Nuclear Nonproliferation: A Role for "Responsibility"?

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Abstract

Despite its past successes and continuing importance, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) faces a precarious moment in its history. This paper examines how current debates over the future viability of the NPT and the broader nonproliferation regime it anchors evince the ascent of a new "paradigm" for thwarting global nuclear proliferation. Challenging the orthodoxies of the Cold War era, this new paradigm focuses not only on the acquisition of nuclear capabilities but also on the character and "responsibility" of the states acquiring them. Whether or not this new paradigm replaces its predecessor as the conceptual foundation for global nonproliferation efforts will shape the course of those efforts well into the twenty-first century.

To examine this paradigmatic context, the paper delineates how and where nuclear threats have changed (and not changed) in the second nuclear era; assesses the logical viability of an actor-based nonproliferation norm in addressing contemporary threats; gauges how well the existing nonproliferation regime could adapt to this new norm, if it becomes globally established; and considers the wider implications for global security of this potential transition.

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Introduction

The 2005 NPT Review Conference ended in stalemate between concerns that the existing nuclear states have failed to move genuinely toward their NPT nuclear arms reduction obligations and alarm over problematic compliance with NPT safeguards among key non-nuclear states. This paralysis highlights the present stagnation of global efforts to move meaningfully toward the promise of comprehensive nuclear disarmament at the NPT's core.

Beneath these mounting tensions lay diverging interpretations over the causes of nuclear proliferation, its consequences, and even the fundamental goals of nonproliferation. The end of the Cold War has brought the world into a second nuclear era,[1] altering some, but not all, of the implications of nuclear weapons for global security relations. For the nonproliferation regime to endure, a new consensus matching long-standing nonproliferation ambitions with the circumstances of the second nuclear era must be forged.

No such new consensus has yet emerged. Instead, the Cold War consensus on nonproliferation – focused on restraining and contracting nuclear weapons capabilities in any direction –faces a controversial new paradigm focused on denying nuclear weapons capabilities specifically to "irresponsible" regimes and non-state actors.

This paper assesses this paradigmatic nonproliferation debate. The paper first reviews the significant developments marking the emergence of the second nuclear era. It next describes the paradigmatic nonproliferation challenge emerging from the Bush Administration's policy initiatives. The paper than examines this paradigmatic debate in the context of more theoretical understandings of the causes and consequences of nonproliferation as applied to two key cases: North Korea and Iran.

The paper concludes that, although many of the Bush Administration's nuclear nonproliferation initiatives are counterproductive, considerations of regime behavior have always been a latent factor in nonproliferation efforts. Carefully crafted incorporation of this dimension into existing nonproliferation mechanisms and norms can be a productive enhancement of the nonproliferation regime in the second nuclear era.

Today's Nuclear Challenges

The quest to restrain the spread of nuclear weapons technology and capability is as paramount a necessity in the twenty-first century as it was a defining imperative of the latter half of the twentieth. However, the nature of that challenge has changed significantly with the end of the Cold War.

In the first nuclear era, a major focus was, rightly, on the two superpowers. The US-Soviet arms race was piling up nuclear arsenals at a mind-numbing rate. At its peak, the US nuclear stockpile contained nearly 32,000 warheads; for forty years, that number never dipped below 20,000. The Soviet stockpile, at its peak, numbered over 40,000.

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[1] Bracken, Paul, "The Structure of the Second Nuclear Age," *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (September 25, 2003), www.fpri.org; Bracken, Paul, *Fire in the East: The Rise of Asian Military Power and the Second Nuclear Age* (HarperCollins, 2000).

In this arms race, testing of increasingly large weapons become the "hot" edge of the "cold" war. During this period the United States and Soviet Union together conducted over 1700 nuclear tests, the major contributors to the over 2000 nuclear tests conducted worldwide.

Most dangerously, the superpower nuclear arsenals were coupled to strategic policies that put the use of these weapons in a hair-trigger state of readiness. In the United States these policies were expressed by the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) and through a multitude of deterrence commitments threatening first use of nuclear weapons in a fairly wide range of "extended deterrence" scenarios, including potential conventional conflicts and attacks on allies.

The Second Nuclear Era: Hope and Frustration

The end of the Cold War relieved some of these dangers, and so brought encouraging progress toward the end of nuclear disarmament.

The United States and Russia have acted bilaterally and unilaterally to significantly reduce their nuclear arsenals well below Cold War levels. In 1987 the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty eliminated the entire category of ground-launched mid-range nuclear missiles in Europe. In 1991 the first President Bush removed nuclear weapons from all naval deployments, except strategic missile launching submarines, and all overseas deployments, except in Europe under NATO auspices. Under the 2002 US-Russia "Moscow Treaty," both sides will reduce "operationally deployed strategic warheads" to 1,700-2,200 by the end of 2012; the Bush Administration meanwhile has anticipated that the total US nuclear arsenal by 2012 would be reduced to approximately 6000 warheads.[2] The United States and Russia also reached agreements to "de-target" these weapons, improving the strategic relationship. Perhaps most importantly, the two countries have been working together under the Cooperative Threat Reduction and the G8 Global Partnership programs to secure fissile materials and technologies throughout the former-Soviet Union – perhaps the most important global enterprise now underway to prevent the spread of nuclear technologies.

The end of the Cold War also produced the first instances of states surrendering their nuclear weapons capabilities. South Africa destroyed seven secret nuclear bombs, and joined the NPT as non-nuclear state. Meanwhile, three newly independent republics emerging from the collapse of the Soviet Union surrendered the "inherited" nuclear weapons deployed on their territory and likewise joined the NPT as non-nuclear states.[3]

There was also significant multilateral progress. The 1995 NPT Review Conference reached agreement to extend the treaty indefinitely. The 2000 NPT Review Conference added consensus on a statement outlining "thirteen steps" for progress toward nuclear disarmament. Successful negotiation of Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996 realized a long-standing nuclear disarmament milestone. With the end of the Cold War all P5 states curtailed nuclear testing, and the eight years between India's and Pakistan's 1998 tests and North Korea's October 2006 detonation was the longest complete hiatus ever. (See Table) The strengthening global norm against nuclear testing is a major step forward from the Cold War.

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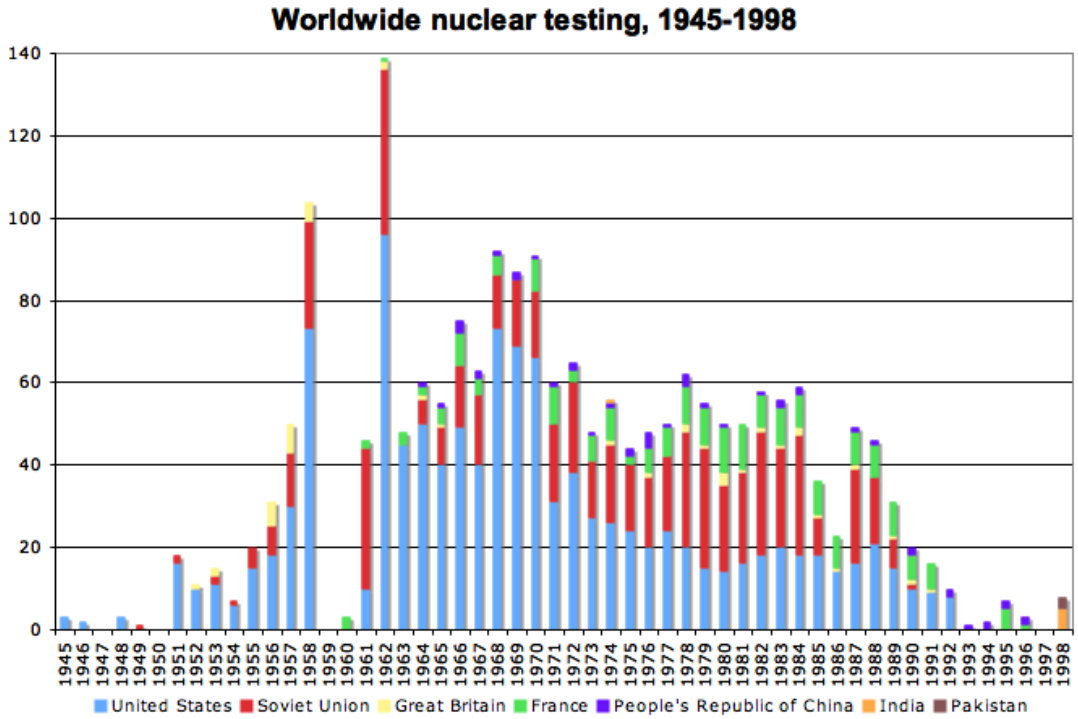
[2] By 2012 Russia may have as few as 2000 total warheads. For detailed estimates and critiques, see Natural Resources Defense Council, "Too Many, Too Slow: The Bush Administration's Stockpile Reduction Plan," June 2004 (http://www.nrdc.org/nuclear/fstockpile.asp). The election of a Democratic president in 2008 could produce plans to reduce the US total stockpile to as low as 1000-1500. (Author conversations with campaign advisors)

[3] In neither case, it should be noted, had the governments publicly embraced nuclear deterrence in their security policies or tested a nuclear device. In both cases, the decisions to surrender nuclear weapons capabilities were strongly associated with dramatic proximate regime change. These threshold conditions strongly qualify considering these cases to represent genuine nuclear "rollback."



But over the course of the 1990s, progress on arms control and nonproliferation languished. Setbacks on old issues were accompanied by the emergence of new dangers.

Despite achievement of the CTBT, the United States and other key states necessary to bring it into force have not ratified it. Negotiations on a companion treaty to end production of fissile materials is also stalled, most recently due to new US claims that such a treaty cannot be verified.

The US-Russia Moscow Treaty will go out of force the year target reductions are met, leaving those targets essentially non-binding, and many deployed warheads remain on hair-trigger, "launch on warning" alert status. Vast quantities of nuclear materials in the former Soviet republics remain unsecured and vulnerable to theft or surreptitious sale, in part because implementation of the CTR and Global Partnership programs has not been optimal; targeted nuclear materials are not expected to be fully secured until well into the next decade.

In 2001, the Bush Administration withdrew the United States from the ABM treaty, the first milestone of US-Soviet arms control and long considered a linchpin of strategic stability. The following year revelation of the classified version of the Nuclear Posture Review generated widespread alarm over plans to develop new tactical nuclear warheads and link nuclear and conventional war planning within a strategic fabric including nuclear infrastructure modernization and missile defenses. (This paper returns to these issues in the next section). Meanwhile, Russia has withdrawn its previous pledge of no first use of nuclear weapons and, as resources become more plentiful, is giving new attention to its future nuclear forces. The United Kingdom decided to procure replacements for its nuclear submarine force, insuring it will remain a nuclear weapons state deep into the twenty-first century, and France has promulgated expanded nuclear weapons doctrines emulating those of the United States. China is embarked on a long-term modernization of its strategic nuclear forces that includes development of new solid-fueled intercontinental missiles that would reduce its launch time from hours to minutes.

