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Nuclear Legitimacy: Why Insurgents Seek and Destroy Nuclear Technology

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ABSTRACT
Scholars observe that we know little about what motivates non-state actors' strategic interest in nuclear technology. This article argues that insurgents with ideological ambitions to form new states adopt acquisitive or destructive interests because nuclear power is a symbol of state legitimacy. State-seeking insurgents—separatists and revolutionaries—require domestic constituencies to recognize them as legitimate sovereigns. However, they differ in their need for international legitimation. Separatists' demand for international acceptance deters them from pursuing nuclear weapons, which poses an international security threat. They will nonetheless attack the state's nuclear facilities in areas they consider their national homeland to assert the legitimacy of their claims over these regions. Since revolutionaries do not expect international acceptance, they can pursue nuclear technology to enhance their legitimacy among key domestic audiences. Statistical analysis and qualitative examination support these hypotheses.

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In 2014, the Islamic State (IS) captured low-grade nuclear material from the University of Mosul, and the insurgent group later captured a hospital that housed a container of deadly cobalt-60.1 In May 2015, the group claimed that it could purchase a nuclear weapon from Pakistan within the year.2 Although these incidents did not culminate in serious threats, IS continued to pursue nuclear material that could be used to manufacture weapons capable of causing widespread civilian loss.3 Other insurgents take a different yet still disconcerting stance toward nuclear technology. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the ETA, a Basque separatist insurgent group in Spain, repeatedly bombed the Lemóniz Nuclear Power Plant and murdered its chief engineers to pressure the Spanish government to halt the plant’s development. In the end, the group was successful in forcing an end to the nuclear project.

What explains these contrasting stances that insurgents take toward nuclear technology? Unfortunately, we know little about the motivations behind non-state actor acquisition and destruction of nuclear technology. As one scholar laments, “one hopes that extensive knowledge of the supply side of nuclear technology is eventually matched by equal sophistication of regarding the demand side, especially the motivations and opportunities of non-state actors.”4 This article maintains that ideological objectives

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1 I want to thank Brian Lai and the editor and anonymous reviewers at Studies in Conflict and Terrorism for their feedback on previous versions of this manuscript.

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explain variation in insurgent nuclear interests. It identifies three different categories of interest—acquisition, destruction, and neutral—and theorizes the ways in which these vary according to insurgent ideology. Most central to the argument is that insurgents with state-seeking aspirations are most likely to adopt active interests, which include the acquisition or destruction of nuclear technology. To illustrate, it is clear that both the ETA and IS have state-seeking aspirations: the former to cleave its perceived national homeland away from an existing state, and the latter to forge an Islamic state over entire existing states. State-seeking insurgents, it is argued, take interest in nuclear technology because nuclear power is an important symbol of legitimate statehood, which these insurgents require vis-à-vis the existing states they fight against. However, the difference in their nuclear interest is explained by the difference between the state-seeking approaches illustrated in these examples: separatism and revolution. Studies on state-seeking and legitimacy primarily focus on separatists, which according to widely recognized international norms of self-determination strive to become accepted by the international community. Separatists must become recognized as legitimate sovereigns by both international and domestic audiences. Since separatists require this international recognition, they are unlikely to attempt to procure nuclear technology, which would pose an international security threat and dissuade the international community from accepting the secessionist state as a legitimate member. While they are unlikely to seek nuclear weapons for acquisitive purposes, separatists may attack nuclear facilities. Attacking nuclear developments in areas that separatists claim as their national homeland can assert the illegitimacy of state control over these regions, thereby enhancing their legitimacy in the eyes of domestic constituencies, such as the ethnic groups the separatists claim to represent, without risking complete alienation of the international community.

Revolutionaries are instead revisionists and attempt to forge new states based on principles not widely accepted as legitimate in the international community (e.g., Islamic law or communism). By capturing the state and imposing alternative forms of rule, revolutionaries present their statehood as a fait accompli to the international community. When nuclear weapons would enhance their image for key domestic constituencies (e.g., religious or socioeconomic groups), revolutionaries are less likely to be deterred from adopting an acquisitive stance since they already anticipate rejection by the international community. In short, the need for legitimacy compels insurgents to adopt active nuclear interests, although the form these interests take depends on the audience providing legitimacy. Both statistical analysis and qualitative exploration lend support to these hypotheses. In addition to their relevance for nuclear security, these findings have important implications for understanding insurgent behavior. While recent studies suggest that legitimacy-seeking insurgents adopt temperate behaviors, such as inclusive service provisions and rejection of child soldiers, this article indicates that legitimacy-seeking insurgents also pose unique security challenges.

**Non-state actors and nuclear technology**

Most research on violent non-state actors and nuclear weapons is descriptive and investigates the possibility of nuclear terrorism. Nuclear terrorism is an ambiguous concept, although traditionally it is defined as the use or acquisition of nuclear weapons by “non-government organization[s].” This article therefore focuses on violent non-state actors,
defined as armed groups in confrontation with the state, irrespective of whether they use “terrorist” tactics; following convention, the term “insurgent” is used interchangeably with “violent non-state actor.”

Additionally, as described below, the intention here is to delineate a theoretical framework to capture the various interests violent non-state actors can take in nuclear technology rather than acquisition and use alone.

Following the devastating 9/11 terrorist attacks, scholars and policymakers gave greater weight to the possibility that non-state actors, especially al-Qaeda, would acquire and use nuclear weapons. Insurgents could procure nuclear weapons through “loose nukes,” state patrons, or attacks against nuclear facilities. State failure in a state with nuclear weapons like Pakistan, which Foreign Policy’s Failed States Index rates in critical condition, could similarly allow insurgents to capture nuclear material. Despite the thankful infrequency with which these events occur, empirical researchers nonetheless use indirect strategies to argue whether non-state actors would acquire or use nuclear weapons. Non-state actors have sought, acquired, and used other weapons of mass destruction (WMD), a term that encompasses chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons.

