



Sagan's work has become an integral part of the nuclear debate in the United States and overseas. He has shown, for example, that a government's decision to pursue nuclear weapons can be prompted not only by national security concerns but also because of domestic political interests, parochial bureaucratic infighting, or concerns about international prestige. Sagan has developed theories about why different types of political regimes behave differently once they acquire "the bomb." Sagan and colleagues have also investigated U.S. public attitudes about nuclear weapons and found that few Americans actually believe that there is a taboo against their use in conflicts. The possession of nuclear weapons also raises the risk of nuclear weapons accidents, and Sagan has shown that even though there has never been an accidental nuclear war, there have been many more close-calls and near-accidents than was previously known.