



Geneva Centre for Security Policy
Centre de Politique de Sécurité, Genève
Genfer Zentrum für Sicherheitspolitik

Program on the Geopolitical Implications of Globalization and Transnational Security

GCSP Policy Brief Series

The GCSP policy brief series publishes papers in order to assess policy challenges, dilemmas, and policy recommendations in *all aspects* of transnational security and globalization. The series was created and is edited by Dr. Nayef R.F. Al-Rodhan, Senior Scholar in Geostrategy and Director of the Program on the Geopolitical Implications of Globalization and Transnational Security.

GCSP Policy Brief No. 3 Prevention of WMD Proliferation, Globalization, and International Security

Dr. Vladimir Orlov
Senior Advisor
Geneva Centre for Security Policy

Dr. Vladimir Orlov is Co-Director of the European Training Course in Security Policy and a faculty member at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. He is also the founder and Director of the PIR Center (Center for Policy Studies in Russia) and Editor-in-Chief of the *Security Index*. Dr. Orlov is a leading expert on international security and Russian foreign policy. His research focuses on contemporary international security challenges, such as the proliferation of nuclear weapons and WMD terrorism. He is the author of numerous articles and books on these subjects.

June 22, 2006

To comment, please email Bethany Webster at b.webster@gcsp.ch.

All copyrights are reserved by the author.

Avenue de la Paix 7bis
P.O. Box 1295
CH-1211 Geneva 1

Telephone
Telefax
www.gcsp.ch

+41 22 906 83 17
+41 22 906 16 49
info@gcsp.ch

Abstract

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is probably the most urgent threat to international security in the 21st century. The author analyzes the current status of the international nonproliferation regime in a new, globalized system of international relations; looks at case studies (Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, India, and non-state actors); and, based on his more than 15 years of experience in the field, provides policy recommendations on how to reduce the risk of proliferation in the near and mid-term future.

Policy Challenges

Iran's nuclear ambitions, six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear-weapons program, the controversial nuclear deal between the United States and India, modernization of China's strategic nuclear forces, attempts by major international terrorist networks to get access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or their most sensitive components: these are all realities of today's political scene. And these realities are attracting increased attention by the world media. The word *nuclear*, by default, adds flavor to news columns or to op-eds. And the abbreviation "WMD", which until recently had been exclusively a part of the vocabulary of experts, is today used by anyone who has access to a television or reads newspapers. WMD was one of the key terms used on the eve of the US-led war against Iraq in 2003, when the general public was invited, through the media, to follow the hunt for Saddam's *hidden WMDs*, a hunt that never achieved its declared goal, that could not, as Saddam had no WMDs to hunt for.

The above example shows one of the major risks of the globalized world and of the worldwide impact of the international media: stories about WMD proliferation make front-page news, which increases the sale of newspapers, and they also lead to political declarations, which can help sell wars to the general public.

WMD proliferation should be, with little doubt, included in any list of the most urgent global threats to international security in the 21st century. As Russian President Vladimir Putin once said, "proliferation is probably *the* most urgent threat [of all]."¹

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which came into force in 1970, is intended to act as the main barrier against the threat of proliferation. This treaty is unique, considering the number of parties that belong to it.² Other treaties dealing with the threat of proliferation include the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (CWC) (1993), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) (1974), and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (concluded in 1996 but not yet in force). Antarctica, the South Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Southeast Asia have been declared nuclear-weapons-free zones. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), established almost 50 years ago, plays a leading role among the international organizations that are now combating nuclear proliferation. The UN Security Council has the power to impose sanctions against countries that violate the nonproliferation regime. This is what the international nonproliferation architecture looks like, at least on paper. But how do things actually stand?

The term "international treaty" is no longer very popular in some capitals. Instead, they propose using alternative methods, such as an *ozirak* policy. This refers to preventive attacks

against countries suspected of proliferating WMD, and it takes its name from an attack by Israel in 1981, when it bombed Iraq's Tammuz I nuclear reactor near the town of Ozirak. This is the type of action taken by the US in 1998, when it launched a missile attack against a facility in Sudan was suspected of being related to Osama bin Laden's biological-weapons program. The reality, however, has been disappointing for those claiming to "expose regimes", and it contradicts their statements that agreements no longer work.