Among non-NPT states, the 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan demonstrated the continuing appeal of nuclear weapons as both strategic tools and national symbols. Israel, although it is not

known to have tested, is believed to have a potential arsenal in the range of 200 warheads. North Korea became the first state to withdraw from the NPT, could now possess some 6-10 nuclear devices, and in October 2006 conducted its first nuclear test.

Experiences with North Korea, Iran and Pakistani nuclear scientist A.Q. Khan's network have spotlighted the proliferation dangers of widespread civilian nuclear fuel technologies, particularly when coupled with weak, inattentive or corrupted governments. An authoritative review noted that at least forty countries now possess the industrial and scientific infrastructure to build nuclear weapons relatively quickly.[4] Much of this capability was obtained through the NPT's provisions for sharing nuclear technologies for peaceful uses, exposing a "loophole" in the NPT's core bargain: states could use membership in the NPT to obtain nuclear weapons precursor technologies, then legally withdraw and produce nuclear weapons.

Nuclear Threats in the Second Nuclear Era

Progress toward nuclear disarmament in the past decade has stalled in part because of political fecklessness, militaristic cultures and the power of commercial arms interests. But these factors have long been present, and so cannot fully account for recent trends. Nor does the tenacious retention of nuclear weapons by those states that have them and the fervent desire to acquire them by parties that lack them derive from some abstract strategic logic. These ambitions have roots in specific circumstances in which the capacity to make nuclear threats provides political benefits. Nuclear disarmament efforts have stalled in part because we haven't caught up with how the post-Cold War international terrain has introduced a new nuclear era with reshaped nuclear dangers.

In the ideologically-polarized climate of the Cold War confrontation, many regarded nuclear arms control as an imperative largely independent of politics. Strategists maintained that the existence of nuclear weapons imposed a logic of its own: theories of deterrence and war-fighting held for any "rational actor." For nuclear abolitionists, a parallel logic obtained: the cataclysmic potential of widespread nuclear warfare rendered their use as a weapon for political ends "unthinkable" and established the independent imperative of nuclear disarmament. While these positions have been typically seen as polar opposites, they shared the view that the driving feature of the nuclear age was the existence of the weapons themselves; policies and politics were derivative.

Nuclear dangers were never so independent of their political and social contexts. Indeed, it was the end of the superpower ideological competition that dissipated the palpable threat of massive nuclear war – the dramatic reductions in the superpowers' nuclear arsenals succeeded, not preceded, political accommodation. The historical lesson is that evolving political conditions (including both material and ideational dimensions) are more determinative than abstract strategic logic or operational doctrines of the ultimate role and disposition of nuclear forces.

In the post-Cold War era, nuclear policies are even more deeply enmeshed in such broader political and security contexts. The reduced prospect of global nuclear holocaust has increased perceptions by many governments (some nuclear-armed and some not) of the political value of capabilities for making nuclear threats and the range of circumstances in which such threats can be effective. Domestic and symbolic factors have become increasingly important drivers of nuclear weapons decision-making.[5]

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[4] *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, Report of the UN Secretary General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, United Nations, 2004, p.39.

[5] Increasing attention to normative factors in states' nuclear weapons decision-making has yet to focus on questions of whether normative influences have shifted between the two nuclear eras or may be in other ways temporally or contextually dependent.

Appreciating this political context underscores how nuclear weapons can serve as symbolic indicators of national power and prestige beyond explicit security applications. Ironically, the non-use of nuclear weapons since World War II – whether due to the intrinsic stability of nuclear deterrence, the emerging normative "taboo" against nuclear use,[6] or some other reasons – enhances the attraction of this symbolic nuclear power by reducing the perceived risks of nuclear possession. This unfortunate side effect is more pronounced in the second nuclear era in which the less material and abstract functions of nuclear weapons possession have greater salience. And, to the extent that these perceptions are actually misperceptions, the attractions of nuclear weapons for threat-making and symbolic purposes aggravate the potential for eventual nuclear weapons use.

Hence, the challenge of nuclear arms control and nonproliferation today is about more than just eliminating nuclear weapons themselves. Increased reliance on nuclear threat-making capacity – the dark side of the nuclear use taboo – is now as relevant as material capacity. In this view, new US nuclear deterrence and counterproliferation strategies are more salient than the numerical size of the US nuclear stockpile – meaning that the shrinking of the arsenal doesn't mean as much now as it would have during the Cold War. For similar reasons, China's and India's resistance to joining multilateral arms control processes until US and Russian arsenals are reduced to sizes comparable to their own are anachronistic.

Even states without nuclear weapons can leverage latent capabilities to make potent threats. Some of the forty-odd countries that now possess the industrial and scientific infrastructure to build nuclear weapons already rely on nuclear threats, either through embracing extended nuclear deterrence guarantees, through their latent ability to develop nuclear weapons on relatively short notice, or both (e.g. Japan).

Nuclear Nonproliferation at a Crossroads

The stalemate of the 2005 NPT Review Conference helped fuel foreboding diagnoses of the health of the NPT regime. A somewhat longer term view is warranted. While the flash-points garner more attention, the NPT regime has continued to grow steadily in strength and capacity. The wider regime of norms and expectations surrounding the NPT, and tying it to a range of other agreements and cooperative mechanisms, including of the IAEA (which preceded the NPT in existence) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), constrains nuclear proliferation as effectively now as it ever has.

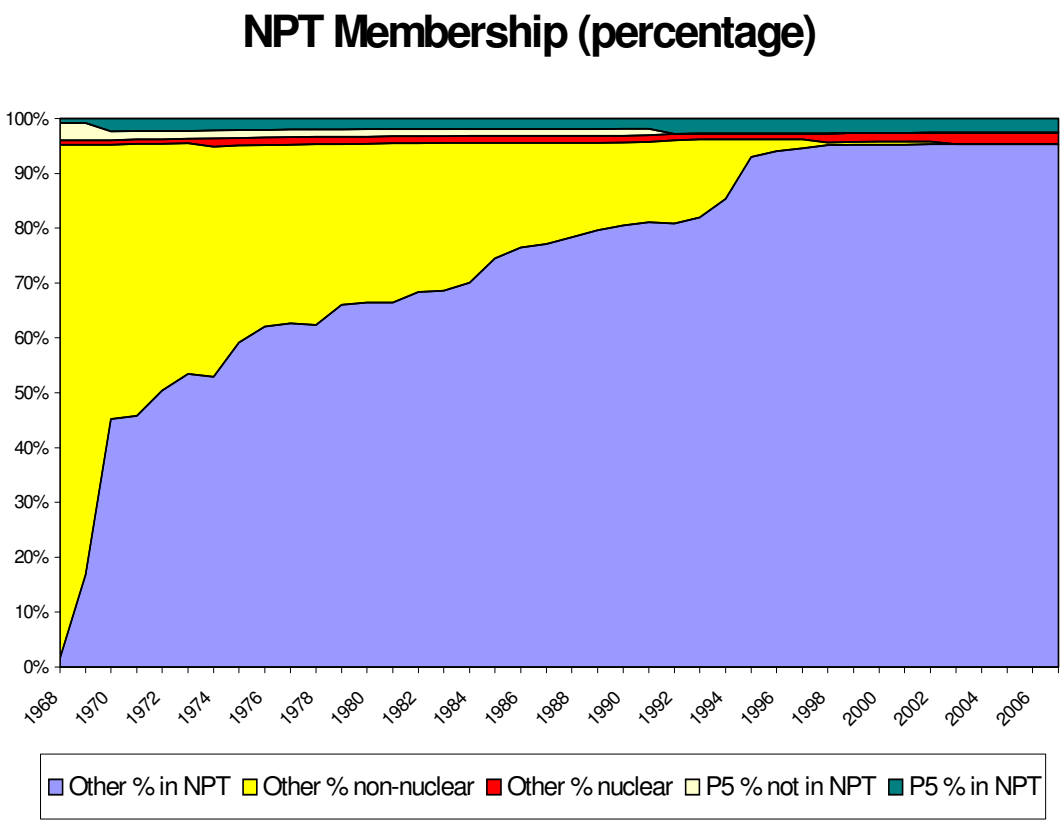
The NPT emerged in the 1960s, in a nuclear proliferation climate even more foreboding than today's. By 1964, France and China had joined the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain to bring the number of overt nuclear weapons states to five. In 1963, US President John F. Kennedy's science advisor forecast that by the 1990s, over 20 countries around the world would possess nuclear weapons.[7] This increasingly widespread concern was felt by nuclear-armed and non-nuclear-armed countries alike: the "haves" saw danger in more states "joining the club" – one of few points of agreement among them – while most "have-nots" felt increasingly threatened by the potential consequences of nuclear weapons use over which they had no control.

The NPT addressed these concerns by linking nonproliferation to the emerging climate of arms control between the superpowers in the form of a core bargain that offered something to everyone: non-nuclear member states agreed to foreswear nuclear weapons (and accept intrusive international verification), while nuclear-armed states agreed to foreswear nuclear threats against non-nuclear states, provide access to peaceful nuclear energy technologies and eventually to

[6] Nina Tannenwald, *The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons Since 1945* (Cambridge University Press, 2008)
[7] See "The Bomb: From Hiroshima to …" *Newsweek*, August 9, 1965, p.53.

eliminate their own nuclear arsenals. Concluded in 1968 and coming into force in 1970, the NPT reinforced the view, growing more consensual at that point in the first nuclear era, that the spread of nuclear weapons would increase the chances that one or a few would be used, and thereby increasing the danger that most or all of them would be used.

The NPT bargain has worked better than many anticipated at the time. Today, the five nuclear weapons states acknowledged by the NPT have been joined by only four others (India, Pakistan and Israel, which never joined the NPT; and North Korea, which joined and later withdrew, but was never in full compliance). Less commonly recognized – but equally important – has been the steady embrace of the NPT by all other states, culminating only in the last few years. France & China, two of the five states allowed to join as nuclear-armed, did not do so until 1992. Many other potentially-nuclear states that had remained outside the treaty finally acceded in the mid-1990s; in 2002, Cuba's accession brought into the treaty the last of the world's states that had not already obtained nuclear weapons. (See Graph)



This incorporation into the NPT of all non-nuclear-armed states is significant: risks of proliferation – not to mention the fear of those risks – would be much greater today if a significant number of countries with the potential to develop nuclear weapons lacked the institutional and normative constraints of the NPT regime. Additionally, as the NPT mandate has become near-global, its capacities have deepened, with an agreement on a new protocol strengthening the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards securing the nuclear facilities in NPT countries.[8]

[8] This "Additional Protocol" is however voluntary and not yet embraced by a number of key NPT member states.

The significance of universal membership of non-nuclear-armed states in the NPT reaches beyond the formal legal obligations that accrue. As importantly, the NPT reinforces national inclinations toward nuclear restraint. From a realist viewpoint, many countries' strongest incentives to obtain nuclear weapons have not been desires to expand national power and prestige, but concerns that neighbors might harbor such ambitions. The verification mechanisms of the IAEA have enabled these countries to assure others, and be assured by others, of the absence of threatening nuclear weapons development programs. For some sets of states, like Brazil and Argentina, the NPT functions something like a non-nuclear MAD, enabling them to escape the nuclear "security dilemma" with respect to one another.[9] In this way, the NPT regime provides a sturdy structure of non-nuclear security from which all nations benefit.

