1957.[10] However, problems emerged from the outset, resulting in the cancellation of the project altogether in 1970.[11]

The Rise and Fall of the Nuclear Weapons Option

The period 1952-1960, was characterised by a realisation within the Swedish military that the procurement of nuclear weapons was essential if Sweden was to deter an aggressor possessing a nuclear capability. William Agrell argues that the origins of purposeful research into nuclear weapons actually began in 1948 when the Supreme Commander instructed the FOA to investigate the "premises for developing nuclear weapons or other forms of nuclear warfare and nuclear propulsion in Sweden".[12] Agrell suggests that this can be regarded as the initiation of weapons research: until this point, the programme had been entirely of a civilian nature.[13]

The first public suggestion that Sweden might seek to acquire nuclear weapons was made by the Swedish Air Force Chief, General Bengt Nordenskiöld in 1952.[14] By this stage, a number of military officials had begun to recognise the potential utility of battlefield nuclear weapons, which could provide a cost-efficient

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[7] Ibid.

[8] "Sweden: Secret Plutonium Past, Controversial Disposal Future", *Plutonium Investigation*, (May-June, 1999) p.4

[9] Eric Arnett, "Norms and Nuclear Proliferation: Sweden's Lessons for Assessing Iran", *Nonproliferation Review* (Winter 1998), p.36.

[10] Larsson, op cit, p.111.

[11] Ibid. p.112.

[12] William Agrell, "The Bomb that Never Was: The Rise and Fall of the Swedish Nuclear Weapons Program", in Nils Petter Gleditsch (eds.) *Arms Races: Technological and Political Arguments*, p.159.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Larsson, "The Swedish Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Postures", op cit, p.105.

means of national defence. The prevailing view by the 1950's was that nuclear weapons were becoming "desirable as an enhancement of firepower and that limited war with small 'tactical' nuclear weapons, without an assumption of escalation, was a likely scenario".[15] As a state situated between two powerful, military power blocs, the case for the acquisition of a small nuclear deterrent as a means of maintaining Swedish security, was persuasive to many, including the military high command.

The worst case scenario for Sweden was the possibility of an armed conflict in Europe between the US and the Soviet Union in which the possession of Swedish territory would appear advantageous to either side. In such a situation, Sweden, as a NWS, could potentially raise the costs of aggression, thus ensuring deterrence through fear of escalation.[16] Analysts focused on the possibility of acquiring a tactical nuclear capability based on the assumption that Sweden would then be in a position to "compel a potential aggressor to disperse his striking forces and thereby prevent him from achieving a concentration of military power at a minimum cost".[17]

How would Sweden go about acquiring nuclear weapons? For some nuclear proponents, the case for purchasing weapons from the US was persuasive.[18] This would allow for quick and effective access to highly advanced weaponry. However, there were two problems associated with this proposal. First, it implied a violation of Swedish non-alignment. Second, the US was reluctant to promote the emergence of another NWS, which could potentially change the delicate nuclear balance in Europe. The terms and conditions that any nuclear arrangement between the US and Sweden would have involved, would have further contradicted Sweden's independent status.

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[15] Rene Nyberg, "Security Dilemma in Scandanavia: Evaporated Nuclear Options and Indigenous Conventional Capabilities", *Cooperation and Conflict*, (XIX, 1984), p.61.
[16] Karl E. Birnbaum, "Sweden's Nuclear Policy", *International Journal*, (1965), p.303.
[17] *OB-62* Report, cited in Birnbaum, Ibid. p.302.
[18] This approach was favoured by Nordenskiold. See Reiss, op cit, p.45.

Sweden succumbed to political reality and concluded that if nuclear weapons were to be acquired, then it would have to be through an indigenous weapons programme. Paul Cole suggests that the option of purchasing weapons components from the US was never completely abandoned: Sweden's authorities considered that if dual-capable delivery systems were obtained, then the US might sell a nuclear capability to Sweden in order to prevent them from being bought elsewhere.[19]

By 1954, the military command had incorporated the resources of the FOA and AE into a joint plan, designed to modernise Sweden's military capability in line with the new "nuclear climate".[20] Where research up to 1952 appeared to concentrate on requirements necessary to protect against nuclear effects, subsequent proposals put to the *Riksdag* by the military stressed the need for research into the development of nuclear weapons. As General Svedlund suggested in the ÖB-54 report, "if a small state lacks nuclear weapons and is not a member of an alliance having such weapons, it might under certain circumstances be tempting for an aggressor to attack that state".[21] It is probable that Svedlund had the USSR in mind when highlighting Swedish vulnerability, particularly given the close proximity of the Soviets' superior conventional forces. As Eric Arnett suggests, many Swedes feared the prospect of a Soviet invasion, either over land in the North or by sea in the South. A Swedish tactical nuclear force could have broken up an amphibious enemy incursion, forcing the adversary to redirect its conventional effort.[22] Equally, the military command sought to restructure its armed forces by creating smaller units capable of fighting during a nuclear attack.

In January 1957, FOA declared publicly that Sweden had the ability to produce its own nuclear weapons within a six to seven year period. A series of reports were

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[19] Paul Cole, *Sweden Without the Bomb: The Conduct of a Nuclear-Capable Nation Without Nuclear Weapons* (Washington, D.C: RAND, 1994) p.44. Cole also suggests that the United States initially anticipated that Sweden would obtain dual-purpose missiles without warheads. Subsequently, the US would provide warheads should they be needed.
[20] Agrell, "The Bomb that Never Was," op cit, pp. 159-160.
[21] See Reiss, op cit, p.47.
[22] Arnett, op cit, p.35.

placed before the *Riksdag* which stressed the benefits of acquiring a small, tactical nuclear force, capable of deterring an aggressor from attacking Swedish territory. Most notable was the ÖB-57 report which Reiss refers to as the "most articulate and well-reasoned argument the armed services had offered on behalf of nuclear weapons acquisition".[23] ÖB-57 specified how nuclear acquisition would increase Sweden's defensive capabilities, based on the assumption that any aggressor would be armed with nuclear weapons and that Sweden would be disadvantaged if reliant purely on conventional capabilities. This report took on added significance by virtue of its assumption that nuclear weapons could be given a traditional battlefield role in much the same way as conventional munitions. Proponents of nuclear acquisition were keen to stress the evolutionary nature of nuclear warfare. In line with those Western strategists who advocated war-fighting strategic nuclear postures, the Swedish military regarded nuclear weapons as an effective supplement to its existing conventional capability.

The acquisition of nuclear weapons was thus seen as part of an overall strategy to modernise Sweden's defence in line with the requirements of the nuclear age. It was considered imperative that Swedish society be prepared to construct a total defence, capable of withstanding an attack at any level. Having suggested that Sweden should equip itself with nuclear weapons, the ÖB-54 report stimulated a lively debate as to the likely economic costs of a nuclear weapons programme and the potential diversion of resources away from civilian nuclear energy programmes and conventional defence.[24]

From the outset of discussions, questions emerged about whether acquiring a nuclear capability would drain Sweden of the resources necessary for a conventional defence. The original proposal for nuclear weapons in 1952 was met with opposition by the army and navy who reasoned that nuclear weapons were simply airforce gadgets that would leave Sweden's defence exposed in other

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[23] Reiss, op cit, p.52.
[24] The OB-57 report addressed the issue of financial limitation by suggesting that the acquisition of tactical nuclear weapons (as opposed to strategic nuclear weapons) could be catered for by the existing defence budget. Ibid.

areas.[25] If Sweden relied on a nuclear deterrent, then a conventional attack would present the military with the option of surrender or escalation in the form of a nuclear strike thus inviting a massive counter-attack. If conflict escalated to a nuclear level then Sweden's insuperior tactical nuclear force would be swiftly wiped out by the aggressor.

Throughout this period, the Sweden's Social Democrat Government, chose to delay any decision on nuclear weapons. Debate was fierce, with opinion divided. Response ranged from clear support for nuclear weapons at the right end of the political spectrum, to outright rejection at the left. These divisions were equally pronounced within the ruling SAP.[26] Prior to its changing perception of nuclear weapons in the mid 1960's, the armed forces held firmly to their demand for nuclear acquisition.[27] They were supported in their cause by the opposition parties (conservatives and liberals) and a section within the SAP.[28] In 1958, the *Riksdag* debated the issue of nuclear weapons for the first time, whereupon approval was given for the so-called "S program" which involved research into protection and defence against nuclear attack, while a decision on the "L program", involving research into weapons construction, was postponed.[29]

Towards the end of 1958, the SAP established a group of party members to form an Atomic Weapons Committee (AWC) designed to look specifically at the nuclear issue. The group produced a report, released in December 1959, which recommended that Sweden need not decide on the question of nuclear weapons acquisition.[30] In addition, it was suggested that Sweden contribute to international efforts to ban nuclear weapons: the AWC concluded that

"negotiations between the great powers about banning nuclear weapons tests are presently taking place ... It would be in accordance with Sweden's own national

[25] Nyberg, op cit, p.61.
[26] Larsson, "The Swedish Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Postures", op cit, p.106.
[27] Ibid. pp.105-108.
[28] Reiss, op cit, p.48.
[29] Larsson, "the Swedish Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Postures", op cit, p.109.
[30] Ibid. p.110

interest as well as in the interest of international peace efforts ... if these negotiations were to be successful. It might have a negative impact on the disarmament efforts if Sweden now decided to manufacture nuclear weapons".[31]

The decision "not the decide" allowed the Government flexibility and "freedom of action" over the nuclear weapons question. Prawitz has argued that the 1959 report may have been interpreted differently by different sections in Sweden. While nuclear weapons opponents may have assumed that this amounted to tactful and diplomatic "no" to nuclear weapons, proponents may have interpreted this as a "yes" for when plutonium became available.[32] However, most accounts suggest this to be a decisive turning point in Sweden's courting of a bomb option.

The period 1960-1968, was characterised by a series of setbacks for advocates of nuclear weapons acquisition, culminating in the eventual decision not to proceed with a nuclear weapons programme. Weapons advocates within the military continued to make calls for nuclear acquisition based on up to date costs and estimates. However, Larsson points out that while the ÖB-62 report reiterated the advantages of nuclear acquisition, it also suggested that "no decision was yet called for" and that it was "desirable to maintain the freedom of action policy".[33] The case for nuclear weapons thus appears to have lost momentum by 1962. Initially, it became doubtful as to whether it was either technically or economically feasible to proceed with the production of weapons-grade plutonium.

The ÖB-65 report recognised what had probably already been accepted by most Swedish defence officials: there was no real freedom of action over the question of nuclear acquisition.[34] In early 1968, the *Riksdag* began a lengthy debate over the defence budget for the next four year period. The result was a defence plan which stated that Sweden would not have nuclear weapons unless they became "a normal component of the armed forces of lesser nations".[35] Sweden signed the

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[31] cited in Reiss, op cit, p.65.
[32] Correspondence with Jan Prawitz, 17th October, 2000.
[33] Ibid, p.114
[34] See Agrell, op cit, p.168.
[35] Larsson, "The Swedish Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Postures", op cit, p.117.

NPT in August, thus officially ending any official interest in nuclear weapons.

An Inevitable Outcome?

Could Sweden have produced its own nuclear weapons? Rene Nyberg argues that the Swedish nuclear option was not based on realistic assumptions because "Sweden never had an adequate plutonium capacity".[36] Reiss agrees that Sweden never had the technical capacity to acquire nuclear weapons.[37] The technical centre-piece of Sweden's nuclear option was to be the 200 MW heavy water reactor at Marviken, which would have produced a ready supply of un-safeguarded weapons-grade plutonium. However, the Marviken project was beset with technical difficulties from the outset and was eventually cancelled. Thus by the mid-1960's, Sweden's entire nuclear program was operating under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

How insurmountable were these technological barriers? Sweden confronted difficulties in acquiring the necessary nuclear material in the process of maintaining a policy of non-alignment, but there is reason to suppose that, given the political will, Sweden could had pursued alternative paths to proliferation. Reiss points to the possibility of underwriting a substantial nuclear weapons research programme, which would have enhanced the credibility of a weapons option.[38] It is also important not to underestimate the importance of economic considerations. Prawitz has referred to a recognition in Sweden of the severe economic costs involved in acquiring a nuclear strike force, which made it progressively more unrealistic in the late 1960's.[39]

While technological factors may have contributed in the short term to Sweden's nuclear restraint, these were largely a function of political and strategic

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[36] Nyberg, op cit, p.60.
[37] Reiss, op cit, p.72.
[38] Ibid. p72.
[39] E-mail correspondence with Jan Prawitz, 16th October, 2000.

considerations. Sweden's initial interest in nuclear weapons derived from a perception of vulnerability. The principal source of insecurity appears to have been the perceived threat posed by Soviet conventional and potentially its nuclear forces. A Swedish nuclear weapons capability may have been considered as a useful deterrent against the Soviet threat.

However, the central issue in relation to Swedish nuclear planning is likely to have been the military and nuclear strategy employed by the US and NATO. In 1966 the under-Secretary of State for Defence, Karl Frithiofson stated that

"Sweden is essentially under the nuclear umbrella in much the same way as our neighboring countries are said to be. In this context our non-alignment and our objective of neutrality in wartime means little if anything".[40]

This might suggest that the Swedish government avoided acquiring its own nuclear weapons because of the defence provided by US nuclear weapons. Why would Sweden as an officially neutral and non-aligned state, consider itself protected by the same nuclear guarantees as those extended to other European members of NATO? Prawitz has rejected the notion that Sweden made any secret agreements with the US concerning security guarantees. Rather there was an assumption at the time, that the US could not afford to accept the prospect of the USSR invading Sweden and advancing closer to NATO territory. Hence, according to Prawitz, the US would have defended Sweden against a Soviet attack whether Sweden requested help or not.[41]

Swedish nuclear proponents may have concluded that a tactical nuclear force could compliment NATO's strategic arsenal. However, Prawitz argues that decision-making in Sweden was decisively influenced by the evolution of NATO nuclear doctrine and specifically the emergence of the doctrine of "flexible

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[40] Quoted in Larsson, "The Swedish Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Postures", op cit, p.118.
[41] E-mail correspondence with Jan Prawitz, 16th October, 2000.

response" in the late 1960's.[42] Quite how the introduction of flexible response affected Sweden's nuclear decision-making remains unclear. Without documentary evidence, it is difficult to offer any accurate assessments. However, if it is accepted that Sweden's nuclear policy was determined by a belief in the existence of US security guarantees, then it is feasible to suggest that Sweden may have been affected by the evolution of western strategic doctrine in the 1950's and 1960's.

In investigating the issue of US-Swedish strategic relations, Cole refers to a Swedish commission set up in 1994, to investigate the extent of Swedish co-operation with NATO.[43] The commission found that the US was prepared throughout the Cold War to come to Sweden's aid in the event of war, although "no guarantees to this effect were forthcoming".[44] Cole concludes that the commission provided no hard evidence to prove that the US was prepared to assist Sweden. Furthermore, US documentation reveals that it was "uncomfortable with any policy language that could be interpreted as evidence of US intentions".[45]

However, Ola Tunander offers a different interpretation of the evidence.[46] Tunander argues that like other Scandinavian countries, Sweden was covered by the US nuclear umbrella from early-mid 1960's as specified in the National Security Council Document of 1960 (NSC 6006/1). In this document it is suggested that it was the intention of the US to "assist Sweden, without prejudice

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[42] Ibid. The doctrine of flexible response was officially adopted on the 9th May 1967. Previously western nuclear strategy was based on the doctrine of 'massive retaliation' which involved the use of US strategic nuclear weapons by means of a massive nuclear strike if necessary, to deter the use of all-out aggression against the West. Flexible Response was designed to deter threats of less than all-out attack by the use of a wide range of military options, both conventional and nuclear, which were linked together in an escalatory chain. See John Baylis, "The Evolution of NATO Strategy 1949-1990" in Colin McInnes (eds.) *Security and Strategy in the New Look Europe* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.101-104;
[43] The commission consisted of a committee of Swedish academics and diplomats (Neutralitetspolitkkommissionen (NPK)), who submitted their findings after a year of research into Swedish and US archives. Cole, "Atomic Bombast: Nuclear Decision-Making in Sweden, 1946-72", *Washington Quarterly*, 20:2, 1997, p.249.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ola Tunander, "The Uneasy Imbrication of Nation-State and NATO: The Case of Sweden" *Cooperation and Conflict* (34 (2), 1999.

to US commitments to NATO, to resist Soviet bloc attack against Sweden".[47]

The issue of security guarantees in explaining Swedish nuclear restraint is not trivial. If Sweden received an explicit nuclear guarantee from the US, then this could be seen as a crucial factor in explaining the Swedish non-nuclear outcome. Much depends on the chronology of events: if Sweden was given a guarantee then it is important to ask whether this came before or after a decision was made about nuclear weapons. According to Eric Arnett a decision was taken against a non-nuclear option before the military considered the issue of extended deterrence, having stated that Sweden "turned decisively away from nuclear weapons in 1959".[48] Thus for Arnett, Sweden's nuclear restraint can be accounted for by other factors. However, as Cole suggests, "thus far no US planning documents or other primary source materials have emerged from official archives that show an American inclination to behave as Sweden anticipated".[49] Consequently, it is difficult to make judgements.