Yet, a survey of 120 studies on non-state actor CBRN use concludes that most research is concerned with the potential to attain these weapons, rather than the motivations behind their acquisition. This is a significant oversight, since understanding the motivations behind acquisition is relevant to predicting which groups will acquire WMD in the first place. One quantitative study finds that non-state actors with transnational connections are more likely to pursue CBRN weapons, but finds no support for the common argument that those with religious ideologies are more inclined to use them. A data-driven investigation of lone-wolf and autonomous cell CBRN pursuit finds that these actors are usually motivated by narrow and idiosyncratic factors when compared with organized groups.

Missing from existing discussions is a conceptual framework for understanding the motivations underlying the different stances violent non-state actors take toward nuclear technology and a theoretical account explaining how these motivations influence their behavior. This article examines what we refer to as insurgent nuclear interests. This concept refers to the position or strategy violent non-state actors take toward nuclear technology, which ranges from complete indifference to an active campaign to acquire nuclear weapons. Shifting to nuclear interest is an analytically important move, since non-state actors have never acquired nuclear weapons and it is therefore impossible to analyze proliferation in stages of acquisition, as common in the quantitative study of nuclear proliferation among states. At the same time, researchers should not treat nuclear pursuit in isolation from other insurgent stances toward nuclear weapons. While insurgents may strive to acquire nuclear weapons for themselves, they may also undertake a campaign to destroy a state’s nuclear technology. A unified framework for understanding how insurgents view nuclear technology, and especially the motivations behind these views, is needed to better predict how insurgent will behave in the future.

**Explaining insurgent nuclear interests**

What strategic interests can insurgents adopt with regards to nuclear technology? Three stand out: acquisitive, destructive, and neutral. An insurgent group adopts an acquisitive
interest when it actively seeks nuclear material for itself. This includes seeking a nuclear weapon, material that would allow manufacture of a nuclear weapon, or lower-grade material useful for the construction of a “dirty bomb.” Insurgents take a destructive stance when, instead of seeking nuclear technology for themselves, they undertake efforts to destroy the state’s nuclear technology or violently inhibit its nuclear development. Lastly, insurgents may simply be neutral or indifferent toward nuclear technology.

It is worth justifying the decision to conceptually bundle all types of nuclear interest. After all, insurgents can pursue a range of technologies for acquisition, and they can similarly select from a menu of possible state targets beyond nuclear facilities. Does this suggest that acquisitive and destructive interests are best analyzed separately? I answer in the negative since, as I elaborate upon below, nuclear technology has exceptional symbolic importance that separates it from other categories of weapons or targets. The acquisition of nuclear technology would confer insurgents with symbolic statehood more than perhaps any other capability. Similarly, an attack against a state’s nuclear facilities is a more potent repudiation of its statehood than attacks against regular military facilities or mundane symbols of state power (e.g. post offices or schools). I therefore believe that pulling insurgent nuclear interests together under a common analytical framework is appropriate and useful.

My central argument is that insurgent ideology predicts nuclear interest, and more specifically that insurgents ideologically motivated to create new states are most likely to take active interests (acquisitive or destructive). Following a recent study on ideology among insurgent groups, ideology is defined here as “a set of more or less systematic ideas that identify a constituency, the challenges the group confronts, the objectives to pursue on behalf of that group, and a (perhaps vague) program of action.” This dovetails with the definition of ideology used in the terrorism literature, where “ideology is the beliefs, values, principles, and objectives—however ill-defined or tenuous—by which a group defines its distinctive political identity and aims.” In short, certain ideological objectives can suggest different nuclear interests as part of the program of action to achieve these aims. I am concerned with ideologies that make state building their primary objective, usually on behalf of a particular community insurgents claim to represent. Separatists and revolutionaries fit this description. For separatists, the primary objective is to cleave away a new state from an existing one, almost always on behalf of an ethnic group who considers the territory their ethnic homeland. For revolutionaries, the goal is to transform society and establish a new state based on alternative legitimizing principles (e.g. from a secular state to a religious one), which again aims to benefit a particular constituency (e.g. a religious group). State-building insurgents can be contrasted with otherwise similar groups. Many insurgents mobilized around ethnicity, for instance, do not make separatist claims, and instead seek goals such as increased regional autonomy rather than separatism. Similarly, many insurgents fighting over the central government only seek to control the levers of government rather than striving for revolutionary transformation. Some even fight for goals as moderate as a place within the current government.

Figure 1 presents a typology of insurgent ideology based on two dimensions: whether the group sets state-seeking as its primary objective and whether its ambitions are central or regional. Four ideological orientations are created from this two-by-two matrix: separatists, revolutionaries, ethnic insurgents, and centrist insurgents.
Additionally, the figure includes the nuclear interest associated with each ideology. I predict that insurgents with state-seeking ideologies adopt active interests in nuclear technology, with revolutionaries inclined toward acquisition and separatists toward destruction. In line with most social science theory, this typology implies a probabilistic relationship between ideology and nuclear interest; some deviations exist since numerous factors influence nuclear interest, although on average these strategic positions should follow ideologically-prescribed behavior. Moreover, this does not mean that most insurgents within each category adhere to their respective interests. As one scholar concludes, most insurgents should fail to evince any coherent nuclear objectives since a focus on nuclear power could divert from more pressing wartime objectives.28 Most insurgents should therefore be indifferent or neutral toward nuclear technology. It is not claimed, for instance, that most revolutionaries will adopt an acquisitive interest in nuclear technology. However, revolutionary insurgents are more likely than insurgents with other ideological orientations to take an interest in acquiring nuclear technology.

