

CRITICAL APPRAISAL ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EXISTENCE AND PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION (WMD) IN SHAPING THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

BY

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Abstract

The first time the world witnessed the devastation Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD) can do was in the event of World War II when United States bomb two Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The idea of using such weapons was to destroy an adversary's cities, so that any other enemy state may fear fighting a nuclear state. The assumptions on the proliferation of WMD is, it created deterrence during Cold War and kept the whole world safe by providing stability in the crisis, giving protection against attacks with nuclear weapons, protection against attacks with conventional forces, and a viable additional diplomatic advantage. The controversy is, if this assertion is true, then why there has been the issue of nuclear disarmament and why Nuclear nonproliferation treaty (NPT), when the Nuclear prevent war? The truth is, nuclear weapons remained powerfully dangerous and even though appeared to be slowly but steadily spreading, its devastation can be immeasurable, and survivability of the world peace as a results of its proliferation cannot be overemphasized. This paper examined the existence and proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in shaping the international security environment. It revealed that city and civilians attack is a war sin, and instead of it to be terrifying and submission by the attacked people, would turn out to be resistance and makes them more resilient and determined to survive and fight back and eventually led to springing up of many dangerous terrorist groups, like Boko Haram, ISIS, etc.

Keywords: Weapons of Mass Destructions, Nuclear Proliferations, arms trade, and disarmaments.

Introduction

The first use of the term Weapons of Mass Destruction was by Cosmo Gordon Lang, in 1937 in reference to aerial bombardment of Guernica, Spain; it was periodically used later in different circumstances by individuals, especially leaders of great powers (Bentley, 2014). There is no authoritative definition of Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD), but it is generally been referred to as a nuclear, radiological, chemical, biological or other weapons (such as missile technology and delivery systems; e.g aircraft and ballistic missiles) that can kill and bring significant harm to a large number of humans or cause great damage to human-made structures

(e.g. buildings), natural structures (e.g. mountains), or biosphere (Hutchinson, 2011). The weapons have the capacity to inflict death and destruction on such a massive scale and so indiscriminately notably against civilians that its very presence in the hands of a hostile power can be considered a grievous threat (Knocks, 2016). Schelling, (2008), asserted that, "in the present era noncombatants appear to be not only deliberate targets in war, but primary targets. The strategic nature of WMD shows their function in the military doctrine of total war as targeting the means a country would use to support and supply its war effort, specifically its population, industry, and natural resources, as destroying cities,

whether in the early stages or the latter is central to nuclear war”.

The dangers posed by countries and groups possessing Weapons of Mass Destruction and its proliferation have come to occupy center stage in international politics and established an unprecedented constellation of challenges to peace and security (Hutchinson, 2011). According to Federal Bureau of Investigation (2014), “the frequency of high-profile acts of terrorism has increased over the past decade or so due to WMD proliferation. Dozens of identified domestic and international terrorists groups have expressed intention to obtain and use WMD, which is an evolving threat to the international peace and security”. The terrorists and multiple countries seek to expand their WMD capabilities using U.S. technologies as the key to moving their programs forward. As new technologies emerge and mature and as scientific expertise and technological equipment become more readily available, the challenge of safeguarding these from those that would use them for nefarious purposes is increasing exponentially (FBI, 2014).

Realist schools of thoughts have long postulated that international system is anarchical. Conflicts among nation states are inevitable, and war is devastating (Knocks, 2015). It is therefore paramount for all nation states to look for a means of preserving peace and security of their entity using different means ranging from disarmament, arms control or non-proliferation agreements, and counter-proliferation (Cirincione, 2014). It was for this, that this paper offers in-depth information on basic threats posed by Weapons of Mass Destruction thereby hindering peace and security to international system. Arguments are supported by reviewing and clarifying the concepts associated with arms proliferation and control among nations that possessed WMD, and finally, criticism to arms control and counter-proliferation were provided.