This does not mean that current tensions in the NPT regime are marginal. The 2005 Review Conference exposed deep chasms among NPT member states across a range of issues that puts the NPT regime at an important crossroads and does imperil its long-term viability. North Korea's NPT withdrawal and nuclear test blatantly defies the regime. Iran's nuclear ambitions and activities demonstrate the limits of NPT commitments and IAEA verification procedures. P5 pledges under NPT Article VI to work definitively toward nuclear disarmament appear increasingly vacuous. Like cracks in a dam, these could portend collapse of the entire structure.

But here, paradoxically, the NPT is somewhat a victim of its own success. The world knows about North Korea's and Iran's activities precisely because these countries have been subject to standards and verification activities created under the NPT's auspices. Complaints that the other P5 states are not fulfilling their nuclear disarmament obligations have standing only because their NPT duties exist in the first place; the United States is bound by no other formal commitments to nuclear disarmament.

But at a deeper level the current crisis over the NPT is being fueled by the growing acceptability of reliance on nuclear threats by parties on both sides of the tension. The United States, Israel, India, North Korea and Iran all indulge nuclear ambitions that erode non-nuclear norms and global nonproliferation efforts. Avidly non-nuclear states like Japan and Germany continue to live comfortably dependent on extended nuclear deterrence guarantees.

In this view, the NPT is at a crossroads not because it has failed, but because, despite its successes, the second nuclear era has introduced new challenges. The increased value of nuclear threat-making, fueling perceptions of nuclear capabilities as a currency of power, has eroded the consensus obligation to pursue nuclear disarmament that constituted the NPT. Perversely, faith in the efficacy of nuclear deterrence or in the compelling power of the nuclear use taboo – or both – eases restraints on nuclear threat reliance: nuclear weapons seem safer. Governments – both those with nuclear weapons and many of those without – are less motivated to pursue nuclear disarmament than previously. These perceptions of relative safety also pervade popular opinion: the political conditions that produced the massive anti-nuclear movements of the 1960s and 1980s simply no longer exist. This ambivalence is a fundamental source of the paralysis of the NPT.

Accordingly, meeting today's nuclear proliferation challenges requires more than strengthening the core "bargain" between nonproliferation among non-nuclear states and disarmament by nuclear-armed states that defines the NPT. What would this entail?

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[9] That this security calculus should prevail over the narrower security attraction of nuclear deterrence is not automatic but can be decisive among other influences. For example, to the extent that the near-term decisions in Brazil and Argentina to abandon their nuclear programs were precipitated by the emergence of more liberal, externally-oriented regimes in both states, the availability of the NPT served both to mitigate potential security-driven resistance to liberalization and to normatively link a non-nuclear posture to broader international community participation in the form of NPT regime legitimation.

The Paradigmatic Challenge

Much of the criticism of the Bush Administration's nuclear weapons initiatives identifies a fundamental hypocrisy between its determination to deny nuclear weapons capabilities to certain potential proliferators and its plans to expand US nuclear weapons options. Shouldn't what's good for the goose also be good for the gander?

This criticism either fails to acknowledge or dismisses the underlying political conception which, in the minds of Bush Administration strategists, ties these approaches together. That political conception transcends nuclear strategy *per se* and is rooted in a vision of appropriate governance and distinctions among states on that basis. While in essence this is a distinction between the "good guys" and the "bad guys," in reality the roots and application of the conception are more nuanced. This approach then views nuclear proliferation as a context-specific problem; nuclear weapons possession and security policies relying on nuclear threats are more pernicious in some cases than in others.

This approach jettisons rather than reinforces the NPT principle of non-discrimination, and questions the central assumption underlying the NPT "bargain" – that fewer nuclear weapons are always better. This alternative approach posits that fewer are better perhaps in most but not in all contexts, and would prioritize global nonproliferation efforts on that basis. The conception cuts across the assumption, common to many schools of nuclear thinking during the Cold War, that the implications of nuclear weapons for international politics were relatively independent of the character of the states that possessed them. As such, this approach constitutes a paradigm shift in thinking about nuclear proliferation. Accordingly, rather than viewing the NPT as a viable cornerstone in need of renovation, this approach suggests that the second nuclear era has rendered the NPT regime obsolescent.

The Bush Administration's policy approaches to nonproliferation – differentiating the acceptability of states' possession of nuclear capabilities on the basis of their "responsibility," itself associated with the nature of their governments – reflect and constitute this new paradigm. The Bush Administration's US nuclear weapons policy initiatives also express this orientation.

The New US Nuclear Posture

The Bush Administration's 2002 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) billed itself as providing a major change in US strategic policy to fit the new demands of the post Cold War and post-9/11 world.[10] However, the NPR does not call for a reduced reliance on deterrence *per se*. Rather, the "new triad" – the core innovation in the NPR – envisions supplementing deterrence with "new concepts" (such as counterproliferation), "active defenses" (principally meaning missile defense), and "responsive infrastructure" (including a reconstituted nuclear weapons production capability). While the new triad is purportedly intended to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons, the NPR also envisions diversifying the types of nuclear weapons in the arsenal, including development of new low-yield, earth-penetrating, and damage-limiting nuclear weapons suitable for tactical, first strike missions against types of targets far different than those in the Cold War.

Many such ideas are really old wine in new bottles: "war-fighting" strategies and aspirations for strategic defenses, revivified in the Reagan administration, are as old as nuclear weapons themselves. But the approach does break dramatically from US Cold War policy by casting off deterrence as the central justification for US nuclear armament. The Reagan Administration,

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[10] The NPR was first publicly summarized at a Department of Defense briefing on January 9, 2002. The classified review was subsequently obtained by *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times*. (Substantial excerpts of the review are available at: http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/policy/dod/npr.htm)

when it similarly pursued tactical nuclear weapons development and threats of nuclear first use, took care to justify these aims as underpinning "the effectiveness of deterrence."[11] But in the post-Cold War context, in which there no longer exists a "balance of terror" shadowing every conflict with the risk of escalation to higher levels of nuclear war, the deterrence logic of "escalation dominance" no longer applies.[12] Although maintaining the language of deterrence, the 2002 NPR implicitly acknowledges this new post-Cold War logic by positing important non-deterrence roles for US nuclear weapons, including possible first-use of low-yield nuclear weapons for counterproliferation purposes against certain types of targets, such as chemical and biological weapons facilities in small "rogue" states.[13]

The Bush administration has justified broadening the functions of US nuclear weapons threat-making on the basis of the altered circumstances of the post-Cold War, and especially post-9/11, era. The *National Security Strategy* (NSS) section dealing with WMD threats in particular lays out the rationale that new dire threats to US security have emerged, responding to which requires expanding the offensive character of US nuclear policy.[14] Two successor documents, the *Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (SCT) and the *Strategy to Combat WMD* (SCW), elaborate the viewpoint that the new, emerging threats the United States faces in the post-9/11 world are actually *graver* than those posed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War.[15] Taken together, these initiatives may constitute the most important reformulation of US grand strategy since the dawn of the nuclear age.[16]

The claim that these new threats justify such responses rests on the assertion that "rogue states," in contrast to the Soviet Union, have less "rational" motivations and behaviors, are more determined in pursuing their goals, and are more likely to actually use WMD capabilities if they have them. The contention is that, although the Soviet nuclear threat was much more massive, it was a rational state against which deterrence was reliable; for "rogue" states, conversely, WMD "are not weapons of last resort, but militarily useful weapons of choice."[17]

The NSS and SCW also underscore that given the "irrational" motivations of "rogue" states, deterrence of WMD use by such states is much more likely to fail. This reasoning builds on that of the NPR, which, although threaded with references to sustaining deterrence, flows centrally from the need to prepare for deterrence failure – the melding of nuclear and conventional strategic strike capabilities and the addition of defense and infrastructure components to form the new "triad" are explicitly for this purpose.

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[11] Weinberger, Casper W., "A Rational Approach to Nuclear Disarmament," *Defense* (August 1982); reprinted in Sterba, James P., ed., *The Ethics of War and Nuclear Deterrence* (Wadsworth: Belmont, CA, 1985), pp.116-121.

[12] Actual US nuclear doctrines and deployments in the Cold War were not confined to this "deterrence only" role, and the political context of Weinberger's argument is highly salient. Weinberger now strongly supports the Bush administration's security policies; see "Anatomy of a Campaign: How many electoral votes does Niger have anyway?" *The Wall Street Journal*, July 18, 2003 (http://www.opinionjournal.com/forms/printThis.html?id=110003765).

[13] For critical overviews, see Levi, Michael A., "Fire in the Hole: Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Options for Counterproliferation," Carnegie Endowment Working Paper #31, November 2002; and Alexander, Brian and Alistair Millar, eds., *Tactical Nuclear Weapons* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, Inc., 2003).

[14] *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, White House, September 2002, section V, pp. 13-16.

[15] *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, White House, December 2002; *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, White House, February 2003.

[16] C.f. John Lewis Gaddis, "A Grand Strategy of Transformation," *Foreign Policy*, (November/ December 2002).

[17] *Strategy to Combat WMD*, p.1; cf. *National Security Strategy*, p.13.

The proposition that deterrence of "rogue" states today is much less robust than deterrence of the Soviet Union during the Cold War is highly debatable. Indeed, conservative strategists throughout the Cold War routinely portrayed the Soviet Union to be just as convinced that nuclear war was winnable and just as determined to use nuclear weapons for political coercion, yet still held that deterrence worked.[18] The NSS list of distinctive attributes of "rogue" states closely resembles Cold War era conservative strategists' contemporaneous portrayals of Soviet character. Neither the NSS nor its supporting documents provide evidentiary arguments to support the assertion that "axis of evil" states are qualitatively less easily deterred than the "evil empire" proved to be.

In fact, today's "rogue states," such as North Korea and pre-2003 Iraq, generally are as cautious as the Soviet Union was (or more), eschewing use of WMD capabilities in any context in which a retaliatory deterrent threat applied.[19] Deductively, realist theory suggests we may further expect that these states are actually more easily deterred than was the Soviet Union because they are both conventionally and strategically weaker; US force capabilities dominate at every level.[20]

Despite (or because of) this diminished faith in WMD use deterrence, the Bush administration's policy planning holds out the hope that a wide range of US capabilities, combined with threats to use these capabilities preemptively, will incite adversaries not to acquire WMD in the first place.[21] Planning and capabilities for preemptive counterproliferation, including possible use of nuclear weapons, is intended to enhance this dissuasion effort.

But within the framework of standard deterrence assumptions, this logic is exactly backwards. US threats of retaliatory attack to deter an adversary's *use* of WMD against vital US interests are inherently more credible than threats of preemptive attack to deter an adversary's *acquisition* of WMD, which may derive from motivations having little to do with US interests. Although the distinction between these two forms of coercion is obfuscated in the 2002 NPR, US Strategic Command advisories to deliberations over the 1994 Nuclear Posture Review recognized it clearly and were skeptical that nuclear weapons could deter WMD acquisition: "Nations with expansionist aims may view development of WMD as the only means of countering US nuclear power… Our nuclear deterrent posture does not influence these reasons to obtain WMD…"[22]

Recent research validates the view that the deterrence effectiveness of US nuclear capabilities actually *increases* acquisition incentives, both strategically and normatively.[23] In this view, "rogue" states' pursuit of WMD capabilities is less motivated by an irrational desire to attack the

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[18] See U.S. Strategic Command, "Essentials of Post-Cold War Deterrence," 1995, (http://www.nautilus.org/nukestrat/USA/Advisory/essentials95.html); Weinberger, Casper W., "A Rational Approach to Nuclear Disarmament," *Defense* (August 1982); reprinted in Sterba, James P., ed., *The Ethics of War and Nuclear Deterrence* (Wadsworth: Belmont, CA, 1985), pp.116-121.

