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NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION AND THE DEBATES ON NUCLEARISATION

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ABSTRACT

This article is an attempt to look at the debate on nuclearisation; it would help to understand both proponents and opponents of proliferation of nuclear weapons. The findings would be used to examine whether nuclear weapons really reduce the probability of nuclear war. In other words the study through the prism of proliferation optimists and proliferation pessimist's debate tries to explain differences between the two theoretical camps. First I will explain the proliferation optimist and pessimists debate and then I will summarize why a full fledge war did not took place between India and Pakistan after nuclear test conducted by India and Pakistan. Through this description in short I want to test nuclear deterrence theory in the context of south Asia. In this paragraph my central question is that is nuclear deterrence theory can be applicable in south Asia?

BACKGROUND OF NUCLEAR DETERRENCE THEORY

Ever since the United States dropped the first atomic bomb on Japan, many people have wondered about nuclear weapons and the risk they pose to the world. A host of countries has nuclear weapons, and the threat of a nuclear war brings fear to many. The concerns about the spread of such weapons date back to World War II. After the detonation of the two atomic bombs in August 1945, the world realized massively destructive nature and the powerful security value of nuclear weapons. These security benefits were not ignored by other nations. In 1949, the Soviet Union became the second nation to develop and test a nuclear weapon. Thus began the nuclear arms race. Hosts of countries, since then, are engaged in pursuit of nuclear weapons, overtly or covertly. Since the appearance of nuclear weapons on the global scene, scholars are engaged in locating the divergent factors, which motivate the states to go nuclear. Many scholars try to find out the implications of these weapons on the interstate relations. Some argue that spread of nuclear weapons will bring more stability to the interstate relations, while others claim that unregulated spread of nuclear weapons will be detrimental to the security of nation states. Those who believe that the spread of nuclear weapons would stabilize the interstate relations find themselves in the category of proliferation optimists such as Kenneth Waltz and others, which subscribe to Waltizian variant of the realism. Those who are cynical about the spread of nuclear weapons are known as proliferation pessimists like Scott D. Sagan; therefore, primarily the scholarship on the spread of nuclear weapons is divided into two camps. Both the schools made efforts to explain whether the spread of nuclear weapons would stabilize the world or destabilize the interstate relations. In this way, Waltz and Sagan made an introduction to this debate in international relations. In the context of South Asia, the debate between Proliferation optimists and pessimists was revisited when China, India and Pakistan became nuclear powers. The nuclear crisis of South Asia particularly between India and Pakistan in the post-I998 era such as Kargil war and Parakram crisis also contributed in reviewing the debate. There are two schools related to nuclear weapons.

Map of nuclear-armed states of the world.

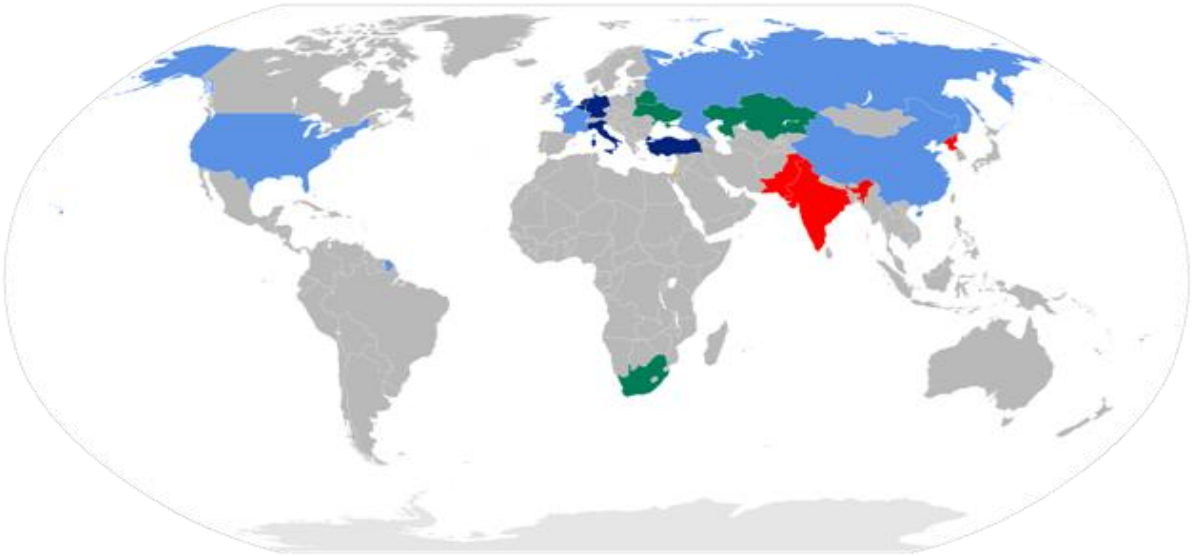
NPT-designated nuclear weapon states (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States)

