Organized Hypocrisy and the NPT

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The nuclear nonproliferation regime is under severe strain. It faces challenges on a number of fronts simultaneously, and it is not clear whether the regime can be adapted successfully to the challenges of the twenty-first century.\(^1\) It is undermined by both open and opaque proliferation by non-signatories of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), especially since India, Pakistan, and Israel have seen little in the way of negative consequences as a result of their nuclear weapons programs.\(^2\) The uncovering of the Abdul Qadeer Khan network’s activities revealed the extent to which a transnational network could spread nuclear weapons technologies, a blind spot for a treaty regime focused on state-to-state transfers.\(^3\) Relevant technology has diffused, and is now traded by non-nuclear weapons states with nuclear ambitions.\(^4\) And state parties – North Korea and Iran – have pursued secret activities outside of the inspection regime, raising fears of states taking advantage of the enhanced access to nuclear technology offered by formal adherence to the treaty and availing themselves, once the capability to build a weapon was accomplished, of the treaty’s provisions allowing withdrawal upon three months notice.\(^5\) Some have proclaimed a “second nuclear age,” to which the NPT and the

\(^3\)On the A.Q. Khan network, see: Slevin et al. 2004, Albright and Hinderstein 2005.
\(^4\)Braun and Chyba 2004.
nuclear proliferation regime are poorly adapted. Various responses – counterproliferation, interdiction, new legal obligations on states regarding WMD trafficking and terrorism, an additional protocol – have been proposed. But the 2005 Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference (RevCon) deadlocked amidst acrimonious wrangling between states alternately concerned with the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs, on the one hand, and the perceived lack of progress towards fulfillment of the nuclear weapons states’ Article VI disarmament commitments, on the other.

Nuclear proliferation is a product of systemic, domestic, and normative factors, which often work at cross-purposes. The maintenance of nuclear umbrellas by nuclear powers can help address non-nuclear states’ security concerns, and persuade them to avoid acquiring their own nuclear arsenal. But the indefinite maintenance of such capabilities erodes the disarmament norms that buttress the legitimacy of the nonproliferation regime. Thus, the logic of consequences of nuclear deterrence and power politics is at odds with the logic of appropriateness of international nonproliferation and disarmament norms. Such conflicts between material and normative pressures give rise to a phenomenon Stephen Krasner has called “organized hypocrisy.” In organized


7 Sanger 2005.
10 Krasner 1999. Krasner adapted the concept from Brunsson’s (1989) work on “the organization of hypocrisy.” Brunsson used the term “organizational hypocrisy” in the first edition, and has adopted the term “organized hypocrisy” since (2002, 2003) but does not appear to have used the term “organized hypocrisy” until after the publication of Krasner’s book on sovereignty. Krasner credits John Meyer with the idea for explaining
hypocrisy – a concept derived from sociological organization theory – actors satisfy contradictory demands from their social and political environment through inconsistent rhetoric and behavior. This paper argues that the nonproliferation regime exhibits organized hypocrisy – rhetorical commitment to nuclear disarmament decoupled from actual nuclear strategies and force structures -- and explores the implications of such “nuclear organized hypocrisy” for the future of the nonproliferation regime.\textsuperscript{11} The nonproliferation regime’s legitimacy depends to a great extent on the maintenance of nuclear organized hypocrisy. NPT Review Conferences play an important role in perpetuating nuclear organized hypocrisy. The failure of the 2005 RevCon therefore raises important questions about the sustainability of nuclear organized hypocrisy, and its implications for the nonproliferation regime.

The next section explains and refines the concept of organized hypocrisy, distinguishing different variants of the concept presented by Nils Brunsson and Stephen Krasner, and situating it in the literature of sociological organization theory from which it emerged.\textsuperscript{12} Following that, I establish that the NPT in fact constitutes organized sovereignty in terms of organized hypocrisy, though it is not clear who suggested the precise term.

\textsuperscript{11} As I explain below, the term “decoupled” is not strictly accurate here, but I use it for the sake of simplicity. Methologically, the single case study presented here is of the “disciplined-configurative” type. George and Bennett 2005, 75. The case is selected primarily for its inherent importance (and for its relevance to the issue of the sustainability of organized hypocrisy), not for being a strong “test” of the theory. Instead, the paper presents a plausibility probe of an organized hypocrisy interpretation of the NPT. More rigorous hypothesis testing awaits further research, which the plausibility probe’s positive result indicates is warranted.

hypocrisy. Finally, I explore theoretical and policy implications of interpreting the NPT in terms of organized hypocrisy.\textsuperscript{13}

**Organized Hypocrisy**

This section explains how the concept of organized hypocrisy has been formulated in the work of Nils Brunsson and Stephen Krasner, and how their conceptions differ based in ways corresponding to the theoretical contexts – realist IR theory and institutionalist organization theory -- in which each author embeds them. A somewhat lengthy and detailed discussion is necessary for several reasons. First, Krasner’s concept of organized hypocrisy is underdeveloped theoretically, with little by way of “moving parts” beyond a definition in terms of simultaneous durability and behavioral violation of institutions, and decoupled logics of consequences and appropriateness.\textsuperscript{14} Analyzing the implications of organized hypocrisy for the nonproliferation regime requires fuller specification of the mechanisms by which organized hypocrisy arises and operates. Brunsson’s conception of organized hypocrisy is considerably more complex and elaborate than Krasner’s, and bears detailed discussion.

Finally, Krasner and Brunsson propose concepts that differ in fundamental ways, making each better suited to different circumstances. Yet, while each has approvingly cited the others’ work, neither has addressed these inconsistencies. Thus, in order to

\textsuperscript{13} The NPT is the core of the nuclear nonproliferation regime. International regimes are defined as “implicit or explicit sets of principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given [issue-] area of international relations,” Krasner 1983, 2. See also Smith 1987.

\textsuperscript{14} Kingsbury 2000, 592.
apply the concept of organized hypocrisy to issues such as nuclear nonproliferation, it is necessary to understand these differences, and to be explicit and self-conscious as to which version of the concept is being employed. I begin with Krasner’s interpretation of sovereignty, both because it is more straightforward than Brunsson’s analysis, and because it is more likely to be familiar to political scientists and IR scholars.