[19] See Record, Jeffrey, "Bounding the Global War on Terrorism," US Army War College, December 2003, pp.17-8 (http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/pubs/2003/bounding/bounding.htm); regarding Iraq specifically, see Mearsheimer, John J. and Stephen M. Walt, "An Unnecessary War," *Foreign Policy*, January/February 2003.

[20] Deterring WMD threats by non-state parties is qualitatively more challenging. Unfortunately, the tendency of the NPR and other Bush Administration policy documents to conflate "rogue states and terrorists" into a single threat concept obfuscates this unique problem.

[21] "Systems capable of striking a wide range of targets throughout an adversary's territory may dissuade a potential adversary from pursuing threatening capabilities." Nuclear Posture Review, p.12 (http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/policy/dod/npr.htm).

[22] "Questions for Nuclear Posture Review: Formal STRATCOM Answers As Of 22 Nov 93," p.12 (partially declassified and released under FOIA; available at http://www.nautilus.org/nukestrat/USA/npr/19usstratcom112293.pdf).

[23] See Etel Solingen, *Nuclear Logics: Contrasting Paths in East Asia and the Middle East* (Princeton University Press, 2007).

United States despite the consequences than by the very rational motivation to "bandwagon" on the US example of the acceptability of such threats and acquire capabilities to deter US attack upon themselves. Additionally, prospect theory suggests that using counterproliferation threats to *compel* reversal of a WMD acquisition program already underway is even harder than *deterring* its initiation.[24]

If the Bush Administration's strategic posture exhibits little faith that deterrence of either use or acquisition of WMD will be fully effective, it expresses even less faith in nonproliferation; the single paragraph in the SCW on the role of "active nonproliferation diplomacy" simply states the need for "a full range of operational capabilities" if the efforts fail.[25] Instead, the posture emphasizes the likely need to exercise proactive counterproliferation efforts, including preemptive attack, to eliminate adversaries' WMD capabilities before they are used.

But the prospect of US first-use of nuclear weapons for counterproliferation also begs the question of what distinguishes this policy from that of "rogue" states which, in the US characterization, see WMD to be "not weapons of last resort, but militarily useful weapons of choice."[26] The answer to this question is rooted in the ideational foundation of the Bush Administration's strategic initiatives.

Nuclear Righteousness

Here the alternative paradigm's introduction of the distinction that nuclear armament is responsible only for certain states and nuclear threats are legitimate only in certain contexts becomes vital. The justification for this distinction connects the Bush Administration's nuclear policies to its broader "grand strategy."

The National Security Strategy and other seminal strategic documents issued early in the administration's tenure unabashedly articulate the ambition to embrace and maintain indefinitely the unprecedented fact of unequaled US power and influence in order to promote governmental transitions favorable to US interests throughout the rest of the world. In the words of the NSS, the US will aim to "create a balance of power that favors human freedom" and "extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent."[27]

Its experiences in Iraq have not compromised the Bush Administration's commitment to the core tenets of this strategy. In 2005 President Bush dedicated his second inaugural address to the proposition that "it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."[28] In early 2006, the administration's long delayed update of the *National Security Strategy* emphasized this core intention even more forcefully than its 2002 predecessor, identifying as its two foundational pillars the aims of "promoting freedom, justice and human

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[24] See Levy, Jack S., "Prospect Theory and International Relations: Theoretical Applications and Analytical Problems," *Political Psychology* 13:2 (1992); Jervis, Robert, "Political Implications of Prospect Theory," in Barbara Farnham, ed. *Avoiding Losses/ Taking Risks: Prospect Theory and International Conflict* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1994), pp. 23-40; and Treverton, Gregory F., *Framing Compellent Strategies* (RAND, 2000). For a contrary view see Robert Powell, *Nuclear Deterrence Theory: The Search for Credibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[25] *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, White House, December 2002.

[26] *Strategy to Combat WMD*, p.1.

[27] *National Security Strategy*, p.1. This theme dominates the NSS posture; for example, the ambiguous term "balance of power that favors freedom" recurs in four other places in the 31-page document.

[28] President George W. Bush, Inaugural Address, January 20, 2005 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/print/20050120-1.html>.

dignity" and "leading a growing community of democracies."[29] While much media attention focused on the new strategy's reaffirmation of pre-emptive attack as a counterproliferation option, its true thrust is to reaffirm that promotion of democracy overseas is as central as ever to the Bush Administration's definitions of US global purpose.[30]

This vision of virtuous US global leadership based on dominant military power harkens to a nineteenth century idealist internationalism underpinned by the security of broad oceans. The Bush administration's embrace of a globalized reincarnation of this vision on the basis of US military inviolability represents the re-ascendance of idealism in shaping US grand strategy following the prevailing realism of the Cold War period. But this articulation also marks the emergence of a specific form of idealism. The active promotion of overseas democratization, by force if necessary, pushes aside aspirations to constitute a society among states, aiming instead to challenge the prerogative of state sovereignty itself. President Bush's repudiation of the Yalta agreements at the end of World War II evinces this viewpoint.[31] The Bush Administration's emergent grand strategy of *emancipatory militant idealism* draws on a distinct variant of the American idealist tradition.[32]

This thinking drives the Bush Administration's approach to proliferation. The approach draws implicitly on observations that strengthening liberalizing and externally-oriented elements within a governmental regime produces more cooperative nuclear weapons postures.[33] From this perspective, nuclear weapons proliferation itself is not really the problem; the presence of nuclear weapons in the hands of illiberal regimes is the problem. In this view, the interest of global nuclear safety helps justify pressing for liberalizing regime change in problem countries – an endeavor that could require a range of US military capabilities. Hence, increased US reliance on nuclear threats against such states is actually part of the nonproliferation solution, and greater US commitment to nuclear disarmament is irrelevant or even counterproductive. In the value system underlying emancipatory militant idealism, there is no contradiction in threatening nuclear attack to thwart nuclear proliferation.

Thus, Bush Administration officials maintain that US nuclear weapons policies are consistent with US NPT obligations and not relevant to the nuclear ambitions of states such as North Korea and Iran. Representatively, Assistant Secretary of State Stephen Rademaker, head of the US delegation to the 2005 NPT Review Conference, stated on the eve of the conference: "This notion that the United States needs to make concessions in order to encourage other countries to do what

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[29] The 2006 National Security Strategy is available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/>, accessed December 14, 2006.

[30] As one measure, the word "preemption" appears only five times in the document, while the terms freedom and democracy appear over 200 times. Ralph A. Cossa, "2006 National Security Strategy: It's All About Democracy," PacNet 13, March 27, 2006 <http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/pac0613.pdf>.

[31] Speech by President George W. Bush, The Small Guild Hall, Riga, Latvia, May 7, 2005 <http://estonia.usembassy.gov/freedom.php>.

[32] For a more detailed exposition of this interpretation, see Wade L. Huntley, "Threats All The Way Down: U.S. Nuclear Initiatives in a Unipolar World," *Review of International Studies* 32:1 (January 2006), pp 49-67. For a similar distinction between contending strains of US foreign policy idealism, see Jonathan Monten, "The Roots of the Bush Doctrine: Power, Nationalism, and Democracy Promotion in U.S. Strategy," *International Security* 29:4 (Spring 2005), pp. 112–156.

[33] See, e.g., Etel Solingen, *Nuclear Logics: Contrasting Paths in East Asia and the Middle East* (Princeton University Press, 2007); and Etel Solingen, "The New Multilateralism and Nonproliferation: Bringing in Domestic Politics," *Global Governance* 1/2 (May-August 1995), p. 214. But the administration's orientation also fundamentally contradicts other elements of such analysis.

is necessary in order to preserve the nuclear nonproliferation regime is at best a misguided way to think about the problems confronting us."[34]

Herein resides the essence of the alternative nonproliferation paradigm. It is the international equivalent of US conservatives' credo opposing domestic gun control: nukes don't kill people; bad states with nukes kill people.

The Paradigms Applied

Is the new nonproliferation paradigm reflected in Bush Administration policies and practices a viable answer to today's nuclear proliferation challenges? Do the new conditions of the second, post-Cold War nuclear era necessitate such a new conceptual approach? In particular, how does the alternative paradigm compare to the prevailing NPT paradigm in addressing the causes and motivations behind nuclear proliferation, and in coping with the consequences of proliferation that could not be prevented?

The paradigmatic innovation of the Bush Administration's approach to nuclear proliferation is evident in its handling of the nuclear aspirations of North Korea and Iran. This section addresses the preceding questions by assessing these two cases across three models of causes and motivations for states to seek nuclear weapons.

Causes and Motivations

The second nuclear era has increasingly demonstrated that restricting access to nuclear resources cannot be a permanent nonproliferation solution for states determined to sustain a nuclear option. Supply restraint can stall nuclear ambitions but institutionalizes a tension always vulnerable to breakdown. A permanent solution must neutralize states' nuclear ambitions—the demand side—by relieving the needs and opportunities nuclear weapons programs can fulfill both domestically and internationally.

What motivates states to obtain nuclear weapons? Fathoming the nuclear motivations in states like North Korea and Iran is bedeviling. Unfortunately, at the level of policy-making discourse, this vacuum of understanding tends to be filled with assumptions befitting particular policy preferences rather than objective analysis. Advocates of engagement and negotiation tend to assume the ruling regime in question pursues its nuclear program as a means to other ends, using belligerence to maneuver for bargaining position, and that ultimately the regime will be prepared to surrender its nuclear capabilities for the right price. Advocates of confrontation conversely tend to assume that the regime genuinely wants nuclear weapons in their own right, that any accommodation is merely a tactic to assuage neighbors and buy time, and that eliminating nuclear weapons in the country ultimately will necessitate regime change.[35]

Of course it would be wiser to build policy on the basis of judgments about motivations, not vice versa. But more fundamentally, both sets of assumptions may both be wrong. It may be the case that a regime's leadership has not made up its mind – as could be the case for any government facing a complex decision under significant pressures and constraints. Also, the types of influences over decision-making discussed below may be evolving over time. Indeed, leaders

[34] Testimony to Congress, cited in Carol Giacomo, "U.S. Rules Out Concessions to Shore Up Nuclear Pact," Reuters, April 28, 2005.

