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US Counter-Proliferation Efforts: A Comparative Study of Iran and North Korea

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Abstract:

The nuclear programmes of North Korea and Iran are perceived to be a threat to global/US national security. In order to meet this situation, various counter-proliferation initiatives, (CPIs) have been launched mainly by the US. These initiatives are aimed at halting, slowing down and dismantling the nuclear programmes of DPRK and Iran. The comparative studies of these CPIs on North Korea and Iran offer contrasting conclusions; unsuccessful for DPRK and partially successful for Iran. However, the Iran nuclear deal has raised the hopes that trustworthy, meaningful and mutually beneficial diplomacy can still be possible to make counter-proliferation efforts a success.

Key Words: Non-proliferation, Counter-proliferation, US, Iran, North Korea

The threat of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) to global security which in the post-Cold War era was presumed to have become a thing of the past has resurfaced. The Western world led by the US is wary of the nuclear programmes of Iran and North Korea a tightened non-proliferation regime has not been able to stop from developing. The concept of non-proliferation was replaced by counter proliferation strategy which mainly focused on the use of force, deception, dissuasion, diplomatic pressure, intelligence and policy of interdiction and was designed to check the spread of WMD. The US has been left with fewer options to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons (which Iran has reiterated time and again it is not doing) and to slow down the nuclear programme of North Korea.

The counter-proliferation initiatives are different from the legal norms of the non-proliferation regime and are not treaty based. The US adopted different policies towards Iran and North Korea to interdict the proliferation activities but these efforts have had little impact on North Korea to slow down its nuclear programme. But in the case of Iran, an interim agreement has been reached between the P-5+1 and Iran, which is considered to be a historic event and left a positive mark on the counter-proliferation initiatives taken by the US. The final deal may prove that

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diplomacy can still work to diffuse threats and to convince the other side to abide by the international norms and regulations of non-proliferation.

This paper discusses the nuclear development programmes of Iran and North Korea, their perceived threat to global security, the US counter proliferation efforts to secure its national security, and ways to make these efforts more effective to stop the proliferation of WMD in the future. These issues are analysed keeping the likely motives behind these programmes and the effectiveness of US counter-proliferation efforts with regard to them.

There are various concepts such as proliferation, tools and motives for proliferation, and counter-proliferation, which need to be explained to fully grasp the issue under study.

Proliferation

Nuclear proliferation can be defined as the spread of nuclear material, weapons, technology experts, infrastructure, and transfer of information from a nuclear weapon state to another state. Proliferation can be further divided into horizontal and vertical proliferation. Horizontal proliferation covers proliferation activities where one state is involved in spreading the nuclear weapons technology or related materials to some other country for the sake of military build-up or for other financial benefits. On the other hand, vertical proliferation is described as the state's ability to proliferate within its jurisdiction while enhancing the capability of its nuclear technology or increasing the number of already existing technologies.[1]

Tools of Proliferation

There are many ways to proliferation, which can easily explain the intentions of the proliferators to either develop nuclear weapon or misuse this technology. 1) Fissile material is an important ingredient in the operation of nuclear reactors. For making the reactor operational, fissile material is required. Fissile material or plutonium can be produced by lowering the level of highly enriched uranium via neutron capture or highly enriched uranium (HEU), which can be acquired from some other state or through theft for military purposes.[2] If nuclear material is proliferated,

[1] Victor W. Sidel, "Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Opportunities for Control and Abolition," *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 97, no. 9 (September 2007).

[2] Alexander Glaser, "On the Proliferation Potential of Uranium Fuel for Research Reactors at Various Enrichment Levels," *Science and Global Security*, vol.14, issue 1 (2006).