Why should insurgents with state-seeking ideologies more readily take a radical stand on nuclear technology? Recent studies note that insurgents fighting for new states require domestic and international legitimacy to become recognized as states.29 Although previous research posits that the quest for recognition should lead insurgents to adopt temperate behavior, such as inclusive service provisions and disavowing the use of child soldiers,30 there can be more worrisome consequences of the demand for legitimacy. One is the desire to acquire the symbols of statehood, or to weaken the existing state’s ability to claim these symbols for itself. Research on nuclear proliferation has long noted that the quest for national prestige is one reason states seek to develop nuclear weapons technology, and that “the attainment of nuclear threshold status may offer a state enhanced national prestige … because nuclear weapon capabilities are simply regarded as a trapping of national grandeur and stature.”31 Building and testing nuclear weapons are especially useful for generating prestige, since there is a distinct boundary separating success from failure.32

Seeking legitimacy through nuclear technology similarly makes sense for insurgents. One study points in this direction in discussing the various motivations behind nuclear acquisition, one of which the authors note is prestige:

“Historically, nuclear weapons have remained under the exclusive purview of nation-states, with one of the key motivations for state acquisition being the status which nuclear weapons are believed to bestow upon their possessors. How much more appealing then
might the possession of nuclear weapons seem for non-state groups, many of whom seek international legitimization? To the extent that terrorists believe that nuclear weapons could enable them to attain quasi-state standing or redress military imbalances vis-à-vis their purported enemies, the possession of such weapons, but not necessarily their use, becomes an attractive proposition.33

Two implications of this reasoning are as follows: insurgents with ambitions of statehood are either 1) more likely to seek nuclear technology because it bestows an aura of state-like legitimacy for the appropriate audience, or 2) more likely to destroy the state’s nuclear technology to weaken the state’s claim to legitimate rule. I argue that these correspond with revolutionary and separatist ambitions, respectively. Legitimacy seems more apt a label than prestige, since prestige implies special recognition bestowed to one member within a community of similar units.34 Insurgent groups, however, are not comparable to states, and state-seeking insurgents seek recognition as a state rather than special recognition from within the community of states. Legitimacy in the international context refers simply to the idea that “widespread consensus” exists in the international system that state rule is right or appropriate, and similarly for domestic audiences that their rule is viewed as right or appropriate.35 In its classical Weberian formulation, the state is the “human community that (successfully) lays claim to the monopoly of legitimate physical violence within a particular territory.”36 At the very least, insurgents need key “domestic constituenc[ies]” to whom they appeal for support to recognize them as legitimate rulers, and when the insurgents seek to be willingly accepted into the international community they must also derive legitimacy from an “international audience.”37 As Thomas Schelling notes, nuclear weapons can assist this goal by allowing insurgents to claim “legitimate authority in some existing state.”38

Separatists and revolutionaries, although both likely to adopt active interest, will tend to adopt different strategic positions toward nuclear technology due to their different relationships with the international community. Both require legitimacy from key domestic constituencies, and could bolster their legitimacy with these constituencies by acquiring nuclear weapons, thereby signaling that they have attained important symbols of statehood. Yet, separatists are unlikely to form an interest in acquiring nuclear technology because, perhaps counterintuitively, this is more extreme than destruction. Unlike insurgents seeking to capture the central government, separatists seek accession of their territorial government into the international community, which requires that the international community willingly accept the new inductee. Existing system members, however, are unlikely to accept new members when they pose potential security threats.39 An acquisitive interest could signal to the international community that the insurgents will use nuclear technology for malicious ends, thereby eliminating the possibility that are accepted as legitimate sovereigns. This does not entail that attacking nuclear facilities incurs no negative international attention, simply that it does not rule out possible accession to the international community in the way acquiring nuclear technology does. To attract support from their domestic constituencies without completely alienating the international community, separatists can instead attack the state’s nuclear facilities. When the state develops nuclear technology in regions separatists claim as their national homeland, they can assert sovereignty over these regions by attacking the state’s nuclear programs and signal to key audiences that state control over those regions is illegitimate, a strategy that the ETA employed against the Lemóniz
Nuclear Power Plant in its claimed Basque territory. Since attacks against nuclear facilities are high-profile events internationally, this strategy can also draw international attention to separatists’ struggle for national liberation.

Revolutionaries, however, do not need to convince the international community to willingly accept them as members. By capturing the existing government, revolutionaries present their statehood to the international community as a fait accompli. After all, once they control the levers of government the revolutionaries must be treated as de facto rulers. A long literature on revolutionary movements notes that revolutionaries are revisionist, since they strive to rest their states on legitimizing principles not widely recognized as legitimate in the international community.40 An example is imposition of religious rule in a secular international system, or nationalist rule within a system where state membership is determined by dynastic principles.41 This contrasts with separatists, since national self-determination is viewed, at least in the post-WWII period, as a legitimate foundation for statehood.42 We can also compare revolutionaries with other insurgents attempting to capture the central government without revisionist ambitions. Although they also capture existing state institutions, they do not found their states on alternative legitimizing principles that are anathema to the international community; simply capturing the government does not indicate that the regime threatens instability in the international arena, and therefore moderates would not risk alienating the international community and potential international backlash by seeking nuclear material.

Although revolutionaries do not require international legitimation from the international community, they absolutely need legitimacy from domestic audiences and perhaps from important transnational audiences. One study on jihadist pursuit of nuclear weapons suggests that “prestige” is a potential motivation and notes that gaining a nuclear weapon could generate “enormous popularity in the Muslim world.”43 Replacing the concept of prestige with legitimacy again, revolutionaries can gain support for their state-seeking projects from key constituencies—such as Muslims for Islamists and socioeconomic groups for communists—by acquiring nuclear weapons. Revolutionaries, since they seek not only to capture the central government but also to change society, must mobilize support from the key constituencies they claim will benefit from the social change, and nuclear weapons can enhance the reputation of these groups and help achieve support from their constituencies as legitimate leaders.

Another consideration informs the decision to seek the acquisition of nuclear technology. After coming to power, revolutionary governments are susceptible to foreign invasion due to their internal vulnerability and the threat alternative legitimizing principles pose to neighboring states.44 By acquiring nuclear material in advance, revolutionary insurgents can better deter potential aggression and force states to accept them as rulers. Some supporting evidence is found in the research on nuclear proliferation, since former rebels are more likely than other state leaders to seek nuclear weapons.45 As scholars in the idealist tradition point out, however, it is not merely governments formed through irregular turnover that pursue nuclear weapons, but “a handful of rouges [that] reject the dominant order and therefore also its nonproliferation norm.”46 My argument extends this logic to revolutionary insurgents before they capture state power. Revolutionaries, since they are definitionally revisionist, are more likely to pursue nuclear technology even prior to achieving state power to gain leverage and support
from key constituencies, whereas more moderate rebels will not risk attracting height-
ened international pressure.

