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THE POLITICS OF NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

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Abstract: Since the explosion of the first atomic weapon the international system has been saddled with perceived threats to national security based around weapons of mass destruction (WMD). This is best seen through the spate of interest by countries to develop nuclear weapons. Hence, nuclear deterrence dominated the cold war calculus of international security. Even with the nuclear states the perception of safety in a nuclear world is illusory. A series of attempts have been made at arms control and disarmament. Most notable is the effort to control the spread of nuclear weapons centred on the non-proliferation treaty (NPT). The effort by the US and its allies to stop the Tehran and Pyongyang programmes have once again brought to the fore the moral question associated to the NPT which itself rests on the claim of a nuclear monopoly by the existing nuclear states, or what the Malaysian delegate's (to the original NPT meeting) term, 'justifying nuclear states for eternity.' Meanwhile, while the US and Russia have taken incremental steps toward disarmament they were accompanied by measures to retain nuclear options. Despite the changed political climate of the post-cold war nuclear weapon states (NWS) still believe in the integrity of nuclear deterrence. This has questioned the credibility of the nuclear states to press others to drop their nuclear ambitions. There must be a genuine desire on their part to pursue disarmament. This work concludes that, amongst others, the nuclear non-proliferation treaty displays, in no uncertain terms, hypocrisy in international politics.

Keywords: Nuclear Non-Proliferation, Nuclear Weapons, Disarmament

Introduction

Mingst once observed that amongst the numerous issues engaging the actors in international relations, those with a clear security dimension are the most 'salient, the most prevalent, and indeed the most intractable.'[1] Consequently, security dilemmas proliferate and

lead to permanent conditions of tension and conflict among states. And, increases in weapon potency results in heightened dangers to regional and international stability.

Technologies produced in WWII, leading to the construction of atomic weapons with a destructive force immeasurably more potent than anything previously fielded and the security dilemma followed suit, has transformed international relations. The consequences of a nuclear armed conflict will be devastating. Throughout the Cold War a stable, though still dangerous balance of power was maintained between the US and USSR. The end of that chapter of international relations has produced a more ill-defined period where thousands of nuclear weapons have heightened the risk of nuclear war. The US and Russia have about 2000 warheads while the UK, France, China, Pakistan and India retain smaller capabilities. These have been joined by North Korea (DPRK) in 2006, Israel follows a policy of nuclear ambiguity and Iran is in hot pursuit of such weapons. This is just the tip of the iceberg as a variety of others seek, or have sought, nuclear forces to deter aggression in an period of international relations history defined, in part, by a new wave of proliferation.

Despite the constant reiteration by the nuclear powers of non-first use, it is naive to accept such assurances at face value. Indeed, historical records show that nuclear powers have, at times, seriously considered deploying such weapons, even aggressively.[2] Therefore, proper nuclear management – extended to other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) – and transparency is required to alleviate tensions which could have dire consequences for the entire world since the most advanced weapons are able to deliver a 'pay-load' some 50 times greater than those deployed against Japan in 1945.[3] And, it is not only the weapons themselves which require regulation, it is all the components that allow for weapons to be deployed world-wide; notably missile systems.

While developing a theoretical lens to explain nuclear proliferation and disarmament is certainly an important task as existing approaches tend to offer on snapshots of both problems and potential solutions, and therefore must be blended, twisted and reshaped if sense it to be made of counter-proliferation strategies. This work, while encouraging others to delve into such theoretical reconstruction efforts, does not further pursue a strictly theoretical solution.

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Instead this work deploys a historical contextualisation to glean lessons for decision-makers and publics so that nuclear weapons remain weapons of last choice and are eventually eradicated altogether from the arsenals of the great and aspiring powers. To gain such insights this work proceeds as follows. First, it considers the proliferation of WMD to demonstrate a singular – but erroneous – strand of logic which has been weaved through the international community since 1945 and maintains that nuclear weapons are responsible for the long peace between the proverbial East and West during the Cold War. Secondly, this work turns to counter-proliferation and disarmament efforts in a bid to disclose some of the positive contributions that have been made as well as the limited successes such programmes have produced. This includes the idea of Declaratory Policy which underpins the non-proliferation treaty (NPT). Thirdly, an assessment of the US's relations to the NPT is undertaken vis-à-vis an investigation of changes to the US's strategic orientation towards WMD (2010). This section concludes with a brief depiction of the START Treaty II (Prague Summit). Fourthly, this work explores some of the obstructions to building a working consensus on the need for international disarmament of WMD. This work concludes by outlining steps forward; those policies that may be adopted to render nuclear weapons politically obsolete on an international basis.

The Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: A Short History

The US, essentially, opened the gateway to advanced WMD. Not for lack of trying, the Nazis and Soviets lost the initial WMD arms race to the US whose Manhattan Project produced the atomic weapons which were deployed against Hiroshima and Nagasaki that helped end WWII in 1945. With the war over, the Nazis defeated, and the US and USSR in a Cold War, the Soviets were able to, essentially, catch-up and by 1948 had successfully tested its first atomic weapon. The UK was next in October 1952 followed by France (1960) and communist China (1964). India (1974) and Pakistan (1978) also demonstrated their domestic nuclear capabilities though neither state was considered a full-fledged nuclear power until their tit-for-tat tests in 1998. It is also noteworthy that Israel, South Afri-

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ca, Indonesia, Brazil and Argentina (among others) had nuclear ambitions and advanced programmes during the Cold War. It seems, though remains unverified, that only Israel was able to successfully acquire nuclear capabilities.

With the breakup of the USSR, a short – but dangerous – spike in proliferation occurred since, in addition to Russia, three former Soviet republics: Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, had Soviet nuclear weapons stationed on their territory. The UN, with the assistance of the US and Russia, were charged with decommissioning such weapons, marking the only time in history when country's with nuclear weapons voluntarily ceded them to international authorities for decommission. The latest member of the so-called 'nuclear club' is North Korea (DPRK) which, in 2006, successfully conducted a nuclear test.

With only nine declared or suspected nuclear powers in the world, disarmament and arms control seems wholly possible, yet it remains an elusive goal, one where the elusiveness is not mysterious but rather the opposite; states continue to conceive of the international politics as a game of brinkmanship governed by unpredictable security dilemmas. Ownership of nuclear weapons is meant to insulate states of external interference and to guarantee survivability. While this is certainly an archaic way to understand international relations, it continues to dominate many circles and thus many states continue to seek their own weapons or alliances with nuclear armed members.

Others, particularly in the US and EU, are working to illuminate nuclear weapons altogether though are forced to maintain small arsenals due to perpetual fear of abandonment – of such a non-nuclear regime – by the others. At the outset of his first term in office, and given his 'reset' with Russia, Obama (Prague, 2009) highlighted that thousands of nuclear weapons are still in service. Indeed, Obama foresaw a diminishing threat of sustained, interstate conventional wars while risks of nuclear conflict are steadily rising; points which reflect his overall worldview that true peace and security can only be achieved in a world without nuclear weapons. This is an especially important issue given the repeated attempts by al Qaeda – among other terrorist groups – to acquire nuclear weapons or some cocktail of depleted uranium or plutonium and more conventional explosives to develop a 'dirty bomb.'

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Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

Given the above rendition of nuclear proliferation, and considering the importance attached to issues pertaining to nuclear weapons by states and civil societies, it is essential to examine some efforts at non-proliferation and disarmament; the focus of this section.

Churchill once declared that peace is the child of potential nuclear terror; that the threat of such a devastating conflict is enough to dissuade a potential aggressor from initiating hostilities against any state, or alliance of a state, that retains nuclear deterrent capabilities. Those who believe in nuclear deterrence, typically assume that such weapons should be controlled by a small number of responsible major powers.[5] This theory therefore presupposes nuclear monopoly, a point which underscores early non-proliferation logic and reflects the permanent members of the UN Security Council, the international community's most powerful chamber.

Efforts promoting nuclear non-proliferation after WWII began with the Truman Administration's adoption of the so-called Baruchi Plan (1946),[6] which drew heavily on the Acheson-Lilienthal report (1946) and proposed verifiable disarmament and the eventual destruction of the US nuclear arsenal; the only nuclear arsenal at that time. It was thought, naively, that doing so would reduce international tensions. Unilateral disarmament was not possible however since the USSR was steadily closing the technological gap and would soon have WMD of its own. Hence, the Baruchi Plan was abandoned. Instead, when Eisenhower assumed office, he devised the so-called 'Atoms for Peace' (1953) programme to bring a degree of international transparency to the atomic technology race and, perhaps, lead to a general system of safeguards. While 'Atoms for Peace' was succeeded by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (1957) it was not until 1960 that an honest effort to reach international agreement over limiting nuclear proliferation was reached. By then the USSR, France and the UK had acquired nuclear weapons. Still, there was no agreement. The international community had to wait an additional eight tense years (1968) until the nuclear armed states agreed to halt proliferation, a consensus enshrined in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) which entered into

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force in March 1970.