Eitherway Frithiothson's statement seems to suggest that Sweden considered itself covered by the US nuclear umbrella in the same way as Norway and Denmark did and in a manner which may have rendered the requirement for an independent nuclear capability as minimal. Effectively, Sweden could enjoy the benefits of "non-weaponized deterrence" without incurring the political and strategic costs associated with a nuclear status.[50] Defence planners may have concluded that any use of nuclear weapons by either the US or the Soviets against Sweden would result in corresponding counteractions from the other. Hence, Sweden would never be forced to resist nuclear aggression on its own. The acquisition of an independent nuclear capability may well have jeopardised this strategic equation, the implication being, that Sweden could offer its own

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[47] Ibid. p.182. According to Tunander, this would involve a unilateral decision on the part of the US but not explicitly involving NATO. Furthermore, according to the same document the US should "maintain and encourage selected NATO powers individually to maintain discreet liaison with the Swedish military establishment as the basis for possible future active military cooperation".
[48] Arnett, op cit, pp. 36-38.
[49] Paul Cole, Sweden Without the Bomb, op cit, p.171
[50] For a discussion of 'Non-Weaponized Deterrence Regimes' see G.Perkovich "A Nuclear Third Way in South Asia" Foreign Policy, 1993, p.96.

defence against nuclear attack.

Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

Erlander suggested in 1957 that "if Sweden managed to produce atomic bombs, which by their nature are highly offensive weapons - our territory would become a more dangerous neighbourhood as seen from the Soviet Union".[51] With an independent nuclear capability, Sweden would be unable to avoid questions of targeting and threat assessment. Sweden would have been thrust into the mainstream of the European strategic equation during a US-Soviet arms race. Such a scenario seemed unattractive to those keen to consolidate Sweden as a neutral, non-aligned state with marginal relevance to European security matters.

Policy-makers may therefore have concluded that Sweden should not acquire nuclear weapons as long as such weaponry did not become part of the regular armoury of small nations. Furthermore, Sweden should do all it could to reduce the risk that these weapons should ever be used. This would explain Sweden's dual-policy of refraining from nuclear acquisition and promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Following WWII, Sweden contributed significantly to the efforts of the UN to limit nuclear weapons. It was considered that the acquisition of nuclear weapons would damage Sweden's credentials in nuclear disarmament efforts. Equally, as Reiss maintains, total disavowal of an interest in nuclear weapons development would eliminate Stockholm's bargaining leverage.[52] This may explain the Swedish Government's insistence to delay any final decision on nuclear acquisition.

In December 1961, the UN General Assembly decided that the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament should be expanded to an Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee (ENDC), of which Sweden should be a part. By this

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[51] Tage Erlander, *Tage Erlander 1955-1960* (Stockholm 1976), p.83.
[52] Reiss, op cit. p.68.

time, Sweden was emerging as advocate of nuclear non-proliferation as illustrated by Osten Unden's (Minister for Foreign Affairs) introduction of the "Unden Plan" at the UN General Assembly which proposed the creation of a "non-atomic club" for member states.[53] Sweden's credentials with regard to these matters were enhanced by its technical expertise in the nuclear field, which most of the other non-aligned, non-nuclear committee members did not possess.

The Swedish Government responded to the Unden Plan in 1962 by declaring that "Sweden would be willing to participate in the largest possible nuclear free zone in Europe, including non-nuclear states in Central and Northern Europe".[54] Little came of this proposal mainly as a result of disagreement between the Nordic countries concerning the geographical scope of a nuclear weapons free zone (NWFZ).[55] On the 20th November 1963, Sweden signed the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT). The Swedish Government suggested that whilst this would not make nuclear tests impossible it should serve as an indication of the centrality of international disarmament and non-proliferation to Swedish nuclear weapons thinking. Throughout the 1960's Sweden played an active and prominent role in the NPT negotiations, signing the Treaty on 19th August 1968 and submitting its instruments for ratification on 9th January 1970.

The formal decision in 1968 to abstain from nuclear acquisition and to sign the NPT was based on assumptions concerning the existing character of the military and political situation in Europe. Having decided that non-acquisition was in the national interest, Sweden was keen to ensure that the 1968 decision was "an active policy and not a political museum piece".[56] Consequently, Sweden embarked upon a policy of active and comprehensive support for the non-

[53] K. Brodin, "The Unden Proposal," *Cooperation and Conflict*, (Vol.1, 1966), p.18.
[54] Prawitz, *From Nuclear Option to Non-Nuclear Promotion*, op cit, p.12.
[55] Finland's President, Urho Kekkonen sought to create a specifically Nordic NWFZ. See Ingemar Lindahl, *The Soviet Union and the Nordic Nuclear-Weapons-Free-Zone*, (Macmillan, 1988).
[56] Prawitz, *From Nuclear Option*, op cit, p.27.

proliferation regime.[57] That Sweden maintained such a high profile role in disarmament and non-proliferation forums, while simultaneously keeping a weapons option open, may appear paradoxical. However, in effect, Swedish nuclear weapons were a "non-option" after 1959-1960. The domestic nuclear debate in Sweden was at its most fierce during the late 1950's. Following the report of the nuclear study group in December 1959 and the decision "not to decide", Sweden effectively moved to an unofficial policy of nuclear restraint.[58] Its promotion of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation during the 1960's might therefore be more consistent with its overall strategy with regard to nuclear weapons, than might otherwise be supposed.

The Swedish Strategic Culture of Neutrality

The Swedish approach to neutrality is both distinctive and long-standing. In contrast to other neutral states such as Switzerland, Swedish neutrality is based neither on constitutional principle nor imposed by international agreement. Instead, it has developed through what Joseph Board has described as "gradual practice rather than conscious design".[59] Nonetheless, it has become firmly established within Swedish society and is left virtually unquestioned by the Swedish people. It is therefore possible to identify a Swedish strategic culture of neutrality.

Ann Sofie Dahl has suggested, that Swedish neutrality grew to be much more than simply a particular means of organising national security.[60] Instead it became an integral part of Swedish life and embraced as a national ideal. Debate on alternative ways of defining national security policy have traditionally been

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[57] Sweden's efforts to support the non-proliferation regime have included: determined efforts to persuade non-party states to accede to the NPT; participation in the guidelines for nuclear exports of the Zangger Committee and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG); cooperation in the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes subject to IAEA safeguards; participation in the negotiations on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); contributions to negotiations for negative security assurances for NNWS; involvement in a number of nuclear disarmament initiatives including a reduction in the reliance on nuclear weapons defence doctrines and the establishment of NWFZ's, amongst others. Ibid. pp.31-33.
[58] Arnett, op cit, p.36.
[59] Joseph Board, The Government and Politics of Sweden (Boston, 1970), p.189.
[60] Ann-Sofie Dahl, "To Be Or Not to Be Neutral: Swedish Security in the Post-Cold War Era", in Efraim Inbar and Gabriel Sheffer (eds.) The National Security of Small States in a Changing World, (London: Frank Cass, 1997)

both discouraged by Government and spurned by public opinion. A neutral pre-disposition has thus pervaded the Swedish consciousness and become deeply embedded within its strategic culture.

The overriding objective for Swedish defence analysts has always been the survival of Sweden as a sovereign state. As a result, Sweden has traditionally maintained a strong system of defence designed to protect its territory from potential threats, wherever they may arise. Swedish strategy has usually involved striking a balance between creating a viable military capability in order to avoid excessive vulnerability on the one hand, and not provoking serious concern among potential adversaries that put regional interests at risk. Swedish security is based firmly on a commitment to the regional protection of the Nordic area.

Swedish neutrality must be seen within an historical context. From the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars until today, Sweden has successfully avoided military conflict. The underlying assumption guiding Swedish foreign policy is that it was prudent for small country such as Sweden to keep out of the power politics played by great states. The policy of neutrality is "sanctified by more than 170 years of success" and has become embedded within the national consciousness. [61] Having avoided the ignominy of defeat and diminished national territory during the 19th Century, Sweden remained neutral during WWI. The inter-war period was characterised by a Swedish policy of "active neutrality" whereby efforts were made to promote a more peaceful international environment. As a result Sweden initially offered support for collective security and the League of Nations, before retreating towards relative isolation by the late 1930's.

The Soviet attack on Finland in November 1939, and the German invasion of Norway and Denmark six months, prompted Sweden to adopt an explicit policy of

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[61] John Logue, "The Legacy of Swedish Neutrality" in Bengt Sundelius (ed.) *The Committed Neutral: Sweden's Foreign Policy* (Westview Press, 1989), p.41.

non-alignment.[62] Soviet activities in Finland once again raised the specter of Russian imperialism and its threat to Sweden's territorial integrity. Equally, Germany's occupation of Norway and Denmark illustrated the weakness of the Nordic region to other hostile European states. WWII thus had two effects on Swedish strategy. First, Sweden began to believe in the need for stronger armed forces and a more robust military defence in general; second, attempts were made to strengthen the regional defence of Scandinavia with the Nordic states acting in concert.

Donald Hancock has argued that underlying any conception of national perspective in Swedish foreign policy was a "widely diffused consciousness of regional affinity with Denmark, Norway and Finland".[63] Basic similarities in culture, religion, language and political systems have provided a firm basis for a regional identity. The advent of the Cold War confronted the Nordic states with a series of new security problems. In 1948, Sweden invited Denmark and Norway to join in a military defense union, which would entail the end of Sweden's policy of non-alignment. The draft of the treaty suggested that each of the Nordic states would remain neutral in peacetime, but would come to each others assistance in the case of war.[64]

The critical thrust of Sweden's attempts to create a Scandinavian defence pact, involved assurances for each state that they would remain non-aligned from major states. This was to prove to be the stumbling block as far as the Norwegians and Danes were concerned. Norway argued that the Scandinavian alliance would be too weak without Western assistance, while Finland was forced into a treaty of "friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance" with the Soviet Union.[65] These problems proved to be insurmountable, with Norway and Denmark joining NATO in 1949 and Sweden pursuing a policy of neutrality.

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[62] Sweden responded to the Finland-Soviet war by declaring itself a "non-belligerent" rather than a "neutral". In relation to Germany, Sweden declared itself neutral not "non-aligned". This was explained by Prawitz: see correspondence with Prawitz, op cit.
[63] Donald Hancock, The Politics of Post-Industrial Change p.242.
[64] Nils Andren, Power Balance and Non-alignment, (Stockholm : Almqvist and Wiksell, 1967) pp.57 and 69-70.
[65] See Lindahl, op cit.

This Nordic strategic equation has remained unchanged to the present day, with Sweden and Finland maintaining an official policy of neutrality and Norway and Denmark aligning themselves with NATO. The scope for discussion of a regional Nordic strategic culture are therefore limited in practical terms. Nonetheless there are grounds to suspect a degree of cultural homogeneity within Scandinavia. Equally, as will shown there are reasons to suspect that Sweden was more assimilated within NATO's military structure, (in a not dissimilar way to Norway and Denmark) than official doctrine would suggest. Whilst this chapter is concerned with Sweden's national strategic culture, there are grounds to acknowledge the relevance of a regional strategic cultural predisposition.

Emerging from WWII as the only Western state not to demobilize its forces, Sweden quickly became acutely aware of its vulnerable position as a small state in-between the East and West blocs. Initially it was assumed that Sweden could exert only a limited influence over the policy of the dominant political and military forces in the European theatre: NATO and the Warsaw Pact. As a result of this strategic assessment, it was concluded that Sweden was of minimal value to either the US or the Soviets, except in a time of crisis. The concept of "marginality" thus became popular among Swedish defence analysts, convinced that an adversary would only devote marginal resources to attacking Sweden. It was envisaged that in the event of an attack by either the US or the Soviets, Sweden's realistic aim should be to inflict marginal costs on the opponent. As Erlander confirmed in 1964, this would involve "building up a defence which naturally has not much chance of surviving against a concentrated attack by a great power, but which, nevertheless, may be troublesome to overcome if Sweden is a secondary objective".[66] The emphasis was on ensuring that Sweden remained secondary, as a military objective of the Great Powers.

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[66] Quoted in Adam Roberts, *Nations in Arms: The Theory and Practice of Territorial Defence* (Macmillan, 1986).

Many Swedes remained fearful of the danger posed by the Soviet Union. As Jozef Kruzel suggests, three possible scenarios were envisaged: first, a Soviet violation of Swedish territory on its way to occupying NATO airfields in Norway; second, a Soviet amphibious landing on the Baltic Coast; third, an "air scenario" whereby Soviet forces would look to occupy Swedish airbases in the event of a North Atlantic conflict.[67]

Whether such scenarios were ever likely to become a reality is open to debate. While Sweden may have come into the military equation in the event of a full-scale European conflict, it was unlikely that the Soviet Union would have disturbed the strategic balance by initiating a pre-emptive invasion of Sweden. Indeed, Sweden, as a non-aligned state, had every reason to be equally mindful of NATO forces in Europe.

The reasons behind Sweden's willingness to regard the Soviet Union as an enemy and the US as a protector, cannot be explained on the basis of rationalist materialist calculation. Rather it is necessary to consider the ideas that constituted these material circumstances. Swedish strategic culture had thus evolved according to an "oppositional" perception of the Soviet Union and a "non-oppositional" perception of NATO.

The question of Sweden's security relationship with the USSR has been described as "the most important issue in the development of Sweden's strategic culture".[68]According to Cole, it was as a result of a series of battles with Russians upto 1709 that Sweden lost its status as a great power. Until this point, Swedish leaders had traditionally attempted to find security by creating a "system of outposts in the Eastern Baltic and by driving the Muscovites from the sea".[69] As a state that has never been occupied by a foreign power, Sweden is highly

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[67] Jozef Kruzel, "New Challenges for Sweden's Security Policy", *Survival* (Vol.30, No.6, November-December, 1988), p.532.
[68] Cole, *Sweden without the Bomb*, op cit, pp. 175-6.
[69] Michael Roberts, *Essays in Swedish History* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1977) p.12.

protective of its territorial integrity. Swedes were therefore easily disposed to regard a militarily strong Soviet Union as a threat to Nordic security.

Sweden's relationship with the US has been an intriguing feature of its Post-War foreign policy. Despite its independent, non-aligned status, Sweden is still a Western state. As modern, liberal, democratic states, Sweden and the US are close in cultural and political terms. Equally, Swedish military planners closely followed developments in Western (mostly American) strategic thought.[70] In contrast, Sweden's approach towards arms control and nuclear non-proliferation has often taken on an anti-American resonance. Sweden has often chosen to express it's own independence by distancing itself from the United States, as illustrated by Olof Palme's condemnation of America's involvement in the Vietnam War.[71]

Swedish neutrality was designed to "keep Sweden out of the Cold War" and to maintain flexibility and freedom of action in national security policy. Officially the policy of neutrality was defined as "freedom from alliances in peacetime in order to preserve our neutrality in war". A policy of nonalignment was accompanied by a reliance on the military credibility of Swedish defence forces and supported by civil and economic defenses and self-sufficiency in military material. Sweden's conception of neutrality was therefore a holistic one, embracing many aspects of Swedish society. Its military defence would be "total", involving the total mobilization of civilian resources in a time of crisis.

