Online Appendix to
Stopping the Bomb: The Sources and Effectiveness of U.S. Nonproliferation Policy

<u>Nuclear Dominoes vs. Communist Dominoes</u>

Given that the debates on nonproliferation in the mid-1960s discussed in Chapter 2 were going on at the same time as the US government was debating further involvement in Vietnam, it is worth considering whether expectations of nuclear domino effects and Communist domino effects were linked,. In other words: were those who were highly concerned about nuclear domino effects and advocated a stronger nonproliferation policy also more likely to worry about Communist domino effects and advocate a strong stand in Vietnam? Conversely, were those who were skeptical or less worried about nuclear domino effects also less wary of Communist domino effects? To address this question, I analyzed secondary sources as well as the State Department's *FRUS* volumes on Vietnam covering the years 1964 and 1965—the years when the Gilpatric committee met and delivered its report and when the US government made the consequential decisions to become heavily involved in Vietnam. In particular, I assessed whether key players in the nonproliferation debate were believers in Communist domino effects, and if this correlated with their views on nuclear domino effects and nonproliferation policy. Details on coding are discussed in more detail below, but the results are summarized in Table A.1, and suggest there is at least a weak relationship, as 6 out of 9 individuals examined held consistent views about nuclear and communist domino effects.It should be noted that while this book argues beliefs in nuclear domino effects were crucial to the strengthening of US nonproliferation policy, leading scholars of the Vietnam War argue that worries about Communist dominoes falling were

secondary to Johnson's and his advisers' concerns about personal and domestic political credibility.[1]

Table A.1: Relationship between Nuclear Dominoes and Communist Dominoes

	Position	Belief in Nuclear Dominoes?	Belief in Communist Dominoes?
Lyndon Johnson	President	Yes	Yes
Dean Rusk	Secretary of State	No	Yes
Robert McNamara	Secretary of Defense	Yes	Yes
McGeorge Bundy	National Security Adviser	Yes	Yes
George Ball	Under Secretary of State	No	No
Walt Rostow	Director of Policy Planning	No	Yes
John McCloy	Member of Gilpatric Committee and Vietnam Panel	No	Yes
Roswell Gilpatric	Member of Gilpatric Committee and Vietnam Panel	Yes	Yes
Sherman Kent	Office of National Estimates	No	No

In the first category are those individuals who believed that both nuclear domino and communist domino effects were strong, and advocated both a strong nonproliferation policy and a strong stand in Vietnam. This includes President Johnson, who was not only concerned that China's test would spur nuclear domino effects, but also worried that if South Vietnam fell to the Viet Cong, this would "increase their [China's] appetite" and endanger other non-Communist states in the region.[2] Johnson worried that a US defeat in Vietnam would be an "irreparable blow" to US credibility, leading countries in the region to view the United States as a "paper tiger,"[3] and argued that failure in Southeast Asia would precipitate "trouble in every part of the

---

[1] See Fredrik Logevall, "Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, No. 1 (2004): 106-110.
[2] Memorandum of Conversation, 19 February 1965, Johnson Administration, *FRUS,* vol. ii, doc. 144.
[3] Notes of Meeting, 21 July 1965, Johnson Administration, *FRUS,* vol. iii, doc. 71.

globe—not just in Asia but in the Middle East and in Europe, in Africa and in Latin America."[4] Secretary of Defense McNamara fell into the same camp—believing that nuclear domino effects were likely unless the US acted and feeling the same way about Communist domino effects triggered in Southeast Asia. As he warned President Johnson in a January 1964 memo, if South Vietnam fell to Communist rebels, this would greatly increase the risk that Communism would spread to Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, and perhaps even Burma and India.[5] In a high-level meeting in July 1965, he made a similar argument, and foresaw "ripple effect[s]" that would lead Japan, India, Pakistan, Greece, and Turkey to reassess relations with Washington.[6]

National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy advocated action to prevent both nuclear domino effects and Communist domino effects, judging in a report to Johnson that Communist South Vietnam would lead to "neutrality in Thailand…Collapse of the anti-Communist position in Laos…Heavy pressure on Malaya…A shift toward neutrality in Japan and the Philippines…[and] Blows to U.S. prestige in South Korea and Taiwan."[7] In addition to being a strong believer in nuclear domino effects, Roswell Gilpatric served on the Johnson administration's Vietnam Panel in 1965, which judged that "Thailand could not be held if South Vietnam were taken over…the effects in Japan and India could be most serious," and that US allies in Europe would lose confidence in Washington.[8]

In the second category are those individuals who were skeptical or relatively less worried about both nuclear domino effects and Communist domino effects, most notably George Ball,

---

[4] Quoted in Jerome Slater, "The Domino Theory and International Politics: The Case of Vietnam," *Security Studies* 3, No. 2 (1993): 191.

