

**Giving Up to Survive:
Domestic Conditions Under Which States
Renounce Nuclear Weapons**

Prepared for delivery at the 2005 Annual Meeting of the
American Political Science Association
Washington, D.C., September 1-4, 2005
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Sung-Ju Cho
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Politics
University of Virginia
sungju_cho@yahoo.com
sjc2y@virginia.edu

Nuclear rollback¹ in the Third World—renouncing once tightly held nuclear ambition—is an interesting puzzle, not simply because it shows a reversal of nuclear proliferation occurring in the real world, but also because it indicates a more significant change of a defiant, revisionist state transforming itself into a compliant member of the international community. Those states that gave up nuclear ambitions in the post Cold War era did not stop at nuclear renunciation, but showed far more fundamental changes ensuing after their nuclear rollback decisions.² South Africa, for example, after having renounced nuclear weapons, not only became a full supporter of the NPT, but also ended apartheid and elected an African as President of South Africa for the first time in its history. Argentina and Brazil, once having given up their nuclear options, complied with regional as well as global nuclear nonproliferation regimes that for decades they had so adamantly resisted. Not only did Argentina renounce nuclear weapons, but it also restored relations with Britain, froze the Condor II missile program, sent troops to the Gulf War, and withdrew from the Non-Aligned Movement. Nuclear rollback, which heralded significant changes in foreign relations from estrangement to reconciliation with the international community, originated internally and voluntarily without any conditions of external rewards. Rare as it was, nuclear rollback turned out to be a harbinger of a greater transformation that occurred beyond giving up nuclear ambitions.

That nuclear rollback cases entailed fundamental changes beyond nuclear renunciation leads to a question if nuclear renunciation was a tip of the iceberg of greater forces of change lying beneath that were about to break out. That is, without fundamental change underscoring those states' internal politics, would nuclear rollback have occurred? Had a Third World state, previously defiant to the NPT, ever significantly reduced its nuclear ambitions without corresponding changes in domestic politics or foreign relations? If not, what constituted the larger chunk of the iceberg hidden beneath that gave birth to nuclear rollback? What was the spark that cracked those states' nuclear ambitions and facilitated their revised stances? In short, the central research question is, "What is the key causal factor that made those once nuclear ambitious, defiant states suddenly turn around, renounce nuclear weapons, and become friends with the international community or former adversaries?"

Addressing this question, this paper proposes a "diversionary compliance" hypothesis. It investigates why a defiant state changed into a compliant member of the international community in the process of renouncing nuclear weapons. Analogous to the concept of diversionary war in reverse, "diversionary compliance" occurs when leaders under domestic crisis send friendly gestures to the international community to obtain support by renouncing nuclear weapons (diversionary compliance) rather than going

¹ Although some scholars differentiate the definitions of nuclear rollback, nuclear reversal, and nuclear renunciation, this paper uses them interchangeably having the same meaning as a switch of a state's position on nuclear weapons from pursuing them to forsaking them.

² On the other hand, North Korea—a supposedly "renounced state" after the 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework—has never shown any changes in its regime, politics, economy, or foreign relations. In the fall of 2002 North Korea began a new round of nuclear crisis that continues at present. Despite Libya's recent decision to renounce nuclear weapons without its regime change, it is premature to conclusively include Libya in the rollback case. See footnote 4 for reasons.

nuclear (diversionary war).³ The hypothesis is “diversionary” in that leaders have an ulterior motive of securing their jobs by “complying” with the international norm of nuclear nonproliferation. The core argument is based on a simple assumption that what is deemed extremely valuable (e.g. nuclear weapons) will only be exchanged for something of an equivalent high value (e.g. international support for a leader in duress). That is, the (political) life of the leader. Nuclear weapons for a Third World state that overcame difficult internal and external impediments in acquiring them should have a higher value incomparable to that of an advanced state’s WMD. Whatever forces militate against keeping nuclear weapons, unless the political or physical life of those in charge of such a state is threatened, nuclear weapons are not likely to be given up. For nuclear rollback to occur, therefore, a critical situation has to arrive where the value of the leader’s political survival outweighs the value of keeping nuclear weapons.

The “diversionary compliance” hypothesis is tested by a comparative historical process tracing of the political and nuclear events of two states—South Africa and Argentina—which all had switched their positions on nuclear weapons or nuclear options, and nuclear nonproliferation norms. The findings show that the conditions that promoted “diversionary compliance” were mainly domestic, that is, the leaders chose to renounce nuclear weapons when they were faced with severe political and economic crises that threatened their political tenure. The paper will proceed in four parts in the following. First, the overall cases of nuclear rollback and previous studies will be described with a brief comment on what has been missing. Second is about the logic of diversionary compliance hypothesis, and under what conditions the hypothesis can be confirmed. Third is a comparative process tracing of two cases: Argentina and South Africa. Fourth will conclude the argument of the paper.

Nuclear Rollback Cases: Practice and Theory

Twenty-one cases of nuclear rollback have been identified since 1945 excluding recent Libya’s decision to renounce nuclear weapons.⁴ A table from Ariel Levite’s

³ “Diversionary peace” or the opposite of diversionary war was first used in nuclear nonproliferation studies by Michael Barletta, suggested by Scott Sagan, in his doctoral dissertation, *Ambiguity, Autonomy, and the Atom: Emergence of the Argentine-Brazilian Nuclear Regime* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2000), pp. 143-56. Barletta partially applied “diversionary peace” to explain nuclear confidence building between Argentina and Brazil that the two governments tried to undercut the threat scenarios of their armed forces by reducing regional tensions. In comparison, however, this paper’s “diversionary compliance” was inspired by Steven David’s omnibalancing theory of the Third World, and finds a few problems with Barletta’s application. Details on “diversionary compliance” hypothesis will be discussed later.

⁴ Libya’s sign of rollback first began in March 2003 when the U.S. forces were entering Iraq. It permitted Americans to arrive in Libya in October when the American Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) team seized nuclear related equipment headed for Tripoli. Verification work in Libya was completed in September 2004. However, Libya too often had shown contradictory and inconsistent positions on WMD. Libya signed the NPT on July 18, 1968, ratified it on May 26, 1975, entered the IAEA safeguard agreement in 1980, and supported the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995. However, in January 1996, it announced that Arab states should acquire nuclear weapons to counter Israel’s nuclear forces. Then, in April, it signed the African NWFZ. In September, Libya voted against the CTBT, but signed it in November 2001. Yet, in 2000-2002 Libya received enriched uranium from Pakistan. In terrorist activities, after the American bombing in 1986 in response to a German nightclub terrorist attack by Libya, it downed

International Security article gives a good summary (Table 1). From this table’s two columns labeled “attained but gave up” and “tried but gave up,” South Africa stands out as a crucial case in that it actually had built six nuclear weapons and then dismantled them. The three former Soviet Republics—Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus—also removed all their nuclear warheads to Russia after the breakup of the Soviet Union; however, the fact that those Republics never had the command and control keys to those weapons makes them weaker cases compared to South Africa. In the “tried but gave up” category, Argentina and Brazil reflect the two most recent cases of rollback that occurred after the end of the Cold War. Although Argentina and Brazil never crossed the “nuclear threshold” of possessing the ability to acquire nuclear weapons within a short time frame, they both pursued the “nuclear option”—acquiring only the technical capacity to build nuclear weapons in the long run—and refused to subscribe to nuclear nonproliferation norms.

Table 1. Cases of Nuclear Reversal Since 1945

Never Tried (Nuclear Abstinence)	Tried but Gave Up (Nuclear Reversal)	Attained but Gave Up	Still Trying	Attained and Maintained
	17	4	5	8
All other states	Argentina Australia Brazil Canada Egypt Germany Indonesia Italy Japan Netherlands Norway Romania South Korea Sweden Switzerland Taiwan Yugoslavia	South Africa Belarus Kazakhstan Ukraine	Algeria Iran Iraq Libya North Korea	China France Britain India Pakistan Russia U.S. Israel

Source: Ariel E. Levite, “Never Say Never Again: Nuclear Reversal Revisited,” *International Security*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Winter 2002/03), p. 62.

a Pan Am airliner in Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988. Libya agreed to pay \$2.7 billion in compensation for the 270 people killed. But, in June 2004 it was reported that Libya plotted an assassination of Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Abdullah. Thus, observation for an extended period of time is needed to determine whether Libya renounced nuclear ambition.

South Africa, Argentina, and Brazil share a few characteristics as former nuclear-ambitious Third World states that renounced nuclear weapons. First is the timing. The decision to renounce nuclear weapons was made after the end of the Cold War, specifically, in 1990 for all three states. Even though the process leading up to renunciation decision took several months, it was on February 26, 1990 when President de Klerk of South Africa gave his written instructions authorizing the dismantlement of six nuclear weapons. Likewise, Argentina and Brazil jointly announced not only renouncing nuclear weapons but also PNEs, and agreed to accept the IAEA safeguards inspections and the Tlatelolco Treaty with the Foz de Iguazu Declaration on November 28, 1990. Despite months and years of time leading up to the decision, it was in 1990, a few months to a year after the fall of the Berlin Wall, that three states finalized giving up nuclear ambitions. Second, all three states' posture on the global nuclear nonproliferation norm stayed consistent with their stance on nuclear weapons. South Africa, Argentina, and Brazil had refused to join the NPT before they renounced nuclear weapons. Unlike such states as North Korea, Libya, Iran, and Iraq⁵ that pursued nuclear ambitions as ratified members of the NPT violating their commitments, the three states' posture on norm and nuclear weapons was consistent. Such coherence between their NPT membership and nuclear behavior makes those states' transition from noncompliance to compliance more significant as the transition was not an act of instrumental adaptation.⁶ Third, one of the main reasons those three states had resisted the NPT was the anti-colonial sentiment they all shared. They criticized the norm as an unfair treaty that intended to "disarm the unarmed" while imposing no restrictions on the superpowers' arms race. However, what makes it more interesting is that they all switched to comply with the NPT after they had decided to renounce nuclear ambition even though the reason for their rejection of the NPT remained the same. It was those three states—the harshest critics of the NPT—that changed, not the NPT. These characteristics three states share might have relevance to the current proliferation problem in the periphery.

Research on nuclear rollback began after South Africa's announcement of its secret nuclear history on March 24, 1993; however, a decade earlier the role of a regional regime seeking nuclear cooperation between Argentina and Brazil had been investigated (Redick 1981). Publications related to nuclear rollback started to pour out after 1993 and these studies can be broadly divided into two groups—an earlier group of investigators (De Villiers et al 1993, Reiss 1995, Potter 1995, Redick 1995, Stumpf 1995/96) that gave detail descriptions of the history and process of nuclear reversals; and a later theory-driven group of scholars (Solingen 1994, Sagan 1996/97, Long and Grillot 2000, Paul 2000, Liberman 2001, Barletta 2001, Levite 2002/03) that explained nuclear reversals from a few different theoretical perspectives. Given that nuclear programs had been kept secret and handled only by a few members of the government in most cases, research on nuclear rollback is compounded not only by the small-N problem, but by the difficulty of getting access to important documents. Thus, many researchers have relied on interviewing those who had been involved in the nuclear program, and provided different explanations based on their interviews. The results show either an in-depth investigation

⁵ Year of joining the NPT for those states is: North Korea, 1985 (withdrew in 2003); Libya, 1975; Iran, 1970; and Iraq, 1969.

⁶ It is useful to apply the constructivist view of differentiating between an instrumental adaptation and an identity change.

of a single case that claims theorizing is not possible due to too many variables or an ambitious attempt at comprehensive theorizing that loses sight of the specifics that went on in each state's domestic politics.⁷ Despite many contributions, what seems to be missing from previous studies is a middle ground analysis that can explain the sudden change from proliferation to renunciation of a few cases. Specifically, an accounting for what sparked the transition to a nuclear rollback is absent. Few studies offer explanations why those states had not given up nuclear ambitions earlier or even later. The closest theoretical consensus suggests that the security conditions improved and became ripe for nuclear rollback to occur at the time. However, that does not explain why nuclear rollback occurred when it did. To fill in the gap of finding a trigger that brought nuclear rollback, this paper shifts the focus to non-security areas of domestic politics which most researchers have ignored with the exception of Solingen.⁸

The Third World and a Diversionsary Compliance Hypothesis

The need for an IR theory that deals specifically with the Third World characteristics has been debated in the past.⁹ However, nowhere does the debate seem more relevant than in nuclear proliferation concerns today. Nuclear-ambitious states have distinctive characteristics that affect their international relations as Third World

⁷ An example of the former is Liberman who applied three views—security incentives, organizational politics, and international pressure—to South Africa, and concluded that “fragmentary and ambiguous evidence (particularly about the weaponization decisions) and the simultaneous changes in South Africa's security environment, diplomatic relations, and domestic politics impede further weighing of causal influences.” Peter Liberman, “The Rise and Fall of the South African Bomb,” *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Fall 2001), p. 84. An example of the latter is Paul, “[A] larger set of variables—domestic, bilateral, and regional—needs to be explored if we are to understand fully the transformation of the two states,” the two states meaning Argentina and Brazil. T.V. Paul, *Power versus Prudence: Why Nations Forgo Nuclear Weapons* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), p. 100.

⁸ Solingen was the first to direct our attention to the domestic political conditions in the study of nuclear rollback. However, Solingen's dependent variable is not exactly nuclear rollback, but nuclear cooperation toward nonproliferation regime. Although Solingen's argument is highly plausible, if applied narrowly to nuclear rollback, her argument does not explain South Africa's case well. In South Africa, for example, it was President de Klerk, not the changes in the coalition of his government, that brought South Africa's nuclear rollback. A more fundamental question for Solingen is “under what circumstances would liberal coalitions take control of the government that leads to nuclear cooperation?” Etel Solingen, “The Political Economy of Nuclear Restraint,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Fall 1994), pp. 126-169.

⁹ For Third World characteristics, see Stephen D. Krasner, *Structural Conflict: The Third World Against Global Liberalism* (Berkeley: University of California, 1985); “Third World Vulnerabilities and Global Negotiations,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (October 1983), pp. 235-49; Brian L. Job, ed., *The Insecurity Dilemma: National Security of Third World States* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992); Stephanie G. Neuman, ed., *International Relations Theory and the Third World* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998); Carlos Escude, *Foreign Policy Theory in Menem's Argentina* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), esp. pp. 138-9.

Debates about the significance of the Third World include, Stephen Van Evera, “Why Europe Matters, Why the Third World Doesn't: American Grand Strategy After the Cold War,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (June 1990), pp. 1-51; Steven R. David, “Why the Third World Still Matters,” *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Winter 1992/93), pp. 127-59; Michael C. Desch, “Why Realists Disagree About the Third World (And Why They Shouldn't),” *Security Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Spring 1996), pp. 358-81.

states. A general common trait is a weakness they have both at the international and domestic levels. Internationally, the combination of small power and underdevelopment leaves Third World states in a weak position. Developing countries rarely have the national power to bargain effectively with the more industrialized states let alone change international regimes. In terms of economies, underdevelopment of the Third World necessitates aligning with the liberal world for economic assistance unless they favor a nationalist economy. Domestically, they have weaknesses largely in four areas: the rigidity of the social and economic structures; political instability; reliance on trade taxes; and ideological and personalistic leadership.¹⁰ These factors make political unrest and legitimacy of leadership the core of their domestic problems.