Today, there are 8 ½ countries that possess nuclear weapons: the five nuclear states as recognized by the NPT (China, France, the United Kingdom, Russia, and the United States); three states that have nuclear weapons but that have refrained from joining the NPT (India and Pakistan, which have carried out successful nuclear tests, and Israel, whose nuclear arsenal is comparable, according to some estimates, to that of the United Kingdom or France³); and the remaining "half" is North Korea. This country has come so close to developing nuclear weapons that, before the ink has dried on this policy memo, it may be necessary to change 8 ½ to 9. Moreover, North Korea's leadership declared a year ago already that it is in fact a new nuclear-weapon state. The information presently available suggests, however, that it is still too early to classify North Korea as a de facto nuclear-weapon state.

Are 8½ too few or too many?

From the point of view of general and complete nuclear disarmament (the goal established in Article VI of the NPT), this number is too high. The NPT aims to gradually reduce the number of countries that possess nuclear weapons, not to mention reducing and ultimately eliminating nuclear weapons altogether. But if we take a realistic view of how things stand, we would have to admit that the number of nuclear-weapon states might actually be as high as several dozen.

According to the Pentagon's 1963 estimates, which were recently declassified, at least 10 countries could have developed nuclear weapons – together with the means for delivering them – in under 10 years. But, "for some reason," Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Romania, Sweden, and Switzerland terminated their nuclear-weapons programs.⁴ South Africa voluntarily gave up the nuclear weapons it had developed. Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine agreed to return all nuclear weapons from their territories to Russia following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Over the last decade, more countries have joined the NPT, among them Argentina, Brazil, China, Cuba, France, and Ukraine.

The NPT has not always been the reason why countries have given up their nuclear ambitions. Yet the NPT has kept states from making political decisions on the development of nuclear weapons of their own; such decisions would have undermined the existing nonproliferation regime, thus provoking a dangerous chain reaction in various regions of the

world. The NPT has established the rules of the game and made clear the advantages of maintaining a non-nuclear status, while ensuring the strict interdependence of the participating states.

In another area of concern, you could not count on one hand the number of states that now possess other types of WMD, most notably, chemical and biological weapons. These weapons, especially chemical ones, are easier and cheaper to make; they can be reasonably described as the A-bomb for the poor. Whereas the CWC provides for verification mechanisms for the participating states, the BWC lacks such a mechanism, and the work on a protocol for this mechanism has stalled.

The number of countries that possess missile weapons has been growing at the fastest rate in comparison with those that possess nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. This is because of so-called secondary proliferation when, for example, North Korea, Pakistan and Iran established mutual ties. International agreements do not prohibit the development of delivery vehicles. Furthermore, the “gentleman’s agreements” between major producers of missile equipment and technologies, known as the Missile Technology Control Regime, can slow down, but not prevent, the development of missile programs in countries with such ambitions. Yet the most important goal of checking the proliferation of nuclear weapons has been successful to date.

North Korea

North Korea provides a classic example of non-compliance with NPT obligations.

Considering North Korea’s nuclear and missile capabilities, together with the veil of secrecy surrounding its regime and its unpredictability, one should admit that this country is a serious instability factor both for Northeast Asia and the world. However, a diplomatic solution to the North Korean problem seems quite possible. It could be found on a multilateral basis, perhaps on two levels at once.

The first level is the six-party mechanism (including both Koreas, China, Japan, Russia, and the US), which could help draft a document, even a non-binding one, that would include North Korea’s pledge to return to the NPT and to open up all of its territory for unconditional IAEA inspections.

Other issues that could be discussed include economic, energy, and other aid packages to Pyongyang from the above-mentioned countries and the EU, as well as the issue of missile nonproliferation. Simultaneously, or perhaps later, both Koreas must confirm the Korean Peninsula’s nuclear-free status and receive guarantees from the nuclear powers.

The second level should be bilateral North Korea-US dialogue and should lead toward security assurances for North Korea from the US. It is clear, however, that, at least for now, the US administration is not ready for this.

Iran

Unlike North Korea, Iran is a party to the NPT and is an active member of the IAEA. So far, there is no definite proof that Iran has developed or is developing nuclear weapons.

The situation concerning Iran and the question of nonproliferation boils down to the ability to make an accurate forecast for the next three to five years. During this period, Iran will probably be able to transfer its ambitious civilian nuclear power program to military purposes, if its leadership decides to make such a political decision. This probability must not be allowed: if Iran possesses nuclear weapons, together with modern delivery vehicles, it would constitute a threat to global and regional security and international stability.