[5] Memorandum From the Secretary of Defense (McNamara) to the President, 7 January 1964, Johnson Administration, *FRUS,* vol. i, doc. 8, tab b.

[6] Notes of Meeting, 22 July 1965, Johnson Administration, *FRUS,* vol. iii, doc. 76.

[7] Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to the President, 6 January 1964, Johnson Administration, *FRUS,* vol. i, doc. 8, tab C.

[8] Notes of Meeting, 8 July 1965, Johnson Administration, *FRUS,* vol. iii, doc. 55.

the Under Secretary of State. Ball did not believe that selective proliferation in NATO via the MLF would lead to further proliferation, and likewise was unconvinced that the fall of South Vietnam to Communism would produce domino effects. As he wrote in a paper for President Johnson in 1965, "in our anxiety to build up support for the struggle in South Viet-Nam, we have tended to exaggerate the consequences for US power and prestige of tactical withdrawal."[9] While Ball acknowledged that a US withdrawal South Vietnam could put pressure on Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Burma to move toward Communist China, he felt that these risks could be managed; moreover, he rejected the notion that it would seriously harm US relations with Japan or NATO. In contrast the blanket domino predictions of Johnson, McNamara, and others, Ball argued that, "Free Asian reactions to a compromise settlement in South Viet-Nam would be highly parochial, with each country interpreting the event primarily in terms of (a) its own immediate interest, (b) its sense of vulnerability to Communist invasion or insurgency, and (c) its confidence in the integrity of our commitment to its own security based on evidence other than that provided by our actions in SVN [South Vietnam]."[10] Sherman Kent, who headed the Office of National Estimates that oversaw the production of NIEs, was similarly skeptical of both nuclear and Communist domino effects. As discussed above, the NIEs on proliferation generally did not expect strong nuclear domino effects, particularly prior to 1966. Similarly, a memo Kent wrote in June 1964 for CIA director John McCone was highly skeptical of the notion that Communist domino effects would be strong. Summarizing the views of the Board of National Estimates, Kent wrote: "We do not believe that the loss of South Vietnam and Laos would be followed by the rapid, successive communization of the other states of the Far East. Instead of a

[9] Paper by the Under Secretary of State (Ball), undated, Johnson Administration, *FRUS,* vol. iii, doc. 26.
[10] Paper by the Under Secretary of State (Ball), undated, Johnson Administration, *FRUS,* vol. iii, doc. 40.

shock wave passing from one nation to the next there would be a simultaneous, direct effect on all Far Eastern countries. With the possible exception of Cambodia, it is likely that no nation in the area would quickly succumb to communism as a result of the fall of Laos and South Vietnam. Furthermore, a continuation of the spread of communism in the area would not be inexorable and any spread which did occur would take time—time in which the total situation might change in any of a number of ways unfavorable to the Communist cause."[11]

Finally, there are those who held dissonant views about the strength of nuclear vs. Communist domino effects, namely Secretary of State Rusk, Director of Policy Planning Rostow, and John McCloy, the latter of whom served on both the Gilpatric Committee and Vietnam Panel. Each of these individuals were relatively unconcerned about nuclear domino effects but convinced that Communist domino effects were highly probable if South Vietnam were to fall. In a meeting at the White House in June 1965, Rusk expressed the view that a US retreat from South Vietnam to Thailand would be futile since the latter "could not be held if SVN had given up. Rather, Rusk said, we would end up with the only secure areas Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and NATO, with even India falling to the Communist Chinese."[12] In a memo to Rusk, Rostow made similarly dramatic predictions of Communist dominoes, judging that if Vietnam were lost, "Thailand would no longer rely on U.S. backing. Laos, Cambodia, and probably Burma would go to the Communists. Taiwan's morale would crumble. The Philippines, Korea, and Japan would be insecure. Sukarno would be confirmed in his semi-pro-Communist stance. Malaya would be endangered. The Indian subcontinent would be outflanked. The Middle East and East Africa would be substantially opened up. The credibility of our European stance

---

[11] Memorandum From the Board of National Estimates to the Director of Central Intelligence (McCone), 9 June 1964, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. i, doc. 209.
[12] Editorial Note, Johnson Administration, *FRUS*, vol. iii, doc. 16.

under the Johnson Administration would be put in question; for our commitments to South Viet Name are no less explicit than our commitments to Berlin."[13] As a member of the Vietnam Panel with Gilpatric, John McCloy judged that the fall of South Vietnam would encourage the spread of Communism elsewhere,[14] while he was relatively skeptical of nuclear domino effects.