Conceptual Clarification

Disarmament and arms control are sometimes used interchangeably, but technically they differ. While disarmament is the reduction of number of weapons and troops maintained by a state, arms control is the treaties made between potential adversaries that reduce the likelihood and scope of war, usually imposing limitations on military capability (Schelling, 2008). Although

disarmament involves reduction of military forces and weapons, arms control does not. In fact, arms control agreements sometimes allow for increase of weapons by one or more parties to treaty so as to bring balance of power which also aimed at instituting peace in international system (Cirincione, 2014). The concept of arms control has simultaneously evolved to counter-proliferation which involves collective efforts by U.S. government agencies to combat the spread or development of Weapons of Mass Destructions and to identify, deny, disrupt, and exploit attempts by foreign governments and other organizations who would do the global nations harm, to obtain or divert materials, technology, and knowledge necessary to fabricate a WMD or advance a WMD program (FBI, 2014). In contrast to the above, Arms race is a competitive or rivalries buildup of sophisticated weapons between two or more powers, while Arms transfer is the flows or movements of arms between or among countries', particularly between industrialized or capitalist nations and 3rd world states (Cirincione, 2014).

Countries with Weapons of Mass Destructions

Over the past century, various states have built a stockpiled lethal arsenal of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and materials to produce them (FBI, 2014), but only nine countries currently have declared they possessing nuclear weapons or are known to have tested a nuclear weapon, from which only five are members of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT); these are Britain or United Kingdom, China, France, India, Israel (assumed), North Korea (claimed), Pakistan, Russia, and United States, and several states are believed to possess chemical and/or biological warfare agents (Cirincione, 2014). There are approximately 30,000 nuclear weapons in national stockpiles of the eight nuclear weapons states (Horowitz, & Neil, 2013).

The only country to have used a nuclear weapon in war is United States, which dropped two atomic bombs on Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. It has been the time when the world witnessed devastation that a nuclear bomb could do to people and their cities (Schelling, 2008). Israel is considered by most analysts to have nuclear weapons numbering in low hundreds as well, but maintains an official policy of nuclear ambiguity, neither denying nor confirming its nuclear status (Cirincione, 2014).

In 2015, United States confirmed that Israel does indeed have thermonuclear arms, disclosing a decades-long collaboration on weapons technology development.

South Africa had developed a small nuclear arsenal in 1980s, but disassembled them in early 1990s, making it the only country to have fully given up an independently developed nuclear weapons arsenal. Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine inherited stockpiles of nuclear arms following the break-up of Soviet Union, but relinquished them to Russian Federation (Bentley, 2014). Countries with access to nuclear weapons through nuclear sharing agreements include Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, and Turkey. North Korea has claimed to have developed and tested nuclear devices, although outside sources have been unable to unequivocally support the state's claims (Bentley, 2014).

'Weapons of Mass Destructions' the threats to international security

Nuclear weapons represent the greatest threat. It has horrific and unmatched destructive power. An all-out nuclear attack could annihilate billions of people within hours. Depending upon the yield and atmospheric conditions, a large thermonuclear weapon dropped on a densely populated city could kill millions of people in an instant. The detonation of just one small nuclear weapon could kill as many as 100,000 people. In addition, many thousands more would die over time due to lethal effects of radiation (Hutchinson, 2011).

The Commission on Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism has reported that, WMD terrorist attack has reached to alarming rate thereby increasing number of acts of group terrorism and insurgencies resulting from illegal trafficking of weapons, unauthorized development and use of arms technology, causing threat on security survival of international system (FBI, 2014). This is for the fact possessing WMD in the name of nuclear deterrence is viewed as terrorism too and even less appealing; it is the worst form of terrorism, because the idea is to persuade an enemy that there is an intention to exterminate him, and therefore the enemy almost ensures that he never surrenders. As a result, countries like Angola, Liberia, Nigeria, Somalia, Rwanda, Kosovo, Syrilanka, India, Pakistan,

Brassabil, Yugoslavia, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Palestine, and even the superpowers were engulfed in great threat of these unprecedented happenings, for example the 9/11 incidence and recent spark of ISIS from Iraq and Syria (Dodge, 2014).