A policy of neutrality and nonalignment did not however mean a passive Swedish foreign policy. There a number of unique features to Swedish neutrality including: the requirement for strong military defence and a productive, a self-reliant defence industry, the desire to participate in international opinion-building through vocal criticism of international "wrong-doing" while playing a mediatory role in

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[70] Cole suggests that the vocabulary and reference points that Swedish military analysts used, suggested an absorption of Western thinking on nuclear weapons. See Cole, "Atomic Bombast", *Washington Quarterly*, p.237.
[71] Ibid. p.240.

international conflict resolution and an active role in the formulation and implementation of international disarmament and diplomacy initiatives. Often these tendencies have shaped contradictory outcomes. However, each represents an important facet of the Swedish strategic culture of neutrality.

The Armed Neutral

Swedish strategic culture has traditionally been charactersied by a need for a strong military and civil defence. In part, this is a reflection of Sweden's historical experiences of the military ambitions of great powers and the need to retain military defences to meet threats. Equally though, this was an inevitable consequence of Sweden's independent neutral status which meant that it had to provide for its own security. Sweden's armament industry was built up during WWII. A concerted effort following the German attack on Norway and Denmark resulted in a general military build-up that was maintained in the post-war period, giving Sweden (by the early 1950's) the fourth largest air force in the world.[72] Nyberg has suggested that the Swedish airforce has contributed significantly the credibility of Sweden's armed neutrality, with the construction of four generations of indigenously designed jet aircraft representing a "major achievement".[73] Sweden has thus put a great deal of reliance on military self-reliance as well as high levels of defence spending. We might therefore refer to Sweden as an "armed neutral".

The fact that Sweden has maintained a high level of defence spending since WWII could be used as an argument to suggest that Swedish military strategy has been based more on a pragmatic response to a competitive strategic environment, than on a commitment to a more peaceful de-militarized international system. An analysis of Swedish defence policy provides an illustration of one of the many paradoxes implicit in the Swedish case. For

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[72] Nyberg, op cit, p.61.
[73] Ibid.

example, while the dominant political party is unenthusiastic about defence spending, Sweden has remained committed to a posture of total defence based on military conscription.[74] Equally, despite being proud of an arms industry based on the most advanced military technology, it is uncomfortable with the sale of arms to other countries.[75]

In the 1950's and early 1960's Sweden spent about 5 percent of its GNP on defence. Since this period, defence spending has steadily decreased to around 2.4 percent of the GNP in 1989.[76] Despite this reduction, Sweden has retained a high level of defence expenditure relative to other European states. The policy of neutrality has made it difficult to gain access to modern military technology through alliance cooperation. Nonetheless, as Ingemar Dörfer suggests, Sweden has managed to circumvent this problem through "clever and selective imports of components an technology".[77] Thus, throughout the Cold War, Sweden enjoyed the benefits of military exchanges with the US and later, other European nations, which further strengthened its military defence.

Those advocating a strong independent military posture were at the forefront of attempts to acquire nuclear weapons. A nuclear deterrent was seen as offering further credibility to Sweden's independent military status. It is interesting to consider the question of the relationship between Swedish neutrality and nuclear motivations : did the former inspire the latter? Theoretically, the strategic culture of armed neutrality might predispose Swedes to consider nuclear weapons. Practically, nuclear acquisition might not have been possible without assistance from other states, thus jeopardising Swedish neutrality and damaging the case for nuclear weapons. This issue is further complicated by the fact that, as will be shown, there are reasons to suspect that Sweden was far less neutral than official doctrine would lead us to believe in that Sweden believed itself to be covered by

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[74] Kruzel, op cit. p.529.
[75] For an analysis of the Swedish Government's policy on arms exports see Espen Gullikstad, "Sweden" in Ian Anthony (Ed.) *Arms Export Regulations* (SIPRI, Oxford University Press, 1991).
[76] Dahl, op cit.p.185.
[77] Ingemar Dorfer, "Nordic Security Today: Sweden", *Cooperation and Conflict*, XVII, 1982.

an American nuclear guarantee.

Sweden as an International Activist

Sweden's policy of neutrality has contributed to a belief that it has strong credentials to play an active and impartial role in international affairs. Developing the idealist principles that first arose in Europe during the inter-war period, Sweden contributed significantly to the emergence of collective security through the UN. Often performing the role of an international pacifist, Sweden has thus sought to promote the ideal of world peace, by offering its services around the world as mediator and neutral arbiter.

Swedish activism has engendered support for developing, small, non-aligned states in the form of aid and development. This has been accompanied by attempts to strengthen international law in favour of the small nations and has often led to a critical stance with regard to the policies of other states, including South Africa's policy of apartheid, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1978 and 1982.[78] The most controversial critical stance taken up by Sweden related to US involvement in the Vietnam War. Having initially supported US policy in Southeast Asia, Sweden reacted negatively towards the escalation of American military involvement in Vietnam. This was driven by a rising wave of protests against the war by Swedish youths and intellectuals. Publicly, Sweden was vocal in its condemnation of US policies, demanding an end to the bombing of North Vietnam. The virulent opposition to the Vietnam War and the strident anti-American rhetoric employed by Olof Palme and others, led to a deterioration in Swedish-American relations.

Sweden's neutrality has thus led to the pursuit of international justice, which has involved an often critical appraisal of the activities of other states. Sweden has

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[78] Ulf Bjerled "Critic or Mediator? Sweden in World Politics, 1945-1990", *Journal of Peace Research*, (Vol.32, No.1, 1995), p.28.

identified strongly with the plight of small nations, and the need to promote democratic and peaceful solutions to conflictual situations. Sweden's role as "critic" has often been accompanied by that of "mediator" in international disputes. Whether Sweden's position as critic and opinion-builder has ever compromised its credibility as a mediator is open to question. Ulf Bjerled offers the suggestion that the use of criticism as a foreign policy tool has strengthened not weakened the possibility of Sweden acting as a mediator.[79] Eitherway, the strategic culture of neutrality has led to a belief in the need to actively utilise Sweden's impartiality. As a result, a mediatory and critical mentality has embedded itself within Swedish strategic culture and has informed its attitude toward the activities of other states.

Board has suggested that the success of the SAP in developing a Swedish Welfare State, based on a "surge of egalitarian solidarity" was important in perpetuating Sweden's domestic and international tendency to think in terms of "community interest".[80] It is possible to consider Swedish nuclear restraint and Sweden's participation in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation efforts as a function of narrow self-interest. If one assumes that Sweden was never likely to attain a nuclear status, then it would seem logical and beneficial to pursue international diplomacy designed to undermine the case for nuclear weapons and enhance the benefits of conventional defence.

Swedish policy-makers thus felt a need to "level the strategic playing field". Equally, by promoting Sweden's' credentials as a model of peaceful and producive societal development, policymakers were able to participate and (to a degree) contribute to international negotiations and agreements.

Faced with the issue of nuclear weapons acquisition, the Swedish Government pursued a dual policy of leaving the option of obtaining a nuclear capability open, while participating in international non-proliferation efforts. Prawitz has suggested

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[79] Ibid.
[80] Board, *The Government and Politics of Sweden*, op cit, p.239.

that it turned out to be a distinct advantage for Sweden to arrive at the negotiating table as a state which was supposedly able to acquire nuclear weapons if it so decided.[81] However, for many, by the mid-1960's, it was becoming virtually impossible to reconcile these potentially contradictory polices. Sweden's accession to the NPT in 1968 confirmed that its commitment to international non-proliferation was stronger than its desire for nuclear acquisition.

It has been suggested that Sweden's nuclear restraint was a direct consequence of its ambitions in the field of nuclear disarmament.[82] A fully operational nuclear weapons programme might have condemned Sweden's credentials as a forerunner in disarmament negotiations. However, if it is assumed that the policy of nuclear restraint was a product of the need to be at the forefront of international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, then it is necessary to ask whether this was purely a response to Sweden's security interests, or an indication of a cultural style in the realm of decision-making. As Prawitz argues, the nuclear option period lasted for little more than a decade, while Swedish support for the NPT and the non-proliferation regime has lasted for over twenty five years. This might suggest that the strategic culture of non-nuclearism and preference for the international norm of non-proliferation has become strong and enduring.

Having decided that a nuclear deterrent was not feasible, policy-makers pursued disarmament and non-proliferation efforts in a way that bolstered Sweden's international credibility. Over time, these sentiments and tendencies disseminated into the policy-making arena, such that subsequent generations of political elites were culturally predisposed towards non-proliferation, both domestically and externally. While Sweden's initial interest in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation may initially have been based on short-term self-interest, it has subsequently become an integral part of Sweden's strategic culture.

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[81] Correspondence with Prawitz, op cit.
[82] See George Quester, "Sweden and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty," *Cooperation and Conflict* 5 (January 1970).

Cole has argued that Sweden's strident rhetoric on the issue of nuclear disarmament was important in creating a national anti-nuclear ethos among the Swedish population. The Social Democratic Government shaped an anti-nuclear culture, which was decisive in the eventual eschewal of a Swedish nuclear deterrent. This policy was also compatible with Sweden's national identity. As Cole claims, Sweden considered itself to be unique in terms the manner in which it had come to define its own neutrality. There was also a strong sense of pride in the idea that Sweden represented a model as a peaceful, modern democratic state. Board has suggested that Swedes are "affected/ afflicted by a strong belief in their own 'exceptionalism', on the conviction that somehow they are a special nation, fundamentally different from others".[83] In this sense, a high profile status in the UN and in arms control and disarmament forums was seen as more beneficial than a nuclear weapons capability. Equally, Sweden's strategic culture is influenced by the need to follow its own course and to choose its own destiny as a neutral, non-aligned state. The implication that Sweden could choose whether or not to acquire nuclear weapons thus illustrated a sense of superiority, independence and freedom of action.

Compromise and Consensus Within the Swedish Political Context

By investigating Sweden's institutional framework and political process it is possible to identify distinctive patterns and proclivities which shaped the nature of the nuclear debate. As Cole maintains, "Sweden's decision-making and conduct reflects the nations history, culture, values and elite power structure".[84] In terms of Sweden's nuclear weapons policy, it was this elite power structure and the small, but influential group of individuals who formed its core, that proved to be one of the decisive factors in the eventual decision not to acquire nuclear weapons.

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[83] Board, "Re-interpreting the Bombast," *Washington Quarterly*, (Autumn 1997), p.238.
[84] Cole, *Sweden Without the Bomb*, op cit. p.1.

Sweden's policy of nuclear restraint emphasizes that the issue of military strategy in Sweden is best considered in terms of the civilian decision-making process. Despite the military's carefully constructed case for weapons acquisition, the ultimate decision was determined by the influence of a powerful anti-nuclear faction. While the significance of the organizational culture of the military cannot be ignored, Sweden's strategic culture seems to be a product of a series of broader national cultural trends that led to a distinctive political process and an observable style in strategic decision-making.

What were the important strategic cultural tendencies that guided the politics of decision-making at the time when nuclear weapons acquisition was considered? Who were the key players in the political process and how representative were they of Swedish culture in general? Can this decision be seen as consistent with traditional Swedish political and cultural practice? These are the crucial questions that require attention if fuller insights are to be gained into this case. Ultimately it is necessary to ask whether the non-nuclear decision was typically Swedish. If this is the case, and the decision not to proliferate was consistent with Sweden's national strategic style, then an investigation into the possible influence of a Swedish strategic culture seems more than appropriate.

It will be contended that the manner in which the issue of a Swedish nuclear deterrent was introduced into the political process, discussed and finally closed, was in accordance with Swedish domestic political culture. The Swedish political style is characterised by consensus decision-making whereby decision-making power is placed with a small circle of individuals. As Cole suggests, security policy is treated as subject "reserved for experts" which is consistent with a Swedish cultural tendency to defer issues to recognised expertise.[85] Policy-makers make decisions based on their own perception of the Swedish national interest with the question of whether this reflects public opinion remaining irrelevant. This process is made possible by the ease with which a consensus is attained on foreign policy

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[85] Ibid. p.87.

issues. Foreign and security policy thus does not provide a good forum for public debate, which would explain why Sweden's policy of non-alignment, armed neutrality and "total defence" has remained largely unquestioned. This unanimity is also prevalent with regard to inter-party political discussion. Debate among the political parties is reserved for domestic political matters: the emphasis is on presenting a unified, coherent policy to the outside world. This is based on a strong awareness that Sweden is a small power that needs to "speak with one voice if its cards are to be played to a maximum advantage".[86]

While the culture of consensus-decision-making is partly a result of institutional arrangements and well-established Swedish political practice, it also reflects a number of broader national cultural tendencies. Board has argued that there is widespread agreement among politicians and the public on the values that characterize Swedish society and how this relates to the outside world.[87] This would explain the lack of intensive debate over foreign policy issues and a decision-making process dominated by a small political elite, acting in the public interest. That there is minimal dispute over security matters thus facilitates a coherent, consensual, policy-making framework.

Having emerged as a serious political issue in the mid 1950's, the debate over the idea of a Swedish nuclear deterrent was characterised by what became known as *Handlingsfrihet* (freedom of action).[88] This involved postponing any firm decision as to whether Sweden should pursue a nuclear weapons programme, while continuing with protection-related research. As Reiss argues, this policy of delay had the merit of avoiding the two extremes: it did not close the issue, which would have limited the range of future options, but equally, it did not invite the international condemnation that an overt nuclear weapons programme would inevitably provoke. Furthermore, by being deliberately ambiguous, the Swedish Government was able to appease opposing factions by giving each the hope that

[86] Board, *The Government and Politics of Sweden*, op cit, p.194.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Cole, "Atomic Bombast", op cit, p.241.

their objectives could be achieved. This policy was both politically prudent, and indicative of the Swedish tendency to follow a middle path and seek reconciliation amidst hostile debate. This was the style that diplomats looked to promote as a means of enhancing Sweden's status as a mediator in international disputes.

Traditionally, Sweden has portrayed itself as a homogenous, independent society capable of expressing a single, unified political voice. To have made a firm decision either for or against weaponization, during the period when the debate over nuclear weapons was at its most intensive, would not have been consistent with Sweden's political and strategic style. The policy of "deciding not to decide" was therefore consistent with a distinctive style in foreign policy-making, which stresses the need for compromise, caution and consensus. The need to remain united and alleviate division was particularly acute within the dominant political party, the SAP, whose leader, Tage Erlander, was ultimately responsible for the decision not to acquire nuclear weapons. Any attempt to identify Sweden's political or strategic culture must refer to the dominance of the SAP. Cole has described the SAP as the "sole legitimate guardian of the Swedish national ethos"; by the 1950's, this party had become a "state within a state".[89]

The issue of nuclear weapons acquisition tested the political cohesiveness and ideological unity of the SAP by jeopardising its long-standing political predominance in Sweden. As Wallin suggests, the party had split before over defence issues. There was therefore every reason to take the issue of equipping the military with nuclear weapons, very seriously.[90] The issue of nuclear acquisition was first considered by parliament in November 1955. In 1957 the director of the FOA stated that Sweden was capable of producing nuclear weapons which would become fully operational by 1963.[91] This engendered a serious rift in the SAP at a time when party unity was essential if re-election was

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[89] See Cole, *Sweden Without the Bomb...*op cit. p.11.
[90] Wallin, "Sweden", op cit, p.377.
[91] Larsson, "The Swedish Nuclear and Non-nuclear Postures", op cit, p.107.

to be secured. By the time of the ÖB-57 report, a majority of Social Democrats favoured a nuclear option, while an anti-nuclear faction within the party, remained vehemently opposed. Elsewhere, the pro-nuclear stance was supported by a number of leading conservatives and sections of the liberal media such as *Dagen Nyheter* which became a firm advocate of nuclear weapons acquisition.

The case for nuclear weapons was dealt a blow by the AWC's report in 1959, which recommended defensive research only.[92] This report effectively strengthened the position of the anti-nuclear lobby within the SAP, which had grown following the introduction of anti-nuclear Communists into a ruling left-wing coalition following the 1958 elections. As Cole suggests, proponents of nuclear weapons production found themselves "increasingly isolated".[93] While the military steadfastly clung to the hope of an active weapons research programme, the issue was, by 1965, politically dead.