embezzled, or leaked due to technical faults, the possibility is that this material can be used for making a nuclear device, either by a state or a non-state actor. 2) Proliferation can happen when a state makes an alliance with another state and strikes a deal that in time of danger the powerful state would defend the weaker one by delivering nuclear weapons so the weaker state has a strong deterrent. Nuclear weapons furnish deterrent capability to a nuclear weapons state likewise a non-nuclear weapon state would also want to join the nuclear club for the pursuance of its national security.[3] 3) In the post 9/11 era, terrorists' access to nuclear weapons knowledge became the focal point of the US national security strategy. The spread of nuclear weapon capabilities particularly to less stable regions presents a major threat to the international security.[4] The major zones of expertise' proliferation are the war prone regions and countries where anti-US sentiments are high. Another major concern is the WMD expertise in the hands of some poor agent/s who can sell their skill to smaller states or terrorist groups for financial benefits.[5] 4) The export of nuclear infrastructure has also negative implications for the international security as this infrastructure comprises the overall design of power plants and the ingredients with quantities needed to build a nuclear weapon. If it is stolen or intentionally proliferated chances are that a state or a terrorist organization can acquire its own nuclear weapon. 5) Nuclear spare parts including the reactor pressure vessel, the vessel's internals, the main primary pipes and pumps, containment, cables, concrete structure, pressurizers, steam generators, primary loop re-circulation pipes, valves, coolant and radioactive material which can be used for making a weapon once these go into the wrong hands or can give the status of nuclear weapon state to a non-nuclear power.[6]

Motives for Nuclearization

Besides these proliferation tools, there are various motivations, which compel states to opt for nuclearization; Scott D. Sagan has given impetus to this debate. Sagan argues that the consensus on national security considerations for becoming a nuclear weapon state is a naïve one; there are other factors, which compel states to strive for acquiring nuclear status. He

[3] Theodore B. Taylor, "Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons," www-ee.stanford.edu

[4] "Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction," Canadian Security Intelligence Service (2013), www.csis-gc.ca

[5] Sharon K Waron, "Retooling Efforts to Stop the Proliferation of WMD Expertise," *Arms Control Today* (December 2011).

[6] "Heavy Component Replacement in Nuclear Power Plants: Experience and Guidelines," Vienna: International Atomic Energy Agency (2008).

is of the view that nuclear weapons like other weapons regardless of their importance as tools of national security also serve political objectives, at the domestic as well as international level as symbols of identity and prestige.[7] He has identified three models; 1) As nuclear weapons have destructive effects, a state seeking to safeguard its national security must acquire deterrence against its rival. Nuclear weapons serve as deterrent against conventional threats or as coercive tools to bring about desired change in status quo leading to proliferation. It is also seen in international politics that if one state acquires nuclear weapons, other states in the region also opt for the same out of security concerns.[8] 2) The second model of nuclear weapons proliferation relates to domestic politics or individual actors within the state who encourage or discourage acquiring nuclear weapons. These individuals are of three types — the state's nuclear energy establishment, military personnel, and politicians whose parties or masses compel the state to go for developing nuclear capability. Whether acquisition of nuclear weapons would serve the national security interest or not but it would definitely serve the parochial or bureaucratic interest of the individual actors. Whenever these actors group together they can directly or indirectly influence the decision making of the government.[9] 3) the third is the normative model where the state's decision for acquiring nuclear weapons is symbolic. In this model, state behaviour is determined not just by the leader's decision to go for nuclearization for sustaining its national security interest, nor by the parochial interests of bureaucratic actors, but rather by norms and beliefs about what actions are legal in the international relations politics.[10]

Counter-proliferation

In the late 1960s the international norm was defined in the form of a nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). It was established to eliminate, remove or limit the proliferation of sensitive material. The NPT is the primary tool of the non-proliferation regime, which prohibits non-nuclear states to acquire, produce and use nuclear material or technology from nuclear weapon states. But with the disintegration of the USSR in early 1990s the concept of non-proliferation changed to counter-proliferation because of the danger posed to US national security interests by smaller states and terrorist groups and organizations. Probably, the notion of counter-proliferation first originated

[7] Sagan. D. Scott., "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in search of a Bomb," *International Security*, vol. 21, no. 3 (Winter, 1997).
[8] Ibid., p.36.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid., p.39.

