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EVOLVING NUCLEAR DETERRENCE STRATEGIES: BALANCING SECURITY AND STABILITY IN A CHANGING WORLD ORDER.

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Abstract

In an increasing evolving global landscape, nuclear deterrence strategies face an unprecedented challenge as the global order transcends from bipolar to a multipolar dimension. This paper analyses the ramifications of preserving stability and security in a world dominated by diverse power centers, technological innovations and emerging global threats. It examines the practical and theoretical implications of nuclear deterrence in a polycentric context including the risk of escalation, miscalculation and proliferation. By examining the historical trends, current mechanisms and potential future events which increases the likelihood of a nuclear disaster. This research paper provides a critical perspective on how states can adapt deterrence strategies to their national needs by enhancing global stability. It adopts theoretical framework such as balance of power, power transition and threat theories to demonstrate how deterrence strategies can be optimized. This paper highlights the importance of robust communication channels, reinforcing nuclear control agreements, collaborative security policies to mitigate risks and fostering a sustainable equilibrium in the realm of nuclear affairs.

Key words: Nuclear Deterrence, Stability, Multipolarity, Balance of Power and Security

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The development of nuclear deterrence strategies has been shaped by global geopolitical dynamics, technological innovations, and the proliferation of nuclear capabilities. Nuclear deterrence during the cold remains one of the complex and challenging concepts faced by states maneuvering their security strategies. Since 1946 there has been much useful rumination and writing on nuclear strategy and especially on the nature of deterrence, but the national debates on the subject have revolved mostly around three questions, all relating directly to the issue of expenditures (Bundy, 1989, pp 66). States acquire nuclear weapons to strengthen domestic security which is essential for their survival especially in an environment where anarchy prevails. It is worth emphasizing that states use every means at their disposal to defend their sovereignty especially when it is under threat of attack. During the cold war, the US and USSR acquired enormous nuclear to enforce their national security amid heighten geopolitical tension globally.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND COLD WAR INFLUENCE

The notion of deterrence emerges during the cold war due to ideological differences between the Soviet Union and the United States of America. As both superpowers vying to reduce strategic influence amongst them due to what they consider as an existential threat from both sides by capitulating on rearmament. The concept of deterrence emerged prominently during the Cold War, focusing on preventing nuclear conflict through the threat of retaliation (Freedman, 2020). Nuclear weapons became a super tool capable of strengthening states influence especially in international politics.

Due to massive production of nuclear weapons between the Soviets and Americans, to diffuse tension on the global stage necessitate states to embark on strategic reduction mechanisms through normative frameworks. The arms race between superpowers necessitated a shift in strategies, leading to arms control agreements that aimed to stabilize deterrence relationships (Baylis & Eames, 2023). Treaties were signed during the cold war which aimed at restricting and regulating the behavior of states in possession of nuclear weapons. However, even such hopeful interpretations of the nuclear arms dilemma were presupposed only because of another feature of the early nuclear arms era, the efforts of arms control initialized by the Partial Ban Treaty of 1963 (Baylis et al, 2007). Normative cooperation shapes the behavior of states against the usage of nuclear weapons thus, reducing the chances of such weapons to be used as the case with the Russian- Ukrainian war in 2022. The nuclear partial ban treaty redefines a new security era which optimize the rationality of states against the usage. This ban was created in response to the realization that although initially considered as deterrents, the proliferation of nuclear weapons throughout the international community could increase their use either intentionally or accidentally (Cirincione et al, 2005).

MODERN CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC ADAPTATION

These modern and strategic hurdles are redefining the existing status quo as well as shaping nuclear deterrence strategies to adapt to the current global security landscape.

THE RISE OF A MULTIPOLAR WORLD ORDER

Multipolarity of the world's political and economic structures shifted security paradigms in favor of new actors who redefine the concept of deterrence into a pre-emptive strike posture. The emergence of Pakistan and India into the global nuclear players shifted the idea of deterrence into a security dilemma risking a "first strike" option due to threat posed by both states towards each other. The proliferation of nuclear weapons has complicated traditional deterrence, as seen in the India-Pakistan context, where both nations have shifted from full deterrence to pre-emptive strike capabilities due to perceived threats (Rossdiana, 2023).