**Quantitative analysis**

I first test the implication that insurgents with state-seeking aspirations are more likely to adopt active (acquisitive or destructive) nuclear interests. To do so, I examine the relative likelihood that state-seeking insurgents perpetrate attacks against nuclear facilities. Although this is an indirect test, it is an appropriate one. One study considers attacks against nuclear facilities one of the “four faces” of nuclear terrorism, or one of the four mechanisms through which violent non-state actors can use nuclear technology to forward their destructive ambitions.47 Not only do these attacks capture a destructive interest, they are one of the most plausible means by which insurgents can capture nuclear material for themselves.48 It is therefore likely that insurgents actively seeking nuclear material will at some point carry out an attack against a nuclear facility. I later explore this more specific implication in great depth in a qualitative section. For now, it is only important to acknowledge that both acquisitive and destructive interests imply an increased likelihood of attacking nuclear facilities.

Data on insurgent groups comes from the Non-State Actor (NSA) dataset, which includes all insurgent groups engaged in conflict with the government that results in at least 25 battle deaths.49 Since the NSA’s insurgent level variables are time-invariant, I adopt Stewart’s cross-sectional version of the NSA dataset, which includes additional control variables relevant for this analysis.50 For data on attacks against nuclear facilities, the dependent variable, I rely on START’s recently released Nuclear Facilities Attacks Database (NuFAD).51 While the data cover the 1961 to 2014 timespan, I restrict the analysis to insurgents operating since 1970 because the only registered attack prior to the 1970s is a 1961 act of sabotage committed by a nuclear reactor operator. As discussed in the book chapter presenting the dataset,52 the incidents were collected using public source information. Out of the 80 attacks against nuclear facilities, ten events are attributable to insurgent groups covered in the NSA dataset. While this is a limited number, it is not theoretically problematic for this analysis since it seeks to explain why insurgent groups attack nuclear facilities, rather than to explain the causes for all attacks against nuclear facilities. Most of the excluded incidents were perpetrated due to personal grievances, non-insurgent criminal activity, or environmental activism, which are not of theoretical interest for this article. Additionally, the unit of observation is the insurgent group rather than attack, meaning that each of the 10 positive cases represents a different insurgent group, rather than the 10 cases being distributed across only two or three different groups, which would violate the independence assumption in regression analysis. Insurgent groups are coded dichotomously on the variable nuclear attack if they perpetrated at least one incident in the NuFAD data (i.e. 1 if they perpetrated any attack against nuclear facilities and 0 otherwise). Table 1 lists the insurgent groups that have carried out attacks against nuclear facilities, the state in which they are located, the years in which they launched their attacks, and their ideology according to the typology in figure 1. As shown, only the ETA perpetrated attacks against nuclear facilities in multiple years; we are therefore not losing data on the
dependent variable by retaining the original cross-sectional structure of the NSA dataset.

My concept for state-seeking motivation is operationalized according to whether insurgents adhere to revolutionary or separatist ideologies. Revolutionaries, in line with research on both state and non-state actors, are insurgents seeking to fundamentally transform society, such as through imposing religious rule over a secular state or communism in a capitalist one.53 Data on insurgent motivations is partly derived from the NSA dataset, particularly its conflict type variable noting whether the group is Islamist, communist, separatist, and so on. Original research was carried out for each insurgent organization to determine whether it is accurately coded as a revolutionary group. For example, Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) is best considered a Christian revolutionary group because it seeks to establish a Christian theocracy, although this case would be erroneously coded as non-revolutionary when relying on the NSA dataset alone. Separatists are insurgents seeking to cleave away territory to form a new state from an existing one. The NSA’s conflict-type variable indicates whether the insurgent group is separatist. Revolutionary and separatist insurgents are aggregated and coded 1 on the state-seeking variable, with other insurgents coded 0.54 State-seeking insurgents account for approximately 42 percent of the insurgent-level observations, indicating that they are outnumbered by insurgents with more moderate ambitions.

Control variables are needed to ensure that the relationship between ideology and nuclear interest is not an artifact of omitting other important explanatory variables. Most importantly, I must control for the opportunity to engage in nuclear facility attacks, since scholars writing from a sociological standpoint argue that opportunities influence non-state actor violence.55 I therefore include a binary indicator for whether insurgents operate in a state with nuclear power plants, which was created using open source data.56 Another possibility suggested in the literature is that only the strongest insurgent groups are capable of coordinating attacks against nuclear facilities.57 I therefore include the NSA’s strength variable, which is measured ordinally for whether insurgents are weaker, at parity, or stronger than the government. NSA’s binary territory variable is also included in the model, because a relationship between state-seeking ideology and nuclear attacks could be spurious if territorial insurgents simply

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**Table 1. Insurgent Attacks Against Nuclear Facilities, 1970—2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insurgent Group</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African National Congress</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Centrist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Qaeda</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Revolutionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Tawhid Group</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Revolutionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijani Separatists</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Separatist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETA</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1977-79</td>
<td>Separatist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Separatist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real IRA</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Separatist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Chechnya</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Separatist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New People’s Army</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Revolutionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tehrik-i-Taliban</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Revolutionary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data on attacks against nuclear facilities comes from NuFAD (Ackerman and Halverson 2016). Data on insurgent groups comes from the NSA (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009). NuFAD cases are linked to the appropriate NSA groups, although they may be listed with different names. For instance, the Philippines attack is attributed to “communist guerillas,” which is linked to the New People’s Army as this was the only communist guerilla group operating in the Philippines at the time. Similarly, we count armed wings as part of the broader organization to which they are a part; the Hamas attack was carried out by its military wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades.
seek nuclear technology for the purpose of holding territory. Since insurgents engaged in protracted conflict may come to target nuclear facilities for a host of reasons related to conflict duration, a duration variable measures how many years the insurgents were active. Lastly, three standard covariates in the conflict literature—GDP per capita, logged state population, and democracy—are included.59