when Israel bombed the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osirak in 1981. Gradually, during the Clinton Administration in 1993, it became a new policy approach introduced to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Later, this policy was employed in 2003 during the Bush Administration, when the US-led coalition attacked Iraq alleging it possessed WMD.[11] Though the purpose of both concepts, non-proliferation and counter-proliferation, is to control the spread of nuclear weapons or WMDs but the approaches and policies in achieving the goals are different. Counter proliferation initiatives or efforts are basically US dominated and are based on the "coalition of the willing" strategy.[12] In counter-proliferation, the state focuses on the use of military force, intelligence, deception, manoeuvring, mobility, dispersion and covert operations or limited war to combat the proliferation of nuclear weapons.[13]

Counter Proliferation Initiatives (CPI)

The US administration and policy makers are of the belief that security of its people, allies and homeland is highly dependent upon the skills and expertise of how it can protect the national security interest. The Bush Administration emphasized developing new strategies for countering the emerging threat of weapons of mass destruction. Since the non-proliferation regime failed to achieve its objectives, hence the post 9/11 scenario became the enabling environment of implementing the counter-proliferation initiatives.[14] Several mechanisms were devised to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the threat posed by terrorists groups and the violators of non-proliferation regime.

Container Security Initiative (CSI): This initiative was proposed in 2001 and was formally declared as the extension of advanced commercial programme. In the wake of September 11 attacks, the US customs services developed programmes to counter terrorism to secure the US homeland. The main purpose of this initiative is to address the threat to border and global trade posed by terrorists who can use containers for delivering weapons of mass destruction, while allowing legal containers to move to

[11] Sana Danish, "US Counter Proliferation Strategies Post 9/11 Implications for Pakistan," *SASSI Report* no. 27, Islamabad: South Asian Strategic Stability Institute, September 2009.

[12] Ibid.

[13] 'Counter-proliferation Investigations Program' Fact Sheet, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, www.ice.gov

[14] Sana Danish, "US Counter Proliferation Strategies Post 9/11 Implications for Pakistan," op.cit.

seaports worldwide.[15] CSI is a programme where multiple actors are involved and these actors are given the opportunity to send their custom officers to major US ports to target the containers, which are then sent to their countries. For an effective CSI implementation, a global forum is being devised to secure maritime activities. As this is a US dominated initiative and is mainly concerned with US interest, problems emerge when other participating states do not have the right to decide which cargo is more threatened. Moreover, the data received is being transmitted to the US, which puts the participating states at stake as the data can be used against them.[16]

Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI): This initiative was adopted by the Bush Administration in 2003 to interdict shipments of weapons of mass destruction and related material, technology to terrorists and proliferators. PSI stemmed from the US national strategy to combat the proliferation and threat of WMD. The main focus of this initiative is to keep the world's most dangerous weapons away from US shores and also from reaching wrong hands. It is a political measure where likeminded countries jointly work; its primary objective is to interdict the proliferation of weapons in seas, land and air,[17] where interdiction is part of a complex military strategy and includes surveillance, deception, and multiple areas of expertise. The legality of PSI is still questionable but the US has tried to strengthen it by providing different scenarios. Its universal membership is still lacking because of its highly secretive nature.[18]

Megaports Initiative (MPI): It is also a US led initiative and part of a broader US national security strategy to stop terrorists from acquiring, smuggling and using radioactive material for making a dirty bomb or a nuclear device. The megaport initiative basically covers three major areas and implement these strategies over the seas which include; engagement, implementation and sustainability. This initiative is helpful in providing the partner countries with detection equipment, which can be used for scanning the containers coming and going over the sea ports. The initiative is being further expanded to include more countries. It focuses on testing and evaluating the latest technology to counter the challenges. However, the

[15] "CSI in Brief," US Department of Homeland Security, October 7, 2011.
[16] Sana Danish, "US Counter Proliferation Strategies Post 9/11 Implications for Pakistan," op.cit.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Erin Harbaugh, "The Proliferation Security Initiative: Counter Proliferation at the Crossroads" *Strategic Insights*, vol. III, issue 7 (July 2004).

initiative has diminishing effects; it lacks performance measures, and has limited deployment of radiation detection equipment.[19]