*Krasner, Sovereignty and Organized Hypocrisy*

In an innovative analysis of sovereignty as organized hypocrisy, enduring as an institution yet routinely violated in practice, Krasner adapted the concept of organized hypocrisy from the work of Nils Brunsson. Krasner defines organized hypocrisy as a condition in which institutions are durable but weakly institutionalized and therefore frequently infringed. Drawing on the concept of “decoupling” from organization theory, he holds that, in organized hypocrisy, institutional norms are decoupled – or causally separate – from behavior. Thus, in the terminology of March and Olsen, norms conform

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16 Krasner (1999, 58) defines institutionalization as “conformity between norms and behavior.” Organizational sociology employs a different meaning, referring to the attachment of meaning and significance to practices. From this perspective, “[t]o ‘institutionalize’ is to infuse with value beyond the technical requirements of the task at hand.” Selznick 1957, 17. For sociologists, “[i]nstitutionalization involves the processes by which social processes, obligations, or actualities come to take on a rule-like status in social thought and action.” Meyer and Rowan 1977, 341. Institutionalization so-defined does not necessarily imply universal behavioral conformity, because institutionalized norms are “counterfactually valid,” consequential even when infringed. Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986, 767.
to a logic of appropriateness embodied in normative standards and cognitive scripts, while behavior reflects logics of consequences or calculations of expected utility.\(^\text{18}\)

Sovereignty has been a durable norm over the previous three centuries, but Krasner demonstrates that it has been routinely violated by the actual behavior of states. While the persistence of a norm in the face of repeated violation seems puzzling from a behavioral perspective, Krasner argued that the puzzle is resolved by recognizing sovereignty as a manifestation of organized hypocrisy, with the institutional norms of Westphalian and legal sovereignty decoupled from and often violated by the self-interested behavior of states.

This argument is based on a significant adaptation and extension of Brunsson’s original concept. Brunsson developed the concept of organized hypocrisy with reference to domestic institutions. Krasner argues that it is particularly applicable to international relations, due to the weakly institutionalized nature of the international system and the conflicting demands of domestic pressures and the international system.\(^\text{19}\) However, for Krasner, the referents of organized hypocrisy are individual rulers.\(^\text{20}\) This contrasts with Brunsson’s conception, which applied to formal organizations. Krasner’s rulers are unitary rational actors, relatively autonomous from the societies they govern, but seeking to maintain power by promoting the interests of their domestic power base. These interests, or the values and norms of influential domestic constituencies, may conflict with norms and pressures at the international level. For Krasner, then, organized hypocrisy arises from the strategic decisions of rulers seeking to manage inconsistent

\(^{18}\) March and Olsen 1989.
\(^{19}\) Krasner 1999, 66.
\(^{20}\) Krasner 1999, 43.
demands. In contrast, the organizations that are the focus of Brunsson’s analysis are not unitary and often not rational. Organized hypocrisy as described by Brunsson is often the unintended result of the aggregation of independent responses to inconsistent external pressures by organizational units loosely coupled to, or decoupled from, each other.

Krasner also argues that, in an anarchic international system, logics of consequences can always override logics of appropriateness. He writes, “In a contested environment in which actors, including rulers of states, embrace different norms, clubs can always be trump.” Brunsson, however, does not regard either logic (what he calls the action and political models) as predominating in this way.

Accounts of the development of organization theory highlight a progression from understandings of organizations as closed systems, distinct and autonomous from their environments and centrally and rationally directed towards fulfillment of organizational goals, to open systems conceptions, in which organizations are regarded as interpenetrated by, and constituted by, interactions with their environments. Brunsson’s understanding of organizations falls within the open systems approach in organization

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21 Specifically, organized hypocrisy is, for Brunsson, a characteristic of a particular type of organization which he calls a “political” (as opposed to “action”) organization. The distinction between political and action organizations is described below.
22 For Brunsson, organized hypocrisy does not carry the negative moral connotation usually associated with the word hypocrisy. This is partly because hypocrisy may be both unintended, and not a product of a unified actor. It is also due to the fact that organized hypocrisy can be necessary to organizational survival in inconsistent environments. While Krasner does not explicitly address the ethics of organized hypocrisy, in recent work he recommends organized hypocrisy as a policy response to state-failure, enabling partial trusteeships while maintaining rhetorical commitment to sovereignty. Krasner 2004. On the political ethics of hypocrisy, see Grant 1997.
23 Krasner 1999, 238.
theory, while Krasner’s corresponds to the closed-rational system perspective. States, in Krasner’s analysis, better fit the closed system model emphasizing independence and clear (territorial) boundaries with the environment. Thus, Krasner has modified a concept Brunsson meant to apply to political organizations, reinterpreting it as a characteristic of rational closed system organizations. Inasmuch as Krasner’s basic unit of analysis is rulers rather than states, his conception of organized hypocrisy is not clearly about formal organizations – as opposed to institutions – at all. While this adaptation may be justified in order to apply the concept to Krasner’s concept of sovereignty, it undermines its utility with regard to formal international organizations, for which the original organization-theoretic formulation of the organized hypocrisy concept offers powerful insights.

Brunsson, “the Organization of Hypocrisy,” and Organized Hypocrisy

Brunsson’s conception of organized hypocrisy is complex, and involves a number of subsidiary concepts. First, Brunsson distinguishes between organizational talk (rhetoric)

26 Brunsson writes (of political organizations, on which he focuses), “Instead of independence, the organization’s dependence on its environment is emphasized. And instead of having clear boundaries with the environment its borders are vague, or so general as to not distinguish the organization from the environment at all. The organization is part of the very environment, which is going to judge it. This, and not because the organization produces action for its environment, is why it can appear valuable.” Brunsson 1989, 195.
27 For a contrasting open systems interpretation of sovereignty and statehood, see Ansell and Weber 1999.
28 Elsewhere, I suggest that Krasner’s interpretation is more suitable for closed-system settings, and Brunsson’s for open systems. Lipson 2005. For analyses of international organizations in terms of organized hypocrisy, see: Héritier 1999 (European Union), Steinberg 2002 (WTO), Weaver 2003 (World Bank), Lipson 2005 (United Nations).
and decisions, calling decisions, “a form of talk important enough to warrant classification as a separate category.” Thus, for Brunsson hypocrisy involves inconsistency among “talk, decisions and actions in organizations” (the subtitle to his book). As he puts it,

If people who place demands on an organization attach importance not only to the organization’s actions but also to what is said and decided, the organization can meet some demands through talk, others through its decisions, and yet others through action – and thus to some extent satisfy three conflicting demands.

Further, Brunsson develops broader and narrower conceptions of hypocrisy, but does not clearly distinguish them in the first edition of The Organization of Hypocrisy. The introduction to the second edition (unrevised except for the addition of a new preface and introduction) clarifies this issue, explicitly distinguishing between the broader concept of “organization of hypocrisy” (OOH) and the narrower “organized hypocrisy.” Brunsson defines OOH as follows:

Hypocrisy is a response to such a world, one in which values, ideas, or people are in conflict with one another. Organizations handle conflicts by reflecting them, by incorporating within themselves elements corresponding to the conflicts.

Conflicting demands are reflected in organizational structures, processes, and ideologies, which then also become conflict-based and inconsistent. Organizations

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30 Brunsson 2003, 205.
coopt conflicting parties on to their managements, they cultivate a plurality of ideologies, they generalize rather than specialize, they focus on problems rather than solutions, and they tend to engage in fairly rational decision processes. These incorporated inconsistencies define the “organization of hypocrisy.”