The Third World leaders face internal as well as external threats where the dominant goal of the leaders entails staying in power.¹¹ Since the consequence of losing power is often a prison term or even loss of life, the Third World leaders are more aggressive than other leaders of the world in their efforts to maintain their positions. Moreover, as Steven David argues, internal threats are more likely to challenge a Third World leader's hold on power than are external threats. Empirically, only a handful of Third World leaders have fallen to external invasions while hundreds have been overthrown by their internal enemies. Thus, to survive in power the leaders sometimes protect themselves at the expense of the interests of the state.¹²

Considering that staying in power is the top priority for nuclear-ambitious states' leaders, their policy decisions will be determined primarily by ensuring their job security. Any policy decisions that might jeopardize their domestic political legitimacy are likely to be avoided. In that sense, securing political power should serve as a primary motive for the leaders when they renounce nuclear weapons. In other words, states are likely to renounce nuclear weapons when renouncing has to do with the leaders' hold on power. A key question to follow, then, is "When does nuclear rollback ever help a leader's hold on power?" There can be two situations that help a leader's position by giving up nuclear weapons: first, when there is a consensus in society to renounce nuclear weapons; and second, when there is a national crisis where giving up nuclear weapons becomes one of the best options to survive the crisis. It is the latter case that applies to the Third World that makes such an act a "diversionary compliance."¹³

¹⁰ Krasner, *Structural Conflict*, pp. 32-58.

¹¹ The importance of political survival applies to all leaders, however. "[E]very political leader faces the challenge of how to hold onto his or her job. The politics behind survival in office is, we believe, the essence of politics." Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), p. 8, and Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, "Domestic Politics and International Relations," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (March 2002), pp. 1-9, esp. 4. Also, see Barry Ames, *Political Survival: Politicians and Public Policy in Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

¹² Steven David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (January 1991), pp. 233-56. Steven David excludes South Africa from the Third World. Bueno de Mesquita et al claim, "If the welfare of a leader and the welfare of the society are at odds—and our theory and data will indicate that they often are—it is more likely to go well for the leader than for society." *The Logic of Political Survival*, p. 21.

¹³ An empirical study on the possibility of a diversionary peace—diverting domestic conflict by making peace with external adversary—is by David T. Burbach, "Wagging the Doves? Peace-Promoting Actions as a Source of Presidential Support," APSA Conference Paper (Philadelphia, 2003).

However, “diversionary war”—seeking aggressive foreign policy to divert domestic opposition—is the more widely known path that leaders take in times of crisis.¹⁴ If so, it seems puzzling why a leader in crisis would give up a nuclear weapons program rather than beat the drums of nationalism by going nuclear. What are the conditions that make leaders take the “diversionary compliance” path instead of the “diversionary war/proliferation” path?

Given a choice between “diversionary war/proliferation” and “diversionary compliance,” leaders are likely to take the path that best secures their political survival. The benefit of “diversionary proliferation” lies at diverting domestic opposition by provoking nationalism and building nuclear weapons at the cost of receiving international condemnation and, possibly, sanctions. The benefit of “diversionary compliance” comes from receiving international social rewards as a result of complying with the nuclear nonproliferation norm and renouncing nuclear weapons at the cost of losing the weapons and domestic nationalistic support.¹⁵ The two contrasting paths are similar in that they share a strategy of using *Aussenpolitik* for *Innenpolitik*, but differ as one takes the path toward international contention (diversionary proliferation) while the other takes the path toward international cooperation (diversionary compliance).¹⁶

It is apparently when international cooperation gives a greater benefit than international contention that states renounce nuclear weapons.¹⁷ When getting

¹⁴ The Falklands/Malvinas War (1982), the 1995 war between Ecuador and Peru, and the 1973 Yom Kippur/October War are often cited examples. Diversionary war theory or scapegoat theory (internal conflict leads to external war) is based on the ingroup/outgroup hypothesis that external pressure promotes internal cohesion. To select a few recent articles among many: Jack Levy, “The Diversionary Theory of War: A Critique,” in Manus I. Midlarsky, ed., *Handbook of War Studies* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 259-88; Alastair Smith, “Diversionary Foreign Policy in Democratic Systems,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (March 1996), pp. 133-53; Birger Heldt, “The Dependent Variable of the Domestic-External Conflict Relationship: Anecdotes, Theories, and Systemic Studies,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (February 1997), pp. 101-6; Kurt Dassel, “Civilians, Soldiers, and Strife: Domestic Sources of International Aggression,” *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Summer 1998), pp. 107-40; Michael Colaresi, “When Doves Cry: International Rivalry, Unreciprocated Cooperation, and Leadership Turnover,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (July 2004), pp. 555-70.

¹⁵ The importance of international support comes from the international norm of nonproliferation. Because of a wide international consensus on nuclear nonproliferation, going nuclear necessarily causes international condemnation. It is impossible for any state to gain international support or any ally’s support by going nuclear. Nuclear ambitious states, thus, inevitably have to take into consideration international opprobrium they will be cast upon should they go nuclear. Likewise announcing the decision to renounce nuclear weapons apparently brings international applause. In short, the nuclear nonproliferation norm set the price of going nuclear very high. In contrast however, there is a weak norm against a diversionary war. Although war is condemned by the United Nations Charter, international support or opprobrium is determined by national interest and diplomatic relations. States are not automatically condemned by international community for going to war due to the differences in the robustness of two norms.

¹⁶ The concept on *Aussenpolitik* and *Innenpolitik* is from Fareed Zakaria, “Realism and Domestic Politics: A Review Essay,” *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Summer 1992), pp. 177-98. For the primacy of domestic politics, Zakaria traces Eckart Kehr, *Der Primat der Innenpolitik* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970). Also, Ethan B. Kapstein, “Is Realism Dead? The Domestic Sources of International Politics,” *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (Autumn 1995), pp. 751-74. “Using enemy to check enemy or 以夷制夷,” is a commonly known phrase in Chinese culture. For realists, such as Steven David, this is a balancing act.

¹⁷ The flip side of the argument is when the cost of receiving international condemnation is bigger than the cost of domestic criticism. What both sides of the argument share is that international opinion matters more than domestic opinion under certain circumstances.

international social rewards by pursuing cooperative *Aussenpolitik* is more useful (for the *Innenpolitik*) than diverting domestic opposition by seeking nationalistic *Aussenpolitik*, leaders renounce nuclear weapons, i.e., the leader has concluded that international support provides the greater benefit.¹⁸

Table 2. Costs and Benefits:
Diversionsary Proliferation and Diversionsary Compliance

	Diversionsary Proliferation (International Contention)	Diversionsary Compliance (International Cooperation)
Benefit	Domestic Cooperation - Divert Domestic Opposition - Gain Nationalist Support	International Cooperation - Gain International Social Reward
Cost	International Condemnation & Sanctions	Loss of Nationalists support

The comparative advantage of international cooperation over international contention depends on two conditions: first, the nature of a state’s national crisis—that is, if an internal crisis is the kind that makes international involvement possible or useful for survival; second, the international community’s position on the crisis—that is, when the international community supports the domestic opponent’s side thereby further cornering the leaders into a stalemate. The two conditions define the parameters of a crisis where leaders confront two opponents at the same time. When the international community shares the cause of the domestic opponents and shows support for them, the leaders face two adversaries—a major domestic opponent that jeopardizes their survival and an international sponsor that backs the opponent. These nuclear ambitious states are under the suspicion of developing or possessing nuclear weapons. The leaders, who are in charge of their secret nuclear programs, already have a fragile relationship with the international community. Given a choice between cooperation and contention under these circumstances, the leaders are better off seeking international cooperation. That is because going nationalistic and building nuclear weapons only makes the relations with the international community worse for the leaders (by objectively violating the norm) and relatively better for the domestic opponents (by undercutting international support for the leaders). On the other hand, without any external support for the domestic opponents, that is, when the international community has to stay neutral to the internal conflict, leaders have no particular benefit in appeasing the international community. For instance, when a crisis is caused by a domestic political dispute where the third party has no place for intervention, inducing international support becomes futile. Under the circumstances, leaders have only the domestic opponent to worry about; thus, the benefits are greater when they take the “diversionary war/proliferation” path.¹⁹ That is because the “rally

¹⁸ It is needless to add a self-evident condition, “when the benefit of international social reward is greater than the cost of losing weapons or receiving domestic criticism.”

¹⁹ Some argue that democracies are more likely to engage in the diversionary use of force. See Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al, “An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace,” *American*

‘round the flag’ effect can be useful when international support does not have a role to play in domestic affairs. In short, the key determinant is the international third party’s position on the internal conflict—particularly the necessity of its assistance and its support for the domestic opponent’s side—that compels the leaders to take the path toward international cooperation.

In summary, the diversionary compliance hypothesis posits that a nuclear-ambitious state is likely to renounce nuclear weapons when the leader faces a national crisis and seeks international support to either overcome the crisis or divert domestic opposition that threatens his/her job security. The conditions that compel the leader to seek diversionary compliance are, first, the need for an international assistance to overcome the crisis; and second, the international third party’s support for the domestic opponent in case the crisis was caused by a domestic political conflict.

Testing the Cases: Argentina and South Africa

Two states’ political and nuclear histories are traced with special emphasis given to domestic crisis and international norm pressure. Both cases consist of three parts and the last part of each case shows how diversionary compliance occurred in the state in question.

Argentina

Argentina’s nuclear history is divided into three parts: 1950-1975 founding of nuclear autonomy; 1976-1983 suspicious activities and the diversionary war; and 1984-1990 the turnaround for survival. The last part shows how diversionary compliance occurred in Argentina.

1. Founding of Nuclear Autonomy, 1950-1975

Argentina had a history of resisting the U.S. initiatives in international relations dating back to the Pan-American Union of 1889. Argentineans viewed this as an instrument of American hegemony in Latin America.²⁰ Argentina’s opposition was especially strong as it was the second largest country in Latin America and eighty-two percent of its population was of European origin uniquely in the region. Independent from Spain in 1816,²¹ Argentina became one of the wealthiest nations in the world by

Political Science Review, Vol. 93, No. 4 (December 1999), pp. 791-807; Christopher Gelpi, “Democratic Diversions: Government Structure and the Externalization of Domestic Conflict,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (April 1997), pp. 255-82. President Clinton ordered air strikes on Iraq, the “Operation Desert Fox,” on December 17, 1998 when the House was about to vote on his impeachment. However, Clinton had pulled back three times from the brink of war, in November 1997, and in February and November 1998, thus the timing could be coincidental. See Barton Gellman, “U.S. Strikes at Iraqi Targets: Impeachment Vote Delayed,” *Washington Post*, December 17, 1998.

²⁰ Latin American resentment of American influence goes back to the Monroe Doctrine of 1823.

²¹ Buenos Aires formed an independent government to administer the Spanish Viceroyalty of La Plata on May 25, 1810. After four years of war with Spain, Argentina declared independence on July 9,

exporting agricultural goods. By 1910, Argentina registered the highest per-capita international trade and Buenos Aires was the second most important port in the hemisphere next to New York.²² The nature of its population and the success of its early economic development created a sense of “manifest destiny” that gave Argentina the false hope of becoming a great international power. Argentineans naively believed that by exporting meat, grains, wool, and hides, it could guarantee itself a prosperous future without having to build a navy to protect its trade. Such illusions became a source of conflict with the U.S. in the twentieth century, as there was too wide a gap between Argentina and the U.S. in assessing Argentina’s place in the world.²³

Considering Argentina’s traditional resentment of American influence in the hemisphere, its pursuit of nuclear autonomy and rejection of the NPT in the 1970s may not be surprising. Having higher levels of scientific and technological expertise than their neighboring countries, it was a matter of pride for Argentineans to have an indigenous mastery of nuclear technology.²⁴ The traditional rivalry with Brazil was also an important factor that spurred the development of nuclear technology.²⁵

Interest in nuclear development for Argentina burgeoned immediately after the Second World War, but it was not until the establishment of the National Atomic Energy Commission (CNEA) in May 1950 by President Juan Domingo Peron²⁶ that Argentina’s nuclear development significantly unfolded.²⁷ The CNEA, directly under the control of the head of state with generous resources, centralized all matters of nuclear development from mining, technical training, nuclear-plant building to reprocessing. In 1957, the

1816 and the new country was called the United Provinces of the Rio de la Plata. The constitution was proclaimed in 1853 and the country took the name Argentina in 1860.

²² Joseph S. Tulchin, *Argentina and the United States: A Conflicted Relationship* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), p. 17.

²³ Tulchin, *Argentina and the United States*, Chapter 2. Argentina’s position of neutrality in WWI and nonbelligerence (1940) in WWII can be examples of American suspicion toward Argentina’s unreliability. On the other hand, Argentina’s major concern in foreign affairs was how to block expanding American hegemony in the hemisphere. For instance, in February 1946, the U.S. State Department published the “Blue Book” exposing Peron’s involvement with the Nazi, but it had a reverse effect of contributing to Peron’s election. Washington’s rejection of Argentine military purchase in 1947, giving most Latin American aids to Brazil, and intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 can also be sources of Argentine suspicion of American hegemony.

²⁴ For instance Argentina has three Nobel Prize winners in sciences: Bernardo Houssay (1947, medicine), Luis F. Leloirwon (1970, chemistry), and Cesar Milstein (1984, medicine). Julio C. Carasales, “The So-called Proliferator That Wasn’t: The Story of Argentina’s Nuclear Policy,” *Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Fall 1999), p. 52.

²⁵ The rivalry between Argentina and Brazil can be viewed as a continuation of the historic Spanish-Portuguese competition in the Americas. Their only military conflict was in 1825 which created Uruguay in 1828. From 1906 to 1909 arms race escalated to the brink of war, but Argentina backed away.

²⁶ Colonel Juan Domingo Peron won the election in February 1946 by the support of working class voters and anti-U.S. sentiment. Election slogan was “Braden or Peron” where Spruille Braden was former U.S. Ambassador to Argentina who claimed Peron’s Nazi connection in his “Blue Book” that he wrote with Cordell Hull. Peron was reelected in 1951 and served as president until his exile in 1955.

²⁷ There was one major fiasco in the early nuclear development. An Austrian nuclear physicist, Ronald Richter, appointed by Peron in 1949, claimed that he had successfully developed a thermonuclear fusion. Peron announced the news in March 1951, the so-called “Huemul Project,” which turned out to be false. Richter was dismissed in November 1952, the laboratory dismantled, and nuclear research became centralized in the CNEA. Tulchin, *Argentina and the United States*, p. 108; Redick, “Nuclear Illusions,” p. 2; Norman Gall, “Atoms for Brazil, Dangers for All, *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 23 (Summer 1976), pp. 180-81.

CNEA made two important decisions: not to import research reactors but to build them in Argentina; and not to import fuels for the reactors.²⁸ The CNEA's role was important to the extent that the history of Argentina's nuclear development has been directly linked to that of the CNEA.²⁹

Pursuing the national goal of nuclear autonomy and resisting the American influence in the hemisphere, however, did not stop Argentina from taking advantage of Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace program. Since 1953, the CNEA had been producing uranium ore from the natural uranium deposits, and in 1955, Argentina signed an agreement for nuclear cooperation with the U.S. The program helped Argentina train two hundred scientists and build its first nuclear research reactor RA-1 at Constituyentes in 1958 based on a U.S. design.³⁰ By 1967, the CNEA was able to construct three additional research reactors (RA-0, RA-2, RA-3) on its own, and in 1968, it purchased a 320 MWe heavy-water power reactor, Atucha-1, from Siemens AG of West Germany. Going with the German reactor was to avoid reliance on the U.S. for fuel; however, Argentina remained dependent on the U.S. for its supply of heavy-water and also on West Germany for fabrication of the fuel rods for Atucha-1.³¹ In the same year, the CNEA built a lab-scale plutonium reprocessing facility at Ezeiza which became operational in 1969. The U.S. had approved reprocessing 13 kilograms of spent fuel rods from the RA-1 until 1973 when the Ezeiza reprocessing facility was dismantled.³² What is interesting is that nuclear cooperation between Argentina and the U.S. first began in 1955 and continued through 1973 while Argentina's independent stance against regional and global nuclear nonproliferation norms began to take shape during that period.

