

General Assembly 1- International Security and Disarmament

Achieving international strategic
stability of nuclear weapons



Forum:	GA1 – International Security and Disarmament
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Introduction

Tensions between nations such as the United States, China, India and Pakistan, are at an extremely high level. This is not helped by the US withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), or the ignition of uranium enrichment programs, by both declared and uncleared countries like North Korea, Iran and Israel, allowing them to become Nuclear Weapons Possessor states. Nations are becoming increasingly concerned for their safety. The strategic stability which Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and the U.S. president George H.W. Bush set in stone in the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) no longer ensures the stability it once did.

Strategic stability is harder and harder to achieve via conventional means with the geopolitical, technological, and psychological landscapes changing so substantially, hence, the urgent need for changes. However, to preserve or ideally improve the state of the world's strategic stability in our exponentially changing world, this will undoubtedly call for constructive contemporary solutions.

The concept of strategic stability has to be completely overhauled to reflect the current state of affairs, in addition to countries adopting significant changes preventing a military confrontation between states, especially current and upcoming Nuclear Weapons Possessor states.

Definition of Key Terms

Strategic stability



Strategic stability as defined in the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START 1) in June 1990, “ removing incentives for either side to launch a nuclear first strike.”.

Nuclear non-proliferation

Promoting cooperation for the usage of nuclear energy in a peaceful manner in addition to lower countries nuclear stockpile (nuclear disarmament).

Nuclear Weapon States (NWS)

As defined by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) nuclear weapon states, are countries that officially hold an arsenal of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons possessor states

When a state has nuclear weapons outside of the NWSs they are referred to as Nuclear Weapons Possessor states rather than NWS.

Uranium enrichment programs

The process of uranium enrichment is a critical step in the production of civil nuclear power generation and state nuclear weaponry.

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF)

The arms treaty signed by the US and the Soviet Union in 1988 to decrease the nuclear arsenals of both countries. The US backed out in February 2019 due to claims of Russian non-compliance with the treaty, making it defunct, which Russia still denies.

Weapons of mass destruction (WMD)

WMD stands for weapons of mass destruction, and pertains to nuclear weapons as well as chemical and biological ones

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

The International Atomic Energy Agency, established on 29 July 1957, is an intergovernmental organisation which promotes the peaceful application of nuclear technology and power, preventing misuse of nuclear technology and materials.

Iran deal (JCPOA)



The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) alternatively known as the Iran nuclear deal was read on July 14, 2015. Vowing to reduce or eliminate its stock of medium-enriched and low-enriched uranium as well as lower the number of its gas centrifuges by $\frac{2}{3}$ for 13 years, in addition to many other terms (such as not having any heavy water factories etc). The purpose of this was to prevent Iran from becoming an Nuclear weapons possessor state which many nations feared it would become.

Nuclear Triad

This entails that nation's nuclear weapons are split between, nuclear missiles located on land, armed submarines and aircraft to prevent other aggressors from taking out nuclear arsenal.

General Overview

Strategic stability

As aforementioned, strategic stability pertains to a state of affairs where nations are protected from their "rivals", by removing the incentive to strike and impair a nation's nuclear ability. So what good does this do and how does it disincentivize a nuclear strike with strategic stability .

Reduction

First and foremost, one of the benefits of strategic stability is the decrease in arms strength. By reducing nuclear warheads on a single missile, for example, this makes it easier to prevent it from reaching its target. Moreover, disarmament is promoted which means that if countries do engage in nuclear warfare there are substantially fewer targets a nation can order strikes on as they have a smaller arsenal.

Survivability

Via creating secure manners of protecting and containing nuclear weapons, the effectiveness of a disarming first strike is greatly diminished. This makes it almost impossible to then be "safe" from a retaliatory strike, which is exactly what strategic stability aims to do. By configuring offensive and defensive arms to ensure that neither side's defenses can be undermined, makes retaliation very easy and thus makes the risk of attacking higher

Conflicts and rivalries between 'Nuclear powers'

Hereunder some of the significant conflicts between nuclear power can be found.