OOH, then, seems to refer to symbolic responses to conflicting external demands through the display of “structure, processes, and ideologies” rather than action. This restates the basic claim of the influential neo-institutionalist school of organization theory, which holds that organizations, in order to gain legitimacy and external support, incorporate the “rational myths” and institutional rules of their institutional environments into their formal structure. This formal structure will often be decoupled from the mechanisms by which the organization actually acts. Brunsson’s twist on this point is that these myths and rules may be inconsistent, in which case their incorporation into formal structure will produce inconsistency within the organization.

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31 Brunsson 2002, xiii.
32 Other than in the title, the phrase “organization of hypocrisy” does not appear to be used elsewhere in the first edition of the book. Thus, the above quote is the only definition of the concept Brunsson provides, and it came only in the second edition. The interpretation I present here of OOH as excluding action is supported by the fact that Brunsson follows the quote presented above by asserting that most organizations cannot simply incorporate external inconsistencies but must also produce action. He then introduces the organized hypocrisy as a concept distinct from OOH, defining organized hypocrisy in terms of inconsistent talk, decisions, and action. This suggests that action (or outputs) is part of organized hypocrisy but not the organization of hypocrisy. However, Brunsson writes, elsewhere, that “[i]f there are no actions, there can, by definition, be no hypocrisy.” Brunsson 2003, 209. Unless “hypocrisy” is understood in this instance to refer to organized hypocrisy but not “the organization of hypocrisy,” this statement is problematic for my interpretation of the two terms.
The concept of OOH corresponds closely to what Brunsson terms “political” (as opposed to “action”) organizations. The action-politics distinction mirrors the neo-institutionalist distinction between technical and institutional environments. Action organizations correspond to technical environments, political organizations to institutional environments. In technical environments, organizations are selected on the basis of their efficiency and effectiveness. In institutional environments, organizations are evaluated and selected on the basis of their conformity with externally legitimated rules and standards. Both dichotomies are ideal-typical. Real world organizations typically face both technical and institutional pressures; an organization may simultaneously face strong technical and institutional pressures. Because all real organizations face both technical and institutional pressures, political organizations will be required, beyond symbolically incorporating conflicting elements of their organizations, to produce coordinated action.

34 The second to last sentence in the block quotation on pages 9-10 lists five specific practices through which conflicting pressures in an organization’s environment are incorporated into the organization’s structures, processes, and ideologies. These five practices correspond exactly to the defining characteristics of what Brunsson calls a political organization. It seems, then, that the concepts of political organizations and OOH are more or less synonymous: the basic characteristics of political organizations constitute the organization of hypocrisy. Brunsson 2002, 13-39 (Chapter 2).
36 A hypothetical organization facing a purely technical environment would be an action organization. It would obtain resources necessary for survival solely on the basis of its efficient production of outputs through coordinated action. Such an organization would exhibit neither OOH nor organized hypocrisy, as both are inefficient in technical environments. A hypothetical purely political environment would exist in a solely institutional environment, but one characterized by conflicting norms. Such an organization would display OOH but not organized hypocrisy, because it would not produce action or products, only rhetoric.
Their formal structures and decision-making procedures, adapted to institutional rather than technical demands, will be poorly suited to doing so. This discrepancy, according to Brunsson, is the source of organized hypocrisy.

**Coupling: Decoupling versus Counter-Coupling**

Organized hypocrisy consists of action inconsistent with talk and decisions. Brunsson notes,

> When institutional norms fail to agree with the requirements for action, organizations will often try to create two sets of structures and processes, one for each type of norm. These sets should not interfere with one another, but should be separated or ‘decoupled.’

Organizations can respond to normative pressures with symbolic formal structures, while the organization acts through an alternate “informal organization.” Decoupling allows these two sets of organizational structures to act in contradictory fashion without interfering with each other. However, in the first edition of *The Organization of Hypocrisy*, Brunsson suggested another form of relationship between inconsistent talk, decisions, and action. Rather than being decoupled – having no affect on or causal relationship with each other – they might be related so that inconsistent rhetoric and

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decisions compensate for one another.\textsuperscript{39} Brunsson has recently elaborated on this relationship, writing,

When hypocrisy obtains, there is still a causal relation between talk, decisions and actions, but the causality is the reverse. Talk or decisions pointing in one direction reduce the likelihood of the corresponding action actually occurring, while actions in a particular direction reduce the likelihood of any corresponding talk or decisions taking place. Talk and decisions pointing in one direction do not encourage actions in the same direction; rather, they compensate for actions in the opposite direction, just as actions in one direction compensate for talk and decisions in a different one. Or, to use the popular concept of “coupling,” when hypocrisy obtains, the talk and decisions and actions are not de-coupled or loosely coupled. Rather, they are coupled, albeit in another way than is usually assumed.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{39} Brunsson 1989, 168-172, 188-189. In the first edition, Brunsson does not explicitly address the difference between this compensating relationship and decoupling, in which action and rhetoric are independent and not causally related. Thus, on the issue of coupling, Krasner’s interpretation of organized hypocrisy as decoupling is consistent with Brunsson’s first edition. In the first edition, Brunsson argues that ideas, as expressed in organizational talk and decisions, may be decoupled from action, or be causally related in one of three ways: ideas may control action, or they may rationalize and explain actions already taken. Finally, Brunsson writes, “In the fourth case, there is no such congruence, but there is a relationship. This is the case when ideas and action compensate for one another, i.e., they systematically contradict one another. Organizational talk is adapted to some norms and action to others. This is hypocrisy.”\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{40} Brunsson 2002, xiv. For example, UN Security Council Resolutions (e.g., the “safe areas” resolutions regarding Bosnia, and SCR 918 of May 17 1994 authorizing a strengthened UNAMIR in Rwanda) authorizing interventions by peacekeepers in the face of ethnic cleansing and genocide without providing necessary resources, by diffusing the pressure to take action, have reduced the chance of effective intervention actually taking place. Lipson 2005. See also Barnett 2002; Rieff 1996, 173. Samantha Power has suggested that activists’ efforts to promote the use of the word “genocide” in relation to
Thus, Brunsson’s understanding of organized hypocrisy, at least in its most recent iteration, is also distinct from Krasner’s in this important aspect. For Krasner, organized hypocrisy consists of decoupling between norms and action. For Brunsson, organized hypocrisy involves what might be called “compensatory” or “offsetting,” or “counter-” coupling. I will use the latter, is it is slightly less awkward than the others. Organized hypocrisy, then, is understood here as action decoupled from, or counter-coupled with, inconsistent rhetoric and symbolic action.

The NPT as Organized Hypocrisy

In 1963, President Kennedy predicted that 15 to 25 states would obtain nuclear weapons by 1975. Concern over this prospect led the United States and Soviet Union to propose draft nonproliferation treaties in 1964 and 1965. These proposals ultimately led to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The NPT designates nuclear weapons states (NWS) and non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS). Under Article IX.3, any state that had “manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to January 1, 1967” was designated an NWS. Thus, all states except the permanent members

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Darfur might detract from actually addressing the crisis with effective action. Whitney 2005.