[35] These two positions do not necessarily converge with the two nonproliferation paradigms, although there is a general correspondence between nonproliferation and engagement advocates, on the one hand, and counterproliferation and confrontation advocates, on the other.

may not know exactly what terms they would ultimately accept, and may not come to decide unless and until, like Reagan at Reykjavik, the moment of decision is at hand.[36]

Scott Sagan offers a useful typology of conceptual categories to capture a fuller range of motivations and explanations for nuclear acquisition programs: state security, domestic politics, and ideational attractions:[37]

- *Realist security model*: states make decisions on nuclear weapons acquisition on the basis of whether it increases state security against foreign threats, especially nuclear threats.
- *Domestic politics model*: states make decisions on nuclear weapons acquisition on the basis of parochial domestic and bureaucratic interests.
- *Normative symbols model*: states make decisions on nuclear weapons acquisition on the basis of evoking important normative symbols of the state's modernity and identity.

In Sagan's presentation, these models are ideal types; any given state's decision-making can involve elements of each model to varying degrees. Thus none of the models tell the whole "real story." Moreover, the relative weighting of the factors flowing from each model may vary within a state over time. The principal use of the models is to distinguish different factors analytically in order to parse the potential consequences of alternative responses.

Each of these models may also be unpacked somewhat. For example, within the security model a state may be motivated to acquire nuclear weapons either to respond to proximate regional concerns or to redress concerns over the distant but powerful United States, or both. Within the norms model, international norms could serve to promote as well as impede national nuclear weapons ambitions, depending on how the particular norms and the particular domestic agents happen to interact.

This section considers the cases of North Korea and Iran parsed in terms of the motivational elements of these three models. Each case considers briefly the application of the two nonproliferation paradigms in light of the distinctions among the models. The section concludes with more general observations regarding the paradigmatic choices for US and global nonproliferation policy responses.

North Korea

North Korea's nuclear aspirations have been problematic since it first joined the NPT in 1985; the country has never been verifiably in compliance with its NPT obligations. By the time the country accepted a safeguards agreement with the IAEA in 1992, it was already suspected of having extracted up to ten kilograms of plutonium from its research reactor at Yongbyon, enough to produce one or two nuclear weapons.

From 1994 the Agreed Framework successfully froze North Korea's plutonium-based nuclear program, but never succeeded as intended in resolving discrepancies of past North Korean activities or removing known spent fuel from the country. These shortcomings loomed when, in October 2002, charges that North Korea was undertaking a second, uranium-based nuclear program triggered an iterated crumbling of the Agreed Framework culminating in North Korea ejecting IAEA inspectors from its facilities.

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[36] On the Reagan Administration's internal divisions over the role of the Strategic Defense Initiative in arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union, see Frances FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

[37] Scott D. Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb," *International Security* 21/3 (Winter 1996/97).

With restraints on its plutonium-based program lifted, North Korea in early 2003 restarted the Yongbyon reactor and began reprocessing the 8,000 fuel rods stored at the Yongbyon site, generating between 20 and 28 kg of weapons-usable plutonium. In April 2005 North Korea shut down the Yongbyon reactor to collect a new supply of spent fuel, providing up to 15 kilograms more of weapons-usable plutonium. Taken together, this combined stock of separated plutonium is enough for about 4 to 13 weapons.[38]

Following the collapse of the Agreed Framework, North Korea became the first country ever to withdraw from the NPT, and also withdrew from the 1992 agreement with South Korea to keep the Korean peninsula nuclear free. In February 2003, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors acted to refer the issue of North Korea's withdrawal from its nonproliferation commitments to the UN Security Council.[39] However, the UN Security Council did not act on the referral, due to Chinese resistance, concern for undermining direct negotiations, and other factors. The 2004 NPT Preparatory Conference and the 2005 NPT Review Conference "sidestepped" the issue of North Korea's NPT withdrawal; presiding officials diplomatically "placed in their pockets" the placard in front of North Korea's empty chair. [40]

In its first term, the Bush Administration sustained its confrontational posture toward North Korea despite its evident failure to stem the country's nuclear weapons development.[41] In its second term, the Bush Administration undertook limited engagement through the Six-Party Talks process. On September 19, 2005, these talks produced a last-minute "Statement of Principles" that included a fresh North Korean commitment to abandoning its nuclear weapons capabilities, but subsequent diverging interpretations of the agreement undercut its impact, and the disintegrating situation reached new lows with North Korea's missile tests on July 5 and nuclear test on October 9, 2006.[42]

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[38] David Albright and Paul Brannan, "The North Korean Plutonium Stock Mid-2006," Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), June 26, 2006 <http://www.isis-online.org/publications/dprk/dprkplutonium.pdf>; Robert S. Norris and Hans M. Kristensen, "North Korea's nuclear program, 2005," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 61:3, May/June 2005 <http://www.thebulletin.org/article_nn.php?art_ofn=mj05norris>. This estimate for the number of weapons North Korea could generate from its presumed plutonium stocks assumes North Korea 1) has only low technological capability, equivalent to the US at the creation of its first plutonium devices, and 2) is developing a relatively larger number of lower-yield weapons.

[39] IAEA Director General Mohamed El Baradei stated at the time: "The current situation clearly sets a dangerous precedent because what we are trying to do is to make sure that the NPT becomes universal in character rather than open the door for countries to walk away from nonproliferation and arms control obligations." International Atomic Energy Agency, "IAEA Director General Sees Compliance as Key to North Korea Issue," Press Briefing, Vienna, Austria, February 12, 2003, <http://www.iaea.org/worldatom/Press/News/2003/02/13-663396.html>. In sharp contrast, a contemporaneous IAEA report found that in Iraq, the IAEA was able to maintain its accounting of safeguarded nuclear materials even during the 1998-2002 suspension of inspections and subsequently found no evidence of a revived nuclear program. "Report's Findings Undercut U.S. Argument," *New York Times*, January 28, 2003.

[40] See Peter Heinlein, "Annan Urges NPT Review Conference to Get Serious," Voice of America, May 13, 2005 (http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/un/un-050513-287d99b8.htm); and "Walking the Nonproliferation Tightrope: An Interview with Ambassador Sérgio de Queiroz Duarte, President of the 2005 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference," *Arms Control Today*, December 2004 (http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2004_12/Duarte_ACTversion.asp).

[41] For an assessment of this period, see Wade L. Huntley, "Ostrich Engagement: The Bush Administration and the North Korea Nuclear Crisis," *The Nonproliferation Review* 11:2 (Summer 2004).

[42] For an assessment of this period, see Wade L. Huntley, "U.S. Policy toward North Korea in Strategic Context: Tempting Goliath's Fate," *Asian Survey* 47:3 (May/June 2007)

The Six-Party Talks agreement on February 12, 2007, which begins implementing the earlier concord, culminated a return to positive movement in the crisis. But the deal doesn't replace the 1994 Agreed Framework, and marked but a first step down a long negotiating road.[43] Just how long and torturous this road remains has been well evinced by developments in the first half of 2008: after missing the December 31, 2007, deadline to submit a full declaration of all its nuclear activities and materials, North Korea now reportedly has secured Bush Administration acceptance that the declaration omit any mention of the alleged uranium program or North Korea's role in the Syrian facility destroyed by Isreali bombing.

The new paradigm at the heart of the Bush Administration's nonproliferation policies helps explain its posture. As a pillar of the "axis of evil" North Korea is one of the "bad guys" – no negotiated arrangement can ever be reliable when dealing with a regime whose character is fundamentally inimical to American global purposes and values. This distaste for engaging North Korea diplomatically expresses a deeper conviction that the current Pyongyang regime is an international miscreant that does not deserve the prerogatives of sovereignty, and underlies the conviction that only "regime change" is the ultimate solution to the nuclear crisis (a conviction still prevalent among harder-line elements despite the achievement of the February 2007 deal[44]).

This orientation also helps explain why the Bush Administration has concentrated its concern on North Korea's potential to export fissile materials, technologies and expertise, while expressing few worries for the fate of the NPT regime (discussed earlier) or the potential for further Northeast Asian regional nuclear proliferation. On the latter, from the perspective of the new paradigm, all the next potential proliferators – Japan, South Korea and Taiwan – are US allies with largely liberal democratic governments expressing convergent global values and sustaining a capacity for "responsible" nuclear behavior, qualifying the implications of their potential proliferation. Unsurprisingly, at one point there were indications the Bush administration might look more benignly than its predecessors on Japan becoming a nuclear-armed state.[45]

The simple fact of North Korea's transition from NPT member to nuclear-arms tester speaks directly to the poverty of the new paradigm as a policy guide in this case. But a closer look at the interaction of the paradigm with North Korea's specific interests in nuclear weapons development is warranted. North Korean nuclear motivations are particularly difficult to discern due to the opacity of the Pyongyang regime's decision-making, itself due to extreme secrecy and considerable (though not absolute) concentration of power in the person of Kim Jong-il. In the case of North Korea, the three motivational models usefully expand analysis of the scant information available.

Realist Security Model. From this perspective, the principal motivations for North Korea's acquisition of nuclear weapons are the security of the state and survival of the regime. These two motivations are viewed internally as convergent. State security concerns focus on the United States, which threatens both regionally and directly: regionally through support of the South

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[43] See Wade L. Huntley, "One Cheer for the North Korea Arms Deal," *The Toronto Star*, February 15, 2007 (http://www.thestar.com/opinion/article/181844).

[44] David E. Sanger and Thom Shanker, "Rice Is Said to Have Speeded North Korea Deal," *New York Times*, February 16, 2007.

[45] The *Asahi Shimbun* on 17 March 2003 quoted Vice President Richard Cheney as stating that, if North Korea develops nuclear weapons and missiles, "Japan may be forced to consider whether or not they want to readdress the nuclear issues." (http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/japan/nuke.htm). The comment came in the context of considerable discussion of this prospect following collapse of the Agreed Framework, spurred by Charles Krauthammer, "The Japan Card," *Washington Post,* January 3, 2003. The only other comparable moment of US ambivalence toward East Asian nuclear proliferation was under the Nixon Administration after issuance of the Guam Doctrine calling on US allies to be more self-sufficient in their security policies.

Korean government which obstructs reunification of Korea on Pyongyang's terms, and directly through fear of potential US attack for various reasons with either conventional or nuclear weapons. Thus, in this instance, regional motivations and motivations deriving directly from US policies converge. North Korea may be pursuing its nuclear weapons option as a means to both rectify its growing conventional inferiority to the US and South Korean forces aligned against it and to deter any solely US pre-emptive action.

Either of the conventional assumptions about North Korea's motivations for acquiring nuclear weapons – it wants them for keeps or it's prepared to deal them – are plausible in this outlook. The typical argument that North Korea feels nuclear weapons would deter a US attack would be valid; but so would the also typical argument that North Korea would trade them away for a package including reliable US security assurances (which would probably necessitate a broader regional security accord formally ending the state of war on the Korean peninsula).

To the extent that this model predominates, North Korea can be expected to behave as a "normal" state. Realist assumptions about the efficacy (and sometimes inefficacy) of deterrence would apply. Under these conditions, the prevailing NPT paradigm is far more likely to lead to a peaceful denuclearization of North Korea. The alternative paradigm, conflating aversion to the Pyongyang regime generally with nuclear decision-making irrationality, is ill-equipped to exploit diplomatic opportunities and consequently aggravates the threat perception that drives North Korea's nuclear ambitions in the first place.