Kokoski argued that the NPT created a framework for controlling the spread of nuclear materials and expertise.[7] Indeed, the signatories pledged to avoid taking any action(s) that would add to the number of countries with nuclear weapons.[8] The treaty invariably presupposed that while the non-nuclear weapon states party to the treaty are not to manufacture or receive nuclear weapons, or any other nuclear explosive devices, the existing nuclear weapon states (NWS) are not required by the treaty to give up nuclear weapons but rather to negotiate in good faith. For the non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS) there was no room for negotiation. Consequently, the treaty established two classes of states: NWS and NNWS. The nuclear weapon states are those that had conducted nuclear tests before 01 January 1967.

The NPT may be broken down into three pillars; non-proliferation, disarmament and the right to peaceful use of nuclear technology. The articles of the treaty, arguably, impose only a vague obligation that all signatories move in the direction of nuclear disarmament which was to occur under strict and effective international controls. Unfortunately, the articles do not determine a time-frame for signatories to actually conclude a disarmament treaty; they were only obliged to negotiate in good faith.

The sixth NPT Review Conference (20 May 2000), the first since the treaty was indefinitely extended in 1995, adopted an important agreement on the practical steps for nuclear disarmament. This was the climax of the disarmament between the NWS and a key group of "New Agenda" NNWS over the fulfilment of disarmament obligations, for which previous conferences since 1985 were unable to reach consensus. The nuclear powers had pledged the unequivocal desire to completely eliminate their nuclear arsenals. The conference raised some concerns that the NWS had not taken disarmament seriously enough, noting that progress had stalled since the end of the Cold War while the NNWS indentified certain steps that should be taken. NWS should:

1. unilaterally disarm,
2. provide more information on their nuclear capability and the implementation of disarmament agreements,
3. reduce non-strategic nuclear weapons,
4. take concrete measures to further reduce the operational

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status of nuclear weapons system
5. involve all five nuclear powers 'as soon as appropriate' in nuclear reduction and disarmament negotiations.[9]

For some observers, the 'as soon as appropriate' was seen as watering-down the basic aims of the steps, despite that they were intended to be carried out within 5 years.

NPT is only one of several treaties designed as confidence building measures (CBM) to create a transperant atmosphere for nuclear dialogue. Even with its limited objectives, NPT was, and remains, a cornerstone of nuclear limitations. Yet, since the 1970s, efforts at actual arms control – particularly between the US and the USSR produced few or no results. Among these efforts was the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) I (1972) and SALT II (1979). Others include: the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force (INF) (1987), the Missile Technology Control (MTCR) (1987), the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) I (1991) and START II (1993) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) (1996). Remarkably, Russia did not ratify START II while the US under Bush withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) (1972) in order to pursue the development and deployment of Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) systems. The US senate, for its part, refused to ratify the resulting CTBT (1999).

Declaratory Policy

Returning to the basis of nuclear management based on the NPT regime, declaratory policy is part of the bargain which originally underpinned the treaty. The purpose of the declaratory policy is deterrence. For this reason declaratory policy of the use of nuclear weapons has been a contentious issue in deterrence and disarmament discourses. Declaratory policy is, essentially, an official policy statement on the exact circumstances a nuclear weapon might or might not be used. Declaratory policies are central CBMs.[10]

The declaratory policy attempts to reconcile disarmament and deterrence since it represents an effort to devalue and delegitimise nuclear weapons to move towards a world in which nuclear weapons have less of a role in international politics. In other words, by creating transparency over nuclear strategies – and supposing that

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NWS were not being deceiptful – and, as the case was and remains, relegating such weapons to a defensive posture, the NWS actually lead-by-example and indicate that developing, storing and maintaining nuclear weapons is expensive and, largely, inappropriate. And, under such a declaratory policy, the NNWS were given negative assurances: reassurance that their decision to forgo the nuclear options would not leave them exposed to nuclear coercion.[11] Nearly all nuclear deterrence strategies were accompanied by attempts at reassurance and arms control; to reassure NNWS, prevent arms races, improve crisis stability, and reduce costs.

