John Mueller

John Mueller is Woody Hayes Chair of National Security Studies at the Mershon Center for International Security Studies and Professor of Political Science at The Ohio State University. His interests include international politics, foreign policy, defense policy, public opinion, democratization, economic history, post-Communism, and terrorism.

Mueller's newest book is *Atomic Obsession: Nuclear Alarmism from Hiroshima to Al-Qaeda*, published by Oxford University Press in 2009. The book examines the influence of nuclear weapons on history, assesses their spread, and evaluates the possibility that nuclear weapons might fall into the hands of terrorists.

Mueller argues that while the actual impact of nuclear weapons has been modest, they have had a massive influence on rhetoric, theorizing, and defense expenditures. The United States has spent up to $10 trillion on nuclear weapons – enough to buy everything in the country except the land – to combat a threat of military aggression that didn’t exist.

Remarkably few countries have tried to develop nuclear weapons, Mueller says, and those that have did not find them to be much of an advantage. For these reasons, nuclear proliferation is not a major threat. Nor are terrorists likely to surmount the practical difficulties involved in developing, delivering, and detonating an atomic device.

Mueller is author or editor of 16 other books, including:

- *The Remnants of War* (Cornell, 2004), winner of the Joseph P. Lepgold Prize for Best Book on International Relations from Georgetown University
- *Capitalism, Democracy, and Ralph’s Pretty Good Grocery* (Princeton, 1999)
- *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War* (University of Chicago, 1994)
- *War, Presidents and Public Opinion* (Wiley, 1973), selected as one of the “Fifty Books That Significantly Shaped Public Opinion Research,
Mueller regularly appears at seminars and workshops on national security. At this year’s American Political Science Association conference, he headlined a panel on “Atomic Obsession” organized by Jacques Hymans (USC), with Andrew Kydd (Wisconsin), Etel Solingen (UC-Irvine), David Welch (Toronto) and Scott Sagan (Stanford). Mueller also gave an invited seminar in June on “Nuclear Alarmism from Hiroshima to Al Qaeda” at the Norwegian Nobel Institute in Oslo.

This year Mueller was interviewed or published in almost 60 major media outlets about nuclear weapons, the war on terror, and war and public opinion. Placements included The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Atlantic, Slate, and Foreign Policy.

Perhaps most discussed was “How Dangerous Are the Taliban?” published on the Foreign Affairs web site in April, in which Mueller argued that the official justification for the war in Afghanistan -- to keep al Qaeda from gaining a base there -- is highly questionable. The article was reprinted in multiple blogs and covered by UPI and World Politics Review.

Mueller also won the 2009 Susan Strange Award from the International Studies Association. Established in 1983, the award recognizes a person whose singular intellect, assertiveness, and insight most challenge conventional wisdom and intellectual and organizational complacency in the international studies community.