

China's nuclear program

Intro (Damjan & Alison)

- Brief history of China's nuclear program, from its beginning in the 1960s, through its gradual growth, to its current rapid expansion
- China's official doctrine of no first use
- Fears from other NWS, mainly the United States
- Brief summary of scholarly views on China's accelerated nuclear development

Questions for Matt Korda

- 1) To what extent would you say China is true to its stated policy of no first use? Would you say that this policy was at least partly formulated out of necessity, due to China's previous technological inferiority to the US and Russia?
Follow up if Matt gives credence to the latter option: If so, would you say the development of more sophisticated nuclear capabilities could lead to a more aggressive Chinese nuclear posture in the near future?
- 2) China's goal is to achieve nuclear parity with the US and Russia. How much would you say that this is due to legitimate fears of nuclear inferiority in a conflict, and how much is it part of China's desire to be an equal global power as the two?
This question pertains to the three MODELS (security model vs domestic politics vs norms) we saw in class, which we will briefly introduce in the intro
- 3) To what extent would you say that the tensions between the USA and China during the Trump administration have spurred China on to improving its nuclear capacities? Can the Biden administration's less adversarial stance assuage China's fears and lead them to slow down their armament efforts?
- 4) Would you say that the change in leadership (Xi Jinping replacing Hu Jintao, who was significantly more open and cooperative towards the west) has affected China's nuclear stance?
- 5) Broadly speaking, why do you think China has started building up its nuclear arsenal now? We mentioned previously deteriorating relations with the US, improved technical abilities and a search of prestige on the world scene, but do you think there is another factor?
If he hasn't mentioned Taiwan up to this point, we will ask: How do you square China's increase of its nuclear arsenal to the question of Taiwan?

Back-up questions in case he hasn't mentioned one of these elements, or if we do not manage to hit the necessary time

-As an expert, do you speculate that China might want to take over the US and Russia in nuclear arsenal size?

-How do you think the international community will be reacting to China's increasing nuclear arsenal?

-How do you view China's failure to ratify the Comprehensive Ban Treaty a quarter of a century after it has signed it?