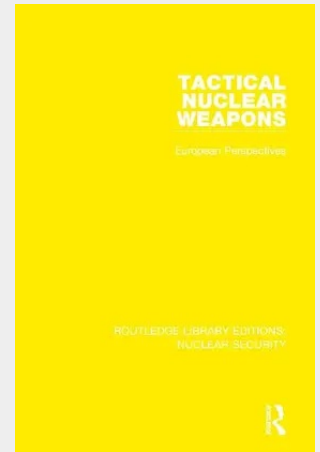


Tactical Nuclear Weapons

European Perspectives

In the 1970s tactical nuclear warfare was a topical issue. The introduction of the new generation of tactical nuclear weapons into Europe could have had disastrous consequences. These new weapons had already been developed by nuclear-weapon laboratories and pressures were growing for their deployment. On first sight, smaller and more accurate nuclear weapons may seem more humane and militarily preferable to the relatively high-yield tactical nuclear weapons currently deployed. But some of these new types of weapons would blur the distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons and their use would make escalation to strategic nuclear war extremely likely. Indeed, the argument for these new weapons is that their use in wartime is more credible (and therefore 'acceptable') than current types of tactical nuclear weapons. This perception could easily lead to the exceedingly dangerous idea that some types of tactical nuclear war were 'winnable'. The fact has to be faced that any use of nuclear weapons is almost certain to escalate until all available weapons are used. To believe otherwise is to believe that one side will surrender before it has used all the weapons in its arsenal. History shows that this is most unlikely to happen. Because of its importance, SIPRI organized a meeting to discuss the whole question. Originally published in 1978, this book is the outcome of that meeting.

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