THE EMERGENCE OF TECHNOLOGY

Technological advancement further complicates the notion of deterrence by granting states new technological weapons prompting a possibility of a nuclear war. Technological advancements in warheads and sophisticated delivery systems have further constrained the effectiveness of established deterrence models, challenging the assumptions of Cold War strategies (Kang & Kugler, 2022). Technological innovation accelerates and enhance the production of nuclear war heads which seeks to disequilibrate the balance of power status quo. Nuclear weapons, with their unprecedented capacity for destruction, have brought about a fundamental change in the nature of war and diplomacy (Budy, 1989. p. 9). They demand new strategies of restraint and responsibility, as their use would bring catastrophic consequences for humanity." (Bundy, 1989. p. 9).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The evolution of nuclear deterrence mechanisms poses serious challenge to states seeking to balance their security concerns arising from security dilemma in an increasing changing world order. Achieving and maintaining strategic stability in a nuclear-armed world requires a delicate balance between signaling and avoiding misperception (Kapur, 2014). The delicate security balance complexities arising from signaling and avoidance of miscalculation in an event of a potential first strike poses a precarious uncertainty amongst states. This intricate security imbalance resulting from sophisticated technological advancement such as hypersonic weapons and cyberwarfare capabilities capable of annihilating humanity. This delicate balance is becoming increasingly complex with the emergence of disruptive technologies, such as cyber capabilities and hypersonic weapons, which are reshaping the nuclear landscape (Lieber & Press, 2020). Moreover, threat poses by non-state traditional actors such terrorists add more complexities to the existing fragile deterrence strategies. Furthermore, the threat of nuclear proliferation to non-state actors, as identified by (Sagan, 2017), adds another layer of complexity to deterrence strategies and requires states to adapt to the unique challenges posed by non-traditional actors.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can states optimize their nuclear deterrence strategies to effectively enhance their balance of power dynamism and stability in response to technological advancements as well as preventing nuclear proliferations into the hands of non-state actors?

THE BALANCE OF POWER THEORY:

The balance of power theory is centered around power which is a main proponent of the realist school of thought in terms of material capabilities. Neo Realist such as John Mearsheimer believe power is concentrated in military and economic spheres of the state which equally shape their behavior in international politics (Mearsheimer, 2001). While classical realist such as Hans Morgenthau see the state as a combination of various elements such as territory, population, resources as an important source of power maximization essential for its survival thus, – nuclear weapons should be a determinant factor of state power. The balance of power may refer to the distribution of power between countries, a particular configuration of such a distribution, i.e. the multipolar one, a deliberate foreign policy meant to preserve the balance within the international system, or a family of international relations (IR) theories (Davis, 2008, p. 47).

THE BALANCE OF THREAT THEORY

The theory stipulates states will balance the same amount of what it conceived as threat to another in responding to their action which include three factors such as, over all military as well as economic potentials, geography and the perception of aggressive intentions. The hegemonic ambitions of these primarily continental challengers unleashed against the power that has nurtured them a counterbalancing coalition “coordinated by the world power and basically oceanic in orientation” (Modelski, 1987, p. 33); consequently, this ultimately led to their defeat. Still, because states are interested in anticipating the emergence of possible problems, balancing can occur even before a state, or an alliance represents an immediate threat.

POWER TRANSITION THEORY

This theory explains how the international order is characterized by war - anarchy. The powerful states will prefer to maintain their status quo over weaker ones and ethnocentrism becomes the order of the day. The weaker ones will decide to reverse or rebel against the stronger states leading to a clash which will bring about equilibrium. The rivalry between the BRICS and G7 nations will eventually leads to a clash to bring about parity in the international order. To emphasize this assertion, Organski used as an example the idea that periods of world peace have overlapped with the existence of a hegemonic power, while periods characterized by an even distribution of power caused wars (Organski, 1968, p. 363). According Organski, when the power challenger – emerging states reaches a certain level of power parity with the hegemon, the automate results will be war and not a balance of power.

