Annals of Human and Social Sciences
www.ahss.org.pk

Nuclear Deterrence and South Asia: Theory and its Pre-Requisites

[1] Dr. Robina Khan [2] Dr. Ghulam Mustafa* [3] Dr. Bilal Bin Liaqat

1. PhD, Department of Political Science, Government, College University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, Government College University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Lecturer, Department of International Relations, Government College University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan

| ***Corresponding Author** | ghulammustafa@gcuf.edu.pk |

ABSTRACT

The article explores the concept of nuclear deterrence and its Pre-Requisites. Deterrence is an abstract phenomenon perceived as a 'Strategy of Peace' not a 'Strategy of War' and is intended to persuade the adversary, that aggression is the least attractive out of all the options. Deterrence has four types in military terms; deterrence by defeat, deterrence by punishment, deterrence by denial, and mutual deterrence. In the context of nuclear deterrence, it means having the means to deliver along with the will to order a castigatory strike. In simple word deterrence is restoration of balance of power between two rival state. This article is the case study of Pak-India Nuclear Deterrence to testify if the Nuclear Deterrence work as strategy of peace. The Purpose of this article is to analyze the assumption of deterrence and nuclear deterrence in theoretical Perspective and try to implement them on peace between India and Pakistan in South Asia. This qualitative research straight forwarded analysis of India and Pakistan Nuclear policies towards each other.

| **Keywords:** | C4 W, Complex Deterrence, Mutually Assured Destruction, Nuclear Arsenals, Nuclear Deterrence |

Introduction

Academically deterrence is an abstract phenomenon perceived as a 'Strategy of Peace' not a 'Strategy of War' and is intended to persuade the adversary, that aggression is the least attractive out of all the options. Though it seems impossible to restrict the adversary physically yet it restricts it psychologically. Thomas Schelling claimed that "deterrence is concerned with influencing choices another party will make, and doing it by influencing his expectations of how we behave. It involves confronting him with evidence for believing that our behavior will be determined by his behavior" (Halperin, 1962). While Colin Gray describes that, "deterrence refers to the effect when a person, institution, or polity decides not to take actions that otherwise would have been taken, because of the belief or strong suspicion that intolerable consequences would ensue from such action" (Gaddis, 1989). "Deterrence has four types in military terms; deterrence by defeat, deterrence by punishment, deterrence by denial, and mutual deterrence. Deterrence by defeat presents the situation that one of the sides might intend to initiate war however avoid starting it because of the maximum possibility of its defeat" (Jervis, Robert, 1989). Deterrence by punishment means that one might desire to initiate war would avoid doing so due to the belief that retaliation from the opposite camp could impose unprecedented damage to the enemy (Jervis, Robert, 1989). Deterrence by denial represents the condition when an adversary might wish to impose war on its enemy but restrict itself, as it is convinced that its war objectives will not be attained (Ambrose, Eisenhower the President, 1984). On the other hand, Mutual Deterrence is different from mutually assured destruction (MAD). Mutual deterrence is the state which exists up to the time till the adversaries are convinced regarding the devastation of launching attack that commonly fits the nuclear war (Jervis,

Robert, 1984). Additionally, the deterrence may not be considered as credible unless or until it fulfills certain conditions to exist. Deterrence is efficacious when the deterred is convinced that what deterrer has the resolve to do what he threatens.

C4 W: (Capability, Capacity, Credibility, Communication of Will)

"C4" stands for capability, capacity, credibility, communication and will or determination to use the nuclear arms when the conditions demands so" (Baloch, 2008). Capability stands for possession of weapons or technology along with the accuracy of delivery. Whereas, Capacity means that even after facing the first shock of nuclear strike by the adversary sustain with, retaliate with adequate stamina and inflict unprecedented loses over the enemy. Deterrence is usually considered as a combination of capability as well as credibility. In the context of nuclear deterrence, it means having the means to deliver along with the will to order a castigatory strike. American Defense Secretary while commented on cold war nuclear strategy of US stated that, "by maintaining a highly reliable ability to inflict unacceptable damage upon any single aggressor or combination of aggressors at any time during the course of a strategic nuclear exchange, even after absorbing a surprise first strike……. Assured destruction is the very essence of the whole deterrence concept. We must possess an actual assured destruction capability, and that capability also must be credible" (Khan, 2005). A reliable delivery mechanism must be possessed by the nuclear state to ensure credible minimum deterrence along with the second-strike capability to strike the target. As certainty of considerable retaliation can only be achieved through the accuracy of the delivery of nuclear weapons.