Unfortunately, Obama's declaratory policies as developed under the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) and the Stockpile Stewardship and Management Plan (SSMP) only explain the US's vision of disarmament. They try to balance disarmament and deterrence but do not reassure NNWS and the NPR – the latest declaratory policy – explains identifies and then justifies the US's contradictory position on disarmament and deterrence. In short, US policy regarding its nuclear posture is ambiguous and ambiguity over such an important issue causes undue anxiety in both NNWS and the other NWS. Therefore, it is important to single out the NPR (2010) and assess its international impact.

The US and the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) 2010

The NPR 2010 document presented the US's position on nuclear weapons and deterrence. The document reflected the Obama Administration's sentiment of building a world without WMD by reducing their strategic role. The document listed three conclusions. Firstly, that the US would continue to strengthen conventional capabilities and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in deterring non-nuclear attacks with the objective of making deterrence of nuclear attack on the US or its allies and partners the sole purpose of US nuclear weapons. Secondly, the US would only contemplate the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend its critical interests or its allies and partners. And, finally, that the US would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against NNWS that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear proliferation obligation.[12]

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Assessing the document, Warren notes that the actual reduction in the US's nuclear mission was rather moderate and it was 'difficult to see truly any shift in US nuclear planning.' He observed that Obama's NPR appeared to continue nuclear planning against regional adversaries with WMD.[13] In short, the declaratory policy embedded in the NPR should be seen as justifying the continuation of previous administration's nuclear strategies rather than reassuring other NWS and NNWS alike.

The NNSA was more forthcoming on US plans. It reported US plans to evolve and sustain its nuclear deterrent. The NNSA had planned to spend some $175 billion (USD) over the next two decades building new nuclear weapons factories, testing and simulating facilities, and modernising and extending the lives of the present nuclear stockpile. Obama's Administration plans to stockpile, maintain and modernise US nuclear weapons despite its commitment to nuclear disarmament. This position contrasts sharply with Obama's 2009 Prague speech based on creating a world free of nuclear weapons.

One area where the US is consistent is in regards to the NPT, and it took further steps at reinforcing that treaty during the NPT Review Conference in 2010.

NPT Review Conference 2010

The NPT Review Conference (NPTRC) was called for by the US to discuss challenges facing the treaty. The conference considered nuclear disarmament, including specific practical measures such as: nuclear non-proliferation; the promotion and strengthening of safeguards; regional disarmament and non-proliferation; measures to address withdrawal from the treaty and measures to further strengthen the review process.[14] The conference was a significant test of how it would meet unfolding challenges.

The conference final document reviewed commitments and produced an action plan for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Many analyst are of the opinion that the language of the concluding document on its action plan was watered down compared with previous versions, leaving it up to the next review, in 2015, to determine how far these steps will take the international community towards ful-

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filling NPT goals.[15]

The 2010 Review document was seen as forward-thinking and balanced. Praise was heaped on the US and others for steps taken to advance nuclear disarmament. The conference also encouraged the early entry into force of the CTBT and the urgent need to get on with long-delayed talks on the fissile material cut-off treaty. For some, the conference strengthened a non-proliferation regime, while others saw the achievements of the conference as modest. Since then no achievement has been recorded. Yet the NPT has managed through some difficult times and it speaks to its wide-acceptance that few states have joined the NWS since the treaty's inception back in 1968. Other treaties have not fared nearly as well.

The New START Treaty

START II has not yet fulfilled its intentions. The treaty includes detailed definitions and counting rules that both the US and Russia should utilise to identify the forces limited by the treaty. Both parties were expected to maintain a comprehensive database, indicating the locations, members and technical characteristics of weapons limited by the treaty. While there were some positives in START II, there were also many negatives in terms of limits versus reduction.

On the bright side, for instance, the new limit of 1550 deployed strategic warheads was 74% lower than the 6000 warhead limit of the 1991 START Treaty, and 30% lower than the 2200 deployed strategic warhead limit of the 2002 Moscow Treaty.[16] Alternatively, START II, while limiting the number of deployable warheads, it fell silent on the actual number of warheads in their arsenal. In other words, START limited the amount of deployed nuclear weapons, not the amount of weapons in total. Additionally, the treaty makes no mention of how the limits would be achieved and verified.

For all its successes and shortcomings START II has been polarising. Yet of all the critics of the treaty, none are more vocal than the US Senate, which has been deploying every filibuster in an attempt to stall its ratification indefinitely. In fact, some republican senators rehashed Cold War arguments to delay or defeat the pact, suggesting that the treaty will limit US efforts to build missile defences pointing to the provision in the treaty that bars the use of

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missiles interceptors. The senators accuse Obama's Administration of not doing enough to modernise the US's nuclear forces. Not everyone agrees and a Senior White House Official argued that the US came away (from the START II negotiations) a clean winner. Why a 'winner?' Because the US retains its nuclear deterent and has found a way to redeploy its nuclear weapons without decommissioning them. Like Russia, the US is unwilling to disarm rendering START II moot.