**Results**

Using this cross-sectional dataset, I use logistic regression as the primary estimation strategy since the dependent variable is binary. Standard errors are clustered on the state against which the insurgent group fights to account for the dependence of observations within the same state. One potential problem is that the dataset is small and moreover analyzes a rare event that takes a 1 value in fewer than 5 percent of the observations. To address this limitation, I also estimate the full model using Firth’s penalized maximum likelihood logit. Monte Carlo simulations demonstrate that this bias-reduction method outperforms alternatives, such as rare events logit, and this approach is rapidly becoming the standard for analyzing binary outcomes with small samples. The appendix features several robustness checks. Given the small sample size, the model is also estimated using a linear probability model. Additionally, a bivariate specification is included to demonstrate that the results are not an artifact of including discretionary covariates into the model. Decadal fixed effects (e.g. binary variable coded 1 if the insurgent group is active in a given decade) are added to account for temporal heterogeneity in the data. Lastly, jackknife standard errors are used to ensure the results are driven by outliers.

Figure 2 visually presents the results from two statistical models (results in tabular form are shown in the appendix). Each point represents a coefficient estimate surrounded by 95 percent confidence intervals, and every interval that does not cross the red dotted line at \( x = 0 \) is statistically significant at the 5 percent error level (p-value < 0.05). As shown, state-seeking ideology has a statistically significant impact on whether insurgents carry out attacks against nuclear facilities in both models. Indeed, it is the only variable other than GDP per capita that retains statistical significance across models. This statistical analysis therefore lends support to the theory. Additionally, insurgent strength is statistically significant in the first model. There is thus tepid support for the conjecture that weak insurgents lack the capacity needed to plan and execute attacks against nuclear facilities. However, there appears to be no support for the alternative argument that opportunity is a driving factor.

As mentioned above, one limitation of this quantitative analysis is that it does not allow me to disaggregate state-seeking ideologues into their two constituent types. Yet, this is of theoretical relevance to ensure that neither revolutionaries nor separatists are exclusively driving the results. I therefore present two simple cross-tabulations between the two types of state-seeking ideologies and attacks against nuclear facilities. The baseline category is non-state seeking insurgents. Both contingency tables support the hypotheses regarding ideology and attacks against nuclear facilities. Comparing across the rows in table 2, we can see that approximately 83 percent of non-revolutionary insurgents that attacked nuclear facilities are separatist (5/6), whereas only approximately 29 percent of the same category that did not attack nuclear facilities are
separatist (59/202). Table 3 presents a similar association. It shows that 80 percent of non-separatist insurgents that attacked nuclear facilities are revolutionary (4/5), but only about 22 percent of non-separatist insurgents that did not attack nuclear facilities are revolutionary (40/183). Additionally, we can see that both associations are statistically significant according to the $\chi^2$ statistics. Thus, there is evidence for an independent effect of both types of state-seeking ideology on attacks against nuclear facilities.

Qualitative evidence

Despite tentative support from the quantitative analysis, several important questions remain unanswered. For instance, is it true that interests vary according to ideological disposition such that revolutionaries are more likely to adopt an acquisitive interest and separatists a destructive one? Qualitative examination of various insurgent groups allows me to better explore this claim. Several violent non-state actors discussed here are not included in the NSA dataset, thus eluding quantitative analysis; casting aside these cases, however, unnecessarily throws out information that sheds light on insurgent nuclear interests. Data limitations do not allow me to conclusively prove the theory is correct, since insurgents rarely outline the motivations behind their nuclear interests. I can
nonetheless determine whether the available data is consistent with the theory, thereby carrying out what qualitative researchers call a plausibility probe.64

**Islamism and acquisitive interests**

Radical Islamists, revolutionary insurgents seeking to violently impose Islamic law in otherwise secular states, have attracted significant attention for their frequent pursuit of nuclear weapons. In December 2001, CIA director George Tenet embarked on a clandestine mission to Pakistan disconcerted that al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders met with Pakistani nuclear scientists as part of their campaign to acquire nuclear weapons.65 By then, the groups’ pursuit of nuclear material had been underway for nearly a decade. As early as 1993, al-Qaeda attempted to purchase uranium in Khartoum, Sudan, although it was sold an irradiated substance called “Red Mercury” that is useless for nuclear purposes.66 In 1998, Osama bin Laden stated that “acquiring WMD for the defense of Muslims is a religious duty;” since then most of the commentary on Islamist non-state actors and nuclear pursuit has revolved around al-Qaeda.67 In line with my theoretical expectations, one of al-Qaeda’s primary rationales for acquiring nuclear weapons is to “defend [its] co-religionists,” suggesting this quest is motivated to rally support from the key constituencies necessary for an Islamist revolution.68 Despite the obvious relevance of al-Qaeda, the nuclear ambitions of other Islamist non-state actors often goes overlooked.

Beyond al-Qaeda, Chechen Islamists have been at the forefront of the quest for nuclear weapons. At a 1995 press conference, Shamil Basayev, militant Islamist responsible for the Beslan school massacre, “claimed that he had planted vials with radioactive cesium … to indicate that he had some nuclear or radiological capacity;” these vials were indeed found in 1999, exactly where Basayev claimed they were located.69 A series of Chechen attacks against nuclear facilities followed. In 1996, Chechen fighters unsuccessfully attacked a Russian military airfield believed to house nuclear weapons.70 Between 2002 and 2003, jihadist-linked Chechen rebels attempted a series of break-ins against Russian facilities in order to steal nuclear weapons.71 Although inferring intention from these operations is difficult, it is telling that Chechen Islamists have very clearly voiced their desire to acquire nuclear weapons.72 Moreover, the Chechen conflict features both nationalist-separatist and Islamist groups, and the latter draw from transnational actors and foreign fighters enticed by forging Islamic states rather than regional separatism.73 The fact that the attempts to acquire nuclear weapons and declarations of these attempts comes from the Islamists suggests that separatism is not driving these insurgents’ acquisitive interest.