Despite the opacity of the Pyongyang regime, there are objective comparative reasons to doubt the sufficiency of the security explanation in the North Korea case: other similarly-situated states have not felt similarly compelled to develop nuclear weapons. Compare particularly Vietnam, circa 1980. Both countries then were ruled by highly autocratic communist regimes, both had hosted conventional wars involving US ground troops (Vietnam more recently) and both had been subject to US nuclear threats. Yet Vietnam, unlike North Korea, did not proceed to launch a nuclear weapons program.

The role of China in this comparison is even more instructive. Some analysts consider China's burgeoning relations with South Korea and moderation of its defense commitment to North Korea in the early 1990s to be a precipitant of Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions.[46] But North Korea initiated its program well before these developments. In the meantime, Vietnam fought a war with China in 1979, and so enjoyed less support from China *then* than North Korea does *now*. Some consider India's border war with China in 1962 to have been a catalyst for India's nuclear weapons development.[47] Such logic should have held even more strongly for Vietnam, weaker and strategically more vulnerable vis-à-vis China than India. Yet Vietnam refrained from nuclear weapons development, embarked on Chinese-style economic reforms, courted (and eventually obtained) US diplomatic recognition and economic engagement, and chose a course to maintain its security embedding the nation firmly in the ASEAN community.

Of course, there are important differences in Vietnam's situation that plausibly explain why it refrained from nuclear weapons development while North Korea (and India) did not. But these explanations come from beyond the security model. Thus, counter-cases like Vietnam demonstrate that the existence of security incentives to obtain nuclear weapons capabilities – especially to counter threats from states already nuclear-armed – does not always lead to proliferation and is therefore an insufficient explanation of proliferation, even in cases such as North Korea where evidence to explain nuclear decision-making remains scant.

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[46] See, representatively, Victor Cha, "The Second Nuclear Age: Proliferation Pessimism versus Sober Optimism in South Asia and East Asia," **, p.91.

[47] For an argument against this conclusion, see Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?" pp.65-69.

Domestic Politics Model. North Korea certainly has domestic factions. They are difficult to discern, even among the domestic actors themselves; but indications of their existence and the terms of their interactions can sometimes be gleaned.[48] Kim Jong-il, since assuming power in 1994, has definitively bolstered his internal position by increasing the power and role of the military. However, the imperatives of the economic and energy collapse weigh on the regime, particularly outside the military. Thus, two driving dynamics are allocation of resources between military and other demands and the risks to security and domestic regime legitimacy of opening the economy through reform measures. Kim Jong-il manages these forces, leaning one way or another as circumstances warrant.

In this model, North Korea's nuclear weapons acquisition is driven principally by the military, which views the nuclear program as means for both national security and internal validation of its mission. A civilian nuclear power faction is a factor contingently; public support of nuclear weapons capabilities is derivative. Non-military factions seeking support for economic reform can be expected to view the nuclear program tactically, to value energy and economic aid offers highly and to support deal-making. Many of the organizational and psychological deficiencies associated with nuclear weapons decision-making hold, some in particularly aggravated forms.

In these circumstances, the prevailing NPT paradigm could lead to a peaceful denuclearization of North Korea, especially insofar as available multilateral mechanisms can reinforce domestic factions favoring denuclearization. The alternative paradigm, however, might also produce productive outcomes if US policy-makers can articulate a positive future image for the Pyongyang regime that is plausible enough to bolster domestic factions favoring reform.

Normative Symbols Model. The importance of North Korea's national ideology of *juche*, and of national myth-making more generally, pervades North Korean society. The sources and implications of these ideational factors are complex, but several facets are clear. First, the ideology of *juche*, roughly translated as "self-reliance," is highly introverted. Secondly, the mythology that North Korea is alone in the world and left to its own resources to resist overpowering American hegemonic intentions functions as a principle of regime legitimacy and a predominant normative imperative. Third, Kim Jong-il validated the importance of this mythology in amending it to legitimize the increased influence of the military under his rule.

In this model, nuclear weapons capability represents the epitome of national self-reliance. It answers and counters the imperialist's most powerful weapon and assures national survival; it is a symbol of power and international stature. Many official governmental statements convey this self-conception of the role that ought to be accorded to North Korea on the basis of its nuclear achievements.[49]

To the extent that this orientation predominates, the prevailing NPT paradigm is not likely to be effective in reversing North Korea's nuclear weapons acquisition. Not only do internal ideational motivations drive the country to wriggle out of its NPT commitments, but the dominance of the internal mythology combined with the country's insularity block the role that adherence to the nonproliferation norm as a means of national identity takes on in other countries.

In this case, the alternative paradigm, imputing to the Pyongyang regime a megalomaniacal obsession with nuclear capability, has a closer read. But this paradigm's embrace of the validity of nuclear threat-making for political purposes beyond core security interests would be a normative resource some in the Pyongyang elite could draw from to reinforce domestic allegiance

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[48] Two good explorations of these internal dynamics are Ken E. Gause, "North Korean Civil-Military Trends: Military-First Politics to a Point," Strategic Studies Institute, September 2006, ISBN 1-58487-257-8 (http://www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil/) and [** second source title].

[49] [** NK UN ambassador quote following UNSC vote on nuclear test]

or even their own resolve. Hence, the policy prescriptions flowing from this paradigm are not any more likely to produce a peaceful denuclearization result.

Iran

Iran's nuclear program is much less advanced than North Korea's. Current concerns focus on disclosures of previously unknown Iranian efforts to develop indigenous uranium enrichment capabilities. The pilot plant at Iran's uranium centrifuge enrichment facility at Natanz, at which Iran initiated testing in 2003, could when completed produce between 10-12 kilograms of weapon-grade uranium annually. A planned larger plant would produce approximately 400-500 kilograms annually, or enough for 15-20 nuclear weapons a year. If these facilities become fully operational, Iran would become only the ninth nation in the world able to enrich uranium for nuclear fuel.[50] Most estimates, however, consider Iran to be years away achieving the ability to enrich uranium to weapons-grade levels.[51] Whether Iran is even undertaking research on how to then produce a nuclear explosive device or warhead is a matter of current controversy.[52]

Iran's uranium enrichment activity does not violate its NPT commitments or IAEA safeguard obligations. But its concealment of that activity from 1985 until its exposure by a dissident group in August 2002 was a significant compliance breach. Unlike North Korea, which long avowed its need for a "powerful deterrent" before claiming explicitly to be nuclear-armed, Iran's leadership assiduously states its commitment to developing only peaceful nuclear technologies and to its NPT obligations. But technical assessments that Iran's technologies and ambitions go beyond requirements for a peaceful nuclear energy program leave these claims suspect.

The IAEA first visited the Natanz facility in February 2003, while European Union representatives Germany, France and Britain (the "E3") reached agreement on October 21, 2003, for Iran to abide by the IAEA Additional Protocol and voluntarily suspend all uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities.[53] But ongoing diplomacy remained restive, particularly following the unexpected June 2005 election of conservative populist Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as Iran's president. In February 2006 Iran resumed operations at Natanz, and in April announced that it had succeeded in enriching uranium to the level of 3.6%.[54] The IAEA Board of Governors promptly referred the problem to the UN Security Council, after which Iran suspended its voluntary adherence to the Additional Protocol. Sanctions imposed on Iran by three UNSC resolutions in the ensuing two years failed to inhibit Iran's activities. However, the IAEA has

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[50] Iran would also be only the sixth nation able to commercially convert raw uranium into the gas form used for centrifugal enrichment. Joseph Cirincione, "Controlling Iran's Nuclear Program," *Issues in Science and Technology*, Spring 2006 (http://www.issues.org/22.3/cirincione.html).

[51] Natural uranium contains about 0.7% of the fissile isotope U235. Uranium enriched to 3-5% U235 is suitable for a number of nuclear power plant designs. Uranium usable in nuclear weapons is typically enriched to over 90% U235 (although some designs can use lower enrichment levels).

[52] In November 2007, a US National Intelligence Estimate determined that Iran did have a nuclear weapons development program but terminated it in 2003 after the uranium enrichment efforts became public. The NIE had less confidence that Iran has no *current* weaponization program or that US intelligence would be able to detect recommencement of such a program. "Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities," *National Intelligence Estimate* (National Intelligence Council, November 2007).

[53] Statement by the Iranian Government and visiting EU Foreign Ministers, 21 October 2003 (http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Focus/IaeaIran/statement_iran21102003.shtml). Iran agreed to abide by the Additional Protocol pending its ratification by its parliament, the Majlis.

[54] Subsequent IAEA testing "tend[ed] to confirm" Iran's claim. Importantly, the enrichment facility remained under IAEA safeguards containment and surveillance measures. "Excerpts from UN report on Iran nuclear program," Reuters, April 28, 2006.

accounted for all know nuclear materials, and has, under a "workplan" developed in cooperation with Iran, resolved all but one of its outstanding concerns.[55]

Unlike North Korea, which never has been in full compliance with NPT obligations, Iran developed its suspect nuclear technologies while within the NPT community. However, regime change played a critical role: Iran acceded to the NPT in 1970, under the Shah; its surreptitious nuclear program began years after the Islamic revolution. Nevertheless, Iran remained in ostensible compliance with NPT obligations until the revelation of its concealed programs in 2002. Hence, while Iran's open acquisition of nuclear weapons and withdrawal from the NPT would not set a precedent (North Korea did that), it could wound the NPT regime more deeply than did North Korea's action. As with North Korea, if Iran's nuclear weapons development progressed far enough to require an extraordinary negotiated settlement to roll it back, this would also impinge the credibility of the regime as a whole.

Iran's nuclear activities have spotlighted a "loophole" in the NPT: nuclear fuel processing capabilities, allowed for peaceful uses under NPT Article IV, can also be utilized to generate weapons-grade fissile materials while the state remains fully in compliance with its NPT obligations. Japan is perhaps the most notable example of a state that has followed such a course. Once these capacities and knowledge are in hand, a state could legally withdraw from the NPT and become nuclear-armed relatively rapidly. With some forty countries possessing some level of nuclear technology, the case of Iran has thus also raised awareness of the broader weapons proliferation risks of spreading nuclear fuel cycle technologies.

This wider context, given the NPT's non-discrimination norm, poses dilemmas for dealing with Iran equitably. Iran insists that forcing it alone to curtail NPT-permitted activities would create "a second discrimination, one between those that have peaceful nuclear technology and those not allowed to have peaceful nuclear technology."[56] Broader proposals to deny support for civilian nuclear programs to countries deemed in violation of their nonproliferation commitments, or to prohibit new nuclear fuel cycle capabilities to any country, don't target only Iran but foreshadow systematic discriminatory categorization among non-nuclear NPT states. Putting all facilities to highly enrich uranium or separate plutonium under international control would close the loophole equitably, but would require many states with impeccable nonproliferation records (such as Japan) to surrender national capabilities. Indicatively, Japan, France and the United States, as well as Iran, all opposed a proposal for a five-year global moratorium on all new uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing.[57]

The Bush Administration's alternative nonproliferation paradigm sidesteps many of these considerations. Prioritizing obligations of broader responsibility over non-discrimination, equal treatment need no longer be the measure of fairness. This approach detaches the imperative to curtail the proliferation activities of "states of concern" from more systematic solutions and general norm-building, seeing the latter as secondary or even counterproductive. Indeed, in this view, effectively stopping miscreant proliferators and encouraging responsible behavior more broadly would more effectively improve the global nonproliferation normative climate.

