

Summaries

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China in a World of Orders: Rethinking Compliance and Challenge in Beijing's International Relations

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Many scholars and policymakers in the United States accept the narrative that China is a revisionist state challenging the U.S.-dominated international liberal order. The narrative assumes that there is a singular liberal order and that it is obvious what constitutes a challenge to it. The concepts of order and challenge are, however, poorly operationalized. There are at least four plausible operationalizations of order, three of which are explicitly or implicitly embodied in the dominant narrative. These tend to assume, ahistorically, that U.S. interests and the content of the liberal order are almost identical. The fourth operationalization views order as an emergent property of the interaction of multiple state, substate, nonstate, and international actors. As a result, there are at least eight “issue-specific orders” (e.g., military, trade, information, and political development). Some of these China accepts; some it rejects; and some it is willing to live with. Given these multiple orders and varying levels of challenge, the narrative of a U.S.-dominated liberal international order being challenged by a revisionist China makes little conceptual or empirical sense. The findings point to the need to develop more generalizable ways of observing orders and compliance.

61–109

Dangerous Confidence? Chinese Views on Nuclear Escalation

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Chinese views of nuclear escalation are key to assessing the potential for nuclear escalation in a crisis or armed conflict between the United States and China, but they have not been examined systematically. A review of original Chinese-language sources and interviews with members of China's strategic community suggest that China is skeptical that nuclear escalation could be controlled once nuclear weapons are used and, thus, leaders would be restrained from pursuing even limited use. These views are reflected in China's nuclear operational doctrine (which outlines plans for retaliatory strikes only and lacks any clear plans for limited nuclear use) and its force structure (which lacks tactical nuclear weapons). The long-standing decoupling of Chinese nuclear and con-

ventional strategy, organizational biases within China's strategic community, and the availability of space, cyber, and conventional missile weapons as alternative sources of strategic leverage best explain Chinese views toward nuclear escalation. China's confidence that a U.S.-China conflict would not escalate to the use of nuclear weapons may hamper its ability to identify nuclear escalation risks in such a scenario. Meanwhile, U.S. scholars and policymakers emphasize the risk of inadvertent escalation in a conflict with China, but they are more confident than their Chinese counterparts that the use of nuclear weapons could remain limited. When combined, these contrasting views could create pressure for a U.S.-China conflict to escalate rapidly into an unlimited nuclear war.

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Home, Again: Refugee Return and Post-Conflict Violence in Burundi
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Conflict between returning refugees and nonmigrant populations is a pervasive yet frequently overlooked security issue in post-conflict societies. Although scholars have demonstrated how out-migration can regionalize, prolong, and intensify civil war, the security consequences of return migration are undertheorized. An analysis of refugee return to Burundi after the country's 1993–2005 civil war corroborates a new theory of return migration and conflict: return migration creates new identity divisions based on whether and where individuals were displaced during wartime. These cleavages become new sources of conflict in the countries of origin when local institutions, such as land codes, citizenship regimes, or language laws, yield differential outcomes for individuals based on where they lived during the war. Ethnographic evidence gathered in Burundi and Tanzania from 2014 to 2016 shows how the return of refugees created violent rivalries between returnees and non-migrants. Consequently, when Burundi faced a national-level political crisis in 2015, prior experiences of return shaped both the character and timing of out-migration from Burundi. Illuminating the role of reverse population movements in shaping future conflict extends theories of political violence and demonstrates why breaking the cycle of return and repeat displacement is essential to the prevention of conflict.

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The Domestic Politics of Nuclear Choices—A Review Essay

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When and how do domestic politics influence a state's nuclear choices? Recent scholarship on nuclear security develops many domestic-political explanations for different nuclear decisions. These explanations are partly the result of two welcome trends: first, scholars have expanded the nuclear timeline, examining state behavior before and after nuclear proliferation; and second, scholars have moved beyond blunt distinctions between democracies and autocracies to more fine-grained understandings of domestic constraints. But without linkages between them, new domestic-political findings could be dismissed as a laundry list of factors that do not explain significant variation in nuclear decisions. This review essay assesses recent research on domestic politics and nuclear security, and develops a framework that illuminates when and how domestic-political mechanisms are likely to affect nuclear choices. In contrast to most previous domestic arguments, many of the newer domestic-political mechanisms posited in the literature are in some way top-down; that is, they show leaders deliberately maintaining or loosening control over nuclear choices. Two dimensions govern the extent and nature of domestic-political influence on nuclear choices: the degree of threat uncertainty and the costs and benefits to leaders of expanding the circle of domestic actors involved in a nuclear decision. The framework developed in this review essay helps make sense of several cases explored in the recent nuclear security literature. It also has implications for understanding when and how domestic-political arguments might diverge from the predictions of security-based analyses.

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