Evidence also points to the possibility that Pakistani Islamists seek the acquisition of nuclear weapons. In particular, the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) initiated a series of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revolutiona</th>
<th>Attack</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>183</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>188</td>
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</tbody>
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χ² = 12.10, p-value < 0.001
attacks against Pakistan’s nuclear facilities. Al-Qaeda and the TTP launched four attacks against Pakistan’s nuclear bases between 2007 and 2009, including a suicide attack against the Wah containment facility in what became the deadliest attack to date against Pakistan’s armed forces. Although analysts still doubt that the TTP can procure nuclear weapons, concerns were heightened when the TTP and related Islamist militants penetrated and attacked the Pakistan Army’s General Headquarters, which is one of the most secure military complexes in the country. It is impossible to decisively conclude that the TTP is attempting to acquire its own nuclear weapons, but the group’s links to al-Qaeda, which has voiced a steady desire to obtain them, hints in this direction. One study takes this position, maintaining that Pakistan “faces a greater threat from Islamic terror groups seeking nuclear weapons than any other nuclear stockpile on earth.”

Is it Islam, religion, or revolutionary ambitions?

Islamist or jihadist ideology is frequently invoked as a motivation behind nuclear acquisition and destruction. However, is the important attribute that the groups are Islamist or that they are revolutionary? One article find that Islam is less important to civilian victimization than whether the insurgent group has universal or local ambitions. The discussion so far seems to indicate that only Islamist revolutionaries adopt an acquisitive stance. A close examination of the cases beyond those in the NSA dataset, however, reveals this conjecture to be false; just as with civilian victimization, it appears that revolutionary aspiration rather than Islam predicts an acquisitive interest. Leftist revolutionaries have a history of attempting to acquire nuclear weapons. One attack in NuFAD was perpetrated by the leftist Red Army Faction (RAF) with the “objective of capturing or destroying tactical nuclear weapons.” Another leftist revolutionary group, the Italian Red Brigades, produced documents discussing the “possibility of stealing a tactical nuclear weapon.” Colombian intelligence officials discovered that FARC, a communist insurgent group, attempted to procure nuclear material to construct a dirty bomb. Although most cases did not involve attacks against nuclear facilities, it is clear acquisitive interest is not restricted to Islamist groups, but is frequently found among secular revolutionaries.

Similarly, the revolutionary need for legitimacy helps explain nuclear interest among religious violent non-state actors organizations that do not fit the insurgent category especially well. Aum Shinrikyo, a religious cult from Japan with upwards of 50,000 members, attempted to gain nuclear weapons from Russia, and this group more vigorously pursued nuclear weapons than perhaps any other violent non-state actor. Although frequently discussed as a millenarian group, which many scholars note are ideologically similar to what other literatures call revolutionary movements, Aum Shinrikyo had patently revolutionary ambitions and attempted to claim legitimacy vis-à-vis the Japanese state. For instance, group leader Ashara “organized the cult into ‘ministries,’ based on those of the Japanese government,” which he hoped would give the group “heightened legitimacy” and indicated that it was “a government-in-waiting.” In short, even though it was not state-seeking in the same sense as some conventional insurgent groups, Aum Shinrikyo was revolutionary in that it sought to replace the Japanese government and transform society, which conforms with our theoretical explanation for why insurgent groups seek to acquire nuclear technology.
**Separatists and destructive interests**

If the arguments concerning the irrelevance of Islamism per se to nuclear interest is true, then there should be evidence that Islamic separatists tend to evince a destructive interest. This is indeed the relationship I find. Hamas and Hezbollah, which strive to secure Palestinian territories rather than instigate a revolution, take a destructive position against Israel’s nuclear technology. In 2014, Hamas’s militant wing, the Qassam Brigades, launched three long-range M-75 rockets at Dimona in southern Israel, stating that their intention was to hit the nuclear reaction located there.85 Hezbollah’s leader, Hassan Nasrallah, also threatened to attack Israel’s nuclear facilities and implored the state to dismantle its nuclear facility at Dimona.86 I do not find any active nuclear interests among other Islamic separatists, suggesting that at most they adopt a destructive stance when expedient.

Non-Islamist separatists are also known to adopt a destructive interest in nuclear technology. On August 15, 1975, Breton separatists detonated two bombs at Monts d’Aree reactor in Brennilis, France; it is clear the intent was destructive rather than acquisitive since the bombings were part of an “anti-nuclear demonstration” organized by the separatists.87 We can infer that the motivation was to deter nuclear development in the separatists’ claimed homeland, since Brennilis is located in Brittany (the territory Breton separatists seek to cleave away from France). As previously mentioned, the ETA repeatedly attacked the Lemóniz Nuclear Power Plant, located in the Basque region the separatists claim as their own, to halt its development.88 At least one exception to this trend exists. In 2002, British law enforcement uncovered a plot by the Real IRA, which aims to forcibly regain control over Northern Ireland from Britain, to steal plutonium from the Sellafield Nuclear Complex.89 Unfortunately, there is no evidence to clearly determine what motivations the Real IRA had for its nuclear pursuit. Despite this exception, the evidence suggests that separatists, when they adopt a non-neutral positions, are most likely to take a destructive interest in nuclear technology to inhibit states from developing nuclear power over their claimed territories.