The India Pakistan conflict

India and Pakistan share a long and complicated history, predominantly regarding the territory of Kashmir since 1947. The Indian Independence Act of 1947 said that Kashmir was free to choose either India or Pakistan, however, as a result, the local leader Hari Singh not letting his people chose Kashmir caused great tension. This lead to conflicts between the two nations in 1947, 1965 and 1999, with the most recent escalation being the suicide bombing of an Indian convoy in February of this year. The Himalayan region is one of the most militarised regions on Earth due to this. However, does this mean that war will originate? The short answer is probably no, as both nations stated that their nuclear weapons are for defence reasons, but no one can know what happens if it keeps escalating

North Korea tensions with America and Asia

Despite calming slightly under the Trump administration, North Korea and the USA are in a very tense state, especially with the possibility that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) could allegedly reach the US with its missiles. Despite China preventing the DPRK from raising tensions too much in the Asian region, nations like Japan and South Korea live with the fear that North Korea could attack at any point with its unpredictable nature. US-DPRK and Russia-DPRK negotiations do however continue, attempting to quell this, although the outcome still remains unknown.

Major Parties Involved

USA

The United States of America has 6,550 nuclear missiles of all shapes and sizes, second only to Russia in arsenal size, however, this seems soon to change with their withdrawal from the INF. Many speculate that in 2021, the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty will not be renewed, meaning that Washington's nuclear arsenal will no longer be governed by bilateral agreements. A large contributor to this is the proliferation of China's nuclear arsenal, with trump specifically stating a new INF must also include China.

Russia

Russia has lost a lot of power since the fall of the Soviet Union, with the factors that prevented war with the USA during the cold war dissipating over time, its nuclear arsenal is



Moscow's key negation tool and deterrent. Moreover, to ensure the preservation of this position, following the actions of the United States, Russia, the world's biggest nuclear power, also withdrew from the INF. Many sources even claim that Russia had been in direct violation of the INF via producing unsanctioned nuclear weapons (which Moscow denies) , meaning that this may not change all too much.

China

For many years Beijing's nuclear policy was characterized by moderation and restraint. However, since the turn of the millennium, as China has assumed the position as a superpower, it has taken a more proactive stance. Despite Beijing's being secretive about its nuclear program, the United States officially considers China, "a near-peer competitor" along with Russia.

North Korea

North Korea has had an intriguing past when it comes to its nuclear program, stopping and starting it back over the years, however, there have still been significant milestones leading up to them become a fully fledged nuclear weapon processor state. Leaving the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2003 North Korea (after Pakistan came out about North Korea obtaining access to nuclear technology from them. With the DPRK having its first successful nuclear test in 2006. This all leads up to them becoming a fully fledged nuclear power in 2009 ((IAEA) Director General Mohamed ElBaradei). Despite still currently testing out nuclear weaponry, the DPRK's key focus as of now is creating a feasible manner to deliver this nuclear warhead which has reinstates the tensions surrounding North Korea. Regarding its arsenal, we know very little (estimating there to be between 13-60 warheads) however we do know that North Korea has an increasingly expanding and sophisticated inter continental ballistic missile (ICBM) program which claims it can already reach Americas west coast (although this is unconfirmed)

Iran

Iran claims to run a peaceful nuclear program and did allow an "extraordinary and robust monitoring, verification, and inspection" under the Iran deal, further decreasing its uranium supply by 98% to 300kg. This allowed sanctions to be lifted and Iran regained control over 100 billion in frozen assets, allowing the nation to rebuild itself. This did not last long as the Trump administration withdrew the US from the deal in May 2018, reinstating debilitating sanctions in November, this extended to anyone who has dealt with Iran. Despite attempting to lessen the blow Iran provided nations like the UK and France an ultimatum the if they didn't



convince the US to lift sanctions in 60 days it would proceed to reinstate the production of highly enriched uranium, something which the IAEA says Iran has already started to do

Israel

After the events of the six-year war, it is believed that Israel undertook in the mass production of nuclear warheads. Despite their size and strength being shrouded, estimates indicate the number of Israeli nuclear weapons to range from 75 to as many as 400, which are allegedly manufactured at the Negev Nuclear Research Center.