Consistent with its search for nuclear autonomy, Argentina refused international proposals that could interfere with the development of an indigenous nuclear option. A prelude to Argentina's noncompliance began to develop at this time with three important incidents. First, Argentina rejected the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections on its nuclear facilities until West Germany, the vendor of Atucha-1, insisted that the Atucha-1 be safeguarded. Because of its need for U.S. supplied heavy-water and for fuel fabrication technology from West Germany, Argentina relented and accepted the safeguard.³³ Second, in September 1962 when Brazil proposed a Latin American Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ), Argentina did not initially support the initiative, but reluctantly joined others at the UN General Assembly, Resolution 1911 (XVIII), in 1963

²⁸ Gall, "Atoms for Brazil, Dangers for All," p. 183.

²⁹ The important role played by CNEA is in Emanuel Adler, *The Power of Ideology: The Quest for Technological Autonomy in Argentina and Brazil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 280-326; Jorge Sabato, "Atomic Energy in Argentina: A Case History," *World Development*, Vol. 1, No. 8 (August 1973), pp.

³⁰ RA-1 was a LWR using 20% enriched uranium, generating 40KWt. [Jones 223, Poneman 1982, Spector 1984: 200, Adler: 291, Carasales 1999: 53.]

³¹ Atucha-1 was commissioned in 1974. All of Argentina's nuclear power plants use natural uranium as fuel and heavy-water as a moderator and coolant. [364 Mwe in Redick 5] Leonard S. Spector, *Nuclear Proliferation Today* (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1984), p. 201.

³² Enriched Uranium for RA-1 was supplied by the U.S. In 1972 Argentina purchased a second nuclear power plant at Embalse from the consortium of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited and Italmimpianti of Italy. It was also a heavy-water, natural uranium based reactor that began generating electricity in 1983. After initial resistance, Argentina accepted IAEA safeguards agreements. Spector, *Nuclear Proliferation Today*, pp. 203-4.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

which ultimately resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in September 1968. During the UN General Assembly discussions, Argentina asserted that a NWFZ could freeze Latin American states into a permanent state of nuclear inferiority, and thus sought to preserve the right to conduct “peaceful nuclear explosions (PNE).”³⁴ Although Argentina signed the Treaty, it did not ratify it refusing to be “contracting parties” for twenty-five years until January 1994.³⁵ Third, Argentina was one of only a few nations to abstain from the UN General Assembly vote for the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in June 1968. Argentina stayed out of the NPT, coining a phrase that often heard in the nuclear proliferation debates that the NPT would, “disarm the unarmed” while imposing no restrictions on the superpowers’ arms race.³⁶ Although Argentina opposed nuclear weapons proliferation, it rejected the tools used by the international community to achieve that objective.³⁷ It was only in December 1994 that Argentina joined the NPT. Also, the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG or London Club) meeting secretly held in London and convened by the U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, in 1974 offended Argentine and Brazilian sensitivities.³⁸ In short, from the mid 1960s through the early 1990s, Argentina consistently refused to join nuclear nonproliferation regimes, whether global or regional, while pursuing nuclear autonomy.

As for domestic politics from 1950 to 1975, instability and complexity typified Argentina’s politics. It underwent a series of economic crises (1952, 1956, 1959, 1962, 1966, 1975), three military coups (1955, 1962, 1966) and two intervening semi-democratic and democratic periods (1957-1966 and 1973-1976).³⁹ During this period, Argentina’s domestic politics reflected a continuous struggle for power among three dominant players: the military, the PJP (Peronist/Justicialist Party), and the UCR (Union Civica Radical). Behind these major players existed unions, business sectors, and the people. In six government changes during the period, most regimes had a short lifespan of less than three years, and the two longest regimes were led by strong dictators, Peron and Onganía. In a period of frequent regime change when instability had been the norm rather than the exception, a legitimacy crisis had relatively little effect on policy decisions for political survival. Due to the rampant political instability, the majority of the population usually received military coups with great relief and high expectations. Only Peron and the military regimes of Onganía subsisted long enough to cultivate thoughts of securing their political legitimacies.

³⁴ John R. Redick, “Nuclear Illusions: Argentina and Brazil.” Henry L. Stimson Center, Occasional Paper No. 25 (December 1995), pp. 16-7. Critical issues of disagreement were PNEs, the transportation of nuclear explosive devices through the zone by the NWS, the entry-into-force process, and treaty reservations.

³⁵ “The Contracting Parties are those for whom the Treaty is in force.” (Article 2 of the Treaty of Tlatelolco) Interestingly, Brazil refused to be the Contracting Parties as well. Although Brazil originally proposed the Treaty and signed it in May 1967, it refused ratification until May 1994.

³⁶ Gall, “Atoms for Brazil, Dangers for All,” p. 185.

³⁷ Presidential Decree No. 10936 in May 1950 expressed Argentina’s opposition to nuclear weapons proliferation. Sara Tanis and Bennett Ramberg, “Argentina” in William C. Potter, ed., *International Nuclear Trade and Nonproliferation: The Challenge of the Emerging Suppliers* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), p. 106.

³⁸ Redick, “Nuclear Illusions,” p. 19.

³⁹ 1957-66 was a semi-democratic period during which Peronism was banned but neo-Peronist activity was tolerated. In the 1973-76 democratic period, Peronism briefly returned to power.

2. Suspicious Activities and the Diversionsary War, 1976-1983

As Argentina's nuclear program advanced smoothly through the early 1970s,⁴⁰ three developments in the mid-1970s brought turbulence. First was Brazil's nuclear deal with West Germany in June 1975; second was the military's return to power for the sixth time in March 1976; and third was the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG or London Club) meetings from 1974 to 1977 that offended Latin American sensitivities. All events pushed Argentina toward hardening its position in search of nuclear autonomy, and the results were further alienating itself from the U.S. and strengthening its anti-colonial nuclear-unity with Brazil.

First, on June 27, 1975, Brazil signed an agreement with West Germany to purchase two 1,300 MWe, low enriched uranium, light-water reactors with the option to purchase six more units. Included in the deal were uranium exploration and mining, a pilot fuel fabrication plant to supply the reactors, a pilot plutonium reprocessing plant, and a large-scale uranium enrichment plant using the jet-nozzle technology.⁴¹ This represented a sale of the complete "nuclear fuel cycle," one of the largest transfers of nuclear technology to a developing country in history. What was alarming was not just the enormous size of the deal, but that Brazil would be able to produce plutonium and highly enriched uranium (HEU), key components of nuclear weapons. Announced only a year after India's nuclear test, Brazil's nuclear deal raised grave proliferation concerns to Washington and a strong motivation for Buenos Aires to catch up with its neighboring rival.

It is therefore surprising that as rivals, Argentina did not criticize Brazil's nuclear deal, but supported Brazilian rights to acquire advanced nuclear technology.⁴² Between nuclear rivalry and anti-colonial unity, Argentina's inclination began tilting towards the latter in the mid-1970s. Interestingly, Argentina welcomed the competition and accelerated its nuclear program to construct reprocessing and enrichment plants as well. In 1977, Argentina began constructing its Ezeiza pilot-reprocessing plant which was announced a year later.⁴³ By the time the plant's construction was announced, Argentina was secretly initiating its large-scale Pilcaniyeu enrichment plant. The announcement of the Pilcaniyeu plant was made five years later, after the defeat in the Falklands/Malvinas War. Thus, in 1977 and 1978, Argentina had secretly pursued nuclear plant construction that would later generate suspicions for potential nuclear weapons development.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ The second nuclear power reactor, Embalse (600 Mwe, heavy-water), was contracted with Atomic Energy of Canada, Limited (AECL) and Italmimpianti of Italy in 1973 that began generating electricity in 1983. It used the CANDU(Canadian-Deuterium-Uranium) reactor. On March 17, 1974 Atucha-1 was inaugurated for the first time in Latin America, making Argentina the leader of nuclear technology in the region. Daniel Poneman, "Nuclear Proliferation Prospects for Argentina," *Orbis*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Winter 1984), p. 862.

⁴¹ Redick, "Nuclear Illusions," pp. 6-9; Norman Gall, "Atoms For Brazil, Dangers For All," *Foreign Policy*, No. 23 (Summer 1976), pp. 155-201; David J. Myers, "Brazil: Reluctant Pursuit of the Nuclear Option," *Orbis*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Winter 1984), pp. 881-911.

⁴² Redick, "Nuclear Illusions," p. 19.

⁴³ Ezeiza plutonium reprocessing plant was claimed to be indigenous, but an Italian company, Techint, was known to have been involved in the construction. Milton Benjamin, "Argentina on Threshold of Nuclear Reprocessing," *Washington Post*, October 16, 1978.

⁴⁴ Earlier in April 1975 a member of a small provincial party allied with the PJP introduced a bill calling on the Argentine government to manufacture a nuclear bomb for national defense. Debate on

Brazil's largest nuclear deal with West Germany not only stimulated Argentina's pursuit of nuclear autonomy, but also promoted the prospect of anti-colonial unity between Argentina and Brazil.

Second, Argentina's aggressive turn in its nuclear program was further supported by a domestic impetus. General Jorge Rafael Videla's ascent to power on March 24, 1976 marked the end of the Perons' three-year democratic rule and with it, Argentina's political instability. The economic crisis of 1975 and political instabilities⁴⁵ had resulted in the military coup; and what followed was Videla's dictatorship that committed brutal human rights violations for the ostensible reason of restoring order. Most kidnappings, tortures, and violent military crack downs on insurgents characterized the Videla regime, particularly from 1976 to 1978.⁴⁶ These atrocities took place during the Carter Administration and Argentina's relationship with the U.S. hit rock bottom. Diplomatic conflicts became inevitable when the Carter Administration's foreign policy concerns focused on human rights while the Videla junta was obsessed with Argentina's international prestige fueled by nationalist sentiments.⁴⁷ Thus, on top of human rights issues, Argentina's construction of reprocessing and enrichment plants and its intent on building indigenous nuclear fuel and heavy-water manufacturing facilities aggravated the relationship with the U.S.

Third, one of the nonproliferation guidelines established in the NPT (Article III, 2) was to control the supply side of nuclear proliferation or the exports of equipment and materials that can be used to make nuclear weapons. The establishment of two informal nuclear supplier organizations, the Zangger Committee (or NPT Exporters Committee) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), in the early and mid-1970s became another source that evoked Argentina's nationalist sentiment.

Contrary to the supplier groups' claims, the Third World beneficiaries perceived the Zangger Committee and NSG as an "export cartel" to exploit Third World countries that needed assistance from the advanced countries for nuclear development.⁴⁸ For

acquiring nuclear weapons gathered strength in January after Atucha-1 went into operation. Jonathan Kandell, "Argentines Assay Their Atom Potential," *New York Times*, April 2, 1975.

⁴⁵ Domestic problems in 1975 included runaway inflation, severe recession, high unemployment, leadership crisis, factional struggles, and terrorist activities which all created the conditions for the acceptance of a military coup that promised to reestablish order. Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 214-5.

⁴⁶ The acts of terror had four principle moments: abduction, torture, arrest, and execution. In 1984 the CONADEP (National Commission of Disappeared Persons) documented 9,000 cases, but human rights organizations claimed 30,000 disappearances, mainly young people between fifteen and thirty-five years of age. Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 217-8. The mothers of the disappeared created an opposition group, "Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo" congregating every Thursday in front of the presidential palace demanding information about their lost ones. Charles Maechling, Jr., "The Argentina Pariah," *Foreign Policy*, No. 45 (Winter 1981-82), pp. 69-83.

⁴⁷ Videla had a lucky break in that the agricultural production from 1976 to 1978 was the highest since the 1930s, and in June 1978 Argentina hosted and won the World Cup soccer championship which was a uniting moment for the Argentineans. Tulchin, *Argentina and the United States*, pp. 143-6. However, Argentina's rank among international economies was at 82nd place in 1976 compared to the highest of 6th in 1928. Joseph S. Tulchin and Allison M. Garland, eds., *Argentina: The Challenges of Modernization* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1998), p. xi.

⁴⁸ A Third World perspective is in Munir A. Khan, "Nuclear Energy and International Cooperation: A Third World Perception of the Erosion of Confidence," Working Paper for the International

instance, from Argentina's perspective, the NSG guidelines represented superpower duplicity in that on the one hand, the Americans and the Soviets tried to prevent "horizontal proliferation;" on the other hand, they engaged in an insatiable nuclear arms race of "vertical proliferation." And in the name of nonproliferation, the two superpowers and NSG suppliers endeavored to keep a monopoly on nuclear supply and thereby fostered a dependence upon them by others.⁴⁹ The director of CNEA, Castro Madero, argued, "Secretly, ignoring the IAEA and without listening to the countries in receipt of that technology, the Club established safeguards conditions that were more rigid as regards the transfer of equipment, materials and services... In fact, this implied a flagrant violation of Article 4 of the NPT, as well as being an attempt to maintain hegemony in the industrial field and dependence on the part of the countries receiving nuclear supplies."⁵⁰ However informal, the NSG was regarded an additional means of discrimination for the non-NWS on top of the NPT.⁵¹

During these three developments, Argentina and Brazil walked hand in hand in opposing the Tlatelolco Treaty, preserving the right to PNE, rejecting IAEA full-scope safeguards inspection and refusing to join the NPT or to follow the NSG guidelines. When international pressures increased, Argentina and Brazil strengthened their defiance and nuclear unity. In January 1977, the foreign ministries of the two states issued a joint communiqué stressing the importance of nuclear cooperation and the initiation of nuclear technology exchanges.⁵² However, U.S. pressure was not the only source contributing to Argentine-Brazilian cooperation; Jorge Videla was also responsible for the detente. Although President Videla had refused to compromise with the U.S. on the issues of human rights and nuclear policy, within the junta he was identified as the dove seeking economic liberalism, anti-nationalism, and negotiations with neighbors in the region. When the Beagle Channel dispute with Chile came close to a war in November 1978, Jorge Videla convinced his colleagues to back down and accept the Pope's mediation at the cost of losing the support of young officers.⁵³ Then, in 1979, Argentina signed a treaty with Brazil establishing a framework for managing their energy and water disputes in the Rio de la Plata area. This was a highly significant initiative that removed a primary obstacle in their bilateral relations. This, in turn, led to the Foz de Iguazu nuclear fuel

Consultative Group on Nuclear Energy, Rockefeller Foundation/Royal Institute of International Affairs, September 1979.

⁴⁹ Sara Tanis and Bennett Ramberg, "Argentina" in William C. Potter, ed., *International Nuclear Trade and Nonproliferation: The Challenge of the Emerging Suppliers* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), pp. 95-109.

⁵⁰ Quoted in *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Abram Chayes and Antonia Handler Chayes, *The New Sovereignty: Compliance with International Regulatory Agreements* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 132.

⁵² The U.S.-Brazilian relationship went bad after Brazil's 1975 deal with West Germany. President Carter sent Vice President Mondale to West Germany in January 1977 to prevent the transfer of German reprocessing and enrichment technologies to Brazil. Carter's effort was fruitless and a joint communiqué between Argentina and Brazil was issued shortly after Mondale's visit. Redick, "Nuclear Illusions," p. 19.

⁵³ General Lucaino Benjamin Menendez was the one who pushed the event to the verge of war. Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 235, 242. The conflict centered on three tiny islands in the channel where Chilean control over the islands implied access to the Atlantic, a principle Argentina would not accept. Some argue that the Beagle Channel dispute was a prelude to the Falklands/Malvinas War. Tulchin, *Argentina and the United States*, pp. 143, 146.

cycle cooperation in May 1980.⁵⁴ It is therefore plausible to argue that Videla's good neighbor policy was reinforced by his anti-colonial stance against the U.S. What is particularly important to note is that Argentine-Brazilian cooperation began in the late 1970s under the military regimes of Videla and Figueiredo, before the advent of democratic governments in the two states. This undermines the "democratic triumphalist" argument that would connect the positive developments in Argentina's foreign relations with the democratic governments of Alfonsín and Menem in the mid-1980s after the Falklands/Malvinas War.⁵⁵ On the contrary, the initial momentum of cooperation began with the military dictators in Argentina and Brazil in a joint effort to stand up against what they perceived as "nuclear colonialism."