United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency 1969, ix-xi. The U.S. and Soviet Union held private discussions of a nonproliferation treaty from 1962.

The Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, or Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) was opened for signature in 1968 and entered into force in 1970. It currently has 187 state parties (the five nuclear weapons states – the U.S., Russia, China, UK, and France) and all non-nuclear weapons states except India, Pakistan, Israel, and Cuba. North Korea withdrew from the treaty in 2002.
of the Security Council are NNWS under the NPT. The NPT is often described as comprising three “pillars”: nonproliferation, disarmament, and the right to peaceful use of nuclear technology. NWS agree not to assist in the spread of nuclear weapons to NNWS. NNWS agree not to try to obtain nuclear weapons, and accept International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards on nuclear facilities to verify their non-military use of nuclear technology. NNWS are guaranteed the right to peaceful use of nuclear technologies. And NWS are committed, under Article VI, to pursue negotiations in good faith to end the nuclear arms race, and to achieve nuclear disarmament and “general and complete disarmament.”

The Treaty had an original duration of 25 years, with review conferences held every five years, and a conference of the parties to be held at the end of that period to decide on indefinite renewal of the treaty. At the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, the parties agreed to renew the treaty indefinitely, continuing the practice of five-year review conferences. The 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences adopted measures reaffirming the pillars of the treaty, including Article VI. As part of the overall agreement to extend the treaty, the 1995 Review Conference adopted a set of “Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament,” including a reaffirmation of Article VI by the NWS, and a call for,

[T]he determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goals of

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44 Article VI reads, in full: “Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.”
eliminating those weapons, and by all States of general and complete
disarmament under strict and effective international control.45

At the 2000 Review Conference, the parties adopted a final document including the so-called “thirteen steps,” contained in paragraph 15 of the final document’s section on Article VI. This provision lists 13 items, characterized as “practical steps,” towards fulfillment of Article VI and the relevant portions (paragraphs 3 and 4c) of the 1995 Principles and Objectives. The thirteen steps include ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), negotiation of a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT), reduced reliance on nuclear weapons for security, and the “engagement as soon as appropriate of all the nuclear-weapon States in the process leading to the total elimination of their nuclear weapons.”46 Thus, the NPT links nonproliferation to disarmament, and the nuclear-weapon states have regularly reaffirmed their formal commitments to pursue the elimination of nuclear weapons. Yet their actions belie any intention to relinquish their nuclear arsenals.

The nuclear nonproliferation regime is part of an inconsistent environment, characterized by nonproliferation and disarmament norms that contradict the perceived

self interest of states concerned with power and security in an anarchic international system. Realist international theory holds that states, driven by the security dilemma and the self-help imperative of the anarchic international system, acquire nuclear weapons in response to perceived security threats. In addition, domestic political pressures from groups such as nuclear scientists and the military, and from nationalist movements and parties seeking enhanced status for their country, sometimes promote the acquisition of nuclear weapons. These internal and external pressures constitute logics of consequences with which states and rulers must contend.

At the same time, norms of nonproliferation and disarmament work in opposition to these domestic and systemic pressures. According to Scott Sagan, a “major discontinuity—a shift in nuclear norms—has emerged as the result of the NPT regime.” Nonproliferation norms have shifted the significance of nuclear weapons acquisition from the prestige that previously attached to being a member of the nuclear “club,” to the status of rogue state defying international norms. These norms constitute part of the international environment facing state actors, and are transmitted through domestic

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49 Sagan 1996/7, 76. Mutimer (2000) deconstructs NP norms, pointing to way in which construction of “proliferation” as threat understood in terms of autonomous technological diffusion has effect of defining recipient states rather than nuclear weapons states as threat to IP&S. Paul notes that “India often couches its challenge to the nonproliferation regime in normative and idealistic terms, such as the sovereign equality of states and the need for global disarmament.” Paul 1998, 1. By coupling at least partially inconsistent disarmament and nonproliferation frames, NPT’s drafting put it in environment of inconsistent norms.
mechanisms, becoming elements of national identity when they are internalized.\textsuperscript{50} Thus, the NPT and the nonproliferation regime form part of the kind of inconsistent environment that gives rise to organized hypocrisy.

The behavior of nuclear weapons states constitutes organized hypocrisy. Nuclear weapons states are committed by Article VI to pursue nuclear disarmament, yet maintain nuclear forces and military strategies that presume the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons. Article VI commits states parties to pursue negotiations towards disarmament in good faith. However, the current policies, ongoing planning, and force structures of the nuclear weapons states make clear that they intend to retain nuclear weapons for the foreseeable future.

A recent assessment of French nuclear forces noted that,

Although France is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and is bound by Article VI’s goal of nuclear disarmament, it shows no signs of giving up its remaining arsenal. Instead, it is making plans to develop, procure, and deploy new weapons, and to maintain its arsenal without nuclear testing, for years to come.\textsuperscript{51}

This observation in fact applies to all of the NPT-designated nuclear weapons states. The British government has reportedly decided to develop a replacement for the United


\textsuperscript{51} Norris and Kristensen 2005a.
Kingdom’s fleet of Trident ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) in advance of their scheduled 2024 decommissioning.52 Russia, while cutting its stockpile of strategic nuclear weapons under the 2002 Moscow Treaty, is also developing a new land-based intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and a new class of ballistic missile submarines.53 The Russian SS-18 ICBM, which had been slated for retirement, is now expected to remain in service until between 2015 and 2020.54 Similarly, the People’s Republic of China, as part of its overall modernization of its strategic nuclear forces, is developing new ICBMs (the DF31 and DF31A models) and submarine launched ballistic missiles (JL-2 SLBMs).55 In July 2005, a Chinese General stated that the PRC would have to use nuclear weapons were the United States to intervene militarily in a conflict over Taiwan.56 A joint project by two NGOs advocating nonproliferation and disarmament concluded that, “China claims to be contributing to nuclear disarmament through its longstanding policy of ‘no first use’ of nuclear weapons but it currently appears to be neither ready nor willing to enter the disarmament process itself.”57

52 Brown 2005.
The United States likewise has plans and programs in place to maintain its nuclear deterrent for the foreseeable future. The 2001 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) proposed changes to the U.S. strategic nuclear arsenal to ensure, “over the coming decades, a credible deterrent at the lowest level of nuclear weapons consistent with U.S. and allied security.” The 2001 NPR proposed a “New Triad” comprising offensive capabilities, (including nuclear and non-nuclear weapons), defensive forces, and enhanced defense industrial, procurement, and nuclear weapons infrastructures. The NPR envisioned an operationally deployed force of 1,700-2,200 nuclear warheads by 2012 with this figure later formalized in the 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) with Russia.

