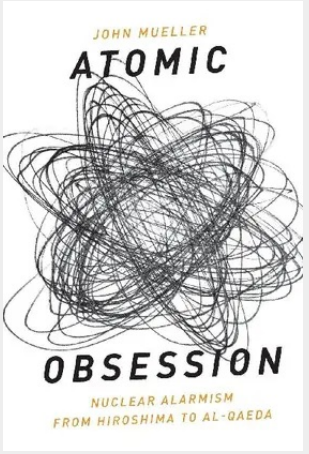
Mueller

Atomic Obsession

Nuclear Alarmism from Hiroshima to Al-Qaeda



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Ever since the first atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, the prospect of nuclear annihilation has haunted the modern world. But as John Mueller reveals in this eye-opening, compellingly argued, and very reassuring book, our obsession with nuclear weapons is unsupported by history, scientific fact, or logic. Examining the entire atomic era, Mueller boldly contends that nuclear weapons have had little impact on history. Although they have inspired overwrought policies and distorted spending priorities, for the most part they have proved to be militarily useless, and a key reason so few countries have taken them up is that they are a spectacular waste of money and scientific talent. Equally important, Atomic Obsession reveals why anxieties about terrorists obtaining nuclear weapons are essentially baseless: a host of practical and organizational difficulties make their likelihood of success almost vanishingly small. Mueller, one of America's most distinguished yet provocative international relations scholars, goes even further, maintaining that our efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons have produced more suffering and violence than the bombs themselves, and that proliferation of the weapons, while not necessarily desirable, is unlikely to be a major danger or to accelerate. "The book will certainly make you think. Added bonus: It's immensely fun to read." --Stephen M. Walt, ForeignPolicy.com "Meticulously researched and punctuated with a dry wit. Mueller deserves praise for having the guts to shout that the atomic emperor has no clothes." --Arms Control Today "Mueller performs an important service in puncturing some of the inflated rhetoric about nuclear weapons. An unusual and fruitful perspective on nuclear history." --Science Magazine

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