Barriers to nuclear Arms Reduction and Disarmament

Rourke rightly observed that security concerns constitute the most formidable barrier to arms control and nuclear non-proliferation and suggested that the anxiety during the Cold War spawned a huge arms build-up that has yet to be fully appreciated, let alone reduced.[17] Owing to the Cold War, NWS decision-makers' mentality is skewed towards that period of international history rather than the unfolding period and exhibit extraordinary resistance to change.

Equipped with such old-fashioned thinking, the NWS were caught completely off-guard as the threat of nuclear terrorism thrust the nuclear clock a minute closer to Armageddon following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the US and the arrest of a man thought to have constructed a 'dirty bomb' by mixing plutonium with conventional explosives. The threat was further increased as a wave of so-called "rogue" states began to seek revisions of the distribution of power associated to possession of nuclear weapons. The only solution to such challenges, as the logic of the Cold War dictated, was to react on a tit-for-tat basis. Hence Bush began building anti-weapons systems, while Russia developed the SS20 – a stealth delivery system – and China increased the tempo of its nuclear programme; steps deemed to negate the spirit of disarmament.

Yet, Bush was the worst spoiler of the disarmament gains in the decade before his Presidency. Having viewed arms control treaties and multilateral non-proliferation agreements as inherently unverifiable and overly constraining of US security strategy, Bush simply side-stepped, ignoring the CTBT, pursing national missile defence and developing a nuclear bunker-buster weapon.[18] He explored the

option of putting anti-missile weapons in space and reached a nuclear cooperation deal with India, which is not party to the NPT.[19]

Obama, while publically supporting the elimination of all nuclear weapons, emphasised that the US will not disarm unilaterally and that as long as nuclear weapons exist, it will retain a strong, safe, secure, and reliable nuclear deterrent. This prompted Taylor to conclude that as long as nations possessing nuclear weapons continue to behave as though they feel more secure with than without them, more non-nuclear states can be expected to join the nuclear club.

Rauf notes that in the field of diplomacy the NWS have systematically and determinedly opposed all attempts, since the 1995 NPTREC, to be involved in a substantive engagement on nuclear disarmament issues in any multilateral fora, be it the NPT review process, the CD, the First Committee or even NATO councils.[20] At the NPT Review, the NWS accepted 'talking sessions' on nuclear disarmament, but continue to reject any and all proposals calling on them to either implement existing bilateral treaties, negotiate new reductions, or to take unilateral measures towards nuclear disarmament.

Such behaviour – of NWS – made many NNWS weary of renewing the NPT and demanded that the NWS should set a clear timetable for dismantling their arsenals.[21] This prompted Malaysian delegates to the conference to demand that without a pledge by the NWS for a timetable to dismantle, renewing the treaty would be 'justifying nuclear states for eternity.' In essence the treaty was meant to maintain their monopoly.[22]

Without the NPT it is uncertain how nuclear relations would unfold. And yet, the treaty has been violated time and time again and has many wondering whether it is becoming completely irrelevant. Consider the following short history of undermining actions which render the NPT a shell of its intentions.

Firstly, between 1975 and 1996, the US authorised transfers of nuclear parts to the UK under a National Security Decision Memoranda. It is also true that some of the fissile materials for the UK Trident Warhead were purchased from the US Department of Defence and property services. This was certainly against the spirit of the NPT and reveals that nuclear states can freely interact while insisting on a ban for others underlining that the difference between

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NWS and NNWS is absolute, sending the message to other states that acquiring nuclear weapons increases national power and bargaining positions.

Secondly, India, Pakistan and Israel have been 'threshold' countries in terms of the international non-proliferation regime. Both India and Pakistan are publically opposed to the NPT as it stands and India has consistently attacked the treaty since its inception, labelling it, in 1970, as a lopsided treaty in favour of the existing nuclear powers. India refused to sign the treaty because China is a nuclear state and the two are locked in an enduring dispute. Former Indian Foreign Minister, Pranab Mukherje, stated in 2007 that India's opposition was not because of a lack of commitment for non-proliferation but because they consider NPT as a flawed treaty which does not recognise the need for universal, non-discriminatory verification and treatment.