The U.S. Department of Energy oversees a stockpile stewardship program and Stockpile Life Extension Programs (LEPs) for individual warhead types. The U.S. plans to extend Minuteman III ICBM service life beyond 2020, and the Navy plans to replace its existing class of SSBNs in 2029. In 2005, Congress established the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program, with initial funding of $9 million, to explore the feasibility of redesigning existing warheads to make them easier to manufacture and maintain, and to increase their reliability. The RRW program is to some extent an alternative to the LEPs, regarded by its proponents as a more effective way of ensuring

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59 A “responsive force” of non-operationally deployed weapons is available to supplement the operationally deployed force as contingencies require.
60 A life extension program is underway for the W87 warhead (deployed on the MX ICBM, and scheduled to replace W62 warheads on Minuteman III ICBMs as the MX is retired). LEPs are scheduled for the B61-7/-11, W76, W78, W80, B83, and W88 warheads. Norris and Kristensen 2005c.
the continued reliability of weapons in the stockpile without the need for testing. A recent Congressional Research Service report on the RRW program noted that, in evaluating the relative merits of the LEP and RRW programs, “The issue for Congress is how best to sustain the nuclear stockpile and its supporting infrastructure for the long term.” Thus, the U.S. clearly intends to maintain its nuclear arsenal, adapted in accordance with the 2001 and future Nuclear Posture Reviews, indefinitely. Moreover, the Bush administration has pushed for the development of a new type of nuclear weapon, seen by critics as lowering the threshold for use of a nuclear weapon, in seeking funding and development of a Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (RNEP) or nuclear “bunker buster.”

U.S. strategies, plans, and programs are strikingly incompatible with the proclaimed commitment to disarmament under Article VI of the NPT. Moreover, the U.S. is no

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63 Medalia 2005a, CRS-1 (emphasis added).
64 Medalia 2005b. The RNEP has encountered Congressional resistance. Ruppe 2005a. To the extent that they make nuclear weapons more “useable,” bunker-busters are inconsistent with the U.S. commitment, as part of the thirteen practical steps towards disarmament adopted at the 2000 Review Conference, to reduce reliance nuclear weapons. Grotto 2005.
65 Assistant Secretary of State Stephen G. Rademaker has forcefully defended the record of the United States with respect to Article VI, arguing that it is “unassailable,” and that the U.S. is in full compliance. He points to, *inter alia*: the end of the Cold War arms race; the ongoing U.S. moratorium on nuclear testing; strategic arms reductions under START II and SORT; dismantling on non-strategic nuclear weapons; non-production of weapons-grade uranium and plutonium; and fissile material destruction. Rademaker 2004. Rademaker’s argument implicitly interprets nuclear disarmament, under the terms of Article VI, to mean arms reduction rather than nuclear abolition. The US has reduced its nuclear arsenal to operationally deployed levels of 4,216 strategic warheads and 680 nonstrategic warheads. Ruppe 2005b. Approximately 5,000 additional warheads are in a “responsive reserve force.” Norris and Kristensen 2005c. In the late 1960s, approximately 32,000 U.S. nuclear warheads were operationally deployed. Norris and Kristensen 2004. Therefore, the current levels do represent significant reductions, and further reductions are planned. Although the U.S. may be, in a strict legal sense, in technical compliance with Article VI’s nuclear disarmament requirements, its clear intention to maintain its nuclear arsenal indefinitely is at odds with its Article VI commitment to pursue nuclear
exception among the recognized nuclear weapon states, which as one observer notes
“preach but do not practice nuclear abstinence.”

In addition to the organized hypocrisy inherent in nuclear weapons states’ nuclear
force structures and plans inconsistent with their Article VI commitments, a
manifestation of organized hypocrisy closer to Krasner’s focus on sovereignty can be
discerned in the International Atomic Energy Agency’s role in monitoring compliance
with the NPT. The IAEA is formally committed in its governing Statute to respecting the
sovereignty of its member states, and is “based on the principle of the sovereign
equality.” However, in the current dispute over Iran’s nuclear activities, the IAEA has
arguably acted as an instrument of sovereignty-related organized hypocrisy. Britain,
disarmament (and general disarmament as well), understood to mean the elimination of
nuclear weapons.

66 Thakur 2005.

67 International Atomic Energy Agency 1957, Article IV.C. Article III.D of the IAEA
Statute requires the IAEA’s activities to be conducted “with due observance of the
sovereign rights of states.”

68 In 2003, following up on disclosures by an Iranian dissident group, the IAEA declared
that Iran had been conducting clandestine nuclear fuel cycle activities for 18 years,
violating its safeguarding obligations as a party to the NPT. In October 2003, Iran agreed
to suspend its uranium enrichment, and in December it signed the Additional Protocol,
granting IAEA inspectors largely unrestricted access to both declared and undeclared
nuclear sites for snap inspections. The IAEA has subsequently found Iranian declarations
of its nuclear activities to be incomplete, and Iran has yet to ratify the Additional
Protocol. Negotiations between the Britain, France, and Germany (the EU3) and Iran
have proceeded in fits and starts. The prospect of UN sanctions is complicated both by
possible Security Council vetoes by China and Russia, and by the fact that Iran’s uranium
enrichment activities are not forbidden by the NPT, and it is not clear whether its
violations of the Treaty’s safeguards requirements constitute sufficient legal basis (that is,
a clear enough threat to international peace and security) for enforcement action under
Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Grotto 2004. Based in part of judgments that previously
suspected military enrichment efforts parallel to the civilian program did not in fact exist,
the U.S. and Israel revised their estimates of Iran’s likely acquisition of a nuclear bomb in
the summer of 2005, with the U.S. National Intelligence Estimate assessing Iran’s
capability to produce sufficient fissile material “closer to 2015” than the previous
estimate of “within five years.” Linzer 2005a. Revised Israeli estimates hold that Iran
France, and Germany (the “EU three”), negotiating on behalf of the European Union and with U.S. support, have employed both carrots and sticks in an effort to induce Iran to agree to abandon efforts to produce fissile material that could be used in nuclear weapons. While offering to provide fuel for Iranian civilian nuclear reactors in exchange for Iran’s verified abandonment of efforts to enrich uranium itself, the EU and U.S. have also threatened that if Iran ended its voluntary suspension of uranium processing they would take the issue to the IAEA’s board of governors for referral to the UN Security Council and possible sanctions. The terms of a U.S.-backed August 4, 2005 proposal by the EU3 requires Iran to agree that IAEA inspectors could “visit any site or interview any person they deem relevant to their monitoring of nuclear activities in Iran.” Thus, the EU3 are seeking to induce Iran to agree, in negotiations backed with a threat of coercive sanctions, to forgo rights to nuclear technology and accept a limited surrender of Westphalian sovereignty to the IAEA, in exchange for security assurances and nuclear energy assistance. If successful, such efforts would constitute what Krasner terms a contract compromising Westphalian sovereignty. If failure of the negotiations resulted in the imposition of sanctions, or Iranian capitulation in the face of sanctions, this would constitute coercive infringement of Westphalian sovereignty.

