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# **Understanding coercive nuclear reversal dynamics: a comparative case study of US coercive diplomacy against the nuclear programs of Iran, Libya, and South Africa**

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### PROPOSITIONS ON THE PhD THESIS

**Topic:** Understanding coercive nuclear reversal dynamics. A comparative case study of US coercive diplomacy against the nuclear programs of Iran, Libya, and South Africa.

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- Coercive diplomacy prevails when two conditions are met: if the coercer exploits the vulnerabilities of the target and if he demonstrates a motivation to have a sustained campaign to compel the target.
- The likelihood of diplomatic coercion to succeed heavily depends on the coercer's ability to mitigate the counter-coercion strategy of the target.
- Failure to consider the threat perceptions, security guarantees and the status of the target is a recipe for a failing coercive strategy.
- The more you demand from the target, the more you should be willing to offer and suffer.
- Process tracing is a suitable method to unveil causal mechanisms in coercive diplomacy research but cannot accurately identify special events that played a decisive role in the coercion of the target.
- Neoclassical realism highlights the importance of accurately assessing a State's power and interests, which are crucial for effective coercive diplomacy.
- Neoclassical realism's emphasis on power politics complements the focus on State capabilities from the neorealism model, providing a more nuanced perspective on foreign policy outcomes.
- Neoclassical realism's integration of systemic, domestic, and individual factors makes it a robust framework for comprehensively understanding the complexities of foreign policymaking and outcomes.
- In a striking twist, Washington's apparent insincerity in addressing two out of the three cases scrutinized in this study raises a compelling question: is the US inadvertently adopting the stance of a *de facto* nuclear proliferator?
- My promoters' statement in our first-ever meeting: "The thesis is yours and we defended ours more than 20 years ago" was a compelling suggestion against laziness and sleeping nights. It served as an uproarious reminder that I could not just snooze through this academic journey!