In terms of domestic politics, the military junta that had taken power in 1976 did not experience a legitimacy crisis until the early 1980s when the Falklands/Malvinas War erupted and resulted in the junta's demise. Although presidential power had been restrained by the commanders of the three military services, President Videla managed to maintain relative stability in the regime for a few years. Moreover, economic problems did not lead to a national crisis until 1980 that eventually became a debt crisis in 1982 with Mexico's announcement of moratorium. The junta's brush with war with Britain had the desperate diversionary intent on getting out of a domestic political stalemate which was caused by a declining economy.

As for Argentina's economy, the Videla junta had picked Jose Alfredo Martinez de Hoz, a proponent of international liberal capitalism, to take charge of the economy for five years without interruption.⁵⁶ The Minister of Economy, Martinez de Hoz, found problems in the Argentine economy—rampant inflation, recession, corruption, inefficient enterprises, and the balance of payment deficits—in the interventionist and welfare states that had been constituted since 1930. He took on ambitious reforms of economic liberalization in 1977 freeing interest rates, authorizing new banks and financial institutions, and diversifying financial instruments. Reform measures culminated with adopting "tablita" or the so-called pegged exchange rate in December 1978 that established a monthly devaluation scale of the national currency to a final fixed rate. However, "tablita" did not sufficiently reduce inflation due to growing uncertainty aroused by the overvalued peso. With it came a great influx of dollars from abroad—the origins of huge foreign debt—which was common throughout Latin America. Argentina, however, encouraged foreign debt by allowing the money to be placed in the money markets which provided huge returns with minimal risk. Such a situation created a highly unstable economy because most money was placed in short-term activities and

⁵⁴ Redick, "Nuclear Illusions," p. 20.

⁵⁵ Barletta shows a good account why democratic peace explanation does not work. Michael Barletta, "Argentine and Brazilian Nonproliferation: A Democratic Peace?" in Henry Sokolsky and James M. Ludes, eds., *Twenty-First Century Weapons Proliferation: Are We Ready?* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), pp. 148-67. Also, see Mitchell Reiss, *Bridled Ambition: Why Countries Constrain Their Nuclear Capabilities* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 1995), p. .Between regional rivalry and colonialist pressure, Argentina cooperated with its rival, Brazil, which had a common interest in pursuing nuclear independence. Both perceived the U.S. as a colonial threat which strongly opposed their search of nuclear autonomy.

⁵⁶ It is puzzling why the military junta selected a proponent of liberal free-market economy. Tulchin argues that "the junta never contemplated the contradictions between the long-term economic and strategic requirements of a national security regime and the painful process of reinserting the Argentine economy into the international market." Tulchin, *Argentina and the United States*, p. 142.

speculation was rewarded. Many firms borrowed in dollars to invest in plant modernization or in the financial markets. When the pay back time came, the firms resorted to new loans which resulted in a vicious cycle doomed to fail. Thus began a financial crisis in March 1980 when the Central Bank finally allowed the bankruptcy of the country's largest bank and three other important ones. The financial problem continued and worsened until the end of the military government.⁵⁷

In March 1981 General Roberto Marcelo Viola became president despite the Navy's opposition, and with him a new economic team was in place. The government had to go into debt to cover its expenses, and throughout 1981, the peso was devalued 400 percent in the midst of an outbreak of inflation that reached 100 percent annually. In 1982, the state nationalized the private debt of the companies and the era of "easy money" came to an end. When Mexico announced its moratorium, the credit for Latin America was cut off while interest rates and the amount of debt rose in a spectacular fashion. From \$8.5 billion in 1979, the debt increased to \$25 billion in 1981 and \$45 billion by early 1984. Foreign creditors began to demand tighter conditions and foreign debt preoccupied the national economy. As a result, economic growth dropped from a high of 7.1 percent in 1979 to below 1.0 percent in 1981.⁵⁸

The Falklands/Malvinas War that lasted three months from April 2, 1982 represented an example of a military venture motivated by a diversionary intent when the junta faced mounting opposition to its rule.⁵⁹ At the start of Viola's presidency in March 1981, the media had become outspoken in criticizing the generals for the mismanagement of the economy. *La Prensa* and *Buenos Aires Herald* even called for an end to military rule.⁶⁰ In June 1981 the five largest political parties formed a common front or the *multipartidaria* and demanded a new electoral law that would permit open party activity and competition. In November, the junta issued guidelines for a new electoral law that was an important step ultimately leading toward restoration of civilian rule. Viola's presidency, however, lasted only nine months. In December, due to ill health, Viola was replaced by General Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri.⁶¹ The change to President Galtieri did not ease bitter public resistance. Rising economic problems turned the traditional supporters of the junta, such as independent farmers and entrepreneurs, into severe critics. When organized labor, the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), broke the ban on union activities and demonstrated for "bread, freedom and work" at the Plaza de Mayo on

⁵⁷ Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 221-25.

⁵⁸ Richard Ned Lebow, "Miscalculation in the South Atlantic: The Origins of the Falklands War," in Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), pp. 89-124, esp. p. 98.

⁵⁹ The invasion, "Operacion Rosario," had been on the junta's agenda since January 12, 1982, shortly after Galtieri took power, but the invasion was not supposed to occur until the end of the year and at the earliest on May 15. Deborah L. Norden, *Military Rebellion in Argentina: Between Coups and Consolidation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 71. For diversionary aspect of the war, see T.V. Paul, "The Argentine Invasion of the Falklands/Malvinas, 1982" in *Asymmetric Conflicts: War Initiation by Weaker Powers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 146-65; and Jack S. Levy and Lili I. Vakili, "Diversionary Action by Authoritarian Regimes: Argentina in the Falklands/Malvinas Case," in Manus I. Midlarsky, ed., *The Internationalization of Communal Strife* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), pp. 118-46.

⁶⁰ *La Prensa*, March 23-27, 1981; *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 25, 1981.

⁶¹ Having served as military attaché to the U.S., President Galtieri was willing to align Argentina firmly with the U.S. by supporting its covert war in Central America.

March 30, 1982, the junta finally reached a critical juncture in needing to step down or soundly restore its legitimacy. As argued by many, the choice in the latter for the junta was to pursue a recovery of sovereignty over the Falklands/Malvinas Islands.⁶²

Why did “diversionary-compliance” not occur in the spring of 1982? It is debatable whether the junta had no choice but to go for a “diversionary-war” path. In hindsight, it seems apparent that President Galtieri and the junta occupied the islands and waged war with Britain to divert domestic problems, but from a theoretical perspective, going to war was not their only option. They could have attempted to make diplomatic negotiations with Britain over the sovereignty issue of the islands or/and renounced nuclear ambition to draw international support for the regime which the U.S. and the international community would certainly have offered, especially when foreign debt was the most urgent problem of Argentina’s failing economy. Between the two paths, however, the junta chose the “diversionary-war.” Excluding the misjudgment factor on the part of the junta,⁶³ and focusing on the internal conditions that drove them toward “diversionary-war,” the logic is clear. It was because the primary cause of its legitimacy crisis was intrinsically an internal problem of economic decline where international community had no part to play in with a domestic opponent. In the absence of external support for the domestic opponent, diverting domestic opposition by making an enemy out of Britain was a better option when the sovereignty problem over the islands was an unresolved issue. In addition, the opponent’s call for democratization shared by the international community was weaker than the nationalist sentiment shared with the junta. Thus, when the invasion of the islands sparked broad popular support and no one questioned the legality of the takeover in Argentina, the military venture appeared to be the right choice for the junta. In short, there was weak third party or external assistance to the domestic opposition that otherwise could have pushed the leaders to appease the third party and go for “diversionary-compliance.”

Argentina’s surrender on June 14 was shocking for the Argentineans who had been manipulated to believe that they were winning the war. Argentina’s economy was suffering even more after it had become an international pariah resulting from the U.S.’s economic sanctions imposed on April 30. The outcome of the war, thus, completed the process of public disillusionment of a failed economy and military oppression. As a result, the transition to democracy and civilian rule came naturally in a fashion where the junta was not forced out but left the government.⁶⁴ Democracy was regarded as a

⁶² Lebow, “Miscalculation in the South Atlantic,” pp. 98-99; Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, p. 242. Argentina and Britain had conducted yearly negotiations since 1965 until the “lease-back” debacle of November 1981 where British hardliners opposed any concessions to Argentina and defeated the proposal. For the diversionary aspect of the war, see T.V. Paul, “The Argentine Invasion of the Falklands/Malvinas, 1982” in *Asymmetric Conflicts: War Initiation by Weaker Powers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 146-65, and Jack S. Levy and Lili Vakili, “Diversionary Action by Authoritarian Regimes: Argentina in the Falklands/Malvinas Case,” in Manus I. Midlarsky, ed., *The Internationalization of Communal Strife* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), pp.

⁶³ Lebow argues miscalculation on both sides is claimed to be the cause of the Falklands/Malvinas War. But, the focus of discussion here is on the internal reason that pushed the leaders to the brink of a war whether the actual breakout was caused by miscalculation or not.

⁶⁴ David Pion-Berlin, “The Fall of Military Rule in Argentina: 1976-1983,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Summer 1985), pp. 55-76; and Tulchin, *Argentina and the United States*, pp. 157-58. Thus, the effect of “diversionary-war” is questionable.

panacea after the double jolt of economic crisis and military defeat, and there was little resistance from the junta about giving up its power. Argentina was unique among other Latin American countries in that the transition to democracy occurred with a complete rupture with the past.⁶⁵ Unions called for people to have a massive march in protest, and party enrollments increased enormously. The junta finally set up a date for a national election in October 1983, and the election results were a victory for the Radical Party's (UCR) Raul Alfonsin and the Peronist's defeat for the first time in its history.⁶⁶ This election turned out to be the final death knell to the military rule that had lasted nearly fifty years except for a short period in 1973-76.⁶⁷

On the nuclear side, on November 18, 1983, just one month before the transition to the Alfonsin government, the director of CNEA, Carlos Castro Madero announced the existence of the Pilcaniyeu uranium enrichment facility which had been secretly constructed in 1978 in the province of Rio Negro.⁶⁸ This was allegedly an indigenously constructed facility that had no legal requirements to submit to the IAEA safeguards inspection. Madero and President-elect Alfonsin claimed that the plant would be used strictly for peaceful purposes, but the announcement shocked the international community as it was the first Third World nation to possess an enrichment plant. It also provoked suspicions of a military intent especially when it was announced a few months after the defeat in the Falklands/Malvinas War.⁶⁹ Interestingly, however, Brazil publicly congratulated on Argentina's scientific achievement and the U.S. held back taking diplomatic initiatives other than insisting on IAEA safeguards. Even though this was a major setback for American nonproliferation efforts such as the NSG movements, Washington preferred to await the inauguration of the Alfonsin government. In fact, prior to the announcement, in August, the U.S. had approved the German transfer of 143 metric tons of heavy-water to Argentina despite congressional criticism to the Reagan administration's decision. None of the supplier countries—West Germany, Britain, and the U.S.—wanted to embarrass the new government of Alfonsin. With Alfonsin's

Although the junta had full support from the public for going to war with Britain, it ended up losing office after the defeat in the war.

⁶⁵ The departing military government made no request to the incoming civilian government. This total break gave the Alfonsin government greater freedom to implement its policies. Joseph S. Tulchin and Allison M. Garland, eds., *Argentina: The Challenges of Modernization* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1998), p. 44.

⁶⁶ Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 247-54. UCR won 51.7% of the votes and PJP, 40.1%. Levitsky, *Transforming Labor-Based Parties in Latin America*, p. 120; Liliana De Riz, "From Memem to Memem: Elections and Political Parties in Argentina," in Tulchin and Garland, *Argentina*, pp. 133-62, esp. 143.

⁶⁷ Why "diversionary-compliance" not occurred after the defeat in the Falklands/Malvinas War has to do with the fact that the junta did not try to stay in office. The cause of the military regime's fall, however, is attributed to a pattern of self-defeating behavior on the part of the armed forces that had started two years prior to the war. Pion-Berlin, "The Fall of Military Rule in Argentina," p. 56.

⁶⁸ Milton R. Benjamin, "Argentina Claims To Build Plant for Enriched Uranium," *Washington Post*, November 19, 1983. The Pilcaniyeu enrichment plant was made in response to the 1978 U.S. cutoff of enriched uranium for Argentina's research reactors. About the motivation of the announcement, Madero said it was stimulated by a desire to boost the national morale after the defeat in the Falklands/Malvinas War. See Redick, "Nuclear Illusions," p. 21.

⁶⁹ In a June 1990 interview, Alfonsin said he was taken by surprise when the existence of the facility was announced prior to his inauguration. See Leonard S. Spector and Jacqueline R. Smith, *Nuclear Ambitions: The Spread of Nuclear Weapons, 1989-1990* (Boulder: Westview, 1990), p. 224.

inauguration, President Reagan even ended the ban on U.S. arms sales and military aid that had been imposed in 1977.⁷⁰

3. The Turnaround for Survival, 1984-1990

The announcement of the Pilcaniyeu enrichment plant in November 1983 appeared to be a prelude for a major shift in Argentina's nuclear policy as the world eagerly awaited the start of the new democratic government. As a civilian president, Alfonsín had little interest in Argentina's nuclear program in the first place, and he even actively considered ratifying the Tlatelolco Treaty, if not the NPT, to negotiate Western assistance on Argentina's claims to the Falklands/Malvinas Islands.⁷¹ The first positive sign shown by President Alfonsín was to appoint for the first time in its history a civilian engineer, Alberto Constantini, as the head of the CNEA in December giving high expectations of a major change in Argentina's nuclear policy. However, the new president's overwhelming political challenges—prosecuting former military leaders for human rights violations, negotiating a settlement with Britain over the Falklands/Malvinas Islands, resolving the Beagle Islands dispute with Chile,⁷² and above all, fighting high inflation of twenty-five percent per month—delayed redirecting Argentina's nuclear program. In addition, political opposition from the Peronist and right-wing parties blocked the new government from ratifying the Tlatelolco Treaty.⁷³ The more fundamental reason, however, was that President Alfonsín continued the previous priorities in foreign affairs that would not let him easily change Argentina's nuclear policy. The gist of his policy as shown in his inaugural address was that Argentina, as a Western nation, nonaligned and developing, was going to maximize the autonomy of the nation in its project of reinsertion into world affairs.⁷⁴ Although Argentina was historically and culturally associated with the Western countries, it was not going to form any military bloc with them, but rather broaden linkages with Latin American nations. Contrary to the anticipation of the Western countries, what the new democratic government sought was more continuity than change in its nuclear as well as foreign policies.

Nuclear cooperation with Brazil, which is one of the major contributions of the Alfonsín government, thus can be understood as a continuation of Argentina's anti-colonial unity rather than a move toward fundamental change in its nuclear posture. Nonetheless, there can be no denying that great progress was made in its bilateral relationship with Brazil in regards to their nuclear programs. Interestingly, what helped

⁷⁰ John M. Goshko, "President Ending Ban on Military Aid and Sale to Argentina," *Washington Post*, December 9, 1983. Details on the Pilcaniyeu announcement are in Spector, *Nuclear Proliferation Today*, pp. 218-24.

⁷¹ Jackson Diehl, "Nuclear Policy Shift Signaled in Argentina," *Washington Post*, December 9, 1983.

⁷² The Beagle Channel Treaty with Chile was signed in November 1984.

⁷³ Spector, *Nuclear Proliferation Today*, p. 227. Britain's refusal to talk to the Alfonsín government also strengthened the nationalist right-wing position.