United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540: It is an important tool of counter-proliferation, which compels and binds the states legally to develop international framework for curbing WMD proliferation. The UNSCR works under three major obligations: prohibit states from supporting non state actors who are seeking such items, to devise and implement laws which prohibit the proliferation of these weapons and related material to non-state actors, and to take effective measures to ban these items. The resolution compels all the states to develop strategies and formulate domestic laws on non-proliferation and exports. This resolution is also the hallmark of counter proliferation strategy as it focuses on the use of force.[20] The UNSCR 1929 was adopted in 2010, which specifically focuses on the policies and laws to stop Iran from the proliferation of nuclear weapons.[21] While North Korea comes under the UNSCR 1874 which was also adopted in 2009 when the US and South Korea together imposed strong sanctions through the United Nations.[22]

Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT): In the post 9/11 period, many terrorists organizations emerged and raised concerns about international security through nuclear terrorism. In response the US and Russia jointly developed an initiative which was specifically addressed to the gaps in international non-proliferation regime, with the goal to prevent non-state actors from acquiring, transporting or using nuclear or radioactive materials, and explosive devices. Both countries described this initiative as a tool to enforce national and international programmess to counter nuclear terrorism. The flaws in GICNT are that it lacks international nuclear security standards and it does not cover the security of military facilities, materials and weapons.[23]

Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI): GTRI was proposed by the US in 2004 in cooperation with Russia. It was decided to work together to identify, remove and protect nuclear or radioactive materials which can be

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[19] "Combating Nuclear Smuggling: Megaports Initiative Faces Funding and Sustainability Challenges 2012," United States Government Accountability Office, November 28, 2012, www.gao.gov

[20] Sana Danish, "US Counter Proliferation Strategies Post 9/11 Implications for Pakistan," op.cit.

[21] "Sanctions Against Iran" Global Policy Forum, www.globalpolicy.org

[22] "Sanctions Against North Korea," Global Policy Forum, www.globalpolicy.org

[23] Ibid.

vulnerable to sabotage or terrorist attacks. Russia was the only country having large stockpiles of radioactive material. GTRI functions mainly on three levels including conversion, removal and security of nuclear or sensitive radioactive material.[24] This comprehensive approach has the advantage of being able to deny terrorists access to nuclear material available at research facilities. Other than Russia, Canada, France and Norway are collaborating in enhancing the effectiveness of this initiative and to make it acceptable to the international community.[25] GTRI can be effective in detecting and protecting nuclear material from threats of theft or sabotage but its security upgrades are voluntary and can have cost implications for the operator.[26]

Iran's Proliferation Moves

Iran's nuclear programme is more than half a century old. It started in the 1950s when the US constructed a research reactor at Tehran, under the 'Atoms for Peace' programme. In 1970s, Tehran went for an ambitious nuclear power programme and according to some US intelligence reports, it was to construct as many as 20 nuclear power reactors to produce 20,000 megawatts of nuclear electricity.[27] At that time, Iran had started work on light water nuclear reactors near Bushehr and was to obtain uranium enrichment and reprocessing technology. Tehran expressed its willingness not to pursue a nuclear weapons programme and signed the NPT in 1968 and ratified it in 1970. Another step in that direction was Iran's 1974 draft resolution at the UN General Assembly proposing a nuclear weapon free zone in the region.[28]

After the proclamation of the Islamic Republic in 1979, Iran's nuclear programme was totally halted. However, in 1982, in the wake of the Iran-Iraq war, Iran reinstituted its nuclear programme asserting it was purely for the generation of electricity and it was not nuclear weapons oriented.[29] Under Hashmi Rafsanjani and Muhammad Khatami Iran continued to

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[24] "Global Threat Reduction Initiative," National Nuclear Security Administration, www.nnsa.energy.gov

[25] Jill Zubarev and Garry Tittemore, "The Global Threat Reduction Initiative: Enhancing Radiological Security in the Russian Federation," www.iaea.org

[26] Warren Stern and Edward Baldini, "Global Threat reduction Initiative efforts to prevent Radiological Terrorism," *The Journal of Science and Security,* vol. 66, no.4 (Fall 2013).