By considering the Swedish case from the perspective of domestic politics, it becomes evident that the advice offered by the military concerning the need for a Swedish nuclear deterrent, was largely ignored by the political elite. Despite continued formal and informal approaches to the Government, the strategic analysis offered by the Supreme Commander was not decisive. This raises an interesting point: if as Prawitz argues, the decision not to acquire nuclear weapons was based on the belief that it was not conducive to Sweden's security interests, then this would imply a conception of security based on something more than rationalist materialist calculation. It would seem unlikely that the Swedish Government would choose to question or challenge strategic advice offered by the military. It is therefore logical to assume that the Government's refusal to act on the pro-nuclear advocation of the military, indicates that strategic considerations were somehow subordinated by other security or political interests.

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[92] Arnett, op cit, pp.35-36.
[93] Cole, "Atomic Bombast", op cit, p.242.

This is not to suggest that military strategy was not important to Sweden. Clearly the extent of Sweden's interest in conventional defence implies an acknowledgement of the importance of strategic matters to the Swedish Government. Rather, it illustrates that the issue of nuclear weapons involved questions of a political, economic, diplomatic and moral nature which led decision-makers to focus more on the strategic disadvantages of nuclear weapons, rather than the benefits suggested by the military.

It would appear that the decision not to acquire nuclear weapons was taken by the Swedish Government and its ruling party, the SAP. This might suggest that it would be relevant to consider the cultural style of Swedish strategic decision-making according to the culture of the SAP. However, as has already been suggested, Sweden's decision-making on national security issues is restricted to only a few individuals who act in the name of national public interest. If political elites within the SAP were responsible for policy-making on the question of nuclear weapons, then it is necessary to address a question raised earlier: were the views and perceptions held by these elites consistent with the cultural style of the party and Swedish society in general?

The literature relating to Swedish domestic politics and the non-nuclear decision, suggests that the SAP's political elite did not pursue an independent, radical departure from traditional party policy. This might be explained by the fact that the SAP, and the Swedish political process in general, is not well disposed to autocratic decision-making. Equally, this could be a result of the unanimous and consensual nature of thinking on issues of national security alluded to previously. A more likely suggestion is that this was a result of the fact that party leaders were forced to follow a conservative middle-line in order to minimize the extreme political division within the party over nuclear weapons. If the SAP were to retain its ascendancy in the *Riksdag*, then the requirement was for a purposeful unanimity, which stressed the importance of the party's strongest traditions. It was not a time for radical, autonomous individualism.

However, for Cole, this relationship between SAP culture and elite decision-making would be better considered in terms of the way in which members of the elite such as Erlander and Unden individually and independently shaped SAP policy.[94] Cole suggests that in order to understand Sweden's conduct over the issue of nuclear weapons, it is essential to understand Unden: "Sweden's policy was shaped by his dialectic reasoning" which promoted a policy of neutrality as "the antithesis of the two-bloc world system".[95] Prawitz makes a similar point when stressing the importance of Unden's resistance to Swedish nuclear acquisition.[96]

For others, such as Reiss and Agrell, it was the influence of Prime Minister Erlander that was decisive. Reiss stresses the importance of Erlander in maintaining party discipline and minimising divisions, whilst Agrell argues that Erlander decided "how the research program should be defined".[97] At the time when the FOA was pushing for an elimination of the distinction between research aimed at providing protection and that aimed at construction, Erlander recognised the merits of a policy of postponement which satisfied opposing elements within his party. He suggests in his memoirs that party unity could be upheld if "we accepted a policy of postponement and agreed to research with regard to nuclear bombs, but had guarantees that the research would only deal with how to protect oneself from attack".[98] The freedom of action line was thus very much a product of Erlander's political will.

Where does this leave the application of a strategic culture approach? If Cole is to believed then nuclear decision-making was a function of the individual ideas and beliefs of members of the elite and not broader strategic collectives. It might

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[94] Ibid.
[95] Cole, *Sweden Without the Bomb*, op cit, p.11.
[96] As Prawitz suggests, Unden rejected the proposal for a Swedish nuclear deterrent on the grounds that it would diminish Sweden's international standing. As his plan submitted to the United Nations in 1961 suggested, Unden firmly believed that "reducing risks of war was more important than upgrading military defence". Prawitz, *From Nuclear* Option, op cit.
[97] See Reiss, op cit, p.59; Agrell, op cit, p.164.
[98] Erlander, op cit. p.97.

therefore be disingenuous to regard a strategic culture as informing nuclear questions. However, Erlander, Unden and others were en-culturated within Swedish Social Democratic culture, which in turn was shaped by broader national cultural trends. The boundaries between these ideational levels of analysis are far from clear cut and are highly inter-penetrable, which sets a difficult task for a strategic culturalist in deciphering which was decisive in shaping the nuclear debate. The important point to make is that it is wrong to focus purely on one particular level of analysis such as the "individual".

Thus, while the needs of the SAP were shaped to suit the nature of the nuclear debate, the strategic outcome was consistent with Social Democratic culture. Although the Swedish case cannot be considered without looking at the distinctive policy-making style of Erlander, ultimately it is necessary to see him as a product of his party's political culture. If as Cole suggests, the SAP has "dominated Sweden's foreign and domestic policy planning for the better part of the Twentieth Century", then it would be feasible to suggest that the cultural style exhibited by the party will be an essential component in Sweden's strategic culture.[99] The greater the persistency of these cultural trends across time and across the relevant objects of analysis, (the political elite), then the more likely it is that there was a positive relationship between non-nuclear decision-making and strategic culture.

The literature pertaining to SAP culture reveals a dual tendency in terms of its influence on strategic decision-making. Cole's analysis offers an illuminating insight into how this dualism manifested itself over the issue of nuclear weapons. As has already been suggested, the SAP was deeply divided in the nuclear debate. Pro-nuclear activists within the party based their argument on a pragmatic conception of Swedish security needs. The anti-nuclear faction, which Cole describes as the "ideological component of the party" followed a moral idealist line which strongly rejected "realist notions of the national interest and balance of

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[99] Cole, *Sweden Without the Bomb*, op cit, p.4.

power".[100]

Which of these strategic cultures was more in accordance with the culture of Swedish society broadly speaking? As has already been illustrated, public opinion was largely irrelevant in the debate over nuclear weapons. Issues of national security were considered to be the concern of the political and strategic specialists. As Reiss maintains, as far as the Swedish people were concerned, the issue of a supplementary pension scheme was of far greater significance.[101] However, it might be feasible to suggest that the anti-nuclear faction within the SAP "cultivated an image of Sweden, both at home and abroad, that perfectly complemented the country's shared ethos".[102] Cole suggests that the lessons learnt from Sweden's strategic history has led to the emergence of a national ethos which favors aloofness, neutrality and non-alignment. Cole concludes that this explains Sweden's belief in the futility of expressing national pride through weapons construction. A nuclear weapons programme would thus seem incompatible with the broader national strategic culture.[103]

The Swedish Military

The Swedish military provided the most consistent and structured argument for a nuclear deterrent. Following the advent of the nuclear era, Swedish strategists perceived nuclear weapons as symbolising modern military technological advance, and became interested in the tactical implications of a small Swedish nuclear force. Military analysts in Sweden proved to be voracious consumers of American strategic precepts and traditions. As Cole suggests, the "vocabulary and reference points military analysts used reflected the absorption of Western

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[100] Ibid. p.8.

[101] The origins of this issue can be located in the period immediately following WWI, when the original Labour Party was split into the SAP and the Communists.

[102] Ibid. p.11.

[103] This argument cannot be extended to suggest that Sweden is not disposed to all weapons construction. Sweden has appeared proud and committed to developing and maintaining a strong and technologically advanced conventional defence (particularly the Swedish airforce). It was therefore a specifically anti-nuclear cultural tendency, cultivated and perpetuated by the SAP's anti-nuclear faction, that guided Sweden's strategy towards nuclear restraint, rather than a strategic cultural aversion to military production in general. Roberts, *Nations in Arms* op cit.

views on nuclear weapons".[104] Pro-nuclear advocates within the military thus promoted weaponization as a logical development for an advanced modern, western state as well as a rational strategic response to the nuclear security environment.

Swedish military strength and pride has always rested with its airforce. Adam Roberts attributes this to the impact of the Battle of Britain on Swedish military planners.[105] Following WWII, the Swedish airforce maintained a close contact with the British Royal Airforce, basing its air defence on the British model and purchasing both fighters and radars. An emphasis on airpower, allowed the Swedish military to concentrate on advanced technical solutions to strategic problems. One such technical solution was nuclear weapons acquisition. As Agrell suggests, the idea of nuclear weapons had its earliest advocates within the Swedish airforce.[106] Airforce Command reckoned that if Sweden was to weaponize, then it would look to deliver a tactical strike from the air, thereby giving the airforce an important new role in defence strategy.[107] Nuclear weapons acquisition was thus encouraged by the airforce on the basis of organizational interest.

Sweden's system of defence has traditionally been based on three alternative force postures: 1) Power projection, which involves attacking an adversary before they penetrate Swedish territory; 2) Perimeter defence, which attempts to set a high entrance cost to an attacker; 3)Territorial defence, involving defence in depth with an emphasis on surviving a long protracted war of attrition.[108] For the airforce, a nuclear weapons capability would confirm their belief in the utility of power projection, thus emphasising Sweden's resolve to strike early and decisively. The navy remained committed to a system of perimeter defence which would confirm its importance in protecting Sweden's long coastal frontier. For the

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[104] Cole, "Atomic Bombast", op cit, p.237.
[105] Roberts, *Nations in Arms*, op cit.
[106] Agrell, op cit, p.166.
[107] Ibid. p.165.
[108] Kruzel, op cit. p.535-536.

army, territorial defence represented the only strategic scenario whereby Sweden would rely on a large field and conscript forces.

Each of the armed services thus favoured the strategy that most accentuated their own importance. The Government was faced with the option of a defence based on high technology, which favoured the airforce (and, to a degree the navy,) or a low technology which favoured the army. Realistically, the airforce was the only branch of the armed services that could be guaranteed a role in a nuclear strategy. Both the navy and the army feared that their forces would be rendered obsolete in the new nuclear climate. The Swedish government refused to commit itself eitherway. The SAP's leadership sought to persuade the airforce away from its nuclear ambitions, while maintaining an interest in a research programme which could protect against the effects of a nuclear war and could, if required produce a nuclear weapons capability should an emergency arise.

By 1961 it became clear that there was insufficient political will to proceed with the full-scale production of nuclear weapons. At a time when the budgetary constraints on a weapons programme were becoming more salient, the airforce proceeded with a plan to develop the System 37 Viggen aircraft, a large technological and financial undertaking that forced the issue of a nuclear weapons capability into the background. As Wallin argues, ultimately for a small state such as Sweden, the ability to "maintain one of the largest air forces in the Europe and to provide it with successive generations of indigenously produced fighter aircraft may confer more prestige than a small nuclear force of doubtful military value".[109]

The debate over nuclear weapons thus provides an interesting insight into the character of civil-military relations in Sweden. Board has observed the manner in which civilian supremacy over the military is unquestionable in Sweden, just as in

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[109] Wallin, op cit, p.378.

the United States. The military does not enter into party politics and confines itself to budgetary questions related purely to their own sphere of influence.[110] As Larsson suggests, the military establishment in Sweden "has never been allowed to develop into a 'state within a state' and to act as an independent political force".[111] The scope of the Swedish military's objectives is thus limited to the protection of Sweden's independence. The nuclear weapons issue confirms this suggestion: despite repeated attempts by the Swedish military to push the nuclear weapons issue onto the political agenda, civilian policymakers appeared to follow their own course once the issue became a matter of serious public debate.

Cole takes this analysis further when observing that the dichotomy between Sweden's military and its politicians was more fundamental. For Cole, the Swedish military came to rely on a "vernacular that was both anathema to Swedish socialists (including the SAP) and incompatible with Swedish historical experience".[112] This is another reference to the SAP's belief in the futility of expressing power through weapons acquisition and indeed an eschewal of the term 'power' generally. Eitherway, it would seem that if a Swedish strategic culture did influence the decision not to acquire nuclear weapons, then it cannot be attributed to any great degree to the culture of the military. The importance of the military (and more specifically the airforce) was in providing the strategic case for weaponization. Beyond this, its significance was negligible. The military encountered a firm and powerfully committed anti-nuclear faction in government, most notably the defence minister who conspired to thwart persistent requests submitted by the Supreme Commander for weapons acquisition.

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[110] Board, *The Government and Politics of Sweden,* op cit.
[111] Larsson, "The Swedish Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Option, op cit, p.102.
[112] Cole, "Atomic Bombast", op cit, p.237.

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An Unofficial Alignment ?

How neutral was Sweden? As was intimated earlier, there are reasons to suspect that while Sweden may be conceptualised as a neutral and non-aligned state, it has assimilated itself informally within the political and military structure of NATO. As Tunander notes, Sweden was both a neutral state and a state "plugged in to NATO".[113] Having interviewed a number of senior US and Swedish military officials, Tunander concludes that Sweden's secret military collaboration with NATO was such that it was on a parallel with Danish-Norway basing policy or French secret agreements with NATO. Thus the Swedes were cooperating closely with NATO while officially standing outside of its military structure. Furthermore, it is suggested that Swedish defence staff had a secure line of communications with the US airforce headquarters in Wiesbaden, and was prepared to accept US troops in a war or a prewar situation.[114] Crucially, from the nuclear perspective, in addition to the nuclear guarantees mentioned earlier, Sweden contributed to signal intelligence which assisted the operations of US strategic bomber forces and cruise missiles, which would fly over Swedish territory in the event of war.[115]

The implications of Tunander's findings are that Sweden pursued a dual policy of official neutrality and unofficial NATO alignment. Upon closer inspection, this is consistent with Swedish strategic culture. The reality of Sweden's unofficial links with NATO were known by very few. Tunander even goes so far as to suggest that Unden, Foreign Minister between 1945 and 1962, knew nothing of Sweden's NATO links.[116] Effectively Sweden's relationship with NATO was conducted by a

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[113] Tunander, op cit.
[114] Ibid. p.179.
[115] Ibid. 183.
[116] Ibid. 184.

few individuals who maintained close informal ties with their respective colleagues in other states. It appears that nothing was written down and that everything was left to an informal understanding, which is very much in tandem with the Swedish style in relation to these matters.

Tunander's findings are supported by Anne Sofie Dahl, who alludes to the NPK report (referred to earlier) in arguing that Sweden had maintained intimate contacts with NATO countries during the 1950's and 1960's, including the exchange of sensitive information and on military planning.[117] Dahl concludes that the timing of the NPK's report was designed to clear a path for an official re-articulation of Sweden's neutral strategy. Sweden signed up to the Partnership for Peace Program (PFP) in Summer 1994, and joined the European Union in 1995, which might suggest a reorientation of the traditional policy of neutrality.

Dahl uses structural realist theory to account both for Sweden's contact with NATO during the Cold War and for its re-definition of security in a post-cold War world. According to structural realists, Sweden's reliance on NATO during the Cold War would probably be seen as a strategy of "free riding", whereby small/ weak states rely on others for security.[118] Equally, a re-definition of Swedish security interests following the end of the Cold War is explained by the adjustment of a small state to structural changes in the international system and the balance of power.

Research into Sweden's policy of neutrality has attracted the attentions of a number of structural realists interested in Sweden's position as a small state looking to preserve the balance of power in Scandinavia and non-alignment.[119] As Board suggests, non-Swedes have somehow acquired the impression that Sweden's neutrality is somehow a product of "morality, untainted by political

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[117] Dahl, op cit, p.186.
[118] Ibid. p.179.
[119] For example see Hans Mouritzen, "Tension Between the Strong, and the Strategies of the Weak" *Journal of Peace Research*, (Vol.28, No.2, 1991).

calculation"; rather, the appeal to morality is common among small states as a means of compensating for inferior military capability. [120]

James Robbins has argued that while Sweden's neutral status is indeed longstanding, the specific alliance-free character of its neutrality in the post-WWII period resulted from a failed Swedish attempt to establish the Scandinavian Defence Alliance.[121] Thus for structural realists, Swedish neutrality has never been based on idealistically motivated considerations. Instead, it is a response to considerations of national self-interest that are common amongst small states in the international system. According to this argument, Sweden's preference for non-alignment during the Cold War was based more on a belief that it would upset the balance of power in the Nordic region, rather than a moral, distinctly Swedish disavowal of alliances. Equally, there was a limit to the scope of Swedish neutrality that suggested an element of pragmatic self-interest. For example, Sweden did not remain ideologically neutral where the issue of democratic as opposed to autocratic systems of government was concerned. Equally, Sweden was vocally critical of US involvement in Vietnam, and issued a rhetorical commitment to the plight of small, oppressed states in the developing world.[122]

This emphasises the active nature of Swedish neutrality which "as distinguished from the languid, passive attitude of pacifism, attempts to hold its own course so long as it is possible".[123] Whilst many interpreted the lack of Swedish resistance to Nazi demands during WWII to indicate a form of pacifism, in reality the Swedish Government held a firm and committed course based on a long-term preservation rather than an emotional commitment to the non-violation of Nordic territory.