⁷⁴ Tulchin, "Continuity and Change in Argentine Foreign Policy," in Tulchin and Garland, *Argentina*, pp. 163-97, esp. 172-73. In his meeting with President Reagan, Alfonsín particularly criticized Reagan's Nicaragua policy which was improved as a result.

the Argentine-Brazilian cooperation improve was the lack of attention from Washington as well as the international community. Two factors helped facilitate this timely breathing space for Argentina. First, Washington was preoccupied with the Soviet Union changing its leaders from Andropov to Chernenko (February 1984) and to Gorbachev (March 1985); and secondly, the U.S. officials did not believe that much could come out of Argentine-Brazilian bilateral cooperation that would curtail American influence in the hemisphere.⁷⁵ Riding on this window of opportunity, Alfonsín began the policy of peaceful nuclear cooperation with Brazil. On February 7, 1985, Alfonsín and Brazil's President-elect Tancredo Neves met in Buenos Aires and reportedly agreed on an eventual joint nuclear inspection arrangement.⁷⁶ Neves's sudden death in April, however, stalled the inspection arrangement. His appointed successor, Jose Sarney, lacked the political power to formalize the arrangement. Despite this setback, nuclear cooperation continued and Presidents Alfonsín and Sarney met each other at Iguazu Falls on November 29 and established a Joint Committee on Nuclear Policy. This Joint Committee was significant in two ways: first, as an open declaration, it was an important step toward reducing nuclear tensions between the two countries. Further, it signaled that the two leaders were intent on ending the nuclear suspicions of their past military regimes.⁷⁷ Second, Joint Committee dialogue eventually evolved into the Commission of ABACC⁷⁸ which was an agency of mutual nuclear inspection and verification much like the IAEA of the international community.

From November 1985 on, cooperation with Brazil progressed swiftly and significantly not only on nuclear issues, but also in other areas. The joint nuclear commission met in March and July of 1986. In the first meeting, the participants endorsed the mutual inspection concept, and decided that the data obtained would not be shared with the IAEA. This showed that by March 1986 Argentina was still not willing to open up to the global nuclear nonproliferation regimes. In the July meeting, they focused on nuclear safety issues and also signed a major trade agreement that promised a phased elimination of trade barriers and the creation of MERCOSUR.⁷⁹ Even more significant in the summer of 1986 was that Argentina took a first step toward support for a global nonproliferation treaty by secretly ratifying the PTBT. The vote in the Congress on July 30 was not publicly announced for fear that the politically sensitive issue might stir up a nationalist uproar.⁸⁰ Apparently, ratifying the PTBT was not intended to please the domestic audience nor was Argentina's national interest involved in the ratification when nothing much could change insofar as Argentina was resistant to the NPT. It is

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁷⁶ Richard Kessler, "Argentina, Brazil Agree to Mutual Inspection of Nuclear Facilities," *Nucleonics Week*, March 14, 1985, p. 14.

⁷⁷ Leonard S. Spector, *The Undeclared Bomb* (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1988), p. 236.

⁷⁸ ABACC (Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials) commenced operation in December 1991. Redick, "Nuclear Illusions," p. 21.

⁷⁹ MERCOSUR (Southern Cone Common Market) is a Latin American trade bloc that was established in March 1991 by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. MERCOSUR gave the Bush and Clinton administrations a convenient grouping to deal with Latin American countries, paying less attention to the individual nations.

⁸⁰ President Alfonsín sent the ratification to Congress on January 24, 1986. Thus, it took six months for Congress to approve the PTBT. How it was voted is unknown. Richard Kessler, "For the First Time, Argentina Has Ratified an International Nuclear Treaty," *Nucleonics Week*, Vol. 28, No. 19 (May 7, 1987), p. 6.

interesting then, why President Alfonsín took such a big symbolic step toward nuclear restraint.

What had happened in domestic politics up to the summer of 1986 shows a correlation between Alfonsín's mounting leadership crisis and Argentina's ratification of the PTBT. Even though there had been a sense of national unity around *alfonsinismo* with the start of a new democratic era, it did not last long. Upon inauguration Alfonsín faced three major political challenges. First was the legacy of the "dirty war" or the seven-year campaign of state-sponsored terror by the military juntas; second was international isolation and border clashes; and third was economic crises and foreign debt. In the first challenge, the military tribunals proclaimed the actions of the juntas appropriate, thus the president passed the cases to the civil courts. Public trials began in April 1985 that caused military unrest, and a year later resulted in sending three former presidents—Videla, Viola, and Galtieri—and other officers to prison. Although the sentencing attempted to provide a closure to the human rights violations of the past, a few military officers staged an uprising against the prosecution a year later in April 1987 in which the government agreed to exonerate the subordinates in the dirty war.⁸¹ The ending of the uprising was the beginning of a series of disasters for the government for its weakness as more uprisings occurred in 1988. As for dealing with the second challenge, to subdue the nationalist outcry preemptively, Alfonsín held a plebiscite in November 1984 showing that the public favored a peaceful solution to the border conflict. Only after that did Alfonsín accept the Pope's arbitration and Argentina signed the Beagle Channel Treaty with Chile. Despite these diplomatic achievements, Alfonsín had trouble dealing with the third challenge which was the severest of all.

Inflation and foreign debt constituted the most serious economic problems, and thereby the most critical challenge Alfonsín faced. Inflation increased 434 percent, 688 percent, and 385 percent in 1983, 1984, and 1985, respectively.⁸² Foreign debt had been less than \$10 billion in 1976, but it was \$45.9 billion in 1983. This represented nearly 80 percent of GDP when GDP in 1983 was roughly equivalent to that of 1970. Foreign debt kept growing to \$48.8 billion in 1984 and \$49.3 billion in 1985.⁸³ Despite such serious economic problems, the Alfonsín government refused to follow the IMF suggestions and adopted a strategy of brinkmanship by suspending all debt payments to force the IMF and foreign governments to come to the rescue.⁸⁴ However, this game of financial "chicken"

⁸¹ Colonel Aldo Rico was the leader who staged the "Holy Week crisis" for four days. The officers condemned the generals who discharged their responsibility in the dirty war on their subordinates. The uprising received no support from the society, but the government was perceived to have capitulated to the officers as it agreed to support the Law of Dutiful Obedience. Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 262-5.

⁸² Consumer price index based on figures in Daniel Marx, "The Road to Sustainable Growth, 1983-1993," in Joseph S. Tulchin and Allison M. Garland, eds., *Argentina: The Challenges of Modernization* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1998), pp. 217-37, esp.219.

⁸³ From 1971 to 1985, Argentina's external debt increased nearly \$41 billion where capital flight by wealthy Argentines accounted for 63.3 percent of the increase in debt burden. William C. Smith, *Authoritarianism and the Crisis of the Argentine Political Economy* (CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), pp. 270-1, 284.

⁸⁴ Bernardo Grinspun was the Minister of Economy who advised President Alfonsín to reject the IMF's orthodox adjustment policies. The IMF orthodoxy aimed to (1) correct the external trade deficit and stabilize international reserves at safe levels; (2) curtail and eliminate the public-sector deficits; and (3)

did not work. After tense negotiations, the IMF and other banks suspended new loans to Argentina in March 1985. Argentina's relations with the IMF, the U.S. Treasury, and the creditor banks reached its lowest point and foreign exchange reserves were depleted. To make matters worse, domestic organized interests such as the CGT, the UIA or the SRA began to criticize Alfonsin's economic management, and the threat of hyperinflation became imminent.

Under these dire circumstances, Alfonsin implemented emergency measures; the so-called the "Austral Plan." In June 1985, this brought temporary relief to the economy and a political victory for Alfonsin's Radical Party (UCR) in the November elections.⁸⁵ The Plan's effects were short-lived, however, and in less than a year, by February 1986, there were powerful political demands on revising the Austral Plan's freeze on wages and prices. Alfonsin also faced right-wing violence in May and June. By September 1986, the Plan's failure was apparent and a series of economic shocks were implemented to salvage the economy.⁸⁶ By the time the fourth shock was administered in July 1987, labor and business resistance exceeded wage and price controls as inflation accelerated significantly. As noted earlier, the "Holy Week" military uprising in April 1987 had shown Alfonsin government's limited ability in dealing with social unrest. The economic failure led to the Radical Party's defeat and the Peronist's return in the September 1987 congressional elections.⁸⁷ However, Alfonsin responded with a cabinet reshuffle and more shocks to stabilize the economy. The debt crisis continued to drive economic policy and in 1988, a sense of desperation in the Radical Party intensified with the upcoming presidential election in May 1989. Inflation kept increasing (except for one year when the Austral Plan's effects had been reflected in 1986). Finally when the government announced the peso's devaluation in February 1989, inflation exploded and registered over 3,300 percent in the year making it the worst economic crisis ever. By April, the hyperinflation brought about looting in the supermarkets. In May, inflation was at 70 percent and 114.5 percent in the following month.⁸⁸ The Argentine economy was on the verge of collapse. It was during these times of economic crisis that Carlos Saul Menem of the Peronist Party was elected president in May 1989. This ended five years' of Alfonsin presidency. Emergency situations at the time called for an early termination of the Alfonsin government and President Menem took office in July 1989, five months earlier than the officially scheduled inauguration date prescribed by the Constitution.

Previously in the summer of 1986, Alfonsin had ratified the PTBT and also made the Joint Nuclear Commission and trade agreements with Brazil. These actions were

bring inflation under control. Smith, *Authoritarianism and the Crisis of the Argentine Political Economy*, p. 276.

⁸⁵ The Austral Plan was designed by the new Minister of Economy, Juan Sourrouille. The Plan included a new currency, the austral, that replaced the peso at a rate of 1 austral per 1,000 pesos with the exchange rate devalued 18 percent in terms of the U.S. dollar.

⁸⁶ They were implemented in April 1986(2nd shock), February 1987(3rd the Australito), July 1987(4th), October 1987(5th), and August 1988(6th the Spring Plan).

⁸⁷ Smith, *Authoritarianism and the Crisis of the Argentine Political Economy*, pp. 281-3.

⁸⁸ Eugene Robinson, "Bombs Explode as Looting Continues in Argentina," *Washington Post*, May 31, 1989; James Brooke, "Argentina in Chaos as Prices Rise Hourly," *New York Times*, June 2, 1989; Deborah L. Norden and Roberto Russell, *The United States and Argentina: Changing Relations in a Changing World* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 43.

implemented when his grip on domestic affairs was continuing to worsen. By July 1986, the effects of the Austral Plan had worn out, inflation had returned, and Alfonsín had faced right-wing violence twice already. It was under these increasingly troubling domestic political situations that the ratification of the PTBT occurred. The act may not have been implemented to help Alfonsín alone as the ratification required sufficient amount of support from political parties; however, a correlation between the domestic leadership crisis and the ratification of the PTBT was evident. Alfonsín made a symbolic gesture of complying with one of the global nuclear nonproliferation norms for the first time in Argentina's history, not in a high time of his presidency (earlier years of his presidency), but rather when his leadership was plummeting into uncertainty.

Nuclear cooperation with Brazil can be understood in a similar context. When all things went wrong in domestic politics, Alfonsín was virtually saved by Brazil. From the summer of 1986 until the end of Alfonsín presidency, nuclear cooperation with Brazil developed significantly making it a major success in his presidency. Presidents Alfonsín and Sarney met four times during then and took turns visiting each other's restricted nuclear facilities. At the Brasilia Summit in December 1986, the two leaders agreed to joint research on breeder reactors and Brazil permitted Argentine nuclear aides to visit key parts of its classified nuclear research center at the Institute for Nuclear and Energy Research (IPEN).⁸⁹ This represented a significant step in building mutual trust on nuclear matters that brought about more dramatic events between the two countries. Before Brazil formally announced the successful operation of its indigenous gas centrifuge facility in September 1987, President Sarney had personally informed President Alfonsín of the development well in advance. Alfonsín reciprocated by inviting Sarney to visit the "unsafeguarded" Pilcaniyeu gaseous diffusion facility in July 1987.⁹⁰ This highly significant confidence building measure led to making their nuclear programs mutually transparent. In response, Sarney invited Alfonsín to the official inauguration of the Aramar gas centrifuge enrichment facility at Ipero in April 1988 where Alfonsín was the first non-Brazilian to enter the plant.⁹¹ On November 29, the two leaders met for the fifth time when Alfonsín invited Sarney to visit the Ezeiza pilot reprocessing facility near Buenos Aires where they issued the Declaration of Ezeiza or the Treaty on Integration, Cooperation, and Development. This was another significant milestone for Argentina because of the sweeping character of the Treaty and the support of all political parties for the ratification.⁹² Thus, political support for rapprochement with Brazil can be seen in the context of a broader process of economic integration that was needed for Argentina to exit the economic crisis at the time.

In conclusion, three factors characterized the dramatic improvement in Argentina's Brazilian relationship during the Alfonsín presidency. First, although Alfonsín's meeting with Brazil's President-elect Neves in February 1985 set the nuclear cooperation in motion, it could also be seen as a continuation of the anti-colonial unity that had been initiated by the previous regime of Videla in May 1980. Between the

⁸⁹ Spector, *The Undeclared Bomb*, p. 238. The facilities included an experimental centrifuge uranium enrichment unit and a lab-scale plutonium extraction facility neither of which was subject to IAEA safeguards.

⁹⁰ Redick, "Nuclear Illusions," p. 22.

⁹¹ Barletta, "Argentine and Brazilian Nonproliferation," p. 155.

⁹² Julio C. Carasales, "The Argentine-Brazilian Nuclear Rapprochement," *Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Spring-Summer 1995), p. 41.

Goliath of the NPT and the lesser rival of Brazil, Argentina pursued a good neighbor policy with Brazil to fend off what perceived to be a larger colonial threat. Second, Alfonsín's political opponents—the Peronist and the right-wing opposition—had rejected ratifying the Tlatelolco Treaty let alone the NPT, but their opposition to nuclear rapprochement with Brazil was much weaker. Indeed, after the September 1987 elections when Alfonsín had lost congressional seats, Peronists declared support of Alfonsín's nuclear cooperation with Brazil. Thus, in the latter half of his presidency nuclear cooperation with Brazil was perhaps the only relief Alfonsín was able to obtain from his failing governance. It conveniently gave him a policy instrument with which he could foster a national unity in the struggle against nuclear colonialism. Third, as noted before, Alfonsín's efforts to improve the bilateral nuclear relationship with Brazil had to do with the broader process of economic integration that was expected to help the Argentine economy. In that aspect, Alfonsín enjoyed the support of all parties in pursuing rapprochement with Brazil while he had little hope of improving his leadership in domestic politics.

President Carlos Menem acceded to the presidency in July 1989 amid an acute crisis characterized by hyperinflation, market dislocation, capital flight, and riots and looting. If Alfonsín's priority upon inauguration had been rebuilding democratic institutions, Menem's urgent mission was surviving the economic crisis and restoring government's credibility. Menem represented the old-style Peronism during the presidential campaign promising a salary increase in the classic populist style; however, as President at that critical juncture in 1989, he completely turned around to declare himself a supporter of a "popular market economy" and pushed for reforms.⁹³ In a shocking about-face, Menem praised the opening up of the economy and announced privatization of public companies, liberalization of trade, fiscal austerity, and condemnation of state interventionism. These neoliberal reforms were the most far-reaching in Latin America at the time and they were carried out with little intra-party opposition.⁹⁴ Such a drastic ideological conversion of Menem was significant in two ways: first, Menem's bold about-face was directly proportional to the rate of risk associated with the return of Peronism; second, it brought changes in Argentine foreign policy that entailed alignments with U.S. positions.⁹⁵ In other words, to survive the crisis, despite being a Peronist himself, Menem turned against the traditional Peronist policies, and abandoned Peronism's nationalist foreign policy in favor of pro-U.S. orientation.

