

# School of social science and public policy-case studies in policy decision

[History](#)



The development of the Hydrogen Bomb was first a conception of the United States as a retaliatory step after the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb in 1949. The American nation had always held a de facto military power among the developed nations, and this new development threatened its current position. Apparently, American citizens had always held the notion that with no other country especially the Soviet Union having the capability to make nuclear weapons, then their safety was assured. The Hydrogen Bomb as outlined by Groot (2004, p. 182), was more of a psychological warfare between the communist Soviet and the Capitalist United States. Apart from the international politics of power, the general realization is that there was no practical, strategic and military justifications for the development of a weapon with such huge prospects of destruction.

The development of a Hydrogen Bomb just for the sake of proving a point was in no way practical considering the resources that were utilized in the development of such a weapon. Furthermore, the possibility of using such an immensely destructive weapon was unethical and inhumane by any standards even during wars. However, Dr. Edward Teller speculated that the fear aroused by the existence of such a weapon would drive humanity to engage in more reasonable politics rather than the politics of destruction (Groot, 2004, p. 164). In a letter to the President, Lewis Strauss stressed that the public opinion was already against the development of such a weapon due to the heavy costs (Strauss, 1950). However, Teller also outlines that the success of such a weapon in checking power and possibly preventing a war, would only be successful when another country like the Soviet Union possessed the same weapon. The question is what happens when the

balance of power is broken when some unruly third world country or a terrorist organization gains possession of such a technology? Gizewski (1996, p. 399) adds that the move of making such a destructive weapon would tarnish the image of any nation in international politics due to the emotions harbored after the Nagasaki and Hiroshima atomic bombings.

The military/strategic justifications further make the development of hydrogen bomb unreasonable. According to Groot (2004, p. 182), the arms race that was experienced among the developed nations during the cold war could have only been stopped when nations ceased from making destructive weapons and filling up their arsenals. The United States had realized that it could not make weapons to match the huge Soviet arsenal. Therefore, the US concentrated on quality rather than quantity as a strategic approach during the arms race. However, the approach was not sustainable as Strauss (1950) confessed because it was inevitable that the Soviet Union would make a similar weapon of their own sooner or later. Making of the hydrogen bomb could only fuel the arms race and put humanity in danger of destructions. With countries making many weapons, there was the possibility of some of the weapons falling into the wrong hands and further complicating the situation further.

There was no urgent need of making such a destructive weapon at such high costs with sole aim of instilling fear in the enemy. Furthermore, the nuclear technology could fall in the wrong hands once it has been made. The decision of making the hydrogen bomb seemed to lack strategic sustainability because sooner or later the enemy will also make the same weapon. Such weapons were no longer seen as a sign of power but as

possible instruments of genocide.

#### Reference List

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