The structural realist argument is limited insomuch as it fails to account for the

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[120] Board, "Re-interpreting the Bombast," op cit, p.239.
[121] James S. Robbins, *Recent Military Thought in Sweden on Western Defence*. (RAND Publications), p.4.
[122] Board, "Re-interpreting the Bombast," op cit, pp.239-240.
[123] Editorial in *Ny Militar Tidsrift* (New Military Journal) Vol.27, No.2, 1954, p.37, cited in *Robbins, Recent Military Thought in Sweden*, op cit, p.9.

distinctly Swedish nature of this case of non-alignment. As Unden suggested on numerous occasions, Swedish policy was based on a firm belief in the need to avoid what he referred to as the "bloc-forming". Paul Cole has suggested that it is possible to trace this attitude back to Sweden's failures during its period of great power involvement and its subsequent desire to remain free of international commitment. Sweden's aloofness and neutrality during the Cold War thus reflected in large measure the lessons of what Swedes refer to as "the Great Power era".[124] This would suggest that Swedish neutrality is based on something more than pragmatic self-interest, As Kruzel suggests, whilst in theory, a policy of neutrality is one option amongst many, in reality, Swedes regard it as sacrosanct.[125] Having never been invaded, Swedes remain proud of their status as a peaceful, independent nation and seek to maintain a high international profile by projecting their country as a modern, wealthy, social democracy, capable of contributing to the creation of a more peaceful and economically prosperous international environment.

There are elements of self-interest and pragmatism in Sweden's policy of neutrality, which appears to have been adopted as a convenient posture to avert potential threats. A policy of neutrality may well have been used to manipulate international and domestic opinion. Internationally, Sweden's role as mediator and diplomat was enhanced by a policy of neutrality. Equally, from a Soviet perspective a neutral Sweden was viewed as far less threatening than a NATO-aligned Sweden. Domestically, a policy of neutrality appealed to Swedish people, who developed a sense of pride in its countries neutrality and could be easily motivated by leaders who spoke of perpetuating national independence and non-alignment. In this sense, elites may well have manipulated strategic culture to their own ends. Consequently, the culture of neutrality has become deeply embedded in the Swedish psyche, in a manner which has mitigated against a

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[124] Paul M. Cole, "Atomic Bombast," op cit, p.238.
[125] Kruzel, op cit. p.531.

change in policy direction.

Sweden felt insecure and in need of protection against the possibility of Soviet aggression. Again this may be accounted for with reference to security dilemmas and security-material analysis. Alternatively, a strategic culture account would seek to ask how and why Sweden came to fear the Soviet Union to such a degree that it would contradict its preference for neutrality in favour of aligning itself unofficially with NATO. Equally, we must ask which ideas shaped Sweden's affinity with the West? Explanations which rely purely on security-material factors are insufficient. By looking into Swedish historical experiences and their assimilation into strategic culture we can identify the ideas that shaped these policy outcomes.

What does this suggest about the nuclear option? If it is accepted that Sweden was informally aligned to NATO, then the issue of an independent nuclear option becomes more straightforward: Sweden was covered by the US nuclear umbrella in the same way as the other Scandinavian states officially belonging to NATO and thus there was no need to acquire nuclear weapons.

However, the issue of nuclear weapons was a very real one in Sweden by the late 1950's. Was this because Sweden doubted the credibility of US guarantees at this stage? Did an informal agreement between the US and Sweden come later? One might speculate endlessly in the search for answers to such questions. Ultimately one is left with the question of whether the foundations of Swedish neutrality were as hollow as Tunander and others might suggest.

Its seems incontrovertible that a bomb lobby emerged in Sweden in the 1950's and it did so with the support of a large section of the Swedish people. This may well be reflective of a desire to build an independent, self-reliant defensive military posture with the most up-to-date military technology, which meant nuclear

weapons.[126] Neutrality meant to act alone; Sweden sought a strong "total" defence; a call for nuclear acquisition might therefore seem inevitable. Ultimately the particular brand of Swedish neutrality that stressed the need for an independent nuclear capability was not strong enough to have an enduring effect on policy outcome. Indeed, neutrality in general might not have been strong enough to avert an informal alignment. Eitherway, it is important to recognise the relevance of these competing tendencies if one is to gain greater insights into this case.

Secret Nuclear Intentions?

Having signed the NPT in 1970 and having subsequently emerged as a firm advocate of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, it has widely been accepted that Sweden's nuclear intentions have been benign. As Larsson suggests, having dismantled is plutonium laboratory in 1972, Sweden retained a research programme that had no orientation towards domestic nuclear weapons and that was scaled down monotonously over the next twenty five years.[127] Nonetheless, suggestions have emerged that Sweden has not given up the option of nuclear weapons. This line of thought was given a fresh impetus in 1985 when the Swedish science magazine, *Ny Teknik* published an article in which it was claimed that ten nuclear tests involving weapons-grade plutonium, had been carried out at a site near Stockholm in 1972 and a neutron pulse generator suitable for fission explosions had been constructed.[128] These revelations initiated a flood of media interest into Sweden's nuclear intentions. Some reports went as far as to suggest that the government had operated a "weapons program under

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[126] This equation is complicated by the suggestions made by some military analysts that Sweden should consider purchasing the necessary components for a nuclear capability from the US, thus contradicting the policy of non-alignment. In order to circumnavigate such a reliance on the West, other pro-nuclear advocates, promoted the benefits of an indigenous weapons programme. Hence it is possible to identify competing strategic cultural tendencies amongst weapons advocates.
[127] Larsson, "The Swedish Nuclear and Non-nuclear Postures" op cit, p.119.
[128] See C. Larsson, "Svenska Karnvapen Utvecklades fram till 1972!" (Swedish Nuclear Weapons were developed upto 1972!" *Ny Teknik* No. 17 April 25 1985 cited in Prawitz, op cit, p.45.

civilian cover".

In 1994, the Washington Post again pursued a similar theme in suggesting that Sweden still had the capability to construct a nuclear arsenal should it wish to and that a nuclear reactor at Agesta had not been dismantled in a manner that was consistent with Sweden's commitment to the NPT.[129] This has led to suggestions that Sweden has enjoyed the benefits of a "virtual" nuclear arsenal, reaping the political rewards of an official non-nuclear status, while maintaining the ability to assemble a weapons capability at relatively short notice should security conditions worsen. As Mazarr contends, "the relevant question about Sweden's nuclear capacity therefore is not *whether* it could build nuclear weapons, but rather *how quickly* it could build them".[130]

A number of other writers, such as Arnett, Reiss and Larsson have cast doubts over the idea that a secret option to "go nuclear" has been maintained. Arnett for example has suggested that the *Ny Teknik* article was part of a political ploy to smear Palme who had initially followed a pro-nuclear line.[131] Furthermore, Arnett contends that none of the experiments carried out in 1972 involved "fabricated components of a weapon".[132] Reiss suggests that the activity highlighted in *Ny Teknik* came under Sweden's legal "protected research programme".[133] Reiss does not doubt that the information and data gathered from the tests improved Sweden's competence in the nuclear field and could feasibly have been used for a weapons programme, although he suggests that this research was designed more for the FOA to "learn about foreign nuclear capabilities and possible countermeasures".[134] As Larson maintains, the aim of the Sweden's research program following NPT ratification, was to instigate a competent assessment of

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[129] See Steve Coll, "Neutral Sweden quietly keeps nuclear option open." *The Washington Post*, Nov 25, 1994.
[130] Michael J. Mazaar "Virtual Nuclear Arsenals," *Survival*, (Autumn 1995) p.8. For an analysis of the debate over virtual nuclear arsenals see Mazaar (eds.) *Nuclear Weapons in a Transformed World: The Challenge of Virtual Nuclear Arsenals*, (Macmillan Press, 1997).
[131] Arnett, op cit, p.42.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Reiss, op cit, pp.74-75.
[134] Ibid. p.75.

the potential nuclear threats to Sweden. [135]Arnett also questions the notion that the Agesta reactor was capable of producing the plutonium necessary for weapons production arguing and that its maintenance was on-going simply as a means of ensuring adequate protection for the local environment.[136]Equally, the reactor had been placed under bilateral safeguards as a result of an agreement between Sweden and the US in 1958, whereby the US agreed to supply uranium.[137]

How do we assess the contention that Sweden has kept its nuclear options open? The FOA did not stop its military research following the Swedish decision to sign the NPT, nor was the civilian nuclear programme curtailed. Yet this does not necessarily indicate ongoing nuclear weapon intentions. There are also technical reasons for assuming that a weapons option was not feasible. By 1970, Sweden had abandoned heavy water reactors and was utilising US designed light water plants with imported uranium.[138] Imported nuclear material came with safeguards, which rendered a weapons option as unfeasible. Having already dismantled its plutonium facilities, Sweden went further in 1974 by reorganising the FOA and dispersing its nuclear expertise. Larsson suggests that by 1997, the FOA had around 30 people looking into defensive research, with very little interest or expertise in weapons designs.[139]

Quite why so much attention has surrounded a secret Swedish option is unclear. Perhaps as Holst suggests, Sweden's "aggressive and self-righteous policy of nuclear abstinence" might invite unwanted attention.[140] Equally, the suggestion that the official policy of neutrality has been open to question might have aroused suspicion, especially given the closed, secretive informal nature of Sweden's diplomatic and political style. Finally, as Arnett notes, the notion of a secret

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[135] Tor Larsson, "Re-interpreting the Bombast", op cit, p.237.
[136] Arnett, op cit, p.37.
[137] Ibid. The Agesta natural uranium fuelled reactor became subject to safeguards in 1971 when enriched uranium, or US origin, was used for stepping up its power output to 80 Megawatts. Correspondance with Prawitz, op cit.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Larsson, op cit, p.237.
[140] J.J Holst, "The Pattern of Nordic Security", Daedalus, Vol.113, no.2 (Spring 1984), p.210.

weapons option may well be necessary for realists and technological determinists who struggle to account for Sweden's failure to develop its nuclear technology and acquire the weapons necessary to meet security threats.[141] This chapter seeks to provide a basis for arguing that even if it was established that Sweden had kept its option open, this should be seen more in terms of an indication of Sweden's strategic cultural tendency to "hedge its bets" and reserve judgement on military issues, rather than a confirmation of the credibility of realist theorizing.

Conclusion: The Relevance of Strategic Culture to Sweden's Non-Nuclear Weapon Outcome

The issue of Swedish nuclear weapons has attracted much interest not least because it brings into question a number of accounts that are commonly used to account for proliferation scenarios. The technological determinist model would predict that Sweden, as a modern, technologically advanced state would automatically seek to acquire a nuclear weapons capability, on the basis that if the technology exists, then it will be developed. This was not the case. By 1968 Sweden, having utilised its own supplies of uranium, appears to have had enough heavy water for at least one reactor.[142] Equally, an appreciable amount of nuclear-related research had been conducted, practical problems associated with weapons design had been overcome, and a process for reprocessing reactor fuel had been tested.[143] Nonetheless, Sweden opted to officially abandon research into weapons production and favoured a commitment to the NPT. In terms of nuclear weapons, security policy was thus not technologically determined.[144]

The decision not to acquire nuclear weapons was an intensely political one.

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[141] Arnett, op cit, p.36.

[142] Reiss, op cit, p.43.

[143] Cole describes Sweden's nuclear research program as "elaborate, sophisticated, and expensive". Cole, "Atomic Bombast", p.234.

[144] The Swedish non-nuclear weapon outcome also condemns the suggestion that nuclear weapons provide a confirmation of modern statehood. As a prosperous, modern democratic state, Sweden is acutely aware of the importance of international image. Sweden's eschewal of nuclear weapons, accompanied by a firm and independent commitment to the international norm of non-proliferation, would appear to refute the idea that nuclear weapons confer international status. Sweden has thus sought to embrace the symbolism of peaceful non-nuclearism, rather than seek international recognition through weapons acquisition.

Despite the fact that public opinion was initially in favour of weapons acquisition, an anti-nuclear faction in government succeeded in capturing the essence of public opinion and diverting it towards non-nuclearism. The aim of this research has been to identify the cultural element underlying this strategic decision. In a state where decisions over questions of military strategy are reserved for a small political elite, which largely ignored the military's advice over the question of nuclear weapons and followed its own course, it would be seem logical to consider strategic culture in terms of the culture of the dominant political party. As has been suggested, the SAP, and particularly its left-wing, anti-nuclear faction succeeded in shaping public perceptions over the nuclear issue. As a result a strategic culture based on nuclear restraint and the need to establish a firm commitment to international disarmament and non-proliferation, became prevalent.

It is worth remembering that the history of Sweden's nuclear weapons debate is effectively a history of the decision-making of a few, significant individuals. It is entirely possible that these individuals proceeded according to their own perceptions and belief-systems in a way that would a render a study of Swedish societal or national strategic culture to be of limited value. However, as has been shown, it is the Swedish way to use political and strategic expertise in order to express a single unified voice. Open political division over security matters is minimal. The Swedish strategic decision-making process is thus both cohesive and consensual. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that these elites are culturally reliable as indicators of Swedish society. In many ways, these tendencies were indicative of broader cultural pre-dispositions: Sweden as an ethnically and politically homogenous society and as part of a peaceful regional security community has developed according to the principles of compromise, negotiation, mediation and collectivity. Sweden's strategic commitment to the nuclear non-proliferation regime is therefore based on firmly rooted cultural trends.

The argument that Sweden abstained from nuclear acquisition because it believed that the US would offer to assist in the event of a Soviet attack, is not in question here. Equally it will be accepted that Sweden considered the development of a small tactical nuclear force (which was is its only realistic nuclear option) as a deterrent against the Soviet Union, to be strategically disadvantageous. But this leaves questions unanswered. Despite these restraints, the weapons option made it onto the agenda in Sweden and it did so with a considerable degree of support from diverse elements. How was this possible?

By the 1950's Sweden felt itself threatened by the Soviet Union's large conventional and nuclear capability. The Soviet threat was viewed through a perceptual prism that accentuated the threat and exaggerated responses. This prism was the product of long standing historical experiences which had shaped Swedish strategic culture. Faced with this fear, Sweden considered a nuclear option as a response. Furthermore, by the 1950's Sweden's strategic culture of neutrality had come to shape nearly every aspect of its foreign policy. Having officially committed itself to neutrality and non-alignment, officially there was no possibility of it either obtaining a nuclear capability from another state or sheltering under another states nuclear umbrella. Strategically exposed and self-reliant, Sweden turned towards an indigenous capability.

Throughout the early Cold War period nuclear weapons were gradually emerging as a regular feature of military strategy. Sweden's strategic cultural preference for remaining at the forefront of modern military technology and to equip its armed forces with state-of-the-art equipment, led to vociferous calls from the Swedish Airforce for a nuclear capability. The case for nuclear acquisition was strengthened further by the strategic culture of armed neutrality, whereby Sweden sought to create the strongest military defence possible. By the mid 1960's the popular perception within Sweden was that nuclear weapons would be used in a major war in Europe and that Sweden may well be forced to confront a nuclear attack. As Nils Andren suggests, the building of rock shelters in the larger cities

and the work on thorough plans for evacuating civilians to remote areas in the country, indicate a genuine belief

that Sweden should prepare and mitigate against possible nuclear dangers.[145] Faced with this possibility, weapon advocates glossed over any technological limitations on a nuclear programme or financial costs involved and pressured the government to proceed with weapons research.