President Menem designed Argentine foreign policy to strengthen his economic model. He appointed a Harvard trained economist, Domingo Cavallo, as minister of foreign affairs, and Guido DiTella, also an economist, as ambassador to the U.S. who later became foreign minister.⁹⁶ The two ministers dominated the cabinet and shaped

⁹³ In November 1989, Menem used two major laws to increase his executive power, the Law of Economic Emergency and the Law of State Reform. Also, his Decrees of Necessity and Emergency was similar to state of emergency. Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, p. 288.

⁹⁴ It is obvious that an external shock—the debt crisis—was the spark that brought changes to President Menem. But, why he chose the "popular market economy" and, moreover, how he got away with pursuing neoliberal economic policy is puzzling. Levitsky argues that loosely organized structure of the PJP enhanced the party's flexibility, and thus, helped survive the crisis. See Levitsky, *Transforming Labor-Based Parties in Latin America*, p. 144.

⁹⁵ Torre 204-9; Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 285-9.

⁹⁶ Within a year Cavallo became minister of economics and DiTella became foreign minister.

Menem's foreign policy so closely to the U.S. that the Argentine-U.S. relationship was dubbed "carnal relations." DiTella stressed the need for Argentina to enter the "club of modern nations" and to do that he argued Argentina had to behave correctly and become a reliable, predictable partner.⁹⁷ Such a drastic change in foreign policy stance—from Alfonsín's nonaligned and developing Argentina that intended to maximize autonomy to Menem's Argentina emphasizing "club of modern nations" and pursuing "carnal relations" with the U.S.—was first reflected in February 1990 when Argentina restored diplomatic ties with Britain. Britain responded by lifting its military exclusion zone around the Falklands/Malvinas islands.⁹⁸ In the following month, two decisions by Menem represented another significant step toward "carnal relations." In March 1990, Menem froze the Condor II ballistic missile program⁹⁹ that had been in development after the Falklands/Malvinas War and which had been a source of conflict with the U.S. In the same month, the director of CNEA, Dr. Manuel Mondino announced terminating the Ezeiza plutonium reprocessing facility indefinitely.¹⁰⁰ Dwindling funding for the programs and U.S. pressure apparently played an important role in the decisions. Menem's policy change, however, was not simply a reaction to the lack of funding, but an active effort to appease the West. In September 1990, Menem decided to send troops to support the U.S. efforts in the Gulf War and a year later sent two navy frigates to the region. Such action was unique in Latin American nations.¹⁰¹ In May 1991, Argentina withdrew from the Non-Aligned Movement signifying a big step forward to the "club of modern nations." In short, having taken presidency during a time of national crisis due to near economic collapse, Menem took actions that would save the nation in a way that did not follow his party's nationalist tradition. Instead, he broke away from it and pursued an internationalist stance.

Why Menem changed to take an internationalist stance in dealing with the crisis is beyond the scope of the dissertation. The switch, from a Peronist nationalist presidential candidate to a promoter of market economy and internationalism as a President entailed dealing with the crisis situation that Menem faced at the time of his early inauguration. Comparing Menem's foreign policy decisions with those of Alfonsín in the earlier period however, provides an interesting perspective for evaluating the impact of crisis situations. Both Menem and Alfonsín took leadership under certain national crises (although of different degrees), and coping with the crises equally occupied their presidencies. The two presidents contrasted sharply, however, in that Alfonsín maintained the traditional path of seeking national autonomy in foreign policy whereas Menem discarded the nationalist path and became an internationalist. Why similar crises resulted in contrasting foreign policy outcomes is an interesting puzzle, especially when a Peronist Menem chose to turn against his party's roots. Although nuclear cooperation with Brazil had begun in the previous regimes, the sweeping changes Menem brought about in Argentina's foreign policy orientation were beyond comparison.

⁹⁷ Tulchin, *Argentina and the United States*, pp. 184-5.

⁹⁸ Spector and Smith, *Nuclear Ambitions*, p. 393.

⁹⁹ For Condor II missile program, see Reiss, *Bridled Ambition*, p. 83.

¹⁰⁰ Redick, "Nuclear Illusions," p. 3.

¹⁰¹ In September 1990, 15 out of 25 PJP senators opposed Menem's decision to send troops to the Gulf War, but Menem sent two ships to the region the next year without any consultation. Levitsky, *Transforming Labor-Based Parties in Latin America*, p. 166; Reiss,

Table 3. Similar Inaugural Situations, Different Foreign Policy Stances

	Raul Alfonsin (1983)	Carlos Menem (1989)
Inaugural Situations	- Military junta's collapse after the Falklands/Malvinas War - Economic crisis	- Alfonsin's early termination of his term - Severe economic crisis
Election Results	Radical 51.7% vs. Peronist 40.1%	Peronist 47.3% vs. Radical 32.4%
Agendas	Prosecuting human rights violators War termination Beagle Channel Conflict Inflation	Economy, economy, economy
Foreign Policy Stance	Nationalist (continuity)	Internationalist (change)
Positive Moves	Cooperation with Brazil Ratification of PTBT	Continued cooperation with Brazil Restored relations with Britain Froze Condor II missile program Froze Ezeiza Pt reprocessing plant Sent troops to Gulf War Withdrew from NAM Renounced nuclear weapons Ratified Tlatelolco Treaty Joined NSG Ratified NPT
Negative Moves	Kept Non-Aligned Movement Rejected NPT & Tlatelolco Treaty Rejected IMF plans Kept Condor II missile program	None
Differences	Had room for policy adjustment	Crisis situation

As noted before, Menem terminated the Ezeiza plutonium reprocessing facility in March 1990 ostensibly because of funding problems; however, a more intrinsic reason was to pursue his broader objectives of coordinating Argentina's financial and diplomatic relations with the West. The economic crisis Menem had taken over in July 1989 briefly eased in the fall, but returned with additional surges of hyperinflation at the end of the year and through the first half of 1990. It is interesting to note that the decision to shut down the reprocessing facility was made in the midst of unrelenting hyperinflation. At that time in March his public approval rate had dropped to 24 percent from 80 percent in mid-1989 when he first took command of the sinking Argentina.¹⁰²

Of all the changes Menem initiated, the most significant event occurred on November 28, 1990 in the town of Foz de Iguazu. President Menem and Brazil's President Fernando Collor de Mello announced the Foz de Iguazu Declaration on the Common Nuclear Policy where they formally renounced nuclear weapons and established a framework for the implementation of a bilateral and full-scope IAEA

¹⁰² Levitsky, *Transforming Labor-Based Parties in Latin America*, p. 171.

safeguards inspection. They also agreed to join the NWFZ through amendments to the Tlatelolco Treaty and to abandon the long-held option of developing PNEs.¹⁰³ The November 1990 declaration was a spectacular, historic event reaching the highest point of nuclear rapprochement. Agreeing to accept the IAEA inspection and the Tlatelolco Treaty, and renouncing PNEs let alone nuclear weapons was a radical turnaround from the past. The declaration changed Argentina's nuclear posture completely and permanently as the following years witnessed a series of events geared toward complying with the global nuclear nonproliferation norms.

Once the renunciation decision was announced, bilateral cooperation and compliance with nonproliferation norms proceeded smoothly in the next several years. As a first step, foreign ministers of Argentina and Brazil joined the Guadalajara Treaty in Mexico in July 1991, where they created the Joint System for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (SCCC) and the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC). These institutions were responsible for verifying all nuclear materials and facilities in the two states via a reciprocal inspection process. This process would make certain that these resources were not being diverted to the development of nuclear explosive devices. The two states also agreed to renounce PNEs stating that "at present no technical distinction can be made between nuclear explosive devices for peaceful purposes and those for military purposes."¹⁰⁴ When keeping the PNE option had been one of the core reasons of rejecting the Tlatelolco Treaty let alone the NPT, renouncing PNEs was a huge turnaround eliminating one of the critical obstacles in joining the treaties.

Given that the Guadalajara Treaty was a bilateral arrangement, the U.S., Germany, and Canada emphasized the need for full-scope IAEA safeguards, and such pressures were not strongly resisted; what resulted was the Quadripartite Agreement of December 1991. In the Four Party Agreement including the IAEA and the ABACC along with Argentina and Brazil, the ABACC became the principal safeguard authority sharing certain responsibilities with the IAEA. Modeled after the EURATOM-IAEA Safeguards Agreement (INFCIRC/193) of 1977, the Four Party Agreement's legal obligations were fully equivalent to the NPT (INFCIRC/153).¹⁰⁵ Thus, complying with the Quadripartite Agreement that required full-scope safeguards removed another obstacle in joining the Tlatelolco Treaty and the NPT afterwards.

As for the Tlatelolco Treaty, when the amendments on the responsibilities of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (OPANAL) were made in August 1992, the Argentine Senate unanimously ratified the Treaty in March 1993. The Chamber of Deputies finally ratified it in November 1993, bringing it into force on January 18, 1994.¹⁰⁶ First signed in 1968 and after two failed gestures of ratification by

¹⁰³ Redick, "Nuclear Illusions," p. 24; Carasales, "The Argentine-Brazilian Nuclear Rapprochement," p. 42.

¹⁰⁴ Carasales, "The Argentine-Brazilian Nuclear Rapprochement," p. 43; Redick, "Nuclear Illusions," pp. 24-27. The Treaty was ratified in December 1991.

¹⁰⁵ Argentina ratified the Four Party Agreement in August 1992, Brazil in February 1994, and the agreement entered into force in March 1994. Redick, "Nuclear Illusions," pp. 27-30.

¹⁰⁶ One of the problems to the Treaty was the lack of trust in OPANAL vis-à-vis the IAEA as an instrument of inspections. Text in ACDA website. Four states—Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Cuba—were not parties to the Tlatelolco Treaty at the time. Argentina had signed in 1968 but not ratified, Brazil and Chile previously had signed (1967 & 1967) and ratified (May 1994 & October 1974) but without waiving

Videla in 1978 and by Alfonsín in 1983, Argentina finally became a contracting party to the Tlatelolco Treaty. An important point is that the amendments served as political cover for Argentina to change its position though it had long criticized the Treaty.¹⁰⁷ That is because the key issues that Argentina had rejected in the Treaty did not change much with the amendments. What changed was not so much the content of the Treaty as Argentina's willingness to accept the Treaty.

Just before the Tlatelolco Treaty was about to enter into force President Menem in December 1993 announced his intent to seek ratification of the NPT. The NPT was submitted to congress in July 1994, approved with only token resistance by the Radical Party in December, and deposited accession on February 10, 1995. Considering its history of more than two decades of consistent resistance to the NPT, Argentina's accession to the NPT was surprisingly swift and easy. Moreover, Argentina did not simply join the NPT, but became an active participant in the NPT Review and Extension Conference held in April 1995 where it supported indefinite extension of the Treaty. Following the Extension Conference, Argentina continued to seek a nonproliferation leadership position at the United Nations proposing that the UN Security Council be empowered with new nonproliferation responsibilities.¹⁰⁸ In five years from 1990 to 1995, Argentina's decades of resistance completely dissolved and was replaced by its becoming a vibrant supporter of the NPT.

What explains such a drastic turnaround in Argentina's nuclear policy? Once Argentina crossed the bridge of nonproliferation with the Foz de Iguazu Declaration on November 28, 1990, the rest of the events unfolded swiftly without turbulence. The time span reaching that point of no return, then, would be sixteen months from July 1989 when President Menem took office to the renunciation declaration of November 1990. What factors affected Menem to take such a quick and extreme switch in nuclear policy? Why did Menem not take the diversionary-war path under crisis? There are three factors. First, the effect of the crisis situations on Menem's presidency was different from others in that Menem entered into the crisis as president with the mandate to find solutions. Menem had an urgent national economic crisis to deal with and he had not yet established his political legitimacy to worry about. Second, in an economic crisis where international assistance was essential, taking the diversionary-war path was not possible. It would have only worsened Argentina's economic crisis. Third, Menem's approval rate continued to drop from the time of inauguration as hyperinflation returned in the early 1990. Menem's personal survival was closely linked to the outcome of the national crisis.

In conclusion, the sudden and drastic switch in nuclear policy occurred during the worst economic crisis in Argentina's history. Menem's decisions to renounce nuclear weapons, to ratify the Tlatelolco Treaty, and to join the NPT, thus, were an effort to seek international support for the purpose of surviving the national crisis. Although the decisions may not have been directly targeted to his personal survival, his political

the conditions (Article 28) required for the Treaty to enter into force, and Cuba had taken no action at all until March 1995. Carasales, "The Argentine-Brazilian Nuclear Rapprochement," p. 43.

¹⁰⁷ Reiss, *Bridled Ambition*, p. 65. The key issues that Argentina had refused to accept the Tlatelolco Treaty were: PNEs, transportation of nuclear explosive devices through the zone by the NWS, entry-into-force process, and treaty reservations. See Redick, "Nuclear Illusions," pp. 16-19, 34-36.

¹⁰⁸ Redick, "Nuclear Illusions," p. 38.

survival was closely linked to the outcome of the crisis. In that sense, it can be concluded that Argentina's nuclear renunciation was an act of diversionary-compliance.

Summary of Argentina Case

Reviewing forty years of ups and downs in Argentina's nuclear program shows that the two variables—domestic crisis and norm pressure—had effects on Argentina's nuclear posture changes. Interestingly, most of the time in Argentina's case, the two variables turned out to complement each other in that when domestic crisis was high, norm pressure stayed low, and *vice versa*; both thus had equal impact on nuclear renunciation. Moreover, the overall level of domestic crisis stayed low under the military junta's dictatorship most of the time. Only twice in forty years of its nuclear history (in 1982 and in 1989) did Argentina's domestic crisis reach its highest peak anticipating diversionary moves by the leaders. Diversionary actions occurred both times indeed, but in contrasting ways. The latter case (1989) turned out as diversionary-compliance where President Menem declared renouncing nuclear weapons jointly with President Collor of Brazil. The former case (1982), however, led to a move in the opposite direction: to the Falklands/ Malvinas War.

Why similarly intense domestic crises led Argentina to two contrasting paths seems puzzling. A careful scrutiny of the events, however, has revealed that the third party's role—mainly the position of the U.S. or norm pressure—was decisively different. In 1982, Argentina's nationalist sentiment supported the leaders' effort of invading the Falklands/Malvinas islands, and external help was not only unexpected, but also meaningless. The U.S. had stayed neutral in the beginning of the conflict and only later supported the British side. Thus, the diversionary-war path gave better incentives for the leaders in dealing with crisis. In the 1989 crisis, however, the new democratic leadership desperately needed external assistance for survival to the extent that the entire country's survival depended on it. When Washington's support was vital in overcoming domestic crisis, the leaders had a better chance of survival by taking the diversionary-compliance path. The two incidents have clearly showed that under similar domestic crisis situations the third party's position can be a decisive factor in yielding different results.

President Menem renounced nuclear weapons in November 1990 when Argentina was going through the worst economic crisis in its history. Although Argentina never crossed the nuclear threshold and whether it had intended to do so may never be known, Argentina's decades of defiance against regional and global nuclear nonproliferation norms revealed that it had always wanted to leave the nuclear options open. Thus, the switching of posture from a nuclear threshold country to complete renunciation sufficed to fit Argentina in the nuclear renunciation case. This process tracing of nearly half a century of Argentina's nuclear history confirms the diversionary-compliance hypothesis.

An important point to note is that Argentina's nuclear renunciation cannot be understood without taking into consideration the bilateral context of Brazilian cooperation. From the first Foz de Iguazu nuclear fuel cycle cooperation in May 1980 between Videla and Figueiredo and the subsequent Iguazu Falls meeting between Alfonsín and Sarney in November 1985 to the final Foz de Iguazu declaration of November 1990 between Menem and Collor, cooperation with Brazil was the starting point. It also connected the two states together in their respective moves towards nuclear

renunciation. Despite different nuclear histories, Argentina and Brazil trod the renunciation path jointly and never alone.