Some years back, the threat of potential WMD in Iraq was used by President George W. Bush as justification for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, in which U.S and a multi-national coalition invaded Iraq to depose Saddam. The occasional and persistent disarming of Saddam Hussain by USA suspecting he possessed WMD was the genesis of ISIS insurgency in Iraq and its spread to Syria and affiliation to other nations terrorist groups, like Taliban, Al-qaq'edah, Boko Haram, and others (Knocks, 2016). The existence of ISIS has posed a grave security threat to peoples of the region and international system as it is a criminal organization that has killed thousands of Syrians and Iraqis (Cockburn, 2015). The terrorist group uses WMD in their attacks making people living under daily bombardment and shelling, likewise U.S fight them back using Airstrikes involved of fighters, bombers, and launching Tomahawk cruise missiles causing high number of death and casualties, thus, threat to security (Dodge, 2014).

Based on Raphael, (2015) perception, US interventions in Iraq and Syria did not change the situation but rather worsen it, because 2014 was the deadliest year for civilians in Iraq and Syria since the height of U.S. war in 2006 and 2007. The watchdog found that 17,049 civilians were recorded killed in Iraq in the year 2012 alone; approximately double the number recorded killed in 2013, which in turn was roughly double the tally from 2012. And more than 76,000 people, over 3,500 of them children died in 2012 in Syria, according to figures from the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (Raphael, 2015).

History has it that, during World War II, England was subjected to intense city bombings by Hitler's forces, but that made them to neither surrendered nor even debated surrendering because of city bombings. Eventually an estimated 60,000 people died in the United Kingdom as a result of city bombing. But besides vastly increasing the suffering associated with the war and seeming to strengthen the resolve of their survival and fighting back, the bombings of cities appears to have had little impact on the Britain's military effort in the war. In Germany the

destruction during the WWII created by city bombings was far greater than the destruction in England. An estimated 570,000 people lost their lives and a large number of major cities were seriously damaged or destroyed. Throughout much of the time that German cities were being mercilessly bombed in this way, German civilian morale remained strong, and until August 1944 overall economic production actually rose (Wilson, 2008).

The resultant acts of terrorism and insurgencies caused by proliferation of WMD, due to rise of ISIS had significantly further caused an unintended consequence of refugees' social problems. There was much number of refugees suffering and spreading to countries of France, Greece and other nations looking for life security (Knocks, 2016). According to UNRC (2013), there were 16.7 million refugees worldwide at the end of 2013. Antonio Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, recently warned, "The Syria and Iraq mega-crises, the multiplication of new crises, and old crises that seem never to die have created worst displacement situation in the world since World War II," with at least 13.6 million people displaced from both countries (UNHCR 2013).

Baylis, Wirtz, & Gray, (2013) asserted that, attacks carried out by terrorist groups or nation shake global economy, and further burden national budgets, constrain investments in human development, increased indebtedness position of countries, and create instability in many parts of the world. For self-defense and self-bargaining power, WMD proliferations lead to diversion of resources from developmental programmes to purchase of arms and their services from those with technical knowhow, which are too costly. Instead of injecting capital into social services sector to reduce heightened threat of hunger and starvations, budgets were geared into provision of defense services. For example, in Nigeria, due to Boko Haram insurgency, the country has been spending about 20% of its national budget on defense and security matters (Military Balance, 2014). In recent years, global military expenditure has increased again due to increase of terrorist acts, and is now comparable to Cold War levels. Recent data shows global spending at over \$1.7 trillion (Bentley, 2014).