To ensure the dependability, consistency is also attached now a day with the ownership of triode which means control over the delivery of nuclear arsenals from air, ground and sea. It indicates that in the absence of appropriate capacity and capability, credibility of threat cannot be ensured whereas, the foundation of deterrence depends upon the credibility of the threat. It means that before formulating a certain strategy the risks and costs must be measured minutely. As Dr. Qadir Baloch observed that, "a state's assured-destruction capability gives it the ability to make the cost that an adversary has to bear in any conflict outweigh any possible gains. If, therefore, a state's threat to impose these costs were sufficiently credible, an adversary would prefer backing off" (Baloch, 2008).

As prevention of arousing the certain types of contingencies are the fundamental prerequisites of effective deterrence. So for that purpose, an unambiguous communication either through gestures or actions to deliver the threat is required, that unendurable damages or stark retaliation with unprecedented losses will inflict upon the enemy, (whether the threat is conventional or nuclear, direct or indirect). Secondly the leadership's determination to use the capability of deterrence is also exceptionally critical and the adversary must know it clearly. Thirdly leadership must not bother the question of moral adequacy of nuclear deterrence however the use of nuclear weapons must be the last resort. According to Dr. Qadir Baloch, "rather than focusing over 'in jus ad bellum' (the reason to go war) and 'jus in bello' (the way in which war is conducted)" (Baloch, 2008).

Field Marshal Montgomery observed that, "the fear of atomic and nuclear weapons is a powerful deterrent to war; but once a world hot war started both sides are likely to use them". (Jervis, Robert, 1984) The prominent military strategist Liddell Hart was the very first who draw the focus towards the effectiveness of dependence on nuclear power "as a continuation of policy by other means" (Paul, 1998). The classic example of communicating the resolve to solidify deterrence credibility was 'Cuban Missile Crisis' when USSR withdraws its secretly installed medium range nuclear missiles in Cuba and averted the war with U.S. Nevertheless, deterrence has an abstract value regardless of its type, it turns ineffective as soon as it is believed that "the state is in position to use it or lose it". Consequently, nuclear arsenals can be used as a tool for exerting political influence in 'War as well as in Peace times'. Clausewitz stated "war is continuation of politics by other means"

Nuclear Deterrence and Cold War

The nuclear strategy during Cold War validated that nuclear weapons are for deterrence but not for practical use as it aims to prevent the enemy from its use. Therefore, absence of any major war after WWII is usually credited to the presence of 'absolute weapons' by many political analysts. Many political analysts who consider the Cold War period as an 'Era of Stability' in interstate relations credited nuclear deterrence as the nuclear weapons were installed by both the adversaries. Though US and USSR were prepared to fight and thought of winning it during cold war but they never indulged in the direct war. It is a generally assumed, that the absolute weapons have facilitated the preservation of status quo and maintenance of 'Unprecedented Long Peace' consequently made the occurrence of the crisis infrequent. The 'nuclear weapons' not only deterred the nuclear collusion but also restrained the recurrence of conventional wars. The phenomenon of conventional deterrence is based on prevention of an attack through intimidating retaliation by non-nuclear weapons (Brodie, 1946). Ever since the end of WWII, U.S defense depended upon the Cold War doctrines of nuclear deterrence and containment to deter nuclear attacks. American Defense Secretary Robert McNamara while describing the U.S policy stated that, "The cornerstone of our strategic policy continues to be to 'deter' deliberate nuclear attack upon the United States or its allies" (Mcnamara, 1968).