South Africa

South Africa's case will show only the abstracts of part 1 and part 2, and a full description of part 3 for space considerations.¹⁰⁹

1. Planting the Atomic Seed, 1945-1974

From the end of the Second World War to 1974, South Africa's nuclear development program first began and cruised on favorable circumstances. South Africa's need for foreign capital and technological support conveniently met with the advanced Western states' search for uranium and business interest in the inception of the Cold War. Such mutual strategic and economic needs produced a cooperative mood between South Africa and the Western powers rendering the human rights issue less important in their relations. After the National Party came to power in 1948, its control of the government had never really been challenged despite domestic unrests caused by apartheid. But, as apartheid became increasingly salient in the 1960s, it began to exact tolls on South Africa's nuclear collaboration with the U.S. which had to go through adjustments.

2. Growing Pains and Bombs, 1975-1983

1975 to 1983 was a tumultuous period for South Africa. While South Africa's nuclear development program had sailed on a smooth current up to 1974, all the favorable conditions changed afterwards. Apartheid was the main, if not the only, culprit. Civil unrest reached its peak pushing the government to reform the Constitution. South Africa's brazen pursuit of nuclear ambition began to grow visibly drawing international concerns while India's PNE test earlier had a ripple effect of turning the international community into a nuclear watchdog. International pressure intensified to the extent that South Africa suffered all aspects of foreign relations including the nuclear collaboration with the U.S. by the end of the period. From the Cold War context, an exogenous factor—the Angolan Civil War—drove the apartheid regime further into isolation as the overall American foreign policy toward southern Africa shifted. In domestic politics, Prime Minister Vorster resigned over a political scandal, but the National Party's hold on power never faltered until the end of the period. During this frantic time, South Africa built nuclear weapons.

3. Crossing the Rubicon for Survival, 1984-1993

The third period contains relaxing of global as well as regional security tensions as the Cold War neared the end. Meanwhile South Africa's ruling party went through the worst legitimacy crisis in its history caused by the constitutional reform and chronic economic

¹⁰⁹ South Africa case was presented at 2004 APSA Conference in Chicago.

problems. External pressures were never absent, but paled behind internal problems. In this final period, a staunch apartheid leader changed his position to share power with the African National Congress (ANC). Before this dramatic display of political transformation occurred, South Africa dismantled its nuclear weapons in secret and joined the NPT. Such a sea of change would have us believe that the leadership should be responsible for bringing about the great transformation of South Africa, particularly in renouncing nuclear weapons. However, nuclear renunciation had more to do with the leader's survival maneuver than his personal leadership. President de Klerk was thrown into a situation where giving up nuclear weapons was the best way to promote himself internationally when faced with a domestic legitimacy crisis.

Before the new constitution unleashed the largest civil unrest, South Africa enjoyed a temporary peace in the border with the help of American mediation. In February 1984 after the costly fight under Operation Askari, South Africa reached the Lusaka Agreement with Angola which stipulated a ceasefire and the withdrawal of South African forces from Angola. The architect of the Constructive Engagement, Chester Crocker played a significant role in mediating the two sides, and his assistance was essential again in having South Africa sign the Nkomati Accord with Mozambique the next month.¹¹⁰ These diplomatic successes created a euphoric mood that South Africa had changed its regional policy and that it was finally emerging from isolation. As a result of the two agreements, South Africa's prime minister had a rare opportunity to visit European states officially for the first time since the National Party (NP) came to power.¹¹¹ However, the sudden détente in the region did not last long.

The upsurge of internal violence that began in September 1984 when the new constitution came into effect lasted two years and was greater than the Sharpeville and the Soweto riots. During September sixty people were killed, thousands arrested, and the protests and violence spread to the East Rand, Soweto, townships near Pretoria, the Eastern Cape, and finally the Western Cape. In October the rioting became so serious that the Defence Force was called into townships to assist the police. The 1984 unrest differed from the previous ones in that protestors were well organized. Early in November South Africa entered a new era of protest where black trade unions joined the United Democratic Front (UDF) in a mass strike with students and workers united under a single UDF banner.¹¹² The death toll reached a peak in 1986 with 1,298 killed. What first set off the violence was a rise in rents and electric rates in public housing in the Vaal Triangle adding on to the resentment roused by the new constitution. However, beneath the precipitating factors, economic decline stood as the underlying cause.¹¹³

South Africa's economic problems in the mid-1980s were not so fortunate as in the past. Foreign investors were unwilling to bear South Africa's liability of political

¹¹⁰ The Nkomati Accord was a blow to the ANC as the Mozambique authorities dispelled military bases and restricted the ANC to a small diplomatic mission.

¹¹¹ Portugal was the only country that greeted Botha as an official state visitor. Switzerland, France, Britain, West Germany, Austria, and Italy treated him low-key.

¹¹² On the election day 80 percent of the coloured student population or sixty-thousand students boycotted classes.

¹¹³ Barber and Barratt, *South Africa's Foreign Policy*, p. 304; Hull, *American Enterprise in South Africa*, p. 324; Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century: A Political History—In Search of a Nation State* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 244.

instability and economic lethargy in the 1984 crisis. In the wake of dwindling international bank credit after the Soweto riot in 1976, the soaring gold price had brought in plenty of foreign exchange, and after the post-1980 gold price decline, short-term international credit had provided a shelter to South Africa.¹¹⁴ In 1983, however, the IMF for the first time linked apartheid to South Africa's economic problems and refused to grant loans. The IMF had represented a critical source of funds for offsetting South Africa's balance of payments deficits since 1970.¹¹⁵ Behind the IMF loan halt was the American Congressional Black Caucus leading the anti-apartheid movement. Overall lending by American banks dropped to a disturbing 16 percent to \$4.2 billion between September 1984 and March 1985.¹¹⁶ To make matters worse South Africa's Reserve Bank made a bad policy decision of raising prime lending rates to fight high inflation that resulted in financial institutions searching for short-term international loans with lower rates. This led to uncontrolled borrowing. As a result, South Africa's short-term loans grew substantially, amounting to \$14 billion while the long-term debt was \$10.3 billion by 1985.¹¹⁷ The short-term to long-term debt ratio became so high that any drop in the value of the rand increased the debt burden in dollar terms, and that was exactly what happened as the gold price dropped.¹¹⁸ With the already failing economy South Africa's debt burden increased to an unmanageable degree.

To restore stability, on July 20, 1985, President Botha declared a partial State of Emergency granting the government powers to detain anyone suspected of provoking violence. Such a repressive measure had worked in the past, but this time it backfired. In the first eleven days gold stocks plunged by 20 percent in value and capital outflows accelerated on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. When foreign investors had anticipated that Botha would respond to the crisis with a broad reform as with the new constitution, his emergency measure was a shocking disappointment.¹¹⁹ The crisis aggravated when Chase Manhattan Bank unexpectedly called in all outstanding loans to South Africa and refused to roll over credit lines to South African banks on July 31.¹²⁰ Other foreign banks followed Chase Manhattan creating a liquidity crisis to South Africa where a large portion of foreign liabilities was due at the end of August. Faced with the imminent crisis Foreign Minister Pik Botha toured foreign governments assuring that

¹¹⁴ Vishnu Padayachee, "The Politics of South Africa's International Financial Relations, 1970-1990," in Gelb, ed., *South Africa's Economic Crisis*, pp. 88-109, esp. 101.

¹¹⁵ As a founding member, South Africa first borrowed from the IMF in 1957. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90. Raymond Bonner, "Economic Problems Tied to Apartheid," *New York Times*, 17 November 1983.

¹¹⁶ Hull, *American Enterprise in South Africa*, p. 325.

¹¹⁷ Xavier Carim et al., "The Political Economy of Financial Sanctions," in Crawford and Klotz, eds., *How Sanctions Work*, pp. 159-77, esp. 162-3.

¹¹⁸ A short-term debt of 30 percent of the GDP is generally considered dangerous, and for South Africa it was 50 percent in 1985. In 1980 it was 20 percent (\$16.9 billion) that rose to 46 percent (\$24.3 billion) in 1984. *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Hull, *American Enterprise in South Africa*, p. 327.

¹²⁰ As to why Chase Manhattan Bank decided to halt rolling over maturing short-term loans, Waldmeir cites a Chase executive, "it was never the intention to facilitate change in South Africa, the decision was taken purely on account of what was in the interest of Chase and its assets." Patti Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: The End of Apartheid and the Birth of the New South Africa* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), p. 56. But, the Governor of South Africa's Reserve Bank claimed that the decision was based on "distorted perceptions of the nature, extent and possible consequences of South Africa's domestic political problems." Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, p. 324.

President P.W. Botha would announce a major program of reform at his opening address at the Natal Congress of the National Party on August 15.

However, President Botha's "Rubicon Speech"—broadcasted live to U.S., Britain, and Germany—turned out to be a disaster delivering nothing more than a big despair to the foreign observers. Instead of showing the statesman of reform to the world, Botha delivered a speech more suitable for his party members.¹²¹ For instance, a defiant Botha warned the world not to "push [him] too far" and that he was not prepared to lead "white South Africans and other minority groups on a road to abdication and suicide."¹²² As a result of the speech, the value of rand plummeted 26 percent to the U.S. dollar.¹²³ Finally, on 27 August the South African government announced a four-month unilateral debt moratorium on payment of \$13.63 billion, 57 percent of its total debt due at the end of the month. It also closed the stock exchange and the foreign exchange markets. This was an economic crisis that raised doubts about Botha's leadership forcing South Africa's business organizations to call for Botha's resignation.¹²⁴

One of the most important developments in the nuclear area at this time was that Botha reviewed the entire nuclear program in September 1985 and reconfirmed that the program would be limited to constructing seven fission devices.¹²⁵ This was the first sign of South Africa's nuclear ambition tapering off that ended in the eventual nuclear rollback four years later. What is more important is that, although Botha never decided to renounce nuclear weapons, his review of the program and limiting it to seven nuclear devices occurred when Botha's legitimacy crisis was at the highest level.

Foreign pressures increased when South Africa was undergoing the economic crisis. In July 1985, President Reagan signed the Export Administration Act which resumed the total embargo of exports to South Africa's military and police and prohibited sales of computers.¹²⁶ In the same month, the UN Security Council Resolution 569 urged all members to prohibit new nuclear-related contracts with South Africa, and France imposed an embargo in response to Botha's repression. In September, Reagan's executive order prohibited government export assistance to American firms in South Africa that did not adhere to the labor principles embodied in the Sullivan Code,¹²⁷ and the EC agreed to prohibit all new nuclear collaboration with South Africa. It is important

¹²¹ The cabinet members' suggestion for the speech contained more reform measures to deal with the crisis. However, Botha allegedly rewrote the speech at the last minute. De Klerk, *The Last Trek*, pp. 102-5. Botha's turnaround was influenced by a few factors: firstly, Chase Manhattan loan halt; secondly, the CP's opposition to reform; thirdly, five parliamentary by-elections scheduled in October; and lastly, a rumor has it that on his way to deliver the speech Botha had an altercation with a black taxi-driver and in a state of rage he changed his speech. [O'Meara 330] But, Botha denied that he ever changed the speech. Indeed, Botha had important reforms contained in the speech such as the promise of power sharing with blacks and reconsideration of pass laws. But, what was missing was the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela—what foreign observers wished to hear the most. Botha blamed his foreign minister for raising hopes of a dramatic change which he interpreted as a sabotage. Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle*, pp. 54-55.

¹²² Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, p. 261. Full text in *Business Day*, Johannesburg, 16 August 1985.

¹²³ Interestingly, de Klerk writes that the speech was estimated to have cost South Africa several billion rand—more than a million rand per word. De Klerk, *The Last Trek*, p. 105.

¹²⁴ Carim et al., "The Political Economy of Financial Sanctions," p. 165.

¹²⁵ Stumpf, "South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Program," p. 6.

¹²⁶ Hull, *American Enterprise in South Africa*, p. 333.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* [Sullivan Code]

to note that many of the sanctions implemented addressed only “new” collaboration, allowing existing contracts to continue.¹²⁸ While international pressures intensified, Botha extended the partial State of Emergency districts to Western Cape in October in an effort to counter the impression that collapse of the white regime was imminent.

Partly to placate foreign creditors in an increasingly hostile environment, Botha announced reforms at the opening session of parliaments in January 1986. However, his reforms were perfunctory at best simply to bolster his international image before the upcoming debt negotiations scheduled early that year. In a similar vein Botha lifted the “partial” State of Emergency in March only to reinstate a “national” State of Emergency in preparation of the Soweto anniversary in June.¹²⁹ The State of Emergency was extended each year for the next four years.¹³⁰ Foreign pressures were unrelenting, however. Sanctions against South Africa were adopted by six members of the Commonwealth in August and by the European Community the next month. In October, the U.S. Congress enacted the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act over President Reagan’s veto. The Act marked the crest of the sanctions wave although there was a loophole that the president could permit the importation of South African products considered vital to American interest, such as allowing South Africa’s uranium hexafluoride to be enriched in the U.S.¹³¹ In the following year, President Reagan proposed diplomacy instead of additional sanctions to bring about negotiations.¹³² This reflected the Reagan administration’s preference of using carrot to stick over South Africa.

With two rounds of debt negotiations in March 1986 and February 1987, South Africa reduced the debt by repayment and conversion through exit options. In doing so Botha used two tactics: threatening the creditors by the possibility of default and signaling reforms by releasing high-profile political prisoners hinting at Nelson Mandela’s release. By the Third Interim Arrangement in October 1989 South Africa effectively eased economic pressures.¹³³ The white apartheid regime seemed to have survived another legitimacy crisis. However, the economic crisis of 1985 left a permanent impact on the regime. As Carim et al write, after the crisis “the financial situation weakened long-term prospects for sustainable economic growth, and with it, the foundation of apartheid. As a result of this economic and political conundrum, the NP leaders increasingly acknowledged the need for some type of power-sharing and negotiations.”¹³⁴

The post-Soweto crisis of the mid-1970s had not called into question the form of the state nor the NP hold on political power. However, the 1985 crisis, where Botha’s

¹²⁸ Fig, “Sanctions and the Nuclear Industry,” pp. 88-89.

¹²⁹ Carim et al., “The Political Economy of Financial Sanctions,” p. 167. For instance, “Botha declared the repeal of the pass laws but in ways that merely recognized de facto practice. Proposals to incorporate blacks into the political system granted only minimal, non-elected positions at local levels, creating the appearance of reform without undermining white minority rule.”

¹³⁰ 12 June 1986, 11 June 1987, 10 June 1988, and 10 June 1989. Bureau for Information, *South Africa 1989/90: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa, 15th edition* (Pretoria: Department of Foreign Affairs, 1989/90), p. 271.

¹³¹ Hull, *American Enterprise in South Africa*, p. 341. Section 309.

¹³² The Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act required the president to impose further sanctions after a year if South Africa made no progress in ending apartheid.

¹³³ Carim et al., “The Political Economy of Financial Sanctions,” pp. 166-9.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

resignation was commonly discussed in the business sector, clearly showed that to win over moderate black Africans and foreign observers, reform must go way beyond the tri-cameral parliamentary constitutional change and undo not only the NP political monopoly, but also the existing form of the state.¹³⁵

After the political and economic crisis of 1985, South Africa became more defiant as it became a near absolute state. P.W. Botha was turning into an imperial president relying heavily on his “securocrats” in making important policy decisions. As with the State of Emergency of 1986, *Die Groot Krokodil*¹³⁶ wielded arbitrary power that corrupted him politically. For instance, Defence Minister Magnus Malan and State Security Council (SSC) Secretary Charles Lloyd were the real rulers of South Africa answerable to none but the President. Civilian politicians were marginalized and the Cabinet was not consulted on critical government policy decisions such as the May 1986 raids¹³⁷ which scuttled the Eminent Persons Group (EPG), the June 1986 State of Emergency, and the February 1988 banning of the UDF and 17 other organizations.¹³⁸

Disillusionment with Botha’s policies surfaced within the ruling party as the NP caucus had four distinct factions.¹³⁹ In May 1987’s general election, the NP lost eight seats losing 5.3% of its seat holdings although it kept the largest majority. The NP’s parliamentary seat representation had begun to decrease since the previous election of 1981. By the end of 1988 the NP was in danger of disintegration as most politicians longed for a return to “normal” politics and the civilian control over the NSMS that had greatly influenced Botha’s decision-making since the State of Emergency.¹⁴⁰

It was not until February 1989 after Botha suffered a stroke that F.W. de Klerk replaced him as the NP leader. When Botha’s attempt at staying as president failed, he resigned in August and de Klerk was sworn in as acting president.¹⁴¹ De Klerk was elected as president in the following month’s general election which was the biggest election setback for the NP.¹⁴² The most dramatic changes in South Africa’s history occurred under President de Klerk who entered the office with the lowest electoral support ever since the NP took power in 1948.