CASE STUDY: NUCLEAR DETERRENCE BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States of America and Soviet Union nuclear deterrence strategies plays a vital role in shaping their security policies. These security policies shaped their ideological and geopolitical perspectives accordingly.

THE UNITED STATES NUCLEAR DETERRENCE STRATEGY

The United States main nuclear deterrence doctrine was called Counterforce Strategy aimed at targeting Soviet Union military capabilities thus, deterring aggression. This was later supplemented by the Mutual Assured Destruction MAD aimed at inflicting devastating damages in the case of first strike. The development of the clear TRIAD system which was capable of inculcating Land Base Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles ICBMs and supplemented by Sub Marine Launch Ballistic Missile SLBMs which ensure a credible destruction (Freedman, 2003)

THE SOVIET UNION NUCLEAR DETERRENCE STRATEGY

The Soviet Union embarked on counter Countervalue Targeting prioritizing industrial and urban zones in the United States of America as target aimed at dissuading or de-escalating conflict. The Soviet later added several strategies to their nuclear deterrence doctrine to match the same level with the Americans. They also create the Offensive Defense strategy which accelerate the production of various nuclear arsenal aiming to win a nuclear war against the adversary if necessary. The also invested huge amount of funds to develop missile defense systems and underground communication system to protect their military facilities and leadership (Holloway, 1994)

Both superpowers later recognize the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons which later necessitate to arms control cooperation mechanisms such as Strategic Arms Limitations Talk (SALT). This agreement eventually led to global stability and limitations in miscalculations in an event of a nuclear conflict (Slogan, 1987)

THE METHODOLOGY APPROACH

The methodology adopted was qualitative with emphasize on document analysis to better understand governments actions and their intended purposes in strategizing their nuclear deterrence policies in respond to threat posed by other states. In this regard, a thematic approach of primary and secondary sources which dwell more emphasize on analyzing and interpreting trajectories related to nuclear deterrence policies.

PRIMARY DOCUMENT SOURCES

Arms control treaties, national security archives, review policy documents and security journals were analyzed in respect to nuclear states. Moreover, government strategic documents, official statements and reflecting strategic decision were also assessed.

SECONDARY LITERATURE REVIEW

Analyzing scholarly documents such as thesis, dissertations and think-thank were also paramount in concluding the findings

Geopolitical and Historical and Contextual Review

Dating back during the cold war and post-cold war era including events happening in Eastern Europe relating to the Ukrainian crisis were equally evaluated.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSES

Comparing nuclear deterrence strategies between two major nuclear powers such as the United States of America and Soviet Union as well as highlighting their commonalities and differences in maneuvering security threats were equally considered in analyzing.

JUSTIFICATION

A combination of various approaches enables us to understand an in-depth insight on nuclear deterrence strategies orchestrated by two most powerful nuclear states on earth by integrating diverse perspectives. An interplay between geopolitical realities and historical framework enables us to have a broader perspective in analyzing the hurdles of balancing security and stability in a changing world order.

FINDINGS

Recommendations and findings on nuclear deterrence strategies will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs below:

MULTIPOLARITY AND DYNAMIC DETERRENCE

The emergence of many nuclear powers such as the United States of America, Russia, China, India, Pakistan and North Korea further complicates deterrence strategies thus, creates a multipolar system with so many actors which is difficult to predict security environment (Christensen, 2016). The more nuclear actors we have increases the chances of it to be used thus, creates an environment of uncertainty. The emergence of actors like China, Russia, and potentially others, complicates the strategic calculus, increasing the risk of miscalculation and escalation (Waltz, 2016).