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[55] *Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions 1737 (2006) and 1747 (2007) in the Islamic Republic of Iran*, Report by IAEA Director General Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, March 2008.

[56] Chief negotiator Rohani, cited in George Perkovich, "For Tehran, Nuclear Program Is a Matter of National Pride, *Yale Global*, March 21, 2005 (http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=16694). The "first" discrimination is between the five NPT stipulated nuclear-armed states and its other non-nuclear parties.

[57] David E. Sanger, "Threats by Iran and North Korea Shadow Talks on Nuclear Arms," *New York Times*, May 1, 2005.

As with North Korea, a closer look at the interaction of this paradigm with Iran's specific interests in nuclear technology development is warranted – not least because Iran is a very different country, and lessons from one case apply to the other much less easily than is often assumed. In distinct contrast to North Korea, Iran is relatively open domestically and much more interactive with the international community. While far from being a free country, Iran has a history of constitutionalism and pluralist politics, a functioning, globally-engaged civil society, and established (though highly constrained) political competition.[58] Hence, motivations propelling nuclear weapons interests in Iran are somewhat easier to discern, and evidently flow from all three models. But the complexity of Iran's internal political and social forces also introduces novel opacities and obstacles to identifying those motivations and tracking their evolution over time.[59]

Realist Security Model. Specific regional security threats likely at the forefront of nuclear weapons thinking from an Iranian perspective include the nuclear capabilities of neighbors Israel, Russia and Pakistan, and the presence of US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Whether or not a nuclear capability would be of strategic value to Iran vis-à-vis Israel and Pakistan is arguable. There is a case to be made that a small nuclear arsenal would not be an effective deterrent, and that Iran's nuclear ambitions create incentives for US or Israeli coercion rather then deterring them.[60] At the same time, Iran may calculate that the United States and Israel are hostile to Iran's regime in any event, but would be very sensitive to even a minimal Iranian nuclear threat in contemplating any actions against the regime.[61]

This frame expects Iran to behave as a "normal" state in response to the threats is perceives. To the extent that these types of regional security concerns are the principal drivers of Iranian nuclear ambitions, tangibly alleviating these concerns through a broader regional security settlement would deflate those ambitions. This goal cannot be achieved quickly and would require important quid pro quos from Iran, such as an end to support of terrorist organizations and recognition of Israel. But in the security frame this is a plausible objective.

Under these conditions, the prevailing NPT paradigm, with its foundational non-discrimination premise, is more likely to lead to satisfying international qualms and preserving Iran as a non-nuclear NPT state. The alternative paradigm, conflating aversion to a theocratically-dominated regime with decision-making irrationality – buttressed by the specific US history with Iran and US support for Israel – holds out little hope that a satisfactory regional security arrangement is even possible, let alone that this would alleviate Iran's nuclear interests.

Domestic Politics Model. Nuclear technology ambitions function complexly in Iranian domestic politics and society. Harder-line elements have reasserted greater control over Iran in recent years, and decision-making on nuclear matters is especially secretive and tightly controlled (in part because Iran publicly denies seeking nuclear weapons).[62] Nevertheless the regime is not monolithic – there are reformists advocating human rights and democracy even among the

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[58] "Iran: Time for a New Approach," Report of an Independent Task Force (Zbigniew Brzezinski and Robert M. Gates, Co-Chairs), Council on Foreign Relations, 2004, pp.11,13.
[59] See Wade L. Huntley, "The Context of Iranian Nuclear Aims," in *Iran in the World: The Nuclear Crisis in Context*, edited by Wade L. Huntley & Soushiant Zangenehpour (The Simons Centre, April 2008), http://www.ligi.ubc.ca/?p2=modules/liu/publications/view.jsp&id=2087.
[60] George Perkovich, "Dealing With Iran's Nuclear Challenge," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Working Paper, April 28, 2003, pp.6-8.
[61] Insofar as a single nuclear detonation of modest yield in Tel Aviv would probably cripple the Israeli state, even a minimal Iranian nuclear weapons capability could yield considerable strategic leverage.
[62] George Perkovich, "Dealing With Iran's Nuclear Challenge," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Working Paper, April 28, 2003, p.3.

Islamic clerical elite[63] – and Iran's internal political evolution has created numerous linkages to the international community relevant to the nuclear issue.

This partial pluralism creates both obstacles and opportunities. A principal danger is the prospect of increased popular support for the ruling regime in reaction to international pressure – the "rally-round-the-flag" effect. Iran's nuclear ambitions are not confined to hard-line clerical factions; recent public opinion polling in Iran indicates strong majority support for a nuclear energy program and nuclear fuel development capabilities, principally for domestic energy production purposes.[64] Strategies aimed simply at bolstering pluralism within Iran are not likely to relieve domestic interest in a nuclear capability. Popular support for President Ahmadinejad's spirited defenses of Iran's nuclear aims suggests that the opposite is closer to the case: international pressure risks fomenting pro-nuclear nationalism.[65]

This potential creates incentives for the regime to aggravate the current crisis to bolster its domestic support. Many of President Ahmadinejad's most provocative pronouncements on Iran's nuclear program and other international issues likely are either aimed at domestic audiences or attempts to shape the international climate in directions that enhance his domestic leverage. Criticism of the president's handling of international nuclear diplomacy by leading clerics may reflect a genuine desire to steer Iran toward a more moderate course, but it could also represent an effort to undercut Ahmadinejad's popular appeal for broader political reasons.

Most dangerously, limited pluralism and unleashed nationalism could combine to "trap" Iran's rulers domestically in a more aggressive nuclear weapons posture than they might wish to take on the basis of international exigencies alone. In terms of domestic constraints, Kim Jong-il may be freer to cut a deal than Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, with whom final decisions on Iran's nuclear activities ultimately rests.

But Iranian pluralism also offers wider possibilities for negotiating accords addressing the underlying circumstances driving Iran's nuclear ambitions. The Iranian public appears to clearly distinguish nuclear power and nuclear weapons; a majority believes that obtaining nuclear weapons violates the principles of Islam.[66] More broadly, Iran has valued engagement with the global community and is more sensitive to the benefits of global political integration, and the costs of political isolation, than is North Korea. These conditions provide a wider range of both material and normative opportunities for Iran to enter into and abide by agreements focused on foreclosing nuclear weapons options.[67] Strategies to relieve Iran's regional tensions and avoid instigating nationalistic reactions could deflate Iranians' perceived strategic need for nuclear

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[63] Jackson Diehl, "In Iran, Apocalypse vs. Reform," *Washington Post*, May 11, 2006.

[64] *Public Opinion in Iran, With Comparisons to American Public Opinion*, WorldPublicOpinion.org Poll Conducted in Partnership with Search for Common Ground and Knowledge Networks, April 7, 2008, http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/apr08/Iran_Apr08_rpt.pdf; *Poll of the Iranian Public*, WorldPublicOpinion.org Poll Conducted in Partnership with Search for Common Ground and the U.S. Institute of Peace, January 16, 2007, http://www.usip.org/iran/iran_presentation.pdf; Cf. "Iran: Time for a New Approach," Report of an Independent Task Force (Zbigniew Brzezinski and Robert M. Gates, Co-Chairs), Council on Foreign Relations, 2004, p.23.

[65] For example, US or Israeli air strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities would almost certainly tap resentment of past US interventions in Iran across its political spectrum, fueling anti-US nationalism, and would likely undercut existing moderate dissent, setting back prospects for indigenous regime reform.

[66] *Public Opinion in Iran* and *Poll of the Iranian Public*, op. cit. While roughly half believe other countries have secret nuclear weapons programs today and an overwhelming majority believe there will be more nuclear-armed states in the world in fifty years, less than a third think Iran will be one of them.

[67] "Iran: Time for a New Approach," Report of an Independent Task Force (Zbigniew Brzezinski and Robert M. Gates, Co-Chairs), Council on Foreign Relations, 2004, p.9; George Perkovich with Silvia Manzanero, "The Global Consequences of Iran's Acquisition of Nuclear Weapons," April 2004, p.5.

weapons in part by enabling more moderate domestic forces to tap into anti-nuclear weapons sentiments rather than threat-based nationalism for support.

Normative Symbols Model. Iran's nuclear program functions amorphously to rally Iranian nationalism and symbolize Iran's position as an important power in the region and the world. Many in Iran see its nuclear power program as a flagship of the nation's technological and commercial achievement. A nuclear weapons capability would equalize Iran with Pakistan (a country many Iranians reportedly view as inferior in broader terms) and provide invaluable symbolic leverage vis-à-vis the United States well beyond specific strategic considerations.

Iran is more sensitive to penetration by international norms than is North Korea. But the function of nuclear technological accomplishment as a symbol of national prestige combined with the potential for selective appeal to international norms by vying domestic factions means that the impact of international norms can cut both ways. On the one hand, nuclear nonproliferation norms embedded in the NPT regime provide a means for Iran to demonstrate its allegiance to important global values bolster its standing in the international community. But on the other hand, *de facto* norms of acceptance of reliance on nuclear weapons threats in security policy and association of great power status with nuclear weapons possession (India is an example on both points) would tend to bolster acceptance of an independent nuclear program as an indicator of Iran's independent global stature, eroding rather than reinforcing the normative objections to nuclear weapons possession noted in Iranian public opinion polling.

At this normative level, then, the success of the prevailing NPT paradigm will hinge not just on choices made among approaches to establishing international control over nuclear fuel cycle activities, but also on how strong the international consensus around those choices becomes. Norms, after all, depend on consensual adoption. Widespread *normative* acceptance throughout the world of an idiosyncratic but regime-based approach to Iran would (to the extent normative pressure matters) make it more difficult for Iran to resist this approach without accepting the mantle of an "outlaw" state. On the other hand, absence of fulsome global support would offer international normative sustenance to Iranian resistance.

Because with respect to Iran normative and symbolic forces are more complex and internationally porous, the alternative paradigm is a less incisive window into Iran's nuclear ambitions than in the North Korean case. The paradigm's portrayal of Iran as a radical theocracy inimical to the "American way of life" falters on empirical grounds and ignores opportunities – absent with North Korea – to induce Iran toward a more pacific and non-nuclear regional and global role.

Paradigms and Policy Responses

Elements of any of the three models may account for nuclear proliferation motivations in any given case. Some elements of all models often play a role. This raises two problems. First, different countries will express different combinations of motivations. Therefore, a single omnibus nonproliferation policy is unlikely to work well in all cases – "no single policy can ameliorate all future proliferation problems."[68] Policies have to be tailored to each circumstance. Secondly, in each case, different types of motivational forces – security, symbolism and domestic politics – are likely to be intermingled, with the mix evolving over time. Policies tailored to alleviate certain motivations may inadvertently aggravate others, particularly if not adjusted to ongoing events. Even on a case-by-case basis, it may not be possible to fashion optimal policy responses.