The nonproliferation regime, then, conforms to the overall framework of organized hypocrisy. But, as outlined above, Brunsson and Krasner present different and
partially incompatible models of organized hypocrisy. To what extent does the nuclear nonproliferation regime correspond to the alternative types of organized hypocrisy?

Decoupling vs. Counter-coupling in Nuclear Organized Hypocrisy

In his discussion of decoupling, Brunsson lists four methods by which talk, decisions, and action are decoupled: separation by time, topic, environment, and organizational unit. Nuclear organized hypocrisy exhibits all four. In separation by time, action in one direction occurs now, while talk and decisions promise contrary behavior in the future. The NPT takes this form, requiring safeguards, export controls and other nonproliferation measures in the present, while disarmament is held out as a future goal. In separation by topic, some topics are addressed through rhetoric and symbolism and others through action. The NPT can also be interpreted as addressing the spread of nuclear technology through action (inspections, export controls, sanctions, interdiction, and counterproliferation) while the topic of disarmament is addressed through talk and negotiations. Separation by environment consists of the employment of talk and decisions in some organizational environments (such as interactions with the developing states) and action in others (such as interactions with alliance partners or export control regime members). Finally, in separation by organizational unit, some organizational entities (e.g., the Conference on Disarmament) produce talk and decisions, while others generate action (the Nuclear Suppliers Group) decoupled from the others’ rhetoric.

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More recently, Brunsson has developed a conception of organized hypocrisy in terms of talk and decisions being coupled with one another in a compensating fashion, such that rhetoric compensates for contradictory action and vice versa. This conception appears more suited than a decoupling perspective to understanding the significance of organized hypocrisy for the NPT. For example, institutional decisions such as the adoption of the “thirteen practical steps” toward disarmament at the 2000 Treaty Review Conference are not causally unrelated to the NWSs’ continued possession of nuclear arsenals. Such measures, by responding rhetorically to normative and political pressures for disarmament, have the effect of diffusing pressure to dismantle nuclear forces, making their retention less politically costly. The notion of counter-coupling captures this better than does decoupling.

The distinction between decoupling and counter-coupling matters, therefore, to our assessment of nuclear organized hypocrisy. If Article VI disarmament commitments and decisions such as the thirteen steps are merely decoupled from action, they have no causal effect one way or another on the size or structure of nuclear forces. If, on the other hand, they are counter-coupled, then as Brunnson writes, “the likelihood of an action decreases the more it is talked about and the more clear decisions are made about it.”

Under counter-coupled nuclear organized hypocrisy, in other words, decisions such as the thirteen practical steps actually reduce the likelihood of disarmament in practice.

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72 Brunsson 2002, 205.
73 Conversely, according to this logic, the failure to reach a decision, as with the 2005 RevCon, may lead to greater likelihood of disarmament, or greater political cost of producing new types of nuclear weapons such as bunker-busters, than would have been the case had a symbolic decision been reached.
Implications

If the above analysis is correct in characterizing the NPT as organized hypocrisy, then several implications follow. Most prominently, the ability to sustain this hypocrisy may be critical to survival of the nonproliferation regime. Brunsson emphasizes the point that organized hypocrisy is often “to the benefit of organizational legitimacy and survival.”

Indeed, in his analysis, “Hypocrisy is seen as a solution rather than a problem, it possesses some moral advantages, and it is often impossible to avoid it.” Krasner is less explicit about the virtues and benefits of hypocrisy, but in a recent article on dealing with failed states he recommends the use of euphemistic language to describe proposed arrangements compromising sovereignty in failed states so as to “let policy-makers engage in organized hypocrisy,” to deal more effectively with the challenges of state failure than conventional sovereignty arrangements permit. Thus, Krasner also recognizes that organized hypocrisy can be politically necessary to legitimate actions and institutional arrangements (such as “shared sovereignty”) in the inconsistent environment of international politics.

Organized hypocrisy in the NPT has allowed the regime to successfully respond to inconsistent pressures: normative and political pressures for disarmament, and great power unwillingness to relinquish nuclear weapons; sovereignty norms and intrusive nuclear inspections; demands to spread nuclear technology for development and energy generation, and controls on such technologies to prevent proliferation. Organized

75 Brunsson, 2002, xi.
76 Krasner 2005, 108.
hypocrisy in the nonproliferation regime has allowed for the relatively successful arrangements for limiting nonproliferation to coexist with a lack of progress towards genuine disarmament. Given the unwillingness of the NWS to relinquish their nuclear arsenals, without at least the symbolic commitments of Article VI it would have been politically difficult for developing countries to sign and ratify the NPT.\textsuperscript{77} Without renewed rhetorical commitments in the 1995 Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament, and the “thirteen steps” adopted at the 2000 Review Conference, prospects for the treaty’s indefinite renewal and continued support would have been doubtful. The U.S. stance at the 2005 Review Conference, refusing to acknowledge continued commitment to the thirteen steps or seriously engage in efforts to strengthen the regime, raises the prospect that, by failing to cultivate the organized hypocrisy that underlies the regime, the U.S. may be endangering its continued viability.\textsuperscript{78}

A skeptic might ask why one should care about the survival of a regime that embodies hypocrisy. The answer to this question depends on judgments about the feasibility of non-hypocritical alternatives, and – in the specific case of the nonproliferation regime – the desirability of preventing further nuclear proliferation. Regarding nuclear abolition as a desirable and politically achievable goal would imply a negative assessment of nuclear organized hypocrisy as short-circuiting one of the

\textsuperscript{77} Non-aligned states made clear in early negotiations in the Disarmament Commission during 1964, and in response to a 1965 draft treaty without a disarmament article proposed by the US, that linkage of nonproliferation with disarmament was a priority for them. United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency 1969, 17-20. The U.S. and Soviet Union resisted linkage between nonproliferation and disarmament. United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency 1969, x.

\textsuperscript{78} On U.S. neglect in the run-up to and meetings of the 2005 Review Conference, see Cirincione 2005.
nonproliferation regime’s purpose. Alternatively, if one regards genuine disarmament as unfeasible but nonproliferation as desirable, this would imply that organized hypocrisy is both necessary and beneficial, enabling nonproliferation efforts without making them contingent on politically impossible disarmament measures. On the other hand, under the Waltzian view of proliferation as promoting stability and reducing the likelihood of war, nuclear organized hypocrisy – by preventing proliferation that might increase stability – would be evaluated more negatively. For the purposes of this paper, it is assumed that large scale nuclear disarmament or abolition are, in the near to medium term, politically unfeasible, and that non-negligible risks and extreme consequences of the use of nuclear weapons make preventing proliferation highly desirable. This perspective raises the question of the stability and sustainability of organized hypocrisy. If the nonproliferation regime depends on nuclear organized hypocrisy, what are the challenges and limits of organized hypocrisy, and what policy responses are available?