Change in Nature of Statecraft

The nature of statecraft, state's character and behavior has been altered fundamentally and profoundly after the induction of nuclear weapons. Brodie et al. observed that, "Everything about the atomic bomb is overshadowed by the twin facts that it 'exists' and its 'destructive power' is fantastically great" (Bernard Brodie, 1946). Similarly, the transformation in the thinking patterns of political as well as military leadership about war is due to the mutual condition of 'strategic vulnerability' to keep peace (Jervis, Robert, 1984). As Kenneth Waltz pointed out: "Because catastrophic outcomes of nuclear exchanges are easy to imagine, leaders of the states will shrink in horror from initiating them. With nuclear weapons, stability and peace rest on easy calculations of what one country can do to another. Anyone – political leader or man in the street – can see that catastrophe lurks if events spiral out of control and nuclear warheads begin to fly" (Waltz, 1990). Bhumitra Chakma stated that, "This alteration is more evident in military behavior, in which a nuclear power is bound to maintain exceeding caution when dealing with an adversarial nuclear weapon state" (Chakma, 2015). Though nuclear weapons provide exceptional military might to its possessor yet the weapons are incapable of protecting its possessor. Thomas Schelling noted that, "it is not a matter of 'overkill' but of 'mutual kill' – the side that is 'losing' can inflict unprecedented destruction on the side that is 'winning' as easily as the 'winner' can do so on the loser" (Schelling, 1960). The induction of nuclear weapons has transformed many usual patterns of international relations and above discussion indicates that, these ingrained fears in the minds leaderships have many solid and valid reasons.

In nuclear age 'speed of the war' has increased tremendously and 'punishment is total' unlike the earlier wars. As 'Nuclear deterrence' focuses on the unprecedented price or punishment which makes the political culminations inapt. Moreover, nuclear deterrence depends on the conviction of the belief that attack would not be off real worth (Papp, 1998). In the recorded history of wars, there was enough time and scope for bargaining and punishments were unhurried. Now war is the test of deterrence and the reality of deterrence is that it fails, if the nuclear weapons are used. Secondly, the concept of victory intensely transformed as all-out nuclear wars cannot be won by any side. The US President Eisenhower recognized this: "there is no victory [in a US–Soviet nuclear war] except through our imaginations" (Ambrose, Eisenhower the President, 1984). Jervis recorded that, during the National Security Council meeting Eisenhower again stated, "No one was going to be the winner in such a nuclear war. The destruction might be such that we might have ultimately to go back to bows and arrows". Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev in a joint statement on

November 21, 1985 concluded that "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought" (Jervis, Robert, 1984). Thirdly the connection between political objectives and war has been further severed by the nuclear weapons due to their frightening and unprecedented destructive power. As nuclear environment is supposed to make the occurrence of crises/wars infrequent as both the sides are clear about the 'lines of status quo'. Knowing the fact that in the presence of sufficient nuclear weapons considerable damages to the adversary can be caused as a result of second-strike war became 'impossible' and 'improbable' (Jervis, Robert, 1984).

End of Cold War and Complex Deterrence

'Complex deterrence' according to T. V. Paul as: "an ambiguous deterrence relationship, which is caused by fluid structural elements of the international system to the extent that the nature and type of actors, their power relationships, and their motives become unclear, making it difficult to mount and signal credible deterrent threats in accordance with the established precepts of deterrence theory" (T. V. Paul R, 1998).