However, there were competing strategic cultural tendencies at work which mitigated against nuclear acquisition. If Tunander and Dahl are to be believed, then one such tendency might be the habit of pursuing pragmatic agreements with NATO states, in particular the US, which may have secured some form of nuclear agreement. Whether this came in the form of a specific guarantee is open to speculation.

Furthermore, Sweden's strategic culture of mediation, consensus building and international non-nuclearism became significant in shaping its foreign policy. As its profile in these matters gathered momentum by the late 1960's it became impossible to reconcile this with a nuclear option. The strategic culture of non-proliferation promotion was re-enforced by the international culture of nuclear non-proliferation that formed around the NPT and which was successively re-enforced into the 1970's and beyond. Sweden's tendency to see itself as "the good guy" in international affairs and to promote global peace, disarmament and non-proliferation may have overridden any strategic cultural predisposition towards nuclear acquisition. However, it is important not to discount the possibility that a decision not to acquire nuclear weapons had already been taken by the time Sweden committed itself to support of the non-proliferation efforts.

Realist theories would posit that the non-nuclear outcome was predicated on a calculation of interest. This research does not set out to refute the notion that

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[145] Andren, *Power Balance and Non-alignment*, op cit.

Swedish nuclear restraint was based on national security interests: policy-makers acted according to their perception of Sweden's national interest. A strategic culturalist would ask which ideas informed any notion of interest and thus which ideas led to a belief in the need to trust and depend on the US, to fear and guard against the Soviet Union, to stand as a "good international citizen" and ultimately to abstain from nuclear acquisition.

One illustrative example of this would be to ask why Sweden did not respond to material threat of a Soviet nuclear capability by acquiring its own nuclear defence. The answer may relate to the possibility of some form of American security guarantee, yet this leaves open the question of why Sweden felt protected by US extended deterrence, when a number of full NATO allies were unsure as to the extent of the US' commitment? Ultimately this may have been the result of narrow self-interest: Sweden may have had no other choice but to rely on the US. However, this chapter has highlighted a number of strategic cultural tendencies which indicate that Sweden may have been culturally pre-disposed to accept this commitment.

It is not possible to identify one consistent strategic culture that influenced Sweden's policy of nuclear non-acquisition. Multiple cultural tendencies, at many different levels are at work and are often in competition with each other. Nevertheless, the manner in which the nuclear weapons issue arose in Sweden, the way in which it was discussed, the assumptions on which the debate was based and the eventual conclusion that was reached, were consistent with a number of Swedish cultural proclivities. This would appear to confirm the importance of research into the relationship between Sweden's policy of nuclear restraint and its strategic culture.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This thesis has investigated the utility of a strategic culture approach in analysing non-nuclear weapon outcomes. Research has been divided into two parts: first, an analysis of the debate surrounding strategic culture: second, an investigation into non-nuclear outcomes in Australia, South Africa and Sweden. In each of these cases, strategic culture offers some valuable insights concerning why non-nuclear outcomes were chosen. Nevertheless, research continues to be dominated by theoretical perspectives which assume that strategic outcomes can be explained with reference to rational responses to material conditions. The focus here has been to question these predominant non-cultural explanations.

In Chapter One it was suggested that the concept of strategic culture has been under-explored. Writers have made references to strategic culture but with minimal recourse to theory or methodology. Research that has sought to conceptualise strategic culture in theoretical terms is extremely diverse and eclectic with little emerging in the way of consensus. Often there is disagreement as to how it should be defined, at what level of analysis it can be located, and how it can be situated in relation to other theories.

In terms of a strategic culture methodology, there are numerous problems and limitations. The main issue relates to how strategic cultures are identified, and how their influences are measured. As has been suggested, cultural analysis involves dealing with intangibles. There are no hard, quantifiable variables available for a strategic cultural methodology. This might explain why strategic culture has not traditionally attracted attention within positivist IR research. However, the research of Alastair Iain Johnston suggests that writers might seek to provide a theory and methodology for strategic culture and to then test for its explanatory potential against realist theories.[1]

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[1] Alaistair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton: 1995)

The strategic culture approach favoured for this research seeks to fully utilise its potential benefits without pursuing overly ambitious methodological aims. In part, this is because the strategic culture approach advocated is not intended as a direct test of realist theories, but also because attempts to devise comprehensive strategic cultural methodology confront many problems. To ascertain the main constituents of a strategic culture involves an exhaustive cultural analysis, which would involve digging deep within a state's historical and formative experiences and looking for persistency across a wide range of objects and actors and over a long time period. This is not necessarily impossible, but is not the task of this thesis. With the use of specific case studies, the aim has been to draw out of the existing literature possible cultural proclivities, and then to consider how they may have shaped outcomes. For this reason, cases with plentiful literature have been chosen. In doing so, it has been possible to provide a thick cultural description of the pre-dispositions that have exerted an often important influence on decision-making. The main problem, as will be discussed shortly, has been on deciphering which cultural level of analysis to focus on.

Ontologically, this research does not offer a radical alternative to mainstream realist theories. Strategic culture is considered from a state-centric perspective and is concerned with states' use of military force. However, the central argument is that existing mainstream research is limited in its explanatory scope by failing to give sufficient credence to the role of cultures, and ideas in general. Those theories that fail to allow for the observation that states are composed of plethora of cultural tendencies that shape how states respond to material stimuli are offering limited theoretical explanations.

The task is therefore to problematise existing accounts. How has this been possible? Much of the literature relating to the culturalist programme in IR invites discussion relating to whether culture supplements or supplants realist theories. In other words, it is necessary to ask questions concerning whether cultural theories

offer us a new alternative theory or whether we should look into ways of factoring cultural variables into existing non-cultural theories. This research has sought to side-track this debate by referring to the way in which strategic culture constitutes the material assumptions made by realists. Strategic cultures give meaning to material forces for decision-makers, shaping their choice of certain strategies and their rejection of others.

As Colin Gray suggests, strategy is made by individuals who cannot fail but be cultural.[2] Strategists therefore view material forces through the perceptual prism of culture. Research that fails to account for these ideational processes is limited in the insights it can provide. The strategic culture approach used in this thesis seeks to identify the "cultural conditions of possibility" for traditional non-ideational explanations and in the process clarify why the latter do not apply as well as they might be expected to.

In part, this reflects a belief that strategic culture may be ill-suited to providing a new, alternative theory, in the way that mainstream social scientists would demand. This is because it might be unable to provide a theory of the origins of strategic culture and how it is translated into strategic outcomes in a way that can be applied universally to account for all states' strategies. However, strategic cultural tendencies are relevant and do shape outcomes but they are not a causative phenomenon. Rather, they are constitutive.

Strategic Culture and Non-Nuclear Decision-Making

Realist theory has dominated thinking about nuclear weapons since the 1950's.[3] Most realists would assume that "the principle cause of nuclear proliferation is the desire of states to gain increased security from external attack in an anarchic

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[2] Colin Gray "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back", *Review of International Studies*, Vo.25, No.1 1999, p.62.
[3] Tanya Ogilvie-White, "Is there a Theory of Nuclear Proliferation? An Analysis of the Contemporary Debate", *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol.4 No.1, (Fall 1996) p.44.

world".[4] As John Mearsheimer argues, the international system is a "brutal arena where states look for opportunities to take advantage of each other ... international relations is not a constant state of war, but is a state of relentless security competition".[5] Nuclear acquisition is thus a rational and self-interested response to external material threats and allows a state "freedom of action vis-à-vis other actors who will be deterred form undertaking militarily provocative behaviour".[6] Some realists even go so far as to suggest that the proliferation of nuclear weapons may lead to a more lasting international peace and that "more may be better".[7]

The fact that most states have preferred not to acquire nuclear weapons might therefore be problematic for realist theories. Why would states not seek to maximise their power through the acquisition of the most devastating weaponry available? Devising an answer is a complex task. Traditional accounts for non-nuclear outcomes continue to assume that states act out of self-interest which reflect prevailing security-material factors. As Betts maintains,

"Not every nation that views nuclear weapons as a potentially useful form of military and/or political power will make a committed effort to acquire them. The predictable reactions of other countries may make nuclear status self-defeating. Thus it is advantageous for nations to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and remain non-nuclear weapons states to avoid nuclear confrontations".[8]

Most realist theories would support Thayer's pessimistic conclusion regarding the possibility of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons in light of the fundamental security dilemma facing states.[9] As Harold Müller suggests, most realists adopt a

[4] Bradley Thayer, "The Causes of Nuclear Proliferation and the Utility of the Non-Proliferation Regime", in Raju G.C. Thomas Ed. *The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime: Prospects for the 21st Century*. (London: Macmillan, 1998).p.78.
[5] John Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions", *International Security* 19 1994-1995 p.10.
[6] T.V.Paul, "Power, Influence and Nuclear Weapons; A Reassessment" in T.V Paul, Richard J.Harknett and James J. Wirtz (eds.) *The Absolute Weapon Revisited: Nuclear Arms and the Emerging International Order* (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 1998), p.19.
[7] Kenneth Waltz, "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More may be Better", *Adelphi Papers* (London, IISS, 1981); John Mearsheimer, The Case for a Ukrainian Deterrent", *Foreign Affairs* 72, 3 (1993) For a discussion of the debate relating to the effects of the nuclear prolifieration, see Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate* (W.W. Norton, 1995).
[8] Richard K. Betts, "Paranoids, Pygmies, Pariahs and Nonproliferation Revisited", in Frankel and Davis (eds.) *The Proliferation Puzzle: Why Nuclear Weapons Spread and What Results* (London: Frank Cass, 1993), p. 81.
[9] Thayer, op cit.

"not yet" approach towards non-nuclear weapon states. This suggests that "even those countries which have temporarily eschewed the nuclear weapon option, despite the possession of a technological capability, and have chosen another security arrangement, may opt for nuclear weapons in the final analysis".[10] According to Kenneth Waltz, this is because "there is a constant possibility that conflict will be settled by force".[11] Hence, to be first in a regional nuclear arms race could open up a "window of opportunity"; to be second could be fatal. States must therefore adjust to changes in their security environment or perish.

According to the "not yet" approach, non-nuclear postures are merely transitory options and likely to change at any stage. States will respond rationally to material threats that need to be addressed and subsequently acquire nuclear weapons. But do states always act rationally in response to material conditions? In analysing non-nuclear outcomes in Australia, South Africa and Sweden it appears that states do not always act in this manner. States may be strategic culturally pre-disposed to eschew nuclear options and to maintain a long-term commitment to non-nuclear weapon policies, irrespective of changes in security-material conditions.

Threats and Allies

One of the dominant themes that emerges from the literature corresponding to these case studies relates to how states respond to threats and to allies. Threats are likely to determine whether a state has nuclear ambitions, while the existence of allies shapes possibilities of external nuclear protection. Most realist theories would contend that states arm themselves in response to threats. If states do not acquire nuclear weapons, then one possible explanation might therefore be that they are not threatened. This is the most popular explanation offered for South Africa's decision to denuclearise, but has less applicability in the cases of

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[10] Harald Müller, "Maintaining Non-Nuclear Weapon Status", in Regina Cowen Karp (eds.) *Security with Nuclear Weapons: Different Perspectives on National Security* (Oxford University press, 1991), p.336.
[11] Kenneth Waltz, *Man the State and War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959) p.188.

Australia and Sweden. The important question to ask is: how does a state decide whether or not it is threatened? Focusing purely on material factors is insufficient. Perceptions of threats depend on material conditions and capabilities, yet it is the ideas that underpin these perceptions that gives material factors meaning.

The dominant explanation for South Africa's non-nuclear outcome relates to the suggestion of an improvement in security environment in the late 1980's and therefore a diminution in threat. A non-nuclear outcome thus resulted from the fact that South Africa no longer felt threatened. However, we must address the issue of why South Africa felt threatened in the first place such that nuclear weapons were acquired. South Africa considered Soviet military and nuclear intentions and Marxist forces in the "front-line states" to present a threat to its security and sought nuclear weapons as a deterrent. A rational material calculation might have led to a sense of security based on South Africa's conventional superiority in Southern Africa and the assumption that South Africa was of marginal strategic interest to the Soviet Union during the Cold War. However, South African threat perceptions are better understood if we consider the *laager* mentality and the strategic cultural fear of total onslaught and perpetual threat. It was thus a cultural pre-disposition that shaped such a negative view of the other states in Southern Africa and that distorted considerations of Soviet intentions on the region.

With an improvement in regional relations by the late 1980's and the ending of the Cold War, the focus of South Africa's anxiety was largely diminished. This led to a more positive perception of the external environment and hence, less of a requirement for nuclear weapons. It is necessary therefore to consider the strategic culture which gave rise to perceptions of insecurity in the first place, before explaining non-nuclear policy according to improving security conditions.

However, there were other reasons for South Africa giving up its nuclear weapons, based on the perpetuation of insecurities. By the late 1980's the White regime was internally at breaking point, with the disenfranchised Black majority

becoming increasingly hostile towards the Government. Internal opponents of the White regime were considered to be part of the total onslaught facing Afrikanerdom. Facing the capitulation it had always feared, White South Africa was forced to make immediate concessions. With the inevitability of whole-sale reform looming, the Afrikaner government made haste to insure against a black nuclear inheritance, the prospect of which set alarm bells ringing. Thus it was partly as a result of escalating internal insecurity that South Africa pursued a non-nuclear option.

Australia and Sweden considered themselves threatened enough to consider the possibility of nuclear acquisition. Ultimately, both opted to sign the NPT and give up the nuclear option. Is this because threats were not considered to be severe enough? Australia has been referred to as the "frightened country" possessing a strategic culture of fear and anxiety which has shaped perceptions of threats. This strategic culture reflects the idea that White Australia is an isolated and vulnerable Western colony, set amongst "hostile Asian hordes". Such was this sense of insecurity, that Australia considered acquiring nuclear weapons, initially in the form of a transfer from the UK and subsequently through an indigenous programme.

If Australia had considered threats according to rational calculations based on material conditions, then it may well have concluded that it was peripheral to the strategic calculus of its perceived enemies and was, in any case, capable of repelling a conventional attack from its most likely aggressor, namely Indonesia. By identifying the strategic culture of fear, which shaped an excessively negative assessment of Asian states, it is possible to gain insights into why Australia perceived its external environment in the manner that it did. Australian experiences at the hands of the Japanese during the WWII accentuated the persistent and often exaggerated fear of the so-called "yellow peril". These threat perceptions were re-enforced by the emergence of a strong anti-communist

tendency within Australian strategic culture, which shaped negative assumptions concerning Chinese intentions.

The decision to opt for nuclear restraint was shaped by a weakening of the strategic culture of fear which emerged with Whitlam's Labour Government in 1972 rather than from any great improvement in security-material conditions. After 1972, Australia acted according to a less threatening vision of its regional environment thereby strengthening its rejection of nuclear weapons.

In Sweden, the threat posed by the Soviet Union was severe enough to open up the nuclear issue. In material terms it might have been completely rational for Sweden to consider the Soviet Union and its nuclear weapons, as representing a threat to national security. Geographically close, militarily strong, inherently expansionist and heavily armed with nuclear weapons, there was every reason to be fearful of Soviet intentions. However, Sweden's perception of the Soviet Union is better understood within the context of its strategic culture.

Swedish attitudes towards the Soviet Union were shaped by its historical experiences of Russian imperialism and its cultural fear of territorial violation, which shaped its neutralist policy. Sweden maintained a perennial fear of attack from the East in a way that shaped a pessimistic prediction of Soviet intentions during the Cold War. This fear does not appear to have receded to any great degree during the period in which Sweden made its non-nuclear decision.

Whatever link is made between threats and non-nuclear outcomes, it seems clear that a simple focus on material conditions offers minimal insights. How do we explain situations where states are seen as threats, when in hard material terms, they present a negligible danger? In each of these case studies, perceptions of threat and insecurity have resulted from "in-group" mentalities which have been re-enforced by a "fear and loathing" of "others". Initial motivation for nuclear acquisition were guided by *realpolitik* or "oppositional" identities. In South Africa

this "oppositional" identity was strong enough to guide decision-makes towards nuclear weapons. In Australia and Sweden it was only strong enough to bring the nuclear issue onto the agenda.