How Stable Is (Nuclear) Organized Hypocrisy?

If the nuclear nonproliferation regime depends for its legitimacy on the maintenance of hypocrisy, understanding challenges to maintaining organized hypocrisy becomes an important concern for both theory and policy. Brunsson notes that, “Hypocrisy may be a more or less stable phenomenon – it may persist or it may disappear over time.”

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79 See Waltz’s contributions to Sagan and Waltz 2003.
81 Brunsson 2003, 216.
might organized hypocrisy end? Brunsson and Krasner propose two basic mechanisms. For Krasner, in the international system “clubs can always be trump”: logics of consequences will, as a rule, override logics of appropriateness. Thus, behavior will be dictated by the political interests of rulers, a function of power politics at the domestic and international levels. If norms inconsistent with these interests are enduring, organized hypocrisy will persist. These norms, however, may change, erode, or collapse. In the case of nuclear organized hypocrisy, a Krasnerian perspective would predict that NWS will retain their nuclear arsenals, and that if nuclear organized hypocrisy were to end it would be by means of the abandonment or erosion of norms delegitimizing nuclear weapons. (States would “stop worrying and learn to love the bomb.”) Brunsson calls this mechanism “justification,” indicating that norms change to conform to existing practice. While the norms underlying the nuclear nonproliferation regime have proven durable over the last thirty-five years, it is disturbingly easy to envision plausible scenarios, such as a North Korean nuclear test triggering crash nuclear weapons programs in Japan and South Korea, under which nonproliferation norms would be severely tested.

Organized hypocrisy can also cease if action is made to conform to rhetoric. Brunsson calls this “implementation,” signifying that actions implement talk and decisions. The conditions that produce organized hypocrisy by definition oppose implementation. However, over time the hypocrisy may become increasingly obvious, 

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82 Brunsson presents three mechanisms, arguing that, “[t]he stability of hypocrisy is threatened by tendencies towards implementation, tendencies towards justification, and by the norm of consistency.” Brunsson 2003, 217. However, the norm of consistency (i.e., that talk, decisions, and action should be consistent), is not independent of the other two but manifests as pressure towards either implementation or justification. These are discussed above.
83 Krasner 1999, 238.
and promises of future consistency may lose their credibility, with the consequence that organized hypocrisy can no longer protect organizational legitimacy. In that event, pressures for implementation may override countervailing pressures for hypocrisy, leading to the collapse of organized hypocrisy. In the case of the nonproliferation regime, this would take the form of disarmament norms and the accumulated commitments of past disarmament promises inducing the NWS to actually undertake negotiations aimed at full nuclear disarmament. However, implementation pressures can be weakened by judgments that changed circumstances make past talk and decisions no longer relevant, as with the Bush administration’s view of Cold War arms control treaties. For reasons of both material power and national culture and identity, it is unlikely that decision makers in the U.S., Russia, France, China, and Britain, will abandon nuclear weapons in the foreseeable future.

If the conditions underlying organized hypocrisy persist, pressures to implement past commitments will most likely be addressed through repeated hypocrisy. In the nuclear nonproliferation regime, the practice of holding Treaty Review Conferences every five years, at which disarmament commitments are typically formally reaffirmed without practical action, institutionalizes this response through iterated organized hypocrisy. While the most likely prospect for nuclear organized hypocrisy appears to be repeated enactment at five-year Review Conferences, repetition of the 2005 Review

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85 “Implementation de-stabilizes hypocrisy by actions being adapted to past talk and decisions.” Brunsson 2003, 218.
86 Implementation pressures are also mitigated if past commitments are forgotten. On how perceptions of change and forgetting can buffer organized hypocrisy against implementation pressures, see Brunsson 2003, 216-217.
87 However, a recent survey found that most Americans say that no country should have nuclear weapons. Associated Press 2005.
88 Brunsson 2003, 217.
Conference’s failure to reach agreement would threaten the continued viability of this means of managing pressures on the regime. The next most likely outcome would appear to be the erosion of nonproliferation and disarmament norms under the strain of continued violations. However (from a counter-coupling perspective), if RevCon consensus documents were to cease buffering disarmament pressures, this could have the effect of increasing the pressure on NWS to actually pursue nuclear disarmament with action, since talk would no longer be compensating for the lack of action.

Organized hypocrisy will also be more stable when there is no authority capable of enforcing commitments or violations of norms, when hypocrisy is more difficult to discover, or concerns matters regarded as unimportant, when the organization in question is regarded as internally divided (making inconsistent behavior appear unintentional rather than hypocritical), and when external actors are satisfied with outcomes and have no incentive to complain.\textsuperscript{89} The anarchic nature of the international system therefore enhances the stability of nuclear organized hypocrisy.\textsuperscript{90} Secrecy surrounding nuclear weapons also stabilizes nuclear organized hypocrisy by making it more difficult to monitor and document. Institutionally divided democratic systems of government and regular changes in administration, by mitigating the applicability of the “norm of consistency” (under which unitary actors are expected to act in accordance with their past and present rhetoric), facilitate organized hypocrisy.\textsuperscript{91} Conflict among members of the IAEA’s board of governors may also serve to buffer the IAEA against accusations of hypocrisy. And, to the extent that states are satisfied with benefits such as “fullest

\textsuperscript{89} Brunsson 2003, 216-220.
\textsuperscript{90} Krasner argues that anarchy increases the scope for organized hypocrisy. Krasner 1999, 66.
\textsuperscript{91} On the norm of consistency, see Brunsson 2003, 218-220.
possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy,” as promised in Article IV of the NPT, or protection under the nuclear umbrella of a NWS, they are less likely to challenge nuclear organized hypocrisy.

Organizations responding to conflicting demands by means of organized hypocrisy do so within a global cultural context that includes a norm against hypocrisy on the part of actors, whether individual or organizational.92 Organizations perceived as talking and acting hypocritically endanger their recognition as coherent actors, and therefore their legitimacy.93 Thus, organizations must respond simultaneously to irreconcilable external pressures – which sometimes requires organized hypocrisy – but also obfuscate the inconsistency that constitutes the organized hypocrisy. Brunsson writes, “Doing that it itself a form of hypocrisy, but on a higher level – a ‘meta-hypocrisy’ – the posture that a hypocritical organization is not a hypocrite. Meta-hypocrisy is a crucial factor in the success of the underlying hypocrisy.”94 Meta-hypocrisy is typically manifested in assertions that action and talk are, in fact, consistent (as with U.S. denials of any inconsistency between its commitment to disarmament and its retention and planning for long-term stockpile maintenance and replacement), and through reform initiatives which demonstrate an ongoing effort to reconcile discrepancies between rhetoric and behavior. Five-year review conferences have been a key basis for

93 Brunsson 2003, 214-215. “An organization can, for example, be accused of not really being a coordinated unit. Its hypocrisy is taken as proof that the organization is not actually one actor, but consists of many independent and uncoordinated individuals or departments each being an actor on its own.” Brunsson 2003, 214.
the latter method. Repetition of the 2005 RevCon outcome would undermine the capacity of meta-hypocrisy to stabilize the nonproliferation regime.

