

Over the past year, I worked with Dr. Sukin on her book project which argues that credible nuclear security guarantees can backfire, increasing popular support for the development of independent nuclear capabilities instead. While existing literature holds that credible nuclear security guarantees successfully reassure allies, Dr Sukin's research posits that credible guarantees may actually create concerns about conflict entrapment and embroilment and thus lead to increased support for independent nuclear weaponization in client states. In other words, credible security commitments by guarantor nations like the United States can signal their trigger-happiness or willingness to get involved in conflicts, with this misalignment in risk tolerance sparking both fears of entrapment and higher support for military capacities in client states.

Under Dr Sukin's guidance, I worked on an annotated bibliography focused on British motivations for developing an independent nuclear programme against the backdrop of evolving Anglo-American relations. I also contributed to a dataset by collecting treaty texts of French and Russian nuclear cooperation agreements.

To create the annotated bibliography, I began by consulting secondary literature on British and American nuclear history, and the Anglo-American 'special relationship'. I then filtered out primary sources - House of Commons' speeches, government reports and memos, autobiographical accounts, letters, and media interviews - mentioned in the literature and extracted relevant quotations and information from them. Most of the Commons speeches, media sources and autobiographical accounts were available online but many British government reports and memos had not been digitised. To access these, I paid (a very enjoyable) visit to the National Archives where I read and scanned original versions of classified government reports and documents.

After compiling a list of these sources, I organized them by theme and in chronological order to write a report on motivations underpinning the development of the British nuclear arsenal. I found that while the UK's independent nuclear deterrent was born as a necessary precaution for securing British national safety from the Soviet bloc, it was sustained and fueled by domestic visions of global influence and fears of American isolationism and misalignment of Anglo-American interests. The independent deterrent was Britain's ticket to the exclusive nuclear club, membership of which would help continue England's status as a Great Power. This Great Power status was essential for maintaining British influence and leverage in the Commonwealth and in its 'special' relationship with the United States. Despite this special relationship, there existed substantial fears in the UK about both American isolationism and abandonment, and possible recklessness - these were cemented by unilateral American decision-making during the Korean War, the Suez Crisis etc. As such, it was essential that Britain pursue an independent nuclear deterrent to ensure British and European safety and avoid nuclear blackmail. These findings are consistent with Dr Sukin's argument - the credibility of American guarantees, combined with historical developments in the Anglo-American relationship, created conditions that spurred wide-ranging domestic support in the UK in favour of developing an independent nuclear deterrent.

Besides the annotated bibliography, I worked on a dataset of nuclear cooperation agreements (NCA) and collected treaty texts of French and Russian agreements. To collect this data, I cross-referenced treaties in the Furhmann NCA dataset with James Keeley's

dataset, which listed sources for the original treaty texts. I then looked up the sources for French and Russian agreements and created a machine-readable text-based entry for each treaty. I have been able to find texts for a majority of French-American, Franco-German and Russian treaties. However, several older French treaties remain unpublished.

Overall, my work sets up the background for the book's UK chapter and provides examples from literature which can be used as evidence to support Dr Sukin's argument. The book project presents a novel alternative to conventional literature on alliance politics and nuclear guarantees by demonstrating how, and under what conditions, the perceived credibility of nuclear guarantees can end up increasing support for proliferation. This argument has important implications for guarantor nations like the United States who must ensure that their security guarantees tread the precarious balance between being credible enough to assuage clients' defence concerns while also demonstrating restraint that signals a cautious nuclear use policy.

This research assistantship has been an enriching experience, allowing me to develop and hone skills in archival research and academic writing. I have enjoyed exploring the history of British and American nuclear policy, and this experience has motivated me to explore this area in more detail through a dissertation next year. I want to thank the US Centre, its donors, and the other research assistants, who have all made this programme such an incredible experience. I am particularly grateful to Professor Sukin for her time, support, and guidance throughout this project.