Non-nuclear outcomes in all three cases were shaped by alternative strategic cultures, which overrode "oppositional" identities. In Australia an oppositional strategic culture was prevalent throughout the period when nuclear weapons were being considered, but was overridden by the "traditionalist" mentality which shaped a non-nuclear weapons policy. Subsequently a "non-oppositional" identity emerged in the 1970's, which strengthened a policy a nuclear restraint. In Sweden an oppositional strategic culture brought the issue of nuclear weapons to the fore but was overridden by a non-oppositional mentality, which shaped a preference for nuclear restraint and an active non-proliferation policy. South Africa's nuclearisation was shaped by a strong oppositional identity, which by the late 1980's was challenged by the emergence of a less oppositional Afrikaner identity, which shaped a non-nuclear outcome. One may speculate as to whether South African denuclearsiation was the result of a new Afrikaner identity or simply a tactical adjustment of the more traditional *laager* mentality.

Dominant explanations for non-nuclear decision-making have been based on the assumption that some states are seen as allies that may offer security guarantees and therefore a reason not to acquire nuclear weapons. Yet how are states that present similar material characteristics, defined as either threats or allies? In each of these cases, the US and NATO appears to have been perceived as an ally in a way that affected nuclear decision-making. In Australia, US non-proliferation policy restricted Anglo-Australian nuclear co-operation and hence any nuclear weapons programme, while US nuclear weapons were considered to offer Australia a necessary measure of defence. The most popular explanation for South Africa's policy refers to nuclear weapons as a political tool with which to manipulate the US and which were eventually dismantled partly because of its debilitating isolation and estrangement from the West. Equally, the Swedish case

for nuclear restraint may have been predicated on assumptions concerning US extended deterrence.

Traditional accounts of the importance of the US to nuclear decision-making in these three states, refer to material factors, mainly related to American military strength and nuclear capability. This thesis has posed questions as to the ideas that constitute these material considerations. Australia's and South Africa's colonial heritage has shaped a Western orientation that has informed its search for security. Australia as a "frightened country" has traditionally perceived itself to be a Western colony situated amidst hostile Asian hordes. The attachment to its Western allies is therefore a function of Australia's colonial heritage. Prior to the retraction of British military commitment East of Suez in the mid 1960's and the development of a more independent foreign policy after 1972, Australia traditionally saw itself as a strategic extension of the British empire. Australian defence would therefore be guaranteed by its Imperial protectors. This generated a strategic culture of dependence, which subsequently (following the retraction of British military commitments) shaped an easy reliance on US nuclear weapons and a reluctance to pursue an independent capability in light of US non-proliferation policy.

Isolated and distant from its Western cultural origins, South Africa has traditionally sought to tie itself to the security interests of the West. Faced with diplomatic isolation by the 1970's, South Africa combined an anti-Communist foreign policy with a nuclear weapons capability as a means of perpetuating its importance to US security. With the ending of the Cold War, South Africa's isolation from the international community and ostensibly the West, was imposing significant political and economic costs. The dismantlement of its nuclear capability and a commitment to the NPT was part of a policy to rejuvenate relations with the West.

Thus, Australia and South Africa were historically and strategic culturally predisposed towards a Western identity, which shaped choices of potential allies.

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A Western identity appears to have re-enforced or even generated a fierce anti-communism in both instances, which shaped perceptions of enemies and threats. A communist political ideology appears to have complimented oppositional strategic cultural tendencies in both cases. In Australia this led to an external focus on communist China. In South Africa the anti-communist focus was both internal and external, since the threat was considered to be total and emerging on all fronts.

In Sweden, a policy of neutrality precluded an official anti-communist foreign policy. Nevertheless Sweden's historical experiences at the hands of Russian imperialism had become embedded within Swedish strategic culture in a way that accentuated its fear of Soviet Communism. This might have led it to turn to the West (unofficially) for protection. Yet as with Australia and South Africa, Sweden possessed a Western cultural identity. Socially, politically and militarily Sweden had strong links with the West that shaped a Western strategic cultural orientation. Sweden was strategic culturally disposed to regard the US and NATO as allies, which may have led to the assumption that Sweden fell under the Western nuclear umbrella irrespective of its official policy of neutrality. This suggested a non-nuclear Swedish policy.

Thus, in each of these cases the nature of threats and allies was crucial to decision over nuclear weapons was crucial. Yet these threats and allies must been seen within a strategic cultural context. Why were Soviet nuclear weapons seen by Sweden as threatening while British and American nuclear weapons were seen as protecting? Both were close to Sweden in material terms, yet strategic culture constituted a different perception of each. Focusing on threats and allies in terms of rational responses to material conditions is therefore insufficient.

Material Constraints on Nuclear Decision-making

Traditional accounts for non-nuclear weapon decision-making typically focus on technological and financial constraints that determine outcomes. Were any of these states forced to adopt non-nuclear policies because of insurmountable material constraints? In Australia and Sweden there were technological restraints in acquiring an immediate nuclear weapons capability. At the time when domestic debate was at its fiercest over the question of weapons acquisition there were numerous limitations imposed by inadequate reactor technology, lack of expertise with weapons designs, limited access to delivery systems and the restrictions of finance.

In Sweden, it has been supposed that while there were technological limitations, these could be overcome over time, such that a weapons capability could be obtained relatively quickly, should the motivation exist. Sweden has since been suspected of having a virtual nuclear capability, which illustrates that technology might not necessarily be a timeless material barrier to proliferation. In Australia, as with Sweden, there were abundant reserves of natural uranium, but the progress of its nuclear programme was inhibited by a lack of reactor technology a deficiency in manpower and a lack of the desired delivery systems.

South Africa was able to produce six nuclear devices with a seventh under construction at the time when a decision was taken to dencuclearise. South Africa was thus able to generate sufficient fissile material to construct a relatively simple "gun-barrel"-type nuclear weapon. Questions remain as to whether these weapons could have been used? If we assume that a nuclear capability was designed purely as a political weapon, then the issue of usability is less important. However, speculation surrounds the extent to which South Africa had more ambitious tactical roles for its nuclear weapons. Did technological restrictions

delay the development of thermonuclear designs? At present, these questions remain open-ended.

References are often made to financial restrictions as determining non-nuclear outcomes. In each of these cases, finance appears to have been restraining, but not decisive. As Ian Bellany suggests with the Australian case, a nuclear weapons programme would have involved the diversion of considerable diversion of manpower from other sectors, which would have resulted in serious economic disruption.[12] Jan Prawitz has argued that the issue of financial costs became a prominent factor in the Swedish debate over nuclear weapons by the mid-1960's.[13]

Often, weapons opponents appear to have justified their non-nuclear stance on the basis of the enormous financial costs involved with a weapons programme. Yet the question remains open as to whether financial considerations fundamentally constrained the nuclear ambitions of decision-makers in any of these cases. It may be possible that, given sufficient political will, funds would have been found.

Material factors thus appear to have imposed constraints at particular times. For example, Sweden could not have acquired nuclear weapons in 1950 irrespective of whether it wanted to. However, in none of these case studies did these material factors impose long term insurmountable obstacles to nuclear weapons acquisition. Pro-nuclear advocates sought ways and means of overcoming technological barriers and then of shortening the delay between seeking to acquire nuclear weapons and actually acquiring them.

While there is little doubt that these material factors such as technology and finance were significant in terms of nuclear decision-making, this thesis has

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[12] Ian Bellany, *Australia in the Nuclear Age: National Defence and National Development* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1972).
[13] Correspondence with Jan Prawitz, October 15th 2000.

emphasised that they provide no meaning independent of the strategic cultures that constitute them. Material constraints were clearly in evidence. Yet the focus should be on uncovering the strategic cultural motivations and the methods which led to particular ways of dealing with these technological issues.

In terms of potential methods of acquisition, nuclear decision-making was subject to considerable political constraints in each of these cases. Despite its close collaboration with the British in nuclear weapons testing and the joint project at Woomera, Australia's access to nuclear technology and information on weapons designs was restricted by nuclear agreements between Britain and the US. Britain appears to have been not unwilling to provide its Commonwealth partner with information and assistance, yet US non-proliferation policy prohibited any substantial collaboration. Britain was unprepared to jeopardise its access to American nuclear information, while Australia was unprepared to compromise its relationship with either of its allies.

In Sweden, a policy of neutrality precluded extensive nuclear cooperation with other states. As with Australia, any nuclear programme would have had to proceed "in house". Nonetheless, as has been shown, there are reasons to suspect that Sweden co-operated informally with other states on security matters when it considered it to be in its interest to do so. This might lead to the conclusion that Sweden could have obtained the necessary technology to proceed with a weapons programme if the *Riksdag* had approved.

Political constraints were also important in the South African case. Politically isolated as a result of its apartheid policies, South Africa may have been forced to collaborate with other "pariah" states in order to gain access to technology necessary for a nuclear weapons programme. Much debate surrounds the extent to which South Africa collaborated with states such as Israel, as well as the support which Pretoria received from states that officially approved of international sanctions. Nevertheless, there is reason to suspect that the political constraints

facing South Africa were an important factor in delaying the progression of its nuclear programme.

In all three cases, accession to the NPT has imposed even greater constraints on nuclear weapons acquisition. As official non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS), to acquire nuclear technology for military purposes would be to violate the treaty, which is politically unfeasible. In terms of explaining non-nuclear outcomes it is perhaps more important to consider the political and strategic cultural reasons behind these states joining and adhering to the NPT, than of the limitations it imposed on access to technology.

The focus should therefore be on identifying cultural influences underlying these political constraints. In Australia the strategic culture of dependence ensured that priority was given to maintaining alliances and therefore adherence to US no-proliferation policy; in South Africa, the policy of apartheid which led to diplomatic isolation and hence limited nuclear cooperation was culturally integral to Afrikanerdom; in Sweden, a strategic culture of neutrality, precluded extensive external nuclear collaboration.

The Impact of "Nuclear Weapons"

By the late 1950's many states perceived the "nuclear weapon" to be a potentially desirable addition to military arsenals. This was based on a belief that nuclear weapons were likely to spread in the same way as conventional weaponry and were therefore likely to become an integral part of modern military strategy. The development of a nuclear capability both in the civilian and military realms was also seen as a sign of modernity and technological progression, a trend initiated by the two most powerful states, the US and the USSR.

In Australia, South Africa and Sweden a bomb lobby appears to have emerged that was driven a belief that the state must keep pace with trends in nuclear

acquisition. An emerging international "culture of nuclear acquisition", based on the assumption that nuclear weapons were good things to acquire, was internalised by many states into their own strategic cultures. As Jim Walsh suggests with regard to Australia, bomb advocates argued that if nuclear weapons were to become part of the regular armoury of modern, advanced industrialised countries, then Australia would need to keep pace in order to participate and contribute to its collective security arrangements.[14] Central to this equation was the notion that nuclear weapons could be used in conflict situations. This was more critical for Australia, since Western states appear to have been less restrained in their plans for the actual use of nuclear weapons in South East Asia, than in Europe. Australia thus felt compelled to attempt to either obtain nuclear weapons from other states, secure confirmations of "weapons on demand", or develop an indigenous nuclear capability.

Sweden has traditionally always kept pace with developments in military technology, a trend which one can trace back to the military revolution of the 17th century. Consequently, the strategic culture of nuclear acquisition was easily internalised by many Swedish domestic elements. As a neutral, non-aligned state within close proximity of another potentially hostile nuclear weapon state (NWS), considerations as to a possible nuclear deterrent were therefore underway from an early stage. In South Africa the culture of nuclear acquisition as a means of solving insecurity proved to be decisive: South Africa turned to a nuclear capability as a means of deterring Marxist forces in Southern Africa and cajoling the foreign policy of Western states, most notably the US.

Emerging alongside this strategic culture of acquisition, was a "taboo" against the actual use of nuclear weapons. Peter Gizewski has suggested that a "nuclear taboo" emerged at the end of the Second World War as news of the impact of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki filtered into official and popular

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[14] Jim Walsh, "Surprise Down Under: The Secret History of Australia's Nuclear Ambitions" *The Nonproliferation Review* 5 (Fall 1997).

consciousness.[15] By the time the first thermonuclear device was detonated in November 1952, "a discernible consensus was forming around the notion that the use of nuclear weapons was indeed a 'taboo' in all but the most extreme circumstances".[16] The taboo developed largely as a result of a realisation of the enormous destructive potential of nuclear weapons. Once introduced into conflict, they could not be contained, restrained, confined or limited.[17]

The emergence of a international nuclear taboo equated to a strategic culture of nuclear non-use. Eric Herring has described the nuclear taboo as "a strategic cultural prohibition against the use of nuclear weapons: it is an assumption that nuclear weapons should not be used rather than a conscious cost-benefit calculation".[18] The strategic culture of nuclear non-use may have imposed restraints on the strategies of states possessing nuclear weapons. The US refusal to use nuclear weapons in the Korean or Vietnam wars and Soviet unwillingness to use nuclear weapons in Afghanistan might provide evidence of the workings of the taboo. In addition, Chinese unwillingness to use nuclear weapons against Vietnam in 1979 and British nuclear abstinence in its war with Argentina in 1983, show that other NWS' may have been similarly restrained.

By the 1960's the taboo against the use of nuclear weapons was accompanied by an emergence of a taboo against the acquisition of nuclear weapons. This taboo was stimulated by a realisation that the spread of nuclear weapons to more states increased the possibility that they might be used in conflictual situations. In arguing for restraints on the proliferation of nuclear weapons, US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles suggested in 1957 that, "as matters are going, the time will come when the pettiest and most irresponsible dictator could get hold of

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[15] Peter Gizeweski, "From Winning Weapons to Destroyer of Worlds: The Nuclear Taboo", *International Journal*, 1986), p.401; see Eric Herring, *Nuclear Totem and Taboo: Or How we Learned to Stop Loving the Bomb and Start Worrying*, Paper Presented to the British International Studies Association's Annual Conference, 17 December 1997; T.V Paul, "Nuclear Taboo and War Initiation in Regional Conflicts", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 39 (December 1995) pp.696-717; Richard Price and Nina Tannenwald, "Norms and Deterrence: The Nuclear and Chemical Weapons Taboos", in Katzenstein (eds.), *The Culture of National Security* (Columbia University Press, 1996).
[16] Gizeweski, op cit, p.404.
[17] Thomas Schelling, "The Role of Nuclear Weapons". In L.B Edderington and M.J Mazaar (eds.), *Turning Point: The Gulf War and US Military Strategy* (Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 1994), p.110.
[18] Eric Herring, *Danger and Opportunity: Explaining International Crisis Outcomes*, (Manchester University Press), p.240.

weapons with which to threaten immense harm".[19] This implied that the further proliferation of nuclear weapons technology could have destablising consequences, and should therefore be contained wherever possible.

In 1968 this culture of non-proliferation was institutionalised in the form of the NPT. What effect did this strategic cultural shift to non-acquisition have on the nuclear debate in Australia, South Africa and Sweden? In Australia and Sweden the external culture of non-acquisition appears to have embedded itself within domestic strategic cultures and in a manner which decisively shaped nuclear decision-making. Both states opted to support the NPT and the norm of non-proliferation thus strengthening the international culture of non-acquisition.

This thesis has emphasised how both Australia and particularly Sweden were strategic culturally predisposed towards this international culture of non-acquisition. Australia has traditionally exhibited a tendency to support the international rule of law and to contribute to common security, in the process taking a moral standpoint over nuclear weapons issues. This may be explained as an example of Australia acting out of self-interest as a small state, without nuclear weapons in a region containing other NWS. Yet the rigour with which Australia has contributed to efforts at international disarmament, as illustrated by the establishment of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, has become something of a strategic cultural trait and may have underpinned its decision to abstain from nuclear acquisition.

Sweden's non-nuclear decision was partly influenced by its desire to remain at the forefront of international negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation issues. This was based on a belief that nuclear weapons were unnecessary and detrimental to the development of world peace. As with Australia, it might also be concluded that Sweden actively promoted non-proliferation and disarmament

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[19] Quoted in George Bunn, *Arms Control by Committee: Managing Negotiations with the Russians* (Stanford University Press, 1992), p.63.

because it was a small state without nuclear weapons. However, Sweden has sought to promote itself as an international arbiter and neutral mediator thus facilitating international cooperation and consensus. This has resonance with Swedish strategic culture, which places much emphasis on consensus and compromise.

