7-16-1999


Editor

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp

Part of the Defense and Security Studies Commons, International Relations Commons, and the Military, War, and Peace Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp/vol7/iss2/4

This Trends is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Bulletin of Political Psychology by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact commons@erau.edu.
During much of the Cold War, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) publicly advocated a "first use" of nuclear weapons policy. This policy seems to have constituted two ideas. First--when confronted with the superior military numbers of the Warsaw Pact in a "hot" war--NATO's "going nuclear" first might be the only way to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. Second, the public advocacy of such a policy--even with its propaganda vulnerabilities exploited by the Warsaw Pact--might deter an attack, a "hot" war, and the need to "go nuclear at all."

With the disestablishment of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw pact, Russia publicly claims--since at least 1993--a "first use" policy. The Russian advocacy likewise seems to be predicated on winning a "hot" war, deterring one, and obviating the need to "go nuclear." One big difference is that Russia would face both superior numbers and technology in a conflict with the United States (US) or NATO and the US. Another is that the US and NATO have not yet sought to intensively exploit the propaganda value of the Russian declaration.