**What about the moderates?**

According to the theory, ethnic insurgents fighting for aims short of separatism should be indifferent toward nuclear technology. Take, for instance, the KDPI in Iran, a group sometimes described as separatist but that voices the more limited aspiration for autonomy within a federalist political system.90 Unlike many more extreme separatist groups, the KDPI disavows nuclear attacks and opposes US and Israeli attacks against Iran’s nuclear power as counterproductive for regime change.91 Since its objectives do not preclude operating within a political system which it does not helm, the KDPI does not feel compelled to attack Iranian nuclear facilities to rally its domestic audience to assert claims of sovereign control over parts of state currently under government control. Note that this does not mean that the KDPI does not seek international legitimacy. One scholar refers to the KDPI as a “compliant rebel” group that claims commitment to international law for international legitimacy.92 What this indicates is that, like separatists, ethnic insurgents strive for international recognition and thus avoid nuclear pursuit, but that unlike separatists they also do not resort to attacking nuclear facilities to
gather domestic support for state-seeking projects. And, although some ethnic minorities protest nuclear use in their territories, as do the Uyghurs in China who protested using Xinjiang as a nuclear test site,93 there is no evidence that autonomy seeking or other non-separatist ethnic rebels have taken a destructive stance.

Similarly, there is little evidence that non-revolutionary centrists have adopted active nuclear interest. This again follows from the theory that centrists do not need to capture or destroy the symbols of statehood to achieve domestic support for state-seeking projects, and seeking nuclear weapons could alienate the international community. One notable exception exists. In 1982, the African National Congress (ANC) detonated four bombs at the Koeberg nuclear power station.94 A possible explanation for this deviation from the trend is suggested in the historical record. South Africa began developing its nuclear capabilities in part due its increasing international isolation and its attendant need for self-reliance. In 1978, the US Congress passed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act (NNPA), which prohibited the transfer of nuclear technology to South Africa as it refused to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).95 ANC therefore perpetrated its attack against Koeberg as South Africa was experiencing an international legitimacy crisis partly due to nuclear developments viewed as internationally illegitimate. At the same time, the rebel group sought international legitimation, similar to separatists, for its national liberation project, and adhered closely to the “liberal democratic formula” even after assuming power for this reason.96 Whereas most centrists should be indifferent toward nuclear technology, or would be deterred due to their need to eventually participate in the existing political system, the ANC was able to capitalize on a unique context in which attacking nuclear facilities would accord it the greater international legitimacy its movement needed.97

**Conclusion**

Scholarship on non-state actors and nuclear technology has lacked a conceptual framework for analyzing the motivations behind nuclear pursuit. This article introduces the concept of insurgent nuclear interest—the strategic position that insurgents adopt toward nuclear technology—which includes destructive and neutral interests in addition to acquisitive. It is not claimed that this list constitutes an exhaustive list of interests. Insurgents could, for instance, adopt protestive interests short of destruction toward nuclear technology, although to date this remains the position of activist and environmentalist groups whose platforms explicitly include protesting nuclear technology.98 Nevertheless, the simple framework outlined here better allows scholars and practitioners to probe the motivations behind nuclear pursuit by systematically comparing this interest to its alternatives. By turning to nuclear interests, scholars can more methodically analyze which violent non-state actors pose the greatest threats to nuclear security, a subject that has hitherto eluded empirical scrutiny due to data limitations.

My analysis on the ideological motivations behind different insurgent nuclear interests should also aid academics and policymakers. Inasmuch as non-state actor acquisition of nuclear technology remains an important concern in international security, attention should indeed be devoted to IS and other Islamist insurgents whose basic objective is to forge Islamic states through revolution. Islamic groups whose primary
goal is separatist in nature, however, are significantly less likely to pursue nuclear material. Although Islamism is the most common revolutionary ideology presently,99 the erroneous view that it is Islam rather than revolutionary aspiration that fuels nuclear pursuit could create suspicion that nuclear acquisition is likely from groups that in fact evince no motivation to acquire nuclear weapons. Some authors conjecture that non-religious separatists—Baluchis in Pakistan, Bengalis in India, or Basques in Spain—might resort to stealing and using nuclear weapons in their struggle for greater autonomy.100 Yet, as the research here suggests, these are unlikely scenarios. Separatists will eventually require international recognition for their secessionist states, and they will therefore not alienate the international community and risk significant backlash through nuclear pursuit. States with separatists will nonetheless need to safeguard their nuclear facilities from destructive attacks, especially if these developments take place on the territories which separatists claim as their own.

What do these findings say about the likelihood that non-state actors will detonate nuclear weapons? Presidents George W. Bush and Barak Obama both stressed this possibility as one of the greatest threats to US national security.101 Yet, there is debate over whether insurgents would actually use nuclear weapons even after acquiring them. Some scholars maintain that acquisition does imply that insurgents will detonate nuclear weapons.102 Others are starting to question this assumption. One recent study theorizes that non-state actors are unlikely to use nuclear weapons even if they acquire them for three reasons: opportunity costs, the relationship between concession and surrender, and the value of organizational survival.103 This study suggests an additional reason why they will not use nuclear weapons: their acquisition is largely to enhance their legitimacy. If the primary goal of acquisition is to increase perceptions of the insurgents’ legitimacy, then it is unlikely that they will squander that legitimacy by employing nuclear weapons. After all, deadly attacks against civilians can costs insurgents support,104 and using nuclear weapons will certainly provoke retaliation that will undermine their state-seeking projects.105 While this does not mean nuclear acquisition should be taken lightly, since nuclear weapons could give non-state actors considerable deterrent power, it does suggest that concerns of violent non-state actors detonating nuclear weapons are perhaps overstated.