'Complex Deterrence' ascended with end of cold war. It emerged in context of 'Horizontal nuclear proliferation' moreover, the 'nuclear issues' and 'deterrence systems' arise in many regions of the world especially Asia (Masood, 2007). Paul Bracken claims that the second nuclear age rose 'out of a Hodge podge of unrelated regional issues' (Schaffer, 2002–03). This 'Second Nuclear age' or the 'Era of nuclearization in South Asia' did not emerge immediately nor automatically, in fact the process was evolving in nature and somewhat surreptitious. The explicit nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in May 1998 not only led to the beginning of this new nuclear age but also gave birth to a new category of 'de facto nuclear weapons states' (Masood, 2007). Whose possession of nuclear weapons was proven yet the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) did not acknowledge it.   T.V Paul conceptualized five models sub-categories of complex deterrence in the post-Cold War era: (a) deterrence among great powers; (b) deterrence among new nuclear states; (c) deterrence and extended deterrence involving nuclear great powers and regional powers armed with chemical, biological and nuclear weapons; (d) deterrence between nuclear states and non-state actors; and (e) deterrence by collective actors (Schelling, Arms and Influence, 1960). In the case of South Asia, the "b" category is applicable, where less stable political systems, limited resources, absence of leading-edge technology, and comparatively weaker state institutions pose formidable challenges to these 'New Regional Nuclear Powers'.

Though the optimist school of thought believes, that nuclear revolution has brought strategic stability between the two traditional adversaries India-Pakistan by making the full-fledge war improbable. On the other hand, the Pessimist school of thought suggests that the presence of these absolute weapons made the Indo-Pak traditional rivalry more precarious. Bhumitra Chakma while commenting on difference of nature of cold war nuclear environment and South Asian nuclear dynamics observed that, "a complex deterrence system replaced the 'old Cold War nuclear structure' in the second nuclear age. As the regional nuclear issues and deterrence systems emerged as key features of the new nuclear era. Notwithstanding this transformation of the global nuclear structure in the post-Cold War era, deterrence thinking remained very much Cold War-like. Indeed, post-Cold War nuclear deterrence, both in theory and practice, has copied the deterrence precepts and framework that were developed during the Cold War period. Contemporary regional nuclear deterrence which is conceptualized and practiced in Cold War terms is particularly problematic". Similarly, Thomas Graham pointed out that, in an insightful paper, "Do not Americanize Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia" (Graham, 1980).

The above discussion indicates that there are fundamental dissimilarities between Cold war nuclear deterrence and deterrence in South Asia. As nuclear deterrence during cold war remained more autonomous phenomenon between US and USSR and remained

uninfluenced by any superior force or higher structure on both the sides. While, deterrence in the case of south Asia is profoundly intruded and subjugated by the intervening variable/extra-regional forces. As the penetration and intervention of systemic forces in crises stability increased tremendously with the passage of time, due to the absence of bilateral mechanism in the region to halt the frequent occurrence of crises. According to Bhumitra Chakma, "The intrusion of extra-regional variables or outside powers into regional affairs occurs for two principal reasons. First, it is structurally ordained and unavoidable due to the very nature of the modern international system. Secondly, regional actors seek and facilitate the intervention of extra-regional systemic powers in their favor in regional affairs, mainly in regional disputes and crises" (Chakma, 2015).