[27] Satenik Girgoryan, "Iran's Nuclear Program," www.acdemia.edu

[28] "Middle East WMD Free Zone," Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy, www.acronym.org.uk

[29] Paul K.Kerr, "Iran's Nuclear Program: Status," US Congressional Research Service, October 17, 2012.

further develop its nuclear facilities. In 2002, Iran's secret nuclear activities came to light and became a cause of concern for the western powers, mainly the US which pursued a hostile policy towards Iran since the very inception of the revolutionary regime. By 2003, Iran had made progress in nuclear technology in the departments of mining, milling, conversion and enrichment, which are known to be the requirements of developing a nuclear weapon. Iran's efforts and its firm resolve to master the technology of fissile materials are interpreted as its intentions of acquiring its own nuclear device.[30]

Motives Behind Iran's Nuclear Direction

National security is the main motive behind Iran's nuclear programme. It is a state surrounded by a number of nuclear weapons states — Russia, India, Pakistan, Israel in addition to nuclear armed US forces in the region. For Iran to seek a credible deterrence in such a neighbourhood is quite natural as it perceives threats to its national security from Israel and the US. Israel is an undeclared nuclear weapon state in the region that enjoys US support. Not only that; the US has political conflicts with Iran and opposes Iran's nuclear programme for safeguarding its regional interests. Secondly, the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) left a deep mark on the Iranian national security thinking. Iraq's alleged possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the threat of their use against Iran and lack of international response forced Iran to develop its own nuclear programme.[31] The foreign policy of Iran is formulated by a close group of decision makers who are aware of the mass support they need for their political leadership. Iranians look with respect to their ancient past and their national pride demands they stand as second to none in the region. This serves as a domestic political drive of national honour to have a nuclear status if merely as a symbol of pride and prestige. Iran rejects foreign domination and hegemony over its foreign policy. Having a nuclear position would demonstrate it is an independent and fully sovereign state. In the Middle East region Israel is the only country possessing nuclear weapons and exercises regional hegemony; the development of Iranian nuclear programme will give Iran the political

[30] "A History of Iran's Nuclear Program," *Weapon Program Background Report* (2012), www.iranwatch.org

[31] Oliver Schmidt, "Understanding & Analyzing Iran's Nuclear Intentions-Testing Scott Sagan's Argument of "Why do States build Nuclear Weapons" (MA Dissertation, Lancaster University, September 2008), www.archive.atlantic-community.org

power and international prestige to challenge this regional hegemony and dominance.[32]

Non-proliferation Regime and Iranian Programme

Iran is a signatory to NPT but has allegedly violated the safeguard mechanism on a number of times inviting sanctions for not complying with the treaty obligations. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has time and again verified that Iran has not complied with the safeguard mechanism. It has also verified that Iran has been making efforts to divert the nuclear material to military purposes. Iran in response to these IAEA allegations and assertions has responded by stating that pursuing nuclear energy development was its sole right, and it could use nuclear energy for civil programmes under Article IV of the NPT and had made all efforts to comply with the safeguard mechanisms of IAEA and allowed IAEA inspection of its nuclear power facilities. But the international community has not been able to ascertain and establish that Iran is working on a nuclear weapons programme. However, the US maintains that it has clearly defined the criteria for states to prohibit them from acquiring or diverting their civil nuclear programmes towards a weapons regime. These include undeclared nuclear facilities, clandestine procurement programmes, and a nuclear programme which is having little coherence for peaceful purposes and more coherence towards nuclear weapon development. Iran is perceived to have all these indicators and is seen in violation of Article II and III of the non-proliferation treaty.[33]

North Korea's Proliferation Moves

The nuclear programme of North Korea also started in 1950s when during the Korean War the US threatened to use weapons of mass destruction against it. North Korea established its Atomic Energy Commission Research Institute and the Academy of Sciences in 1952 but its actual programme started when it signed an agreement with the Soviet Union in 1959. The agreement was about the peaceful use of nuclear energy for which the USSR would provide assistance to North Korea in establishing a nuclear research complex. During the 1960s Soviet technical assistance made Democratic People Republic of Korea (DPRK) to produce radioisotopes and also to train its scientists.[34] During early 1980s, Korea

[32] Ibid.

[33] Christopher A. Ford, "Iran, Non- proliferation and the IAEA: A Legal History," Washington DC., Hudson Institute, October 2012.