Thirdly, the Middle East conflict has also posed a major barrier to the NPT treaty. Israel feels unsafe among its Arab neighbours and following repeated hostilities. The US has been a staunch supporter of Israel, and has not pressed Israel to allow IAEA inspectors to its existing facility at Dimona. Now that the Arab-Israeli conflict has evolved into an Israel-Iran conflict, the latter uses the case of Israel to justify its own nuclear aspirations and (former) Iranian President, Al Muhabidean, remarked that nothing was said about Israel's suspected nuclear weapons programme. He also noted that the NWS were not making any effort to destroy their stockpiles. So, since the NWS reserve the right to keep nuclear weapons, Iran should reserve the right to develop them as well.

Fourthly, Israel has individually has expressed disdain for the NPT. The concern of Israel is its security hence Israel scorned the resolution by the IAEA calling on it to sign the NPT. Israel insists that it was unfair to single Israel out when they are not the only nation not to have signed it (Pakistan and India are not signatories). Israel has also argued that it has an inherent right to its arsenal. For instance, Horcy, the Israeli Atomic Chief, claimed that the call for Israel to join the NPT violates basic principles and norms of international law.

Finally, hostilities between India and Pakistan pose another obstacle to nuclear disarmament and to the success of the NPT. This is because they act as a reference point to those who desire to de-

velop nuclear weapons and it is well documented that Pakistan's so-called Kahn network is responsible for developing Iran's nuclear programme.

In addition to the above points, Rauf listed several impediments to nuclear reductions:

1. the deterioration in relations between the US, Russia and China,
2. the increased saliency of nuclear weapons in Russia's security policy,
3. the rise of domestic groups in Russia and the US that remain unconvinced about arms control as an element of national security policy,
4. the Eastward expansion of NATO without considering non-proliferation,
5. increased reliance by Russia on nuclear arms, notably sub-strategic weapons,
6. NATO's continued reliance on nuclear weapons in the absence of credible threats,
7. heightened proliferation concerns in South Asia, the Korean Peninsula and Middle East.[23]

Together, these may be insurmountable without a comprehensive, international rethink of the values of nuclear weapons.

Conclusion

Nuclear proliferation is difficult to stem for the reasons highlighted above. Nuclear disarmament amongst the nuclear states appear very distant and possibly unachievable. For instance, complaints over the lack of progress towards nuclear disarmament have been a perennial feature of most NPT reviews. The significance of these complaints derives from the fact that the NPT is the only legally binding instrument through which the NWS committed themselves to nuclear disarmament.

This is supported by the ICJ, when it asserted that Article VI of the NPT committed the NWS not only to negotiate but also to conclude on nuclear disarmament. Hence the NPT provides a legal framework within which the NNWS could hold the NWS accountable for their actions on nuclear disarmament.[24] The NPT implicitly

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stated that possession of nuclear weapons by the NWS is a temporary, not permanent situation. Consequently, the NPT is both a nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation treaty with the later being a contributing condition for achievement of the former and vice versa.

Arguments for nuclear proliferation or selective proliferation hardly offer a solution to the issue as also noted by the Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyed Axworthy in 1998 that the nuclear powers need to see themselves as others see them and to ensure that they do not send messages that they did not intend. He noted that the nuclear powers should be circumspect about the political value they place on NATO's nuclear forces lest they furnish arguments proliferators can use to try to justify their own nuclear programmes. Hence, Washington's confrontation with North Korea and Iran over their nuclear weapons programme has raised a host of important moral questions that touch on the credibility of the NWS and the possible success of the NPT.

In this light, this work calls for the revisiting of the Buruchi Plan of 1946. The plan had proposed the verifiable disarmament and destruction of the entire US nuclear arsenal, the establishment of an International Atomic Development Authority and the creation of a system of atomic sanctions, which not even the UN Security Council could veto, and which would proportionately punish states attempting to acquire the capability to make nuclear weapons or fissile materials.

It is obvious that countries that wish to possess WMD usually claim so not only on the basis of their security but also to exercise political and military power in the international system. Possessing nuclear capabilities certainly conveys some illusory security and prestige. What the NWS fail to realise is that the failure of disarmament treaties also risks creating an environment that makes non-proliferation more difficult. A better solution therefore, is to revisit the Baruchi plan with faith that the great powers would be courageous enough to embrace and implement it.

The conclusion is that a world without nuclear weapons can only work only if leaders are rational and wanting to avoid the catastrophe accompanying any use of such weapons.

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