Other states with nuclear weapons (India, Pakistan, North Korea)

Other states presumed to have nuclear weapons (Israel)

NATO nuclear weapons sharing states (Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Turkey)

States formerly possessing nuclear weapons (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, South Africa).



OPTIMIST SCHOOL OF PROLIFERATION

The school of proliferation optimism suggests that the spread of nuclear weapons need not be a bad thing, and could even be a good thing. It has its origin in the writings of Kenneth N. Waltz. There are many scholars who belongs to this school like Kenneth waltz, Sumit Ganguly , C. Rajamohan, Rajesh Rajagopalan etc. Waltz in his famous article, "More may be better" argued that as more countries gain nuclear weapons and as more countries achieve nuclear capability, the difficulties and dangers of making preventive strikes increases. He adds that the presence of nuclear weapons make the chances of war less likely as the costs of war rise in relation to possible gains. Waltz thought that because of America's nuclear arsenal; the Soviet Union could hardly have destroyed the forces of Britain and France.[1]Commenting on the origin of proliferation optimism Varun Sahni argues that as a body of thought, nuclear optimism has passed through two distinct stages. Although its lineage can be traced to the classic deterrence theorists, its first robust articulation was Kenneth Waltz's iconoclastic "more may be better" argument. Waltz uses rational deterrence theory and structural realism to advance two interconnected propositions. First, "nuclear weapons, responsibly used, make wars hard to start. Nations that have nuclear weapons have strong incentives to use them responsibly." Second, the first proposition holds true "for small as for

[1]Waltz, Kenneth N. and Scot D. Sagan (1995), The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate New York: W.W. Norton, 1995),p no 14-28.

big nuclear powers;" thus, "the measured spread of nuclear weapons is more to be welcomed than feared.[2] The optimistic school of thought has its basis in certain assumptions; its origin is largely drawn from the writings of Waltz, the pioneer of structural realism or neorealism. Waltz makes some arguments, which mostly from the bedrock of proliferation optimism. According to Waltz in an anarchic world in which there is no central authority at the top, states are concerned about their security and survival as self-help is the main principle of action. This logic of self-help drives these states to achieve all possible means of security in order to sustain in the system. Some of the arguments needs a mention in order to get some idea about the logic why after all states need nuclear weapons.[3]

Waltz argues that the primary reason which drives states to achieve nuclear weapons is the logic of self-help system. According to Waltz, "Self-help system is the principle of action in an anarchic order, and the most important way in which states must help themselves is by providing for their own security".[4] He argues that states require nuclear weapons because of following reasons: A country without nuclear allies, writes Waltz, will want nuclear weapons if some of its adversaries have them. A country may want nuclear weapons because it lives in fear of its adversaries' present or future conventional strength and some countries may find nuclear weapons a cheaper and safer alternative to running economically ruinous and militarily dangerous conventional arms races.[5] Waltz has put these reasons in order to explain the raison d'etre behind the spread of nuclear weapons. One can argue here that Waltz primary argument about the spread of nuclear weapons is embedded in his theory of structural realism. The structural theory revolves around the structure, which according to Waltz is anarchic.[6] Now, question arises how nuclear weapons for proliferation optimists influence the likelihood for peace. Waltz responds by saying that the logic of deterrence and defense works in this case. He presents some of the points to substantiate his argument. States act with less care if the expected costs of war are low and with more care if they are high. "Why fight ifyou cannot win much and might Jose everything?".[7] War can be fought in the face of deterrent threats, but the higher the stakes and the closer a country moves toward winning them, the more surely that country invites retaliation and risks its· own destruction. Purely defensive forces provide no deterrence. Waltz argues, "Although we cannot strike back at you, you will find our defenses so difficult to overcome that you will dash yourself against them".[8]The deterrent deployment of nuclear weapons contributes more to a country's security than does the conquest of territory. Deterrent effect depends both on capabilities and on will to use them. Certainty about the relative strength of adversaries also makes war less likely. He actually talks about the balance of power by saying that the possession of nuclear weapons by adversaries can reduce the chances of war precisely because it makes the costs of war so great. This is called rational deterrence theory (Waltz and Sagan, 1995). Nuclear optimists believe that new nuclear powers will meet these requirements because it is in their interest to do so. These realists argue that since the magnitude of the destruction by nuclear weapons is great, because more states obtain these capabilities, the possible gains begin to reduce and the likely risks and costs for