[34] "North Korea," Country Profile, Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org

started the construction of uranium milling facilities. In 1985 North Korea signed the Non-proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear weapon state in exchange for Soviet assistance for constructing a Light Water Reactor.[35] President George Bush in 1991 announced that the US had withdrawn all of its nuclear weapons from South Korean soil and the President of South Korea also claimed that his country was free of nuclear weapons. With these assurances, both sides signed the Joint Declaration of De-nuclearization in which they were bound not to test, receive, store, produce, and acquire the weapon. The declaration also stipulated that both sides will have consensus on bilateral inspections.[36] In 1994, an agreed framework was signed between the US and North Korea; the framework called upon DPRK to ban and freeze the operation and construction of power plants which were being diverted for military purposes. But the agreement ended as North Korea decided to withdraw from the NPT.[37]

Motives behind North Korean Nuclear Direction

North Korea's motivations behind nuclearization can be assessed by analysing its threat perception.[38] Korea's decision to acquire nuclear weapons was influenced by the US threat to use nuclear weapons during the Korean War. The military ties with the Soviet Union and China soon became weakened by the disintegration of USSR and economic reforms of China in 1990. Korea was enjoying the assistance provided by both these countries but soon North Korea became independent of these countries and this situation compelled DPRK to go for having nuclear weapons for self-defence. North Korea regarded the US as the biggest threat to its national security when President Bush was describing North Korea as the 'Axis of Evil'. Moreover, domestic politics was also a major factor as DPRK felt that nuclear weapons acquisition will best serve the insular interests of the domestic actors. But the most important factor which motivated North Korea for the development of nuclear weapons was its national security interest.[39]

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[35] 'Chronology of US-North Korea Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy' *Arms Control Association*, www.armscontrol.orgl Last updated February 2015.

[36] "North Korea Nuclear" Global Security Newswire, Country Profile, (2013), www.nti.org

[37] Daryl Kimball, "The US-North Korean Agreed Framework at a Glance," *Arms Control Association*, August 2004.

[38] Daniel A. Pinkston, "North Korean Motivations for Developing Nuclear Weapons," *Center for Nuclear Studies* (April 2013).

[39] YemonJi, "Three Paradigms of North Korea's Nuclear Ambitions," *Journal of Political Inquiry*, no.2 (2009).

Non-proliferation Regime and North Korean Programme

North Korea is perceived to pose serious challenges to the non-proliferation regime. DPRK joined the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state but withdrew from the treaty in 2003 as per Article X after its being declared as an "Axis of Evil" by the Bush Administration. In 2005 North Korea officially announcing that it possesses nuclear weapons,[40] but agreed to a preliminary accord under which it would have to dismantle all of its nuclear facilities and weapons, join NPT again and also bind itself to the IAEA inspectors. But the accord did not talk about supply of light water reactor, which again compelled North Korea to refuse to dismantle its nuclear weapons.[41] Further missile tests in 2006 and a nuclear test in 2009 strengthened the position of DPRK as a 'nuclear weapon state.' Following the underground tests of 2006, again negotiations and diplomatic efforts started to stop North Korea from weapons proliferation. In 2010 and 2011, North Korea tried to make efforts for denuclearization, however, it was facing threats and was engaged in military confrontation with South Korea.[42] Recent developments show that North Korea is still working on enhancing its military capabilities and is not in favour of dismantling its nuclear programme because survival of the regime depends on how it can secure itself against external threats.[43]

Counter-proliferation Efforts against Iran

To stop Iran's nuclear programme the US has imposed a number of sanctions – economic, trade, arms, travel etc., — which have proved to be ineffective in bringing about any desired change in the Iranian policy. The US also contemplated some form of military option against Iran such as a limited missile strike at Iran's missile system, and attacks on major military and civilian sites,[44] but better sense has prevailed since the benefits of covert or overt action could at best be illusionary and such action would

[40] "Chronology of US-North Korea Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy," *Arms Control Association*, www.armscontorl.org last updated February 2015.
[41] Ibid.
[42] "North Korea Nuclear," Global Security Newswire, Country Profile, (2013), www.nti.org
[43] Hecker S. Seighfried, "Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises," *Daedalus*, (MIT Press Journal), vol.139, no.1 (Winter 2010).
[44] Anthony H. Cordesman and Khalid R. Al Rodhan, "Iranian Nuclear Weapons? The Threat from Iran's WMD and Missile Programs," Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 2006.