India

Possessing an estimated 130–140 nuclear weapons, in 1999 India has enough weapons-grade plutonium for around 1,000 nuclear weapons. With this being said India has held a strike no-first-use policy since August 1999 which entails that its nuclear weapons are for deterrence and "retaliation only". It states that it will never be the first one to initiate a strike, a policy it seems to hold firmly even with the election of events with Pakistan

Pakistan

Developing nuclear weapons shortly after India, the nations nuclear arsenal and policy are quite similar with an estimated 130–140 nuclear weapons and the stance that the nuclear weapons are purely defensive. This stance isn't however shared with terror groups, which are present due to the continual instability in the nation, making nuclear terrorism,(in the form of transfer of nuclear weapons, components or expertise) a definite possibility in pakistan.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of event
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1942–1946	Under the Manhattan project America, the UK and Canada acquire nuclear tech and some start production on weaponry
August 29, 1949	With the first successful detonation, the Soviet Union became a NWS
1967	Israel allegedly gains nuclear weapon processor state status
December 8, 1987	The INF is signed by the United States and the Soviet Union
May, 1998,	India declares that it is a nuclear weapon state.
May, 1998	Pakistan admits to having “defensive nuclear weapons”
July 31, 1991	The Start is signed by the united states and the soviet union
April, 2009	Report arise that the DPRK has become a fully-fledged nuclear power
April 8, 2010	The ‘NEW START’ is signed by United States and the Soviet Union
February 1, 2019	USA withdraws from INF
February 2, 2019	Russia withdraws from INF
May 8, 2019	Iran threatens to leave the JCPOA if doesn't lift sanctions

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events and Previous Attempts to solve the Issue



- Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
 - o START I
 - o Start II
 - o Start III
 - o New start
- Iran deal
- JCPOA
- NPT
- INF

Possible Solutions

As aforementioned in the introduction, there are a plethora of things that must be done to improve the state of strategic stability. Here under a few of these methods can be found:

Banning and disassembling all nuclear weapons would substantially improve the state of strategic stability, however current NWS and nuclear weapons processor state are unlikely to follow South Africa and willing give up their arsenal (especially nations like Russia which depend on them for their place on the world stage). As such the nation states would proportionally dial back their arsenals over an allocated time, which has the benefit of keeping the nations nuclear influences the same whilst still improving strategic stability which is beneficial to all nations. Furthermore deviation from this would most likely cause unilateral response significantly dissuading nations from doing such and thus improving the successfulness.

Equally radical to the first idea, providing nuclear weaponry to any rival of an NWS will even the playing field via deterring any attempted attack based on the fact that there would be a definitive retaliatory strike. However, with that being said, there are huge downsides to this, mainly making nuclear technology and weaponry available to nations with hostile intentions.



Allegedly being one of the biggest nuclear powers, China remains difficult to predict which doesn't help bring the world towards strategic stability. However, Beijing argues that "the concept of strategic stability in classic arms control theory cannot be applied directly to the framework of Sino-U.S. relations" as there must be a balance which the asymmetry in American and Chinese power prevents. Despite this being logical, it shouldn't allow nations to proliferate their nuclear arsenal which is especially worrying when you consider that both the US and Russian Federation believe China's arsenal to be comparable to their own. As such a new version of the INF must be produced to simultaneously lower the nuclear arsenals of all nations and ease tensions. However US China relations must initially improve for this to be allowed.

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