[2]Sahni, Varun (2009), "A Dangerous Exercise: Brasstacks as Non-Nuclear Near War" in Summit and Kapur (e ds.), Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia, Crisis behaviour and the I bomb, Park Square, Milton Park, Routledge.
[3]Waltz, Kenneth N. and Scot D. Sagan (1995), The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate
[4]Waltz The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed, New York, w. W.Norton.
[5]Ibid
[6]Waltz, Kenneth N. (1987) "Nuclear Myths and Political Realities," American Political Science Review, 84(3): 731-745.
[7]Waltz The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed, New York, w. W.Norton.
[8]ibid

entering or engaging in nuclear war diminish. **Mearsheimer** expounds upon the idea of nuclear deterrence in a world with growing nuclear states. He claims that nuclear weapons are an "excellent deterrent" because "the potential consequences of using nuclear weapons are so grave that it is very difficult to conceive of achieving a meaningful victory in a nuclear war.".[9]He explains that, with the advent of the nuclear age, no state will be willing to initiate such actions because decision-makers must think about the perceived political consequences of military action against the military risks and costs of going to war.[10]Waltz contends that states look for their own security and their own fate. This is the reason why some states violate the treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Waltz also argues that with the existence of nuclear weapons it is too difficult for leaders to ignore the possible risks of using them. He argues that even small amounts of nuclear forces negate conventional and nuclear advantages and that because the sheer power of nuclear weapons is so great, a small second-strike force is just as deadly and intimidating as a large-second strike force.[11] They also claim that political leaders are very sensitive to the cost, which in turn will make this theory work. Therefore, nuclear optimism has faith in nuclear weapons as a stabilizing force in the international relations.

PESSIMIST SCHOOL OF PROLIFERATION

The school of proliferation pessimism that suggests that the spread of nuclear weapons is dreadful and unsafe. Scott D. Sagan is one of the well-known proponents of nuclear pessimism. Other scholars are Kanti Bajpai, Parfullbidwai, Achin Vanaik , Zia mian, Smithu Kothari ,etc. Sagan in his famous article, "More may be worse" argued that unregulated spread of nuclear weapons would be detrimental to the security of nation states. He adds that the presence of nuclear weapons increases the chances of war; nuclear weapons are not able to prevent war between two nations.[12] In common language, Sagan's perspective is known as organizational perspective. It primarily questions the command and control of nuclear weapons. Sagan's organizational perspective depicts rationality as relatively easier way of making conjectures about the anticipated behavior of organizations/states by linking it with their supposed interests. In his opinion, it is not sufficient to use these assumptions to make accurate predictions about nuclear proliferation. He argues that in the functioning of large and complex organizations such as military, which is an important component of decision making when it comes to nuclear weapons, various other organizational features such as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), organizational culture, a general rigidity to adapt to the situation, etc. have to be factored in. Sagan demonstrates such restrictions in their functioning can have great consequences for stable deterrence. He adds that Organizations are tough when it comes to adapting to changes. The rules of these Organizations are rigid and their routines are well-set which makes it difficult for them to adapt to changes. Organizations are also characterized by multiple, conflicting goals and they usually sift the available information through their predisposed frames of reference crystallized by their unique experiences, training, current responsibility etc. Sagan describes, "To the degree that such narrow organizational interests determine state behavior, a theory of rational state action is seriously