The prevailing nonproliferation paradigm embodied in the NPT regime is constituted by the normative principles of rolling back nuclear weapons threat-making and nuclear weapons

[68] Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?" p.85-6.

possession among all countries indiscriminately. US accession to and support of the NPT represents commitment to these normative principles. But this commitment has never been concrete: Article VI obligations are vague and not time-bound, and negative security assurances to non-nuclear states are not explicitly in the treaty at all. The amorphousness of the disarmament obligations, as compared to the concrete nonproliferation expectations, reflected the Cold War realities under which the NPT came to be. Those realities meant, among other things, that a route to the abolition of the strategic nuclear deterrence relationship between the superpowers was hard to see, especially insofar as extended nuclear deterrence guarantees underpinned the decisions of key allies not to obtain nuclear weapons of their own. This circumstance creates a particular policy tension with nuclear-armed states' own disarmament obligations:

> [A] security-oriented strategy of maintaining a major role for U.S. nuclear guarantees to restrain proliferation among allies will eventually create strong tensions with a norms-oriented strategy seeking to delegitimize nuclear weapons use and acquisition. … U.S. decision-makers will eventually have to choose between the difficult non-proliferation task of weaning allies away from nuclear guarantees without producing new nuclear states, and the equally difficult task of maintaining a norm against nuclear proliferation without the U.S. government facing up to its local final consequence.[69]

This policy tension has been aggravated in the second nuclear era, in which the overarching nuclear shadow providing the basic strategic rationale for extended nuclear deterrence guarantees has evaporated.

The Bush Administration's alternative nonproliferation paradigm offers an answer to this tension by abandoning the principle of non-discrimination. Nuclear nonproliferation is a core objective only with respect to problematic "rogue" states; proliferation among "responsible" states is less problematic.[70] In place of a ubiquitous non-nuclear norm comes a norm defined by the quality of governance controls of nuclear capabilities, in turn conditioned by the quality of national governance more generally as measured by commitments to liberal democratic principles – at least in theory. That in practice the list of "responsible" states converges with the list of US allies undermines the credibility of the measure in the eyes of many global observers, which in turns undermines the establishment of any genuine norm. Nevertheless, the alternative paradigm obviates the US policy tension.

In fact, acceptance of an indefinite role for nuclear deterrence and other forms of nuclear threat-making for "responsible" states eases the tension from both sides: neither delegitimation of nuclear weapons possession *per se* nor prevention of nuclear armament by allies need any longer be primary goals. The approach relieves US policy-makers of the need to wean allies from nuclear guarantees without seeing them develop their own nuclear arsenals or the challenge of sustaining a universal nonproliferation norm without demonstrating fidelity to US Article VI commitments.

This alternative paradigm has implications for each of the three models of motivations for nuclear proliferation.

From the realist security perspective, the alternative paradigm *partially* embraces the neorealist notion that gradual nuclear weapons proliferation would yield stability (because deterrence networks are robust) and peace (because it would also tend to quell conventional war). The

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[69] Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?" p.86.

[70] For an early anticipation of this position, see Victor Cha, "The Second Nuclear Age: Proliferation Pessimism versus Sober Optimism in South Asia and East Asia," p.99, who downplays proliferation pessimism in Asia "aside from individual cases of rogue regime proliferation."

embrace of neorealism is *partial*, however, because the paradigm implicitly purports that these dynamics hold only among "responsible" states.

Here the alternative paradigm encounters the domestic politics model. In a sense, the paradigm also embraces the criticisms from organizational and psychological perspectives of the neorealist reliance on "rational actor" assumptions by incorporating the "test" of state "responsibility." But this latter nod to proliferation pessimism is only glancing, for there is no rigorous connection between the political notion of "responsibility" and the analytical notion of "rational" decision-making. In fact some of the pathologies of governmental handling of nuclear weapons decision-making are independent of regime type and shared by the liberal-democratic states that are the paradigm's paragons of "responsibility." A case might be made that these states are *relatively* more responsible – but that would not be sufficient to answer all domestic level concerns and embrace the neorealist security logic that allows abandonment of the nuclear arms control and nonproliferation as non-discriminatory objectives. For the paradigm to hold logically, "responsibility" must be a qualitative and sufficient threshold. Unfortunately, reality doesn't quite satisfy the paradigmatic aspiration.

This qualification is enhanced by the implications from the normative model. The alternative paradigm would willfully abandon the normative delegitimation of nuclear weapons possession as a general proposition, in favor of a general norm that looks more kindly on nuclear weapons possession by responsible states. But, begging the question of "responsibility," such a norm would be weaker and selectively interpreted. To the extent that norms exercise influence by disproportionately empowering vying domestic factions, this normative shift would lend support to domestic factions favoring nuclear weapons possession in autocratic and democratic states alike.

The alternative paradigm would also enhance the perception of nuclear weapons as a symbol of power and stature. Moreover, by normatively associating the legitimacy of nuclear weapons possession with "responsibility," states might come to see a nuclear arsenal as a demonstration to the world of their "responsibility" as well – an ironic reversal! These ideational developments would tend to reinforce, rather than counter, proliferation motivations on realist security grounds – few states, seeing the United States and its allies embracing nuclear deterrence for their own security, would fail to see themselves as "responsible" enough to do likewise. Indeed, a state pursuing a nuclear weapons capability purely for this reason would be satisfying neorealist assumptions of rational calculation.

Conclusion

The North Korean and Iranian nuclear challenges, distinct in many ways, converge on the key role played in both cases by broader security environments, regionally and globally, materially and normatively. These environments condition and in some ways drive North Korea's and Iran's specific national nuclear ambitions, which, through these environments, in turn aggravate and magnify other proliferation challenges.

The role of wider security conditions in these two critical cases illustrates how the advent of the second nuclear era has reshaped the role of nuclear weapons in global politics, and hence also the pursuit of nuclear arms control, nonproliferation and eventual disarmament. Abated Cold War nuclear dangers initially brought encouraging progress toward wider nuclear disarmament goals. But emerging new dangers helped stall this progress, in part because Cold War era arms control and nonproliferation practices, focused more on capabilities than broader political contexts, were not tailored to the meet the increased role of broader security tensions in fueling newer nuclear proliferation challenges. Today, the tenacious retention of nuclear weapons by those states that

have them and the fervent desire for acquisition by many parties that lack them are most directly driven by specific political circumstances, not abstract strategic logic.

The end of the Cold War did not just terminate the superpower nuclear arms race; it also marked a major step toward closing the great ideological battles that have defined much of modernity. But an emerging global consensus on the values of a rule of law, political and economic liberty, democracy and human security would not be an "end of history." The defining task of the twenty-first century is to identify, refine and articulate such a consensus in ways that reinforce rather than repress social, cultural and religious variance, and to institutionalize that consensus through improved global governance offering effective mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution.

Progress in this direction is now more than previously a prerequisite to strengthening global nonproliferation efforts, given the critical linkage now played by reliance on nuclear threat-making in state security policies and on nuclear capabilities as symbols of power and stature both for factions domestically and for states internationally. Breaking the linkage between nuclear armaments and daily politics by refashioning the conditions of global governance is essential. IAEA Director General Mohamed El Baradei makes a similar point:

> Clearly, the development of a security system that does not depend on nuclear deterrence or nuclear weapons will be a prerequisite to a roadmap for effective disarmament. Until the international community fully engages on the development of such a system, achieving complete nuclear disarmament will remain in the realm of rhetoric.[71]

The Bush Administration's alternative nonproliferation paradigm posits no such aims. Instead, it is a paradigm of negation: it effectively disowns the disarmament goals enshrined in the NPT and denies the continuing political relevance of the "bargain" between the nuclear "haves" and "have-nots" to the political and social dimensions of motivations to acquire nuclear weapons – the "demand side" of proliferation. Defenders of this position contend it simply reflects reality: "rogue" states' desires for nuclear weapons are driven more by proximate regional circumstances than distant US policy decisions. This point is valid, up to a point: for both North Korea and Iran, as described earlier, motivations to acquire nuclear weapons are principally driven by some combination of regional security circumstances and internal regime legitimation needs.

But this is not the end of the story. For both North Korea and Iran, US nuclear weapons policies represent direct and proximate threats to national security, and even national survival. Hence, increasing US reliance on nuclear deterrence and coercion *directly* reinforces perceptions in these countries of the political value of nuclear weapons as symbols and as threat-making security devices. The US posture also indirectly reinforces these perceptions by impinging global nuclear non-possession (if not non-use) norms.

Treaty regimes, superpower circumspection, and a normative consensus on reducing the shadow of nuclear weapons over global politics cannot prevent proliferation. But these conditions can be powerful restraints. The absence of these conditions is thus a permissive cause of proliferation ambitions. As a concrete example, had the United States at the 2005 NPT Review Conference led the NPT's P5 in taking seriously their Article VI commitments to nuclear disarmament, rather than leading their disassociation from those commitments, the US would have been far more successful at rallying broad political and normative support for confronting North Korea's and Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions. As IAEA Director General Mohamed El Baradei stated in opening remarks to the Conference, "As long as some countries place strategic reliance on

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[71] Mohamed ElBaradei, "Nuclear Non-Proliferation: Global Security in a Rapidly Changing World," Statement to the Carnegie International Non-Proliferation Conference, Washington, DC, June 21, 2004 (http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Statements/2004/ebsp2004n004.html).

nuclear weapons as a deterrent, other countries will emulate them. We cannot delude ourselves into thinking otherwise."[72]

Despite its rejection of these premises, the Bush Administration's alternative nonproliferation paradigm should prod supporters of the NPT regime to effectively adapt both its material and normative dimensions to the second nuclear era. In its current articulation, the alternative paradigm is too messianic and self-serving to function as an effective nonproliferation foundation. But its generic recognition of the political dimension of nuclear proliferation is overdue. In a more rigorously developed form, this perspective can function as an essential adjunct to the prevailing paradigm's narrower focus on limiting material capabilities and upholding technical non-discrimination. Drawing on more nuanced understandings of the political and social dimensions of the causes and consequences of proliferation is particularly vital in responding to the emerging conditions of the second nuclear era, in which abstract strategy matters less and the broader threat-making and symbolic values of nuclear weapons possession matter more.

Increasing acceptance of and reliance on nuclear threat-making deepens the insinuation of nuclear capabilities into the fabric of international relations in each of the material/security, domestic politics and normative/symbolic domains. Arms control, nonproliferation and the ideal of eventual disarmament require reversing this permeation, which in turn requires elevating conditions of global governance – at both national and international levels – above the mean dictates of anarchy. The prerequisite is both material and normative: good governance means good institutions, but the necessity of consensual acceptance means good institutions cannot be imposed by fiat. The task is necessarily a long one; there are no crusading quick fixes.

The United States, as the globe's preeminent power, can lead this task. But this must be leadership through broad and genuine consensus, not convenient and/or coerced "coalitions of the willing." The Bush Administration is not wrong to orient US policy around a vision for a better world. But America's global friends – and even its adversaries – have vital and necessary roles to play in directing that vision toward more consensual and normatively satisfying aspirations. Then they must join in its quest as well. That would not be a bad measure of "responsibility."

[72] Mohamed ElBaradei, Statement to the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, United Nations, New York, 2 May 2005 (http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Statements/2005/ebsp2005n006.html).