¹³⁵ O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, p. 362.

¹³⁶ “The Great Crocodile” was Botha’s nickname in the mid-1980s.

¹³⁷ SADF launched bombing raids on ANC bases in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Botswana. Botha was fed up with foreigners treating South Africa like a moral playground, a place where they could fight out their own domestic racial battles without worrying about the damage. Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle*, p. 97.

¹³⁸ EPG is a group of visitors for Nelson Mandela made by the British Commonwealth. O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, p. 350.

¹³⁹ The ‘PW Nats’ remained strong on security that faced off against ‘Fast Nats’ which increasingly alienated from the leadership and its lack of a reform strategy. The ‘New Nats’ still believed that the NP remained the best vehicle for reform. But, Botha’s intransigence could turn many Fast Nats and News Nats into ‘Past Nats’ who would leave the party. *Ibid.*, p. 372.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 377. The National Security Management System(NSMS) was established in August 1979, however it did not wield its power forcefully until after the 1986 State of Emergency.

¹⁴¹ There was confusion about the leadership for several months, from Botha’s stroke in January to his resignation in August. During then Chris Heunis was sworn in as acting president until Botha’s return to presidency in March while de Klerk was elected as NP leader in the caucus.

¹⁴² NP lost 30 seats or 18.1% from the previous election. See Appendix.

Nuclear renunciation was one of the important changes that occurred behind the scene while the apartheid regime was hanging onto its last breath.

Before de Klerk's inauguration, a prelude to the dramatic changes began with some positive gesture in South Africa's nuclear policy. This came prior to the relaxing of tensions in the region and before the fall of the Berlin Wall.¹⁴³ In January 1987, two months after the Anti-Apartheid Act went into force, South Africa's Atomic Energy Corporation (previously AEB) promised the U.S. government that it would observe the spirit of the NPT and adhere to the Nuclear Supply Group (NSG) guidelines.¹⁴⁴ This referred to the "Z-Plant" or the semi-commercial scale uranium enrichment plant that was under construction at Valindaba. Two years of negotiations with the IAEA about safeguarding the Z-Plant had been broken off in 1986 due to South Africa's intransigence. Pressed by the West, Botha publicly declared in September 1987 that South Africa would soon accede to the NPT. When the Z-Plant went into operation in August 1988, South African Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Mineral and Energy Resources led a delegation to the IAEA to discuss the question of NPT accession. These efforts helped South Africa remain in the IAEA General Conference from which the Group of 77 had tried to expel South Africa.¹⁴⁵ Whether South Africa's gesture was an instrumental adaptation to extend the IAEA membership or a genuine consideration for joining the NPT, its previous position of abjectly rejecting the NPT had certainly changed.

Lessening of regional tensions did not come until the mid-1988. South African troops had been heavily engaged in Angola in support of UNITA rebel forces. In what Savimbi called the biggest victory in October 1987, South African troops assisted UNITA against the "surrogate forces" of Cubans and Soviets to prevent MPLA control of Cuando-Cubango province.¹⁴⁶ Fighting continued until eventual military stalemate was followed by a new round of negotiations that began in May 1988 in London between South African, Angolan, and Cuban officials with Chester Crocker as mediator.¹⁴⁷ In August a ceasefire was agreed upon for Namibia's northern border, and in December 22, the three governments reached the Angola-Namibia Agreement. According to this tripartite agreement, all Cuban troops were to withdraw from Angola over a 27-month period in return for Pretoria's granting independence to Namibia and not intervening in Mozambique on behalf of the rebel groups. In turn, Angola was to

¹⁴³ Signs of decreasing global tension had begun a few years before the fall of the Berlin Wall. But, the regional tension in Southern Africa did not change until 1988.

¹⁴⁴ Masiza, "A Chronology of South Africa's Nuclear Program," p. 43. This is puzzling compared to South Africa's past behavior on such a pressure.

¹⁴⁵ The Western states wanted South Africa to stay in the IAEA, thus persuaded Botha that to remain in South Africa needed to join the NPT. David Fischer, "South Africa: As a Nuclear Supplier," in William C. Potter, *International Nuclear Trade and Nonproliferation: The Challenge of the Emerging Suppliers* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1990), p. 279.

¹⁴⁶ Savimbi was in a dilemma of militarily being reliant on Pretoria ever more while politically the alliance with South Africa becoming more embarrassing for him.

¹⁴⁷ The Soviet Union's new spirit of glasnost and its policy of disengagement from regional conflicts encouraged the American mediation. *Ibid.*, pp. 342-43.

remove ANC's anti-apartheid guerrilla training bases from its territory.¹⁴⁸ The settlement was a great achievement in reducing South Africa's regional security threat.

Shortly after the conclusion of the Angola-Namibia Agreement, F.W. de Klerk entered the political spotlight in Botha's place on February 2, 1989 as the NP leader having the most conservative track record among the four candidates.¹⁴⁹ De Klerk was deemed by domestic and international observers "unlikely to move ahead of the National Party in its cautious agenda for gradual change."¹⁵⁰ However, the most spectacular changes in South Africa's history began with President de Klerk legalizing the ANC and PAC on February 2, 1990, exactly one year after he became the NP leader. Right before then, the period between February and October of 1989 was when de Klerk had contemplated renouncing nuclear weapons. February was when de Klerk became the NP leader placing him in a position responsible for South Africa's precarious future, and November was when he was three months into his presidency giving instructions to evaluate the pros and cons of dismantling the nuclear devices and joining the NPT.¹⁵¹ As a former Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs responsible for the AEC, de Klerk was one of the few people who had knowledge of South Africa's secret nuclear program. After becoming president, de Klerk selected the "experts committee" for evaluation of the program with members who had held no enthusiasm for nuclear weapons and appointed a chairman, Dawid de Villiers, who had opposed the program. It was apparent that President de Klerk wanted to eliminate nuclear weapons.¹⁵²

The Y-Plant was shut down on February 1, 1990, and de Klerk's written instructions to proceed with the dismantlement were given on February 26. In July the dismantlement study was completed and according to the study six and a half nuclear weapons were all completely dismantled within a year, by the end of June 1991. South Africa joined the NPT on July 10, 1991 and signed the safeguards agreement with the IAEA on September 16 after destroying all the essential documents related to the nuclear program. However, it was not until

¹⁴⁸ Chester Crocker, "Southern Africa: Eight Years Later," *Foreign Affairs* (Fall 1989), p. 144; Gillian Gunn, "Unfulfilled Expectations in Angola," *Current History* (May 1990), p. 213; Spector and Smith, *Nuclear Ambitions*, p. 278.

¹⁴⁹ The other three candidates were: Chris Heunis (Minister of Constitutional Affairs), Pik Botha (Minister of Foreign Affairs), and Barend du Plessis (Minister of Finance).

¹⁵⁰ Christopher S. Wren, "Botha Quits as Head of Nationalist Party: To Remain President," *New York Times*, 3 February 1989. In the party caucus of NP, F.W. de Klerk or "Mr. National Party" was elected because he was seen as the conservative candidate to succeed P.W. Botha. Reform minded members voted against him in that poll. See Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle*, p. 112. However, de Klerk claims that his election presented an urgent desire among the caucus members to move ahead with reform implying that he was seen as a reform-oriented candidate. De Klerk, *The Last Trek*, p. 134.

¹⁵¹ Reiss, *Bridled Ambition*, p. 17; Liberman, "The Rise and Fall of the South African Bomb," pp. 73-74; De Klerk, *The Last Trek*, p. 274.

¹⁵² To argue that de Klerk had nuclear renunciation in mind even before becoming the leader and thus the decision relied heavily on him personally, one has to establish de Klerk's anti-nuclear position before his rise to leadership. However, there is no evidence and somewhat to the contrary. His nuclear position changed after he became the leader and such an abrupt change goes the same with his perspectives on apartheid.

March 24, 1993 almost two years later that de Klerk dramatically announced South Africa's past record of once having possessed nuclear weapons.

Thus, in less than two and a half years, from February 1989 to July 1991, South Africa transformed itself from a defiant pariah state with a suspicious nuclear program (with six nuclear weapons in fact) to a compliant member of the NPT coming clean as a non-nuclear weapon state. Such a sudden and drastic turnaround in a state's nuclear policy is unprecedented and baffling. What is more intriguing is that de Klerk kept the entire dismantlement process secret until March 1993. These facts raise two important questions. Firstly, what led South Africa to reverse the secret nuclear weapons development program that had painstakingly continued for the past fifteen years? Secondly, after the completion of dismantlement, why did de Klerk wait nearly two years to announce the fact when he could have announced it sooner or left it hidden forever?¹⁵³ In short, what motives worked behind in secretly renouncing nuclear weapons and publicly announcing it afterwards?

Diversionary-compliance or appeasing the West under the domestic legitimacy crisis is the answer. De Klerk took the leadership when the apartheid regime had the lowest support in the NP's history. Attacks to the regime came not only from the outside (international sanctions, the comprehensive anti-apartheid act, and the ANC riots), but internal division in the NP (Liberals vs Conservative Party)¹⁵⁴ was just as serious for the regime survival on top of South Africa's struggling economy. Under the circumstances status quo was not an option whoever was in the leader's position.¹⁵⁵ Changing apartheid was inevitable for South Africa to continue the apartheid regime's hold on power. In such a dire situation, de Klerk wanted an international "insurance" before setting on a dangerous journey of reforming apartheid, especially when "Mr. National Party"¹⁵⁶ had hoped to protect white minority rights as much as possible by insisting on his idea of "group security." Under these circumstances, President de Klerk dismantled nuclear weapons and joined the NPT, and announced the fact at

¹⁵³ Stumpf gives two reasons: "First, the state of the country's internal political transformation was not considered conducive to such an announcement at the time. Second, the confrontational verification process then unfolding between Iraq and the IAEA convinced South Africa that it could easily have been branded as a second nuclear outlaw nation despite the fact that Pretoria had not violated the NPT as Iraq had done." Stumpf, "South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Program," p. 7. However, Stumpf's reasons do not explain the timing of exposure in March 1993 when it needed not be announced at all.

¹⁵⁴ De Kerk's dilemma can be shown as follows:

Far Left	De Klerk	Far Right
Liberals ANC & Africans The Western World	Moderates	CP P.W. Botha Securocrats
Abolish Apartheid Share Power	Whites hold power, but allow ANC participation	Maintain Apartheid Resist International Pressure

¹⁵⁵ When President de Klerk announced legalizing the ANC on February 2, 1990 which is widely used as a metaphor for the beginning of a new era, de Klerk did not even inform let alone consult the NP caucus. But, not a single NP member protested his decision because the question of NP survival was too critical at the time. O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, pp. 404-6.

¹⁵⁶ A staunch follower of apartheid, F.W. de Klerk's nickname was Mr. National Party.

a convenient time later.¹⁵⁷ In short, confirming the diversionary compliance hypothesis, the decision to renounce nuclear weapons was made when the leader's domestic legitimacy crisis was high and the international community was pressing hard on South Africa.

Summary of South Africa Case

Reviewing the rise and fall of South Africa's nuclear weapons over forty-five years, South Africa's nuclear posture shows covariance with the fluctuation of its leaders' legitimacy crises. When the level of legitimacy crisis was low, South Africa's nuclear ambition stayed high; and when the level of legitimacy crisis was high, its nuclear posture swerved toward renunciation. It can, thus, be argued that the overall variation of South Africa's nuclear posture confirms the diversionary-compliance hypothesis. President de Klerk renounced nuclear weapons when he was under the worst legitimacy crisis in the National Party's history. When the apartheid regime seemed to have a slim chance of survival in the process of negotiating for the constitutional transition, de Klerk announced the news of nuclear renunciation to the international audience in a dramatic fashion. It is difficult to lose sight of the leader's self-serving motive behind these dramatic acts of nuclear renunciation.

However, the analysis does not show why nuclear rollback did not occur in September 1985 when both legitimacy crisis and norm pressure were at the highest levels. In fact, nuclear renunciation occurred four years later. There are two explanations. First, there is evidence that Botha indeed reviewed the entire nuclear program at that specific time and decided to limit it to seven nuclear devices. Apparently there was no decision to dismantle nuclear weapons, but neither was there a defiant attitude of building more nuclear devices as the diversionary-war theory would argue. Second, the nature of the crisis in September 1985 was confined to the economic area rather than pervading over the political arena. Although the riots and the economic crisis of national debt moratorium put the regime in jeopardy, the election results in 1987 did not show a significant loss of support for the regime. It was two years later, in 1989, that the ruling party lost the most seats ever in its history which can be translated as a more damaging legitimacy crisis.

Conclusions

The cases of Argentina and South Africa confirm the diversionary compliance hypothesis in that nuclear rollback occurred when both states were under severe domestic crises. Both Presidents Menem and de Klerk faced the worst economic crisis in each country's history. For President Menem international assistance was essential to save

¹⁵⁷ Multiparty negotiations (CODESA) for a new constitution started in December 1991, went through several negotiation stalemates, and finally reached an agreement on an interim constitution in November 1993. Thus, until November 1993, the apartheid regime had not given up hope of maintaining minority power, and it was March 1993 when de Klerk announced the nuclear history.

Argentina from the verge of collapse while his approval rating was continuously dropping even though he had been inaugurated with a mandate to solve his predecessor's failed economy. President de Klerk had to carry a dual burden of saving South Africa's economy as well as his National Party from the worst election loss in its history. Under the circumstances, signaling friendly gestures to the international community was inevitable for both leaders and nothing else could have given a more dramatic effect than giving up nuclear weapons. The two leaders gave up nuclear ambitions to survive.

A potential discrepancy with the hypothesis can be found in both cases when noting that there had been crises during their predecessors' governments and a nuclear rollback did not result. Alfonsín entered the presidency during the economic crisis that had begun in 1982 and President Botha had to face the 1985 economic crisis as well. However, they did not renounce nuclear weapons; their successors did. Although nuclear rollback did not occur during the presidencies of Alfonsín and Botha, the diversionary compliance hypothesis cannot be completely rejected since Alfonsín did comply with the PTBT rather unexpectedly and Botha ordered a halt in building more nuclear weapons. These decisions may not be an act of nuclear renunciation; however, it can be argued that there is a correlation between domestic crisis and a leader's survival instinct which can be found in such actions. Alfonsín clearly signaled a friendly gesture to the international community by joining the PTBT without giving up nuclear ambitions. Botha put a stop to constructing more nuclear bombs, perhaps pondering whether to give them up completely, although the time left for him was too short for us to ever know.

In conclusion, domestic crisis—especially an economic or a legitimacy crisis—was the precipitating factor that pushed the leaders to search for a way to survive. Giving up nuclear weapons was the best option to reach that goal as the nuclear nonproliferation norm had set a high price on nuclear weapons. Absent a severe domestic crisis, the leaders would not have sought such a drastic measure to appease the international community when they previously had so adamantly resisted. It is the survival mode of operation brought about by an internal crisis that sparked the transition from a hostile challenger to a friendly complier with the international community once the conditions were ripe for a nuclear rollback policy to be pursued.