[9]Mearsheimer, J. J. (1985), "Nuclear Weapons and Deterrence in Europe," International Security, 9(3): 19-46.
[10]Ibid
[11]Waltz The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed, New York, w. W.Norton.
[12]Waltz, Kenneth N. and Scot D. Sagan (1995), The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate New York: W.W. Norton, 1995)

weakened".[13]Sagan includes political dimension to normal 'accidents theory', which creates even greater pessimism about the possibility of organizational accidents .The organizational perspective further argues that the conflicting views unavoidably subsist within a large organization that manages any dangerous technology. It holds that while some higher authorities may stress on a high priority for security, others may put more premium on fairly insular objectives like increasing production levels, enhancing the size of their subunit, promoting their individual careers, and so on. As a result, organizational learning about safety problems is often severely limited. Sagan emphasizes that the politics of blame inside organizations also minimizes the chances of learning from the accidents. Organizational leaders have great incentives to blame operators at lower levels for any misadventure; this frees higher leaders from any responsibility. Additionally, it is usually cheaper, and more convenient, to fix the blame on a junior staff and fire him/her than changing accident-prone procedures or structures.

. Even though, none of the nuclear states have experienced any serious nuclear accident, there are good reasons to believe that chances increase over time.[14]Therefore, proliferation pessimists argue that deterrence is very old strategy that assumes various assumptions and claims that may not be relevant to many state leaders today. Deterrence theory assumes that the opponent is rational and mutually vulnerable, and that the opponent is a state.[15]They also point to the fact that, as a theory, deterrence has not actually been tested. It cannot be said for sure that the Soviet Union was actually deterred by the US' nuclear weapons during the Cold War. Even if deterrence actually worked during this time, it was successful in a different historical and political context, with unique circumstances and very different people. In today's context, with the rise of non-state actors and the so called 'rogue states', among other factors, dependence on nuclear capability today would be absurd. As the core of deterrence theory, rationality is no longer a reliable measure since the leaders of rogue states do not conform to American hegemony, and are driven by more insidious ideological or religious concerns.[16]

IS NUCLEAR DETERRENCE THEORY IS APPLICABLE IN THE CONTEXT OF SOUTH ASIA?

*In south Asian context some scholars like Sumit Ganguly assumes that nuclear deterrence theory can be applicable in south Asia. Sumit ganguly in his famous book, "India Pakistan crisis in the shadow of nuclear weapon, argues that nuclear weapons do prevent the states to go for an all out war ,he present India and Pakistan example to prove his argument. In this book he describe that nuclear weapons have reduced the risk of full-scale war in the region and have therefore contributed to strategic stability. He presents two examples to prove his hypothesis – Kashmir issue and Prakaram crisis.[17].Another prominent scholar Paul s Kapur*hold a contrary opinion and believe that it is not nuclear deterrence per se that prevents states to go for an all out war,

[13]Waltz The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed, New York, w. W.Norton.
[14]Sagan, Scott D. (1999), "The Perils of Proliferation: Organization Theory, Deterrence Theory, and the Spread ofNuclear Weapons", International Security, 18(4): 66-107.
[15]Brunk, C. G. (1987), "Realism, Deterrence, and the Nuclear Arms Race", in Fox and Groarke (eds.), Nuclear War: Philosophical Perspectives, New York: Peter Land.
[16]Segal,· G. (1988), "Strategy and Survival" in Gerald Segal, Moreton, Freedman and Baylis (e ds.), Nuclear War & Nuclear Peace, London: Macmillan Press.
[17]Ganguly, Sumit and S. Paul Kapur, *Nuclear proliferation in south Asia : Crisis Behaviour and the Bomb*, (London: Routledge publisher, 2009).

instead there are other factors like diplomatic pressure, and domestic circumstances which leads to de-escalation[18].in the end after discussion all the ideas related to nuclear weapon I want to say that nuclear deterrence theory is a western theory. South-Asian atmosphere is different from west countries. I am totally agree with this assumption that nuclear weapons are able to reduce war in south asia special context with India and Pakistan but its only successful to limiting the wars . After making the nuclear bomb India and Pakistan did not fought any full fledge war but limited wars happens between both the countries like Kargil and operation Prakaram. So nuclear deterrence theory can partially applicable in the context of south Asia.

[18]ibid

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