Few question the idea that Iran has a military nuclear program. In 1993, Russia's foreign intelligence reported that Iran "ha[d] a program for military applied research in the nuclear field." The report went on and stated that, without outside technological and research assistance, the appearance of nuclear weapons in Iran before 2001 was unlikely; and even if Iran invested some \$1.5 billion in its nuclear program every year, it would not be able to develop nuclear weapons earlier than 2003.⁵

Three years ago, my colleagues at the Moscow-based PIR Center, having assessed all of the information concerning Iran's advanced nuclear program, arrived at the following conclusion: factors that may have caused Iran to accelerate its nuclear program include its wish to: "obtain technical capabilities for developing nuclear weapons. In this case, Iran could go very far, while remaining within the framework of its international commitments... According to such a scenario, Tehran could receive technical and material capabilities for developing nuclear weapons within months, as soon as it accumulates the required amount of weapons-grade nuclear materials. A political decision to use resources of nuclear materials for developing nuclear weapons can be made if Iranian-US relations become aggravated and the US starts preparing an operation to overthrow the incumbent regime in Iran, or if the US or Israel bombs Iranian nuclear facilities..."⁶

When assessing the current situation in Iran, many experts believe that the world must recognize the existence of a dichotomy.

On the one hand, because Iran is a proud nation that wants to stand on equal footing with the most technologically advanced states, it will develop its nuclear energy, space exploration, and biotechnology programs at almost any cost. On the other hand, Iran's leadership has

repeatedly proven itself to be untrustworthy. In recent years, the international community has witnessed a variety of falsehoods from Iran about its nuclear program. Yet this history of deception does not necessarily mean that Iran has decided to produce nuclear weapons.

Now the question arises: is Tehran deliberately maintaining uncertainty about its plans (the way its sworn enemy Israel has done, thus keeping its nuclear policy under a shroud of complete secrecy) in order to broaden its room for further bargaining? Or do the Iranians themselves not know what they should do next? The latter thesis seems more probable. Iran's elites seem to be divided over the question of the direction of their civilian nuclear program, and how it should be developed, with whom and how they should bargain (and whether they should bargain at all) over a possibility of Iran's giving up its nuclear-weapons ambitions? And most important, what should they demand in return for their cooperation?

The Iranian leadership obviously includes groups that hope for a strategic rapprochement with the US. Washington displays less interest in such a scenario, yet some policy makers there seem interested. Both countries are now maintaining rigid positions, so that they can later reduce the stakes, while leaving a lot of room for bargaining and, ultimately, for a compromise. Tehran does not have a unified US policy, nor does Washington have a unified Iran policy. This factor reduces the possibility for bargaining but does not rule it out.

Pakistan

For me, Pakistan presents the greatest international proliferation-related concern today.

First, Pakistan has already demonstrated that it is a real, not virtual, proliferator. Through Dr. A. Q. Khan's led international network, Pakistan provided nuclear-weapons-related materials and knowledge (including even the design of nuclear weapons) to such states as North Korea, Iran, and Libya. It is known that, in 1990, assistance in building nuclear-weapons capabilities was offered by the Khan network to Saddam Hussein (who refused to accept it thinking, wrongly so, that it was an American provocation). It is not publicly known yet what other states might have received Khan's nuclear "services" or had other kinds of similar arrangements with Pakistan's government. (Pakistan's government has never officially recognized that it had been informed about Khan's illegal activities, and it has never allowed the IAEA or other internationally recognized groups of inspectors or investigators to independently interrogate Dr. Khan.)

Second, the level of security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal provides room for a number of questions. Pakistan's warheads are widely believed to be demated, that is, the highly enriched uranium (HEU) has been removed from the rest of the weapon. Security analysts generally believe that this is a safer means of storing warheads, particularly in such an unstable and terrorist- or extremist-filled region. The most recent analyses prove, however,

that demated weapons may pose a greater threat than mated warheads. According to these analyses, short of terrorists enlisting insider assistance to teach them how to detonate a fully assembled nuclear weapon, they would have more confidence in exploding bombs they build themselves. Another advantage for terrorists is that presently almost all of Pakistan's nuclear weapons are powered with HEU. By stealing the HEU, which is being stored separately from demated warheads, terrorists would have the material they would need to build the simplest, improvised nuclear device.⁷

India

The current international debate on India's nuclear program brings qualitatively new elements to international nonproliferation-related debates on the whole.

Being, legally, in the same position as Pakistan or Israel as a non-member of the NPT and, consequently, with its nuclear-weapons status not recognized by the international community, India, unlike the two other states, recently managed in three or four years to achieve what could be viewed by the nonproliferation purists as *impossible*: de facto recognition as the sixth full member of the nuclear club.

To be precise, the recognition process has just started, and