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Bridled Ambition: Why Countries Constrain Their Nuclear Capabilities (Woodrow Wilson Center Special Studies)

Mitchell Reiss

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BRIDLED AMBITION

WHY COUNTRIES CONSTRAIN

THEIR NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES

MITCHELL REISS

"THOROUGHLY RESEARCHED, SYSTEMATIC AND PROBING IN ANALYSIS, AND SIGNIFICANT
IN ITS CONCLUSIONS."—ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI, FORMER NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER

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Mitchell Reiss : Bridled Ambition: Why Countries Constrain Their Nuclear Capabilities (Woodrow Wilson Center Special Studies) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bridled Ambition: Why Countries Constrain Their Nuclear Capabilities (Woodrow Wilson Center Special Studies):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Constraining Nuclear Weapons By Michael Griswold Mitchell Reiss has written a book on why states give up or pursue nuclear weapons. Rather than focus on international factors such as pressure by great powers like the United States, The Soviet Union, and China. Reiss tends to put more focus on internal (domestic) factors such as changes in leadership, civil-military relations, and politicians needs to get something from the great powers to increase their position domestically. Reiss has written a very accessible book, one doesn't need a doctorate in political science or nuclear physics to understand it. My only concern is that the 1995 publication date has rendered the sections on nuclear weapons in South Asia (India and Pakistan) and North Korea dated. Still, a useful starting point for newbies to nuclear weapons.

Relying on personal interviews with senior officials in a dozen countries and never-before-released classified information, *Bridled Ambition: Why Countries Constrain Their Nuclear Capabilities* explains how and why nine countries - South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, India, Pakistan, and North Korea - have capped, curtailed, or rolled back their nuclear weapons programs during the past few years. Their motivations varied. In the successors of the Soviet Union, for example, the end of the cold war eliminated the initial reason the weapons had been put in place, and new political, economic, and military uncertainties made it dangerous to maintain them. In South Africa, the anticipated transition to majority rule would put nuclear weapons in the hands of a longstanding, untrusted opposition. But in general, Reiss suggests, nuclear weapons may have come to be viewed as expensive and dangerous anachronisms. Reiss details the histories of the debates and politics of these nuclear programs. His account draws on interviews with more than 150 officials, on documentary evidence, and on journalistic accounts. In addition to the information brought forward on politics within the affected countries, *Bridled Ambition* includes information on the efforts and influence of U.S. diplomacy on these processes.

Reiss worked for the National Security Council on nonproliferation issues and thus brings a wealth of inside information to this study. Reiss examines nine countries that have voluntarily constrained, frozen, or eliminated their nuclear weapons programs. These countries are South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, India, Pakistan, and North Korea... Reiss has added an important contribution to the research of nuclear nonproliferation and shown us that occasionally deproliferation is a viable policy option. (Kevin J. Lasher *Presidential Studies Quarterly*) Drawing on hundreds of interviews with officials in several nations and previously classified information, Mr. Reiss explains why nine countries? South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, India, Pakistan, and North Korea? have either capped, curtailed, or rolled back their nuclear weapons programs. (Lawrence J. Korb *New York Times*) Michael Reiss's work is an excellent, detailed and well-documented story of why some states... have subsequently abandoned their nuclear ambitions. (NOD and Conversion) A thought-provoking work? one that offers some useful balm to the fevered discourse over nuclear proliferation... A valuable and well-written reminder that in fighting the world's fight we cannot ignore our occasional clear and even partial successes. (R. James Woolsey, Director of Central Intelligence, 1992-1995) At a time when nuclear proliferation is becoming an increasingly ominous threat to global stability, Mitchell Reiss's book provides the much-needed perspective. Thoroughly researched, systematic and probing in analysis, and significant in its conclusions. (Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser, 1977-1981) Judiciously lays out the wins and draws of recent nonproliferation efforts, drawing our attention to the good policies and good fortune that can play a role in this struggle. (S.S. Hecker, Director, Los Alamos National Laboratory) Matching a critical eye with meticulous research, Reiss slices through diplomatic smokescreens and uncovers a wealth of new information about nuclear programs in nine countries. (Leslie H. Gelb, President, Council on Foreign Relations.) About the Author Mitchell Reiss is a Guest Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and a consultant to the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.