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Double Deterrence and International Mediation

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Summary:

The existing research on nuclear deterrence generally focuses on direct deterrence between the parties of a conflict, such as nuclear deterrence between the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Even after the Cold War, nuclear deterrence research was mainly concerned with deterrence effects emanating from the parties of the conflict. However, this study identifies a second type of deterrence that may emerge at the international level through the collaboration of more than one major nuclear states. This is conceptualized as *double deterrence* in the present study. In this respect, this study fills a gap in the research, which combines the international mediation research with the theories of nuclear deterrence.

The main research question is whether the nuclear dimension of a crisis affects the way in which international mediation takes place, and whether this affects the behaviors of the parties of the nuclear crisis. This study uses in-depth case study analysis and compares the mediation strategies of the US, China, and the Soviet Union (later Russia) during the crises between India and Pakistan, both before and after the crises between them gained a nuclear dimension. The crises between India and China are also used as a complementary case. The study shows that when the crises gained a nuclear dimension, major states turned away from competitive politics to more collaborative policies prioritizing the end of the conflict. This collaborative behavior of major powers poses extra pressure on the parties of the conflict to end the crisis, or in some circumstances, gives them the opportunity to retreat from the conflict without losing credibility.

That the nuclear dimension of the conflicts, rather than the end of the Cold War, is the principal factor behind the collaborative behavior of the mediating states is additionally defended by the author on the basis of a discussion of the geopolitical struggles between the US, China, and Russia in the contemporary era.