Though this constant domination of the 'subordinate state system' by 'International system' started in Cold war but lasts up till now (Papp, 1998). Although with the end of Cold war many international realities have considerably transformed yet this formulation is still relevant. Mohammed Ayub claims that "the autonomy of regional interstate dynamics from global forces have mainly remained a delusion both during the Cold War as well as the subsequent period. Indeed, the penetration of the 'Dominant System' or systemic forces into regional subsystems is structurally ordained and such penetration does occur in all types of international systems – bipolar, multipolar or unipolar, albeit to varying degrees" (Papp, 1998). In one of the important study conducted by Cantori and Spiegel claims that "an intrusive system entails the politically significant participation of external powers in the international relations of the subordinate system" (Papp, 1998). The ongoing discussion indicates that the structure and dynamics are more influenced and shaped by the intrusion of outside powers rather than the region's characteristics and properties. "These extra-regional intrusion affects the contents (goals) and conduct (techniques) of the policy pursuits of regional actors and the pattern – enmity or amity – of regional interactions" (Bhumika Chakma). Cantori and Spiegel identified that, "there are nine channels through which external powers intrude into regional affairs. They are: multilateral arrangements; bilateral arrangements; trade and economic investments; possession of colony; military intervention; subversion; the United Nations; cultural and educational activities; and propaganda" (Papp, 1998). Interference of dominant powers in the matters of regional subsystems is one of the key features of modern international system. Therefore, lack of political stability, under developing economy, general fragility of region's state systems and recurring or intense interstate security rivalries are the dominant factors that enable the penetration of external powers. More specifically the 'strong security dilemma' forces the regional countries to pursue support from the outside powers, either to supplement their own power or to enhance the bargaining position vis-à-vis regional rival/s or to restore the regional balance of power politics (Papp, 1998). For example, India and Pakistan are gripped in formidable difficulties in their mutual relationship and faced multiple conflicts, wars or stand-offs persistently. In order to blow the crisis, third party always played a decisive role (Levy, 1989). Secondly, intruded regions are usually crisis-prone and tempt the regional nuclear players towards brinkmanship in a crisis situation. So the striving regional players garner the support and assistance of extra-regional forces. The major objective for seeking the intervention of outside forces can either be de-escalation or to wind down the crisis. As it was stated "The nature and extent of penetration are determined by the objectives, motives and reputation of the intruding power, the position of the intruding power in the international system as well as by the location of the region where intrusion takes place" (Chakma, 2015). Thirdly, it is generally assumed by regional nuclear players that major power/s will interfere in a regionally erupted crisis to avoid the apprehension that escalation may accelerate further and lead to nuclear war. Such a supposition emboldens regional nuclear players to take more risk in the formulation of their policies or pursuit than they might have otherwise taken. Scott Sagan in South Asia context has claimed: "the possibility of [external] intervention may encourage the governments of India and Pakistan to engage in risky behavior, initiating crises or making limited uses of force, precisely because they anticipate (correctly or incorrectly) that other nuclear powers may bail them out diplomatically if the going gets rough" (Carver, 1982). Lastly the general inadequacies in

the 'nuclear structures' of regional players and the instability of their 'mutual deterrence' offers space to international powers to play for their own vested interests.

The context discussed above indicates that the intervention of international players in nuclear deterrence in South Asia proved a dual-edge sword and added further complexities. On one side it allows the brinkmanship game for the regional actors for risk taking, on the other side it demands swift but careful intervention by international powers for de-escalation. Moreover, it creates doubts in the mind of the second adversary that other side is getting more physical, financial and political support by the extra-regional powers. Therefore, it instigates security dilemma and the latter would seek for the same type of support from some other international player. It is therefore logical that the induction of outer variables creates, (1) high level of susceptibility among the regional players, (2) minimize the autonomy of regional deterrence further, (3) allows the regional players to take more risk (4) international players become the integral part of regional nuclear deterrence. The cursory glance at the security conditions of south Asia clearly indicates that complexities involved in nuclear deterrence are real challenge for stable deterrence in peace building in south Asia. As Halperin and Schelling describes stable deterrence' as "a situation in which the incentives on both sides to initiate wars are outweighed by disincentives. Deterrence is 'stable' when: it is reasonably secure against shocks, alarms, and perturbations. That is ... when political events, internal or external to the countries involved, technological change, accidents, false alarms, misunderstandings, crises, limited wars, or changes in the intelligence available to both sides, are unlikely to disturb the incentives sufficiently to make deterrence fail" (Khan M. A., 1998).

According to the political analysts, South Asia is now more close to nuclear Armageddon due to the fact that as relationship between both the adversaries are fraught and conditions are inapt for a 'Stable Deterrence'.

Conclusion

According to Ken Booth, "a Nation's history, geography and political culture helps to shape behavior on such issues as use of force in international politics, sensitivity to external dangers, civil-military relations and strategic doctrines". During cold war era Washington and Moscow were comparatively more experienced and were tremendously stable politically, with almost zero internal threats. Conversely, in the case of South Asia, where less stable political systems, limited resources, absence of leading-edge technology, and comparatively weaker state institutions pose formidable challenges to these 'New Regional Nuclear Powers'.