further make any future compromise difficult on both sides.[45] The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is applicable to Iran as it concerns getting access to illegal global nuclear networks. The UNSCR 1920 is targeted against Iran, which bans all types of proliferation of missiles and nuclear technology or related material to and from Iran. Likewise, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) also covers Iran as two major non-state actors in Lebanon and Palestine are perceived to be supported by Iran. The Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI) mainly targets Iran because it is believed to be a 'proliferator, violator of NPT and also supporter of the Hamas and Hezbollah organizations.'[46]

In 2013, the National Defence Authorization Act for the fiscal year was signed having Iran-specific clause: "Iran Freedom and Counter-proliferation Act of 2012" which applied a number of new sanctions on Iran. The existing sanctions were also further strengthened. The IFCA sanctions apply to persons and activities which are related to Iran's energy, shipping, shipbuilding sectors, as well as the persons involved in the sale, purchase, or transfer of metals or related materials to and from Iran that can be used in military, missile and nuclear programmes. The IFCA regulates trade in precious metals, provision of underwriting services, insurance or reinsurance, banking services that benefit Iran's energy programme designated under the provisions of International Emergency Economic Powers Act.[47] As IFCA mainly concerns the financial sector of Iran and the US is strict in applying the sanctions under it, it affects the Iranian economy severely.[48]

Counter-proliferation Efforts against North Korea

North Korea's withdrawal from NPT and its nuclear development are viewed with serious concern as challenges to regional and global security and also to the non-proliferation regime. To block the export of nuclear and conventional weapons to North Korea, the US has devised a counter-proliferation initiative of interdiction in which South Korea is also playing its part in maintaining credible export controls and monitoring traffic of suspect goods from and to North Korea. These efforts have regional and

[45] Richard Maher, "The Covert War against Iran's Nuclear Program: An effective Counter Proliferation Strategy?" Max Weber Program, European University Institute, Report no. 17 (2012).

[46] Kenneth Katzman, "Iran Sanctions," US Congressional Research Service, October 8, 2009.

[47] "Fact Sheet: Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act of 2012," www.state.gov

[48] "The Lengthening List of Iran Sanctions," New York: Council on Foreign Relations, October 14, 2013.

global implications.[49] There can be several other policies that can be devised to make North Korea to roll back its nuclear programme which include bringing the DPRK back to the Six Party Talks, to involve it in bilateral negotiations with the US, removal of US forces from the Korean peninsula. 'A military strike on Korean facilities'[50] is also an option of last resort.

The North Korean nuclear programme which the US perceives as a major threat and wants its closure with the help of regional countries as it fears that unless stopped it could inspire a chain reaction as South Korea and Japan also cherish nuclear ambitions. If Japan acquires a nuclear weapon the security alliance of these countries will be at stake and it will compel South Korea to have its own nuclear device. China on the other hand favours a denuclearized Korean peninsula for its security concerns. China is currently developing its economy and for that it needs a favourable and stable environment that a nuclear North Korea may jeopardize[51]. However, since 2005, when DPRK declared itself as a nuclear state, these fears have not come true and no other state in the Korean Peninsula has become nuclear.

Impact of Counter-proliferations Efforts

The US has adopted several policies towards Iran and North Korea but they have been generally ineffective. North Korea went for the nuclear option and is still testing missiles and nuclear devices in the Korean peninsula. It shows that the US counter-proliferation efforts have not succeeded in affecting the nuclear programmes of these two countries. The Iranian nuclear controversy is still a major debate in the international politics. The US and Iran have started negotiations to resolve the nuclear issue through diplomatic means. After several rounds of talks and diplomatic measures both states have reached a consensus on an interim deal, which was signed on November 24, 2013 and is regarded as a historic event. The deal was primarily signed for a period of six months and there was relaxation of sanctions but if Iran does not abide by the deal's obligations then sanctions will be tightened. According to the deal, Iran will not enrich uranium up to 5% for a period of six months, will not search for new sites for enriching material, and will allow its sites for inspections; no nuclear related UN