Thus in both of these cases, it is possible to identify a strategic culture of conformity which shaped decisions against nuclear acquisition. Both Australia and Sweden have sought to be seen as "good international citizens" and to contribute to notions of common security and international peace. This is incompatible with attempts to acquire nuclear weapons.

South Africa's desire to acquire nuclear weapons overrode the influence of an external culture of non-acquisition. In part this may be because South Africa felt isolated and estranged from international trends and thus developed its own insular responses to its security problems. To a degree, South Africa may have developed a "culture of non-conformity" in relation to the international community, in contrast to Australia and Sweden's strategic cultures. By the late 1980's South Africa was recognising the need to re-assimilate itself within the international community. This re-assimilation was likely to proceed more easily with an official non-nuclear weapon status. South Africa may therefore have independently responded to the external culture of non-acquisition rather than been driven by it. However, it may also be the case that the liberal reformist elements of Afrikanerdom had culturally evolved to embrace and internalise external non-proliferation cultures and therefore influenced a policy of denuclearisation.

The Implications for Strategic Cultural Research

The strategic culture approach used in this thesis has sought to avoid methodological over-sophistication. As has been illustrated, there are many methodological problems involved with empirically uncovering all of the aspects

relating to a state's strategic culture. The aim of this thesis has been simply to "tease out" of the available literature the extent to which dominant explanations make implicit cultural assumptions. It is worth returning to some of the methodological issues raised in chapter one and to consider how they apply to these cases studies.

One of the criticism leveled at first generation research into strategic culture was that it might imply that one could identify a unique strategic culture within a state that is persistent across time and affects the preferences of actors. These cases illustrate that while cultural tendencies exist, they are not monolithic and all-encompassing national phenomena. Are cultures malleable and changeable or are they slow-to-change and static? In Australia the strategic cultures of fear and dependence appear deeply rooted and long-standing. Australia's reliance on collective security still guides its security policy. Much has been made of the strategic cultural shift after 1972, which took the emphasis away from an 'oppositional' regional outlook towards one of cooperation. Whether these perceptions changed quickly and across the whole of Australian society is open to debate. Yet in terms of foreign policy and specifically nuclear weapons, it exhibited a swift and decisive influence.

In South Africa the *laager* mentality predominated throughout the period when nuclear weapons were seen as necessary. However, it has been suggested that Afrikaner strategic culture evolved to embrace new liberal ideas in the early 1980's and in a way which facilitated a change of policy with regard to nuclear weapons. It might be possible to attribute this cultural shift to a pragmatic adjustment to the changing threat, based on the traditional Afrikaner mentality. Put another way, the reformists, were first and foremost Afrikaners, who sought to adjust to the changing nature of the "total onslaught" and recognised the untenability of existing policies. The suggestion that De Klerk may have dismantled South Africa's nuclear weapons out of fear as to how they might be used by the new government, may have provide evidence of the fact that that the

laager lived on. South African strategic culture may therefore have been highly static and resistant to change.

In Sweden it is possible to identify a number of persistent strategic cultural themes, including: neutralism and non-alignment, fear of Russian imperialism, requirement for consensus and compromise and a commitment to international peace and cooperation. In the main, these cultural trends have been long-standing and resistant to change, and have shaped Swedish thinking over the issue of nuclear weapons. The challenge has been to consider which is the most predominant strategic cultural trend. As with all three cases, Sweden possesses competing cultural tendencies, such as a fear of Russian imperialism and a wish to build a strong and independent defence while pursuing an agenda for international peace and disarmament. It might appear that the latter was more influential in terms of the debate over nuclear acquisition.

As has been suggested, contemporary research into the relationship between culture and strategy has located its analysis at many different levels of analysis. This thesis has focused on domestic strategic cultures, yet this still leaves room for maneuver. Should the focus be on organizational culture as illustrated by Kier, national culture as exhibited by Johnston, or societal culture as demonstrated by Rosen? How can strategic cultural research acknowledge the impact of external cultures? Having stressed the importance of international taboos and cultures of nuclear non-acquisition, it may seem impossible to restrict analysis purely to the domestic. In approaching these case studies, it appears that all these levels of analysis may be important. In each case military organizations were responsible for raising the issue of nuclear weapons acquisition, yet only in South Africa, where the military and civilian realms overlapped, were their calls acted upon. So at what level were decisions made?

In seeking to elucidate strategic cultural tendencies in each of these cases, the main methodological problem relates to the issue of how to account for the role of

individuals. In each of these cases, decisions on nuclear issues have been taken by individuals which raises the immediate question of whether these individuals are representative of a culture or are acting according to their own individual beliefs. The nuclear decision-making process in the cases considered has been relatively closed and secretive, with virtually no public debate. While it is difficult to be sure as to the significance of input from individuals from the military, scientific or economic spheres, it would appear that final decisions on nuclear issues were, in each case, taken by senior figures within the ruling political party.

In the Australian case, it is difficult to look beyond successive Prime Ministers to assess how policy was shaped. Indeed as Hymans suggests, Australian nuclear policy was shaped by a small number of key individuals. The task for the strategic culturalist is to identify whether these Prime Ministers reflect a particular cultural trend. Menzies almost certainly reflected the traditionalist, conservative strategic culture which sough to retain imperial links; Holt was more inclined to go "all the way with LBJ", while Gorton epitomised the nationalist, "oppositionist" strategic culture that favoured defence self-reliance and inevitably the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Prime Minister McMahon was enculturated more in the conservative realm and thus stalled the nuclear programme prior to Whitlam's signing of the NPT. Whitlam's Labour government signaled the emergence of a less oppositional and more "Asianized" Australian strategic culture, which shaped a long-term policy of nuclear restraint. Individuals were thus important in this process, but were also indicative of broader strategic cultural trends, which developed at multiple levels.

In the South African case, it is possible to find a higher degree of continuity and consensus prior to the fragmentation of Afrikanerdom in the 1980's. Having attained power in 1948, the National Party was lead by a series of Prime Ministers enculturated within the Afrikaner strategic cultural mentality. Despite particular differences in style and emphases, successive leaders approached the question of nuclear weapons according to a deeply ingrained *laager* mentality, which

pervaded the whole of White South African society. The ascendancy of De Klerk within the party might be seen as evidence of the emergence of a more liberal Afrikaner strategic culture, which shaped a non-nuclear outcome. Thus when approaching the South African case, it is possible to identify a more holistic, "total" conception of strategic culture, which permeated every level of Afrikaner society, be it within social organisations such as the *Broederbond*, the SADF, or the governing National Party.

In Sweden, to discuss the impact of culture on nuclear decision-making is to discuss the culture of the Social Democrat Party (SAP), which held power throughout the period when nuclear weapons were considered. The decision to delay any final conclusion to the nuclear issue was almost certainly reflective of the parties' tendency to seek compromise solutions. Equally the strategic cultural tendency to seek unanimity and consensus ensured that the Party would not risk the creation of factions which a nuclear decision would have engendered. These cultural tendencies permeated many areas of Swedish society. Thus while it is possible to discuss the Swedish nuclear decision-making process in terms of political organisational culture, this culture was indicative of broader national cultural trends.

This raises questions about the relationship between political factors and cultural factors. This thesis does not question the importance of political factors. In all three cases, the non-nuclear decision was a political one. This is not a problem for a strategic culture approach. The focus for this research is to identify the cultural milieu underlying political considerations, which may involve a consideration of political culture. The challenge is to accounts which identify the importance of political factors by using a strictly materialist ontology.

In strict definitional terms, political culture may refer to the culture of domestic political institutions while strategic culture deals with the culture of military strategic institutions and organizations. As was suggested in Chapter One,

strategic culture might be used to refer to the military dimension of political culture. However, it is not helpful to compartmentalize discussion of culture too greatly. The political, strategic and military realms are not easily delineated, with cultural tendencies overlapping at many different levels. This is particularly the case with South Africa, where the boundaries between state and military institutions became blurred as society was mobilized in accordance with the rubric of total strategy. The emphasis must therefore been less on distinguishing between exclusive political, strategic, organizational and national cultures, and more on investigating the relationship between them. In doing so, it will become clear that theories which focus purely on external or "systemic" factors and treat states as unitary actors, are offering potentially narrow explanations.

Chapter One discussed Bradley Klein's contention that elites might manipulate strategic culture for there own ends, and Charles Kupchan's suggestion that elites could become entrapped within the strategic cultures which they seek to create. In Australia and Sweden it is possible that elites may have propagated certain images in order to manipulate a culture to suit their objectives. Australia's conservative elites appear to have attempted to perpetuate a cultural reliance on empire and fears of Asian threats, while nationalists mobilised support for their independent self-reliant policy objectives. In Sweden, elites nurtured and preserved the neutral ethos, thereby mobilising society behind its policy of Total Defence. This neutralist strategic culture may now be entrapping the Swedish government from integrating itself more closely with Europe in a post-Cold War environment.[20] If these strategic cultural trends are seen as important in shaping non-nuclear outcomes, then the instrumentality of strategic culture may well be worth considering.

This instrumentality issue is most pronounced in South Africa, where elites appear to have propagated and disseminated images, which supported and strengthened

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[20] See Ann-Sofie Dahl, "To Be Or Not to Be Neutral: Swedish Security in the Post-Cold War Era", in Efraim Inbar and Gabriel Sheffer (eds.) *The National Security of Small States in a Changing World*, (London: Frank Cass, 1997).

their "oppositional" view of the external environment. In order to mobilise society behind the Total Strategy, the Afrikaner elite relied upon a manipulation of enemy images and in-group solidarity. For reformist Afrikaners attempting to embrace new conceptions of security, this strategic culture became restricting by generating inertia and resistance to suggestions that South Africa should denuclearise.

The Value of a Strategic Culture Approach

In each case it has been possible to identify tendencies and patterns, or shared ethos' within particular strategic collectives which have been referred to as strategic cultures. For instance in the case of South Africa, the literature makes continual references to the same particular Afrikaner tendencies in relation to a range of strategic issues. Afrikaners appear to have approached threats according to a similar mentality on a range of issues, regardless of differences in material circumstances, such that this might be referred to as a strategic culture. This is not to say that we can then predict how South Africa would respond to certain conditions. This would involve giving strategic culture a causal, timeless property, which it might not have. However, cultural patterns exist in South Africa, just as they do in Australia and Sweden, which suggests that non-ideational accounts are missing something with their analysis.

It appears that many of the rationalist material assumptions made by traditional explanations of non-nuclear decision-making possess an implicit cultural dimension that is often not acknowledged. Most realist explanations do not refuse to acknowledge cultural factors, but do try to reduce cultural effects to epiphenomena of the distribution of material power. This thesis seeks to justify a more prominent role for strategic cultural factors, not in terms of offering additional or superior causal explanations but in constituting non-cultural factors. The task

has therefore been to "unpack the ideational and cultural baggage" of materialist explanations that is required in order to make the latter work.[21]

This thesis has not provided any new empirical evidence with which to construct new explanations for non-nuclear outcomes. The methodological problems associated with conducting empirical research into nuclear decision-making are often severe. Official documentation relating to nuclear policy is often scarce, while it is difficult to decipher whether the information that is available is reliable.[22] This issue has resonance in the case of South Africa. Despite the willingness of South African government to make public its nuclear intentions as part of the process of denuclearisation, questions remain concerning the issue of how advanced South Africa's nuclear programme became, and what its motivations and intentions were.

In Sweden, the tendency to make decisions in an informal and unofficial manner, and to ensure that there was "nothing on paper"[23], leaves many questions relating to Swedish nuclear policy unanswered. When was a decision taken to opt for nuclear restraint? How close did Sweden come to acquiring a usable nuclear force? Were any agreements made with the US, regarding security guarantees?

In the case of Australia, the recent release of historical nuclear policy documents has encouraged scholars such as Walsh and Jacques Hymans to offer empirical challenges to the dominant assumptions made by previous explanations. While the greater availability of information relating to Australian nuclear policy allows more scope for empirical analysis, caution must be taken when making assumptions.

Randall Schweller and William Wohlforth suggest, "realism is a political philosophy or worldview that is profoundly pessimistic about the human condition,

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[21] This was suggested in e-mail correspondence with Alexander Wendt, 6th April, 2000.
[22] See Ogilvie-White, op cit, p.43.
[23] Ola Tunander, "The Uneasy Imbrication of Nation-State and NATO: The Case of Sweden" *Cooperation and Conflict* (34 (2), 1999. P.185.

moral progress and the capacity of human reason to create a world of harmony".[24] Inter-state relations, are therefore inherently conflictual and driven by the dictates of international anarchy.

A strategic culture approach would support Wendt's argument that "anarchy is what states make of it".[25] If states adopt hostile conflictual relations then this is because of the way they are culturally constructed which dictates whether states view each other as friend or foe. Furthermore, there is no reason to assume that states cannot embrace long-standing perceptions of friends if they are culturally pre-disposed to do so, such that relations might not be always liable to break down in the way that some pessimistic realists assume.

As has been shown, this can have important implications for nuclear weapons decision-making. The fact that states might not constantly view each other as foes might provide some answers as to why states might pursue non-nuclear outcomes. Nonetheless, the literature relating to these and other cases is anchored to traditional rationalist materialist explanations, which provide little room for ideas. This thesis has supported those accounts which consider the importance of culture to the strategic realm. A number of recent accounts of other states appear to be moving in this direction and with a similar attention to theory. In recently analysing India's nuclear decision-making, George Perkovich specifically challenges realist explanations for India nuclear outcomes. Perkovich states:

"At bottom, prevalent Western, or more accurately American-originated theories, structural realism, rational choice and nuclear deterrence – each of which informs the other – cannot explain why and how India's policy developed from 1947-1964. Nor can they explain why India waited thirty four years after China's first nuclear weapon test to declare that it had countervailing nuclear weapons".[26]

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[24] Randall L.Schweller and William C. Wohlforth "Power Test: Evaluating Realism in Response to the End of the Cold War", *Security Studies*, Vol. 9 No.3 (Spring 2000), p.68.

[25] Alexander Wendt "Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46:2 (1992).

[26] George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* (University of California Press, 1999) p.453.

Instead, Perkovich suggests, that "India's national identity and normative aspirations have shaped nuclear policy choices".[27] A similar argument is advanced in Avner Cohen's account of *Israel and the Bomb* where attention is turned explicitly towards culture. Cohen suggests that

"Israel's nuclear opacity is by now more than a phenomenon of international politics or strategy – it is a cultural and normative phenomenon as well. Individuals and events determined the way Israel has stumbled into opacity in the 1950's and 1960's, but since then opacity has become embedded in Israel's national security culture".[28]

Perkovich and Cohen are describing states where nuclear acquisition appears to be the preferred outcome. However, these accounts are significant in revealing the way in which proliferation analysts are gradually turning towards cultural and ideational factors. Elsewhere it has recently been suggested that strategic culture is "in vogue, both in policy circles and in the academic literature".[29]

So what next for strategic culture? The next move should be towards devising more sophisticated theoretical frameworks in which these strategic cultural factors can be analysed. At present, strategic culture is a widely discussed yet indiscriminately applied research tool. Without a degree of consensus as to what strategic culture is and how it should be applied, it is doubtful whether it will progress as a concept. The fact that this research has highlighted as many problems with a strategic culture approach as it had expounded benefits, suggests that the task is a complex one. Nonetheless, as the cases used in this thesis emphasise, it is possible to identify strategic cultural tendencies, which shape particular strategic outcomes within states. This is a credible and significant starting point. By treating culture as a residual or secondary variable traditional explanations might therefore be depriving themselves of a some valuable insights.

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[27] Ibid. p.448.
[28] Avner Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb*, (Columbia University Press, 1998) p.343.
[29] Lewis Dunn, Peter Lavoy and Scott Sagan, "Conclusion: Planning the Unthinkable", in P.R Lavoy, S. Sagan and J.J Wirtz (eds.) *Planning the Unthinkable: How New Powers Will Use Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Weapons* (Harvard University Press, 2000) p.254.

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DATE	SIGNATURE	ADDRESS