New Delhi and Islamabad's long history of deep-seated rivalries, geographical conflicts and sense of enmity has left lasting impressions on the political cultures and behaviors of both the sides. Both face notable internal threats and violence to varying intensity, due to the ongoing secessionist movements. Moreover, both the sides allege each other frequently of stimulating and fomenting the separatist organizations. Sometimes the internal dynamics are linked to the crisis escalation directly and have serious implications for the entire south Asia.

The importance of territories for both the major south Asian nations is perhaps the dominant difference between the conditions of Cold War and the scenario of south Asia. Though political scientists opine that the existence of nuclear weapons enriches the territorial security of states more while decreases the quest for territorial conquest due to the fear that escalation may leads to the nuclear level. Whereas, this view put serious question marks on the situation where the territorial disputes are considered as an issue of state pride and identity rather than a mere piece of land. During Cold War there were neither any territorial claims nor both sides tried to conquer each other's territories. Whereas in case of South Asia, both major nuclear rivals have claim over the territory under control of other additionally linked with the state identity and every conflict adds more emotional

touch in it. A probe into the strategic cultures of both the nations exposes that Kashmir has tremendous significance in the state identities. In short the complexity of Indo-Pak relation have decisive impacts on the nuclear behavior of South Asian nuclear powers. To conclude we can say that nuclear deterrence has mixed effects, 'coercion and cooperation' in pre-detonation era for the peace building process. Whereas, declaration nuclear arsenals in South Asia have not guaranteed the 'Peace building' in the region. Rather than assurances it has contributed in the fragility of 'Peace' and 'deterrence' became more 'unreliable' in post detonation era. The sophistication and elegance of nuclear deterrence theory positions in contrast with the complications that can obstruct the efficacious practice of deterrence.

Bibliography

Ambrose, S. (1984). *Eisenhower the President.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Baloch, Q. B. (2008). Pakistan's Nuclear Deterrence: Decade of Perceptions & Misperceptions, *The Dialogue, II*(4), 1-29.

Bernard Brodie, e. (1946). *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Energy and World Order*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Marshal, F., & Carver, L. (1982). *A Policy for Peace,* London: Faber and Faber.

Chakma, B. (2015). *South Asia's Nuclear Security*. Oxen UK: Routledge.

Gaddis, J. L. (1989). *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War.* Oxford University Press.

Jervis, Robert. (1984). *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Khan, M. A. (1998). *Nuclearisation of South Asia and its Regional and Global Implications*. Regional Studies

Levy, J. S. (1989). Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War. *World Politics, 40, 1 (October)*.

Mcnamara, R. S. (1968). *The Essence of Security.* London: Harper & Row, Publishers.

Masood, T. (2007). Pakistan as a Receptive Proliferator. In M. B. ed by, *Nuclear Proliferation and International Security* (pp. pp. 172-193). London: Routledge.

Papp, D. S. (1998). *Contemporary International Relations: Framework for understanding.* New York: Macmillan college.

Schaffer, T. C. (2002). US influence on Pakistan: Can partners have divergent priorities? Washington Quarterly, 26(1), 169-183.

Schelling, T. (1960). *Arms and Influence.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Paul, T. V., (1998) 'The systemic bases of India's challenge to the global nuclear order', The Nonproliferation Review, 6(1), 1-11

Paul, T. V., Harknett, R. J., & Wirtz, J. J. (Eds.). (2000). The Absolute Weapon Revisited: Nuclear Arms and the Emerging International Order. University of Michigan Press.

Schelling, T. C. (2014). *Strategy and Arms Control.* Connecticut: Martino Fine Books.

Waltz, K. N. (1990). Nuclear myths and political realities. American Political Science Review, 84(3), 730-745.

Khan, Z. (2005). *India-Pakistan nuclear rivalry: Perceptions, misperceptions and mutual deterrence (No. 9)*. Islamabad: Islamabad Policy Research Institute.