Notes

11. Many U.S. policymakers speculated that nuclear armed states could provide nuclear weapons to terrorists, an argument that served as part of the justification for the Iraq War. See the discussion in introductory section of Lieber and Daryl Press, “Why States Won’t Give Nuclear Weapons to Terrorists,” *International Security*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (2013), pp. 80-104. However, these authors disagree that states are unlikely to give terrorists nuclear weapons.
17. We follow recent studies in defining an insurgent group as an armed non-state actor engaged in conflict resulting in at least 25 casualties. See: Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan (2009). Certainly this rules out tiny autonomous cells, although these groups represent very minor threats when compared with armed and organized rebel groups. See: Ackerman and Pinson, “An Army of One.” We also put aside definitional debates surrounding the term “terrorism,” opting instead to focus solely on the criterion that groups are armed, violent, and organized. The theory outline below is generalizable to “terrorist” groups, and we use examples from some such as the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), but for the purposes of our empirical analysis we restrict the discussion to insurgents.
19. Note that this definition of acquisitive interest is different than the term “acquire” used in the literature on nuclear proliferation among states, which codes when a state has actually acquired nuclear weapons. Insurgents with an acquisitive interest are analogous to states that “explore” or “pursue” nuclear weapons in the literature on nuclear proliferation.
22. At the same time, some cases such as attacks against nuclear facilities blur the lines between nuclear and radiological terrorism. Although our focus is on attitudes toward nuclear technology, we believe that this theory can apply equally well to broader categories of CBRN interests.


35. Schelling, “Thinking About Nuclear Terrorism.”


42. Walt, Revolution and War; Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, “The Durability of Revolutionary Regimes,” Journal of Democracy, Vol. 24, No. 3 (2014), pp. 5-17.


49. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan, “Non-State Actors in Civil War.”

50. The original NSA dataset is also cross-sectional; Stewart’s (2018) dataset is used primarily due to its inclusion of relevant covariates not included in the NSA dataset.

51. Ackerman and Halverson, “Attacking Nuclear Facilities.”

52. Ackerman and Halverson, “Attacking Nuclear Facilities.”


54. Unfortunately, too few observations on the dependent variable (again only ten) are coded positively to test the effects of revolutionary and separatist ambitions separately. Disaggregating the variable into revolutionary and separatist—or further, into Islamist revolutionary and leftist revolutionary, and so on—would leave us unable to test the impacts of ideology on nuclear interests due to a degrees of freedom problem. Using an insurgent-year dataset does not resolve this problem, since it inflates the number of positive values on the independent rather than dependent variable. We do not view this as problematic, however, because our theory stipulates that state-seeking ambitions are what predicts active nuclear interests. These concerns are addressed using more fine-grained information in the qualitative section.


56. Using a binary indicator for whether the state has nuclear weapons does not change the results. We cannot include both nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants in the same statistical model due to multicollinearity. We opt for nuclear power plants because it covers more states and therefore stacks the analysis in favor of the alternative hypothesis that opportunity alone explains attacks.


58. Schelling, “Thinking About Nuclear Terrorism,” p. 68

59. The first two variables are measured continuous, and the last is a binary indicator. In other words, these two variables are measured in the state the insurgent fights against. As described in the appendix in Stewart (2018), the first two variables are drawn from the Penn World Tables, and the last one is drawn from Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010).


63. The intercept is removed for visualization purposes.


77. See the contributions in Ackerman and Tamsett, *Jihadists and Weapons of Mass Destruction*.


97. ANC was certainly not a revolutionary insurgency, since its primary objective was ending apartheid rather than implementing transformative social change, such as a communist revolution, and it eventually achieved resolution to the conflict through electoral means; this is corroborated by contemporary South Africa’s exclusion from datasets on revolutionary governments. See: Jeff Colgan, “Measuring Revolution,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (2012), pp. 444-467. The ANC thus had little incentive to acquire nuclear weapons.
Appendix

Table 1. Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1 Logit</th>
<th>Model 2 PML</th>
<th>Model 3 LPM</th>
<th>Model 4 Bivariate</th>
<th>Model 5 Year FE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State-seeking</td>
<td>3.21***</td>
<td>2.45**</td>
<td>0.07**</td>
<td>2.59**</td>
<td>3.24**</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(1.35)</td>
<td>(1.14)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(1.06)</td>
<td>(1.45)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nuclear Power</td>
<td>2.61*</td>
<td>2.15*</td>
<td>0.14*</td>
<td>3.82*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.55)</td>
<td>(1.12)</td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territory</td>
<td>−0.17</td>
<td>−0.08</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.63</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.99)</td>
<td>(0.90)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.39)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>1.03**</td>
<td>0.95*</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>1.70*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.40)</td>
<td>(0.54)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>−0.00</td>
<td>0.33**</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.147)</td>
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<td>Population (Ln)</td>
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<td>−0.05</td>
<td>−0.01</td>
<td>−0.03</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.39)</td>
<td>(0.36)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita</td>
<td>1.68***</td>
<td>1.42***</td>
<td>0.05**</td>
<td>2.52***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.55)</td>
<td>(0.44)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.68)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>−20.07***</td>
<td>−16.89***</td>
<td>−0.26</td>
<td>−4.99***</td>
<td>−54.02***</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(9.34)</td>
<td>(8.05)</td>
<td>(0.290)</td>
<td>(1.005)</td>
<td>(14.99)</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.1, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01
PML = Penalized Maximum Likelihood logit (Firth Logit); LPM = Linear Probability Model; FE = Fixed Effects

Table 1 above presents the results from five models. Models 1 and 2 are those presented in figure 2 in the main text. Model 3 is a linear probability model (OLS using a binary dependent variable). Model 4 is a bivariate regression model to ensure that the results are not due to adding discretionary covariates into the model. Model 5 includes year fixed effects to account for temporal heterogeneity. State-building ideology at the 5 percent error level across all five models.

Another concern, given that there are only ten cases coded on the dependent variable, is that the results are driven by one of the cases. To allay this concern, the model is estimated using jackknife standard errors to estimate the variance after iteratively running the model after dropping one observation each time. The results from this analysis are presented in table 2 below. As shown, the coefficient on the ideology variable is still statistically significant. We can therefore conclude that the results are not driven by outliers.

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State-seeking</td>
<td>3.208**</td>
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<td>(1.512)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nuclear Power</td>
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<td>(2.192)</td>
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<td>Territory</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(1.438)</td>
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<td>Strength</td>
<td>1.034*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.577)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>0.0517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>−0.0711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.552)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita</td>
<td>1.683**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.804)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(13.00)</td>
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<td>Observations</td>
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</table>

Standard errors in parentheses

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1