[13] Memorandum From the Chairman of the Policy Planning Council (Rostow) to the Secretary of State, 13 February 1964, Johnson Administration, *FRUS,* vol. i, doc. 43.
[14] Notes of Meeting, 8 July 1965, Johnson Administration, *FRUS,* vol. iii, doc. 55.

Quantitative Robustness Checks Referenced in Text

Table A.2: Alternative Codings of Nuclear Proliferation

	(1) Jo and Gartzke	(2) Bleek
Dependence Score	0.240	0.150
	(0.284)	(0.353)
Post-76 Dummy	0.919	0.233
	(0.964)	(1.346)
Dependence Score * Post-76	-1.400	-1.013
	(0.422)***	(0.428)**
Industrial Capacity	2.365	2.348
	(0.769)***	(0.933)**
GDP per Capita	0.001	0.001
	(0.000)	(0.001)
GDP per Capita^2	-0.000	-0.000
	(0.000)*	(0.000)*
Enduring Rivalry	2.256	1.755
	(0.630)***	(0.811)**
Recent MIDs	0.258	0.229
	(0.113)**	(0.120)*
Time	0.031	-0.002
	(0.024)	(0.032)
Constant	-9.456	-8.333
	(1.240)***	(1.038)***
N	5,754	5,936

* $p<0.1$; ** $p<0.05$; *** $p<0.01$ Clustered standard errors in parentheses

Table A.3: Alternative Estimators

	(4) LPM	(5) LPM+FE	(6) Probit	(7) ReLogit
Dependence Score	0.001	0.000	0.152	0.307
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.114)	(0.330)
Post-76 Dummy	0.007	0.002	0.485	1.059
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.378)	(1.091)
Dependence Score * Post-76	-0.004	-0.005	-0.619	-1.450
	(0.002)**	(0.002)**	(0.179)***	(0.502)***
Enduring Rivalry	0.001	0.006	0.702	2.014
	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.263)***	(0.726)***
Recent MIDs	0.008	0.003	0.156	0.312
	(0.002)***	(0.003)	(0.035)***	(0.093)***
Industrial Capacity	0.007	0.011	0.799	1.887
	(0.003)**	(0.006)*	(0.257)***	(0.746)**
GDP per Capita	0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
GDP per Capita^2	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000
	(0.000)*	(0.000)	(0.000)*	(0.000)
Time	0.000	0.001	0.017	0.046
	(0.000)	(0.000)***	(0.009)*	(0.028)
Constant	-0.005	-0.005	-4.376	-9.386
	(0.002)**	(0.004)	(0.434)***	(1.153)***
N	5,895	5,895	5,895	5,895

* $p<0.1$; ** $p<0.05$; *** $p<0.01$ Clustered standard errors in parentheses

Table A.4: Additional Covariates and Timeframes

	(8) Fuhrmann Controls	(9) + Regime Control	(10) Time squared and cubed	(11) 1964-1976
Dependence Score	0.227	0.374	0.390	0.662
	(0.357)	(0.398)	(0.343)	(0.734)
Post-76 Dummy	1.801	0.905	2.282	
	(1.070)*	(1.296)	(1.107)**	
Dependence Score * Post-76	-1.747	-1.529	-1.663	
	(0.722)**	(0.520)***	(0.615)***	
Enduring Rivalry	1.781	2.116	2.016	1.861
	(0.885)**	(0.780)***	(0.720)***	(1.330)
Recent MIDs	0.331	0.310	0.429	0.522
	(0.079)***	(0.102)***	(0.125)***	(0.326)
Industrial Capacity	2.127	1.832	2.120	2.058
	(0.739)***	(0.779)**	(0.706)***	(1.275)
GDP per Capita	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)
GDP per Capita^2	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000
	(0.000)*	(0.000)*	(0.000)*	(0.000)
Nuclear ally	0.001			
	(0.696)			
Polity Score	0.022			
	(0.050)			
Trade Openness	0.010			
	(0.010)			
Δ in Openness, Last 5 Yrs	0.008			
	(0.011)			
Δ in Polity, Last 5 yrs	-0.047			
	(0.061)			
Nuclear Coop. Agreements (NCA)	0.023			
	(0.064)			
NCA * Recent MIDs	0.043			
	(0.017)**			
NPT Ratification	-3.561			
	(1.047)***			
Time	0.098	0.051	0.818	0.029
	(0.046)**	(0.029)*	(0.394)**	(0.082)
Personalist Regime		0.494		
		(0.625)		
Time^2			-0.028	
			(0.014)**	
Time^3			0.000	
			(0.000)**	
Constant	-10.682	-10.070	-16.300	-10.013
	(1.615)***	(1.300)***	(3.688)***	(1.526)***

| N | 5,382 | 4,678 | 5,895 | 1,379 |