Towards dismantling Weapons of Mass Destructions

The destructive nature of WMD led to embarking on landmark Nunn-Lugar Program passed in 1991. The program worked cooperatively with Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus, other nations and safely secured and dismantled vulnerable stockpiles of weapons and materials of mass destruction in former Soviet Union. It has assisted in deactivation of more than 7,500 nuclear warheads; the elimination of 2,000 intercontinental missiles; and destruction of 1,000 missile launchers. It helped secures innumerable biological pathogens and destroy almost two million chemical weapons. The expanded scope of the original Nunn-Lugar program posed threats anywhere in the world that destroyed chemical weapons in Albania, provided security to African research labs studying dangerous pathogens, and facilitated WMD security agreements in East Asia. The Program exists as an important resource for responding to proliferation emergencies and building ties to countries that want help contending with WMD stockpiles and infrastructure. Nunn-Lugar has been a vital component of unilateral, bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements between Russia and United States. Later several international conventions and treaties were put in place, although not all countries have signed and ratified them (Baylis, Wirtz, & Gray, 2013). Senator Lugar was at the forefront of efforts to evaluate and pass arms control agreements including the START agreements, the INF Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, Moscow Treaty and others. He was the lead Republican fighting for successful ratification of New START agreement with Russia in 2010 (Cirincione, 2014).

The end of Cold War reduced U.S. reliance on nuclear weapons as a deterrent, causing it to shift its focus to disarmament (Wilson, 2008). With the 1990 invasion of Kuwait and 1991 Gulf War, Iraq's nuclear, biological and chemical weapons programs became a particular concern of first Bush administration. Following the war, Bill Clinton and other western politicians and media continued to use the term WMD, usually in reference to ongoing attempts to dismantle Iraq's weapons programmes. Other states officially became committed in eliminating all stockpiles of chemical weapons, offensive biological weapons and strive for elimination of nuclear weapons

(Cockburn, 2015).

Critiques to non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

Yet beyond all the broad threat to international security that WMD proliferation posed, there remain other people who are in support of nuclear stockpiles and strategies for WMD proliferation. They defend their point that, proliferation play role in establishing international peace and security by preventing the occurrence of major world war since after World War II. To this school of thoughts, proliferation created an avenue for deterrence, as the most important impact of WMD is to deter war between their possessors (Knocks, 2016). By simply acquiring nuclear weapons, countries have gotten themselves a strategic weapon that could be used to attack or defend, but more especially to deter against any attack, both nuclear and conventional (Schelling, 2008).

The almost constant assumptions of deterrence scholars is that, deterrence actually works, that it kept the world safe for the whole duration of the Cold War and beyond due to establishments of balance of power within the international system (Wilson, 2008); and that because of unique characteristics of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), it provides stability in a crisis. Besides general security and stability, the conventional wisdom also holds that deterrence provides three specific benefits which are protection against attacks with nuclear weapons, protection against attacks with conventional forces, and a viable additional diplomatic advantage (Wilson, 2008).

At the center of this theory is the assumption that this threat creates decisive moment or leverage. So because a fight in which many cities could be destroyed is unacceptable between opponents, deterrence exists between nuclear powers. In a conflict between a state with nuclear weapons and a state without nuclear weapons,

even if only a few weapons are used against cities, the state without would immediately surrender. The main argument about this kind of action has always been the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II. The Japanese surrender just days after these cities were attacked seems to provide conclusive proof that city attacks with nuclear weapons are militarily decisive (Schelling, 2008).

Conclusion

Nine nations around the world today were said to possess or procure Weapons of Mass Destruction. WMD proliferation is the major cause of human rights abuses as governments spend more on military expenditure than on social developments, communications, infrastructures and health combined. Non-proliferation as a policy is vital, as it questions the morality and rationality of meaning of war and peace. It is concerned with collective aspects of morality and survivability of all countries. It is against the idea of having military technology, as it is the main causal of proliferation of WMD which threaten the survival of human kind. The idea of disarmament became imperative, at first by unilateral, then bilateral and later multilateral. Later, arms control was evolved as an integral part of disarmament in order to eliminate all dangers of security by making nations to make treaties.

Arms control treaties and agreements are often seen as a way to avoid costly Weapons of Mass Destruction proliferation which could prove counter-productive to national aims and future peace. Some are used as ways to stop the spread of certain military technologies (such as nuclear weaponry or missile technology) in return for assurances to potential developers that they will not be victims of those technologies. Additionally, some arms control agreements are entered to limit the damage done by warfare, especially to civilians and environment, which is seen as bad for all participants regardless of who wins a war.

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