THE EMERGENCE OF NEW DETERRENCE STRATEGIES

Technological innovations including asymmetric cyber warfare capable of triggering large scale nuclear war poses a serious challenge to humanity. The limits of traditional deterrence warfare create a Pandora box for the development of sophisticated weapons capable of distorting the current balance of power once existed in the bi-polar world with the use of mutually assured destruction MAD. States are diversifying their arsenals to include lower – yield nuclear options and advanced delivery systems, which complicates deterrence calculus (Kaplan, 2018).

THE EMERGENCE OF NON-STATE ACTORS

The emergence of non-state actors such as terrorist groups could upend traditional deterrence strategies once orchestrated by states into the hands of individuals without any affiliation to a state. This could further accelerate nuclear proliferation globally leading to a large-scale conflict. The emergence of nuclear proliferation amongst non-state actors poses a serious unique challenge to deterrence strategies, requiring states to rethink how nuclear deterrence applies when facing potential terrorist threats (Hoffman, 2019).

THE URGENCY FOR RESTRAINT

To maintain an effective deterrence strategy, requires reducing strategic weapons production, effective communication, transparency in dealing with what is identified as threat and the need to adhere to international regulations or norms against the use. Arms control agreements, while challenging to negotiate in a multipolar environment, remain crucial for limiting the proliferation of nuclear weapons and reducing the risk of accidental or intentional use (Sagan, 2019).

RECOMMENDATIONS

STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND COOPERATION

Enhancing cooperation can play a vital role in avoiding escalations amongst nuclear states which is paramount in achieving nonproliferation goals. This includes establishing communications links between nuclear states and communicate effectively to avoid misunderstanding which might jeopardize the existence of humanity. Strengthening existing arms control treaties and exploring new avenues for cooperation, such as confidence-building measures, are essential (Kroenig, 2016).

DIVERSIFICATION TO MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEMS

When states diversify their strategic weapon production to other systems, it is more effective, less costly and poses a lesser threat to mankind than embarking on the production of nuclear arsenal. This eventually means states can diversify resources needed to produce these weapons to other lucrative sustainable development projects. Investing in robust missile defense capabilities, while acknowledging their limitations, can contribute to a more stable strategic environment (Payne, 2018).

Promoting Arms Control and Denuclearization Initiatives

Maintaining arms control cooperation is paramount to an effective balance of power especially in regions where security is threatened all the time. When nuclear weapons are reduced according to international norms it creates the basis for cooperation and denuclearization. This requires a multifaceted approach, including strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), providing incentives for states to forgo nuclear weapons programs, and addressing the underlying causes of nuclear proliferation, such as regional conflicts and security concerns (Cirincione,

2013). Denuclearization will be an effective security policy especially if balance is not in parity with other state actors in the region. The Korean peninsula demonstrates suffers from frequent security menace because the region does not have effective deterrence strategy against the Nuclear North Korea.

TOTAL DISARMAMENT TOWARDS AN EFFECTIVE SECURITY DETERRENCE

Nuclear weapons pose an existential security threat to the country hosting than the potential adversary who launches a first attack. Nuclear weapons also create psychological trauma even to the citizens of those states hosting them thus necessitating the need to get rid of such arms. A World where nobody can easily predict the intentions of an adversary is difficult to coordinate an effective deterrence mechanism thus, the most reliable assurance is total disarmament creating an environment where institutions can transparently verify and assume security responsibility for all. Platforms like the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency should be empowered to mediate disputes and monitor compliance with non-proliferation commitments (Nye, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The critical nature of nuclear deterrence strategies in a changing World order presents both opportunities and challenges. To attain an effective nuclear deterrence strategy without any security dilemma, states must ensure they embark on existing normative framework while willing to scale down production. Diversification of resources to other non-nuclear defensive sources helps to cold down the already unpredictable environment characterized by anarchy. Institutional cooperation needs to be optimized to guarantee trust by helping stabilize a favorable balance of power. Quitting institutional arrangements would not resolve the existential threats resulting from nuclear weapons rather, it would intensify at the detriment of humanity.

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