[49] Scott Bruce, "Counter proliferation and South Korea: From Local to Global," New York: Council on Foreign Relations, October 2012.
[50] "North Korean Nuclear Chronology," *Nuclear Threat Initiative,* 2011.
[51] Hu Side, Sun Xiangli and Wu Jun, "On the Nuclear Issue of North," The XV International Amaldi Conference in Helsinki, September 25-27, 2003.

sanctions would be imposed during these six months.[52] As a result the deal would definitely be having significant implications for the international community and for the Middle East region in particular. This deal proves the efficacy of diplomacy in bringing the other side to abide by the international norms and regulations of non-proliferation.[53] The interim deal was extended twice for six months, presently until March 2015, when a final deal is expected to be made but the nuclear talks have hit snags.

Future Prospects

The non-proliferation regime has been unsuccessful in making Iran and North Korea to roll back their nuclear programmes. Besides nuclear proliferation, a new perceived threat has surfaced in the wake of 9/11, which is of nuclear terrorism. Though there has not been any such case but the US national security strategy has devised a counter proliferation set of measures to halt the possibility of nuclear materials falling into the hands of terrorist outfits.

The US National Security Strategy (NSS) of 2002 envisaged that threats posed to the US national security are far much diverse and aggressive than in the past. States which are hostile have demonstrated to take risks to achieve their goals. For this purpose, they are pursuing WMD and their delivery mechanisms as a tool of their strategy. The US believes that for the contemporary deterrent posture, a strong declaratory policy and strong military force is needed along with political tools in order to stop the adversaries from carrying out dangerous activities of WMDs' proliferation. The deterrent posture must also be reinforced by effective capabilities of intelligence, surveillance, and law enforcement.[54] It is also a fact that deterrence may not succeed in achieving its goal of counter-proliferation; therefore, the US NSS stipulates its military and national security agencies to possess the capability to defend against the proliferators of WMD. It requires the capability of detection and destruction of the adversary's WMD before they use them. Finally, the US military force and agencies must be ready to respond to any WMD attack. The primary objective of the response is to disrupt the attack before it emerges or an attack in progress and also to eliminate the chances of attack in future.[55]

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[52] "The Iran Nuclear Deal: Full Text," *CNN,* November 24, 2013.

[53] "Netanyahu is Wrong on Iran Deal," *Al-Monitor: The Pulse of Middle East,* November 24, 2013.

[54] "National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction," The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (2002), www.state.gov

[55] Ibid.

The non-proliferation regime played an important role in the overall strategy of national and international security. A conducive international environment must be established for an effective non-proliferation regime. Likewise, the International Atomic Energy Agency protocols and safeguard mechanisms must be strengthened. Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) must be pursued in a friendly environment. The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and the Zangger Committee must also make the member states to abide by the obligations. There must be worldwide discouragement to use highly enriched uranium. Control in terms of production and usage must also be implemented. Finally, the Iran-US nuclear deal which has proved the success of diplomacy has also proved the efficacy of sanctions. It is important to devise a comprehensive global sanctions policy and also modify the existing sanctions into a counter proliferation strategy. Nuclear proliferation is a security threat not only to the US but also to international security. It is mandatory for all like-minded states to work closely for countering proliferation and fighting the spectre of nuclear terrorism at every level.

Conclusion

Nuclear weapons have proved to be disastrous for global security in the Cold War era, but later acquisition of nuclear weapons have given deterrence capability to states against any external aggression. Though only few states such as Israel, India and Pakistan have become nuclear after the Non-proliferation Treaty coming into force, the West and the US perceive threat from Iran and North Korea. The US wants to devise such policies which can be used to stop future proliferation activities and limit the threat of nuclear terrorism.

This would require that the non-proliferation regime is further strengthened and strong penalties are awarded to the proliferators and violators. At the same time, the NPT must be implemented in letter and spirit, especially by the Nuclear Weapon States, without biases and discriminations. Counter-proliferation initiatives cannot be implemented successfully until and unless sincere and tangible efforts are made for comprehensive arms control and disarmament under the NPT.■