Conclusion

Organized hypocrisy assumes, by definition, that legitimacy is consequential for political and organizational survival, even if norms do not always determine behavior. Recognizing the role of organized hypocrisy in the nuclear nonproliferation regime implies that policy-makers seeking to strengthen the nonproliferation regime should be attentive to the need to demonstrate commitment to the regime’s basic norms even, or especially, when it is not feasible or desirable for the time being to fully comply in practice with those norms. If political elites not intend to pursue genuine disarmament, the nonproliferation regime will depend on their cultivation of organized hypocrisy. This will require adroit use of diplomatic language and symbolism, and would be aided by the projection of a more general commitment to multilateralism. Having failed at the 2005 Review Conference, NWS leaders should still seek further opportunities to restore confidence in the NPT damaged by the 2005 RevCon’s deadlock, such as a proposal by seven non-nuclear weapons states for a declaration on nuclear nonproliferation to be adopted at the 2005 high level plenary meeting (the so-called “World Summit”) at the opening of the UN General Assembly’s 60th session September 14-16, 2005.95

Organized hypocrisy, though often the unintended result of loosely coupled responses by different organizational elements to disparate demands, can sometimes be useful as a consciously adopted strategy to make possible or reduce the cost of actions that would otherwise be normatively proscribed. Arrangements resembling trusteeship may prove to be the most effective means of managing the challenges of failed states, helping to bring stable resolutions to brutal conflicts, and reducing human suffering. However, norms against colonialism, until recently, largely foreclosed serious consideration of neo-trusteeship. Organized hypocrisy may make more effective responses possible, without rejecting or denying the principles of self-determination and sovereign equality. Similarly, addressing the proliferation challenges of Iran and North Korea may require organized hypocrisy in the form of proclaiming respect for their sovereignty while negotiating intrusive inspections and other arrangements that would compromise their rights (assuming North Korean return to the NPT) under Article IV to develop and receive nuclear technology.

A further implication of the preceding analysis applies to NGOs and activists seeking to promote disarmament. A counter-coupling conception of organized hypocrisy holds that, under the conditions that give rise to organized hypocrisy, the adoption of

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99 “North Korea Could Return to NPT, Russian Envoy Says,” Global Security Newswire August 17, 2005, http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues/2005_8_17.html#7C884D57 (accessed August 17, 2005). Specifically, any arrangement acceptable to the U.S. and (for North Korea) the other participants in the six-party talks and (for Iran) the EU3 would presumably infringe the “inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination,” and the “right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.” NPT, Art. IV.
formal decisions actually reduces the chances of the decision’s content being fulfilled. So activists may be well advised to adopt a strategy of reverse psychology. Thus, Brunsson notes, “If lobbyists succeed in convincing the decision-makers to make the right decision, they may well lose out the chance of seeing the desired action actually being carried out. Maybe they should push for the opposite decision instead?”  

100 If formal decisions advocating disarmament, by diffusing political pressure to actually disarm, reduce the prospects for nuclear disarmament, perhaps disarmament advocates should have supported the appointment of John Bolton as U.S. Ambassador to the UN, given his reputation for blocking decisions of that sort. The prospect of anti-nuclear activists and disarmament NGOs promoting “the opposite decision,” seems, however, plainly ludicrous, and in fact such a radical step is not really implied by the theory. Brunsson suggests it, apparently facetiously, on the basis that, if decisions prevent corresponding action, then opposite decisions should prevent the opposite (undesired) action. But a decision in favor of a nuclear arms buildup would not cause disarmament (or prevent an arms buildup) because such a decision would not address a normative demand at odds with a logic of consequences, as decisions supporting disarmament do.

Furthermore, as Brunsson points, organized hypocrisy only works if people take organizational decisions and action seriously. If they do not, rhetoric will not satisfy external demands for action, and organized hypocrisy will be ineffective. “So it is difficult to offer a prescriptive theory of hypocrisy: management books recommending hypocrisy as a strategy would destroy the basis for their own prescriptions.”  

101 A more plausible recommendation would be for activists to oppose, when conditions promoting

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100 Brunsson 2002, xvii.
101 Brunsson 2002, xv.
organized hypocrisy are present, formal decisions that seem merely symbolic and lack clear commitments to specific, verifiable actions. Such action, by complicating and destabilizing organized hypocrisy, would involve costs to the legitimacy – perhaps even putting at risk the survival – of organizations and institutions caught in inescapable dilemmas imposed by irreconcilable external demands.

The analysis presented in this paper also suggests that the concept of organized hypocrisy is of more general theoretical relevance for the study of international relations than is currently recognized. Brunsson terms organized hypocrisy a “not very unusual phenomenon,” and Krasner makes the case that it should be especially common in international relations. Indeed, the conditions of conflicting technical and institutional pressures that give rise to organized hypocrisy are commonplace in international relations. Organized hypocrisy should be common, even pervasive. To date, following Krasner, the concept has been employed in the IR literature almost exclusively with reference to sovereignty. However, the concept was originally developed to apply to formal organizations, suggesting its applicability to formal international organizations as well as institutional arrangements like sovereignty. Advancing our understanding of

102 This might have required opposing even the “thirteen practical steps” toward nonproliferation adopted at the 2000 RevCon, as some of the points listed were not, in fact, “practical steps” (i.e., step 5 “the principle of irreversibility to apply,” to arms control and disarmament measures, and step 11, requiring a reaffirmation of commitment to general and complete disarmament). “Thirteen Steps.”
organized hypocrisy in international relations will require addressing several outstanding questions and problems in future research.

One such problem for future research will be the need for greater precision in defining and operationalizing the organized hypocrisy concept (such as the decoupling and counter-coupling variants of organized hypocrisy). Also, we need to know more about various thresholds: at what point do environmental inconsistencies make organized hypocrisy necessary for institutional survival? At what point does organized hypocrisy become unstable and collapse?

In the case of nuclear organized hypocrisy, can inconsistencies between formal commitments and behavior be sustained more or less indefinitely? If not, can the nonproliferation regime survive? The nonproliferation regime’s resilience to date in the face of changing circumstances suggests that the answer to the first question is a conditional yes, if the NWS continue to credibly reaffirm their commitment to disarmament norms. The 2005 Review Conference casts doubt on whether that condition will continue to be met. In light of both the political-military imperatives pushing the existing nuclear powers to retain their nuclear weapons, and the robustness and strength of disarmament norms as a logic of appropriateness, as long as the NPT couples nonproliferation and disarmament it is unlikely that the nuclear nonproliferation regime could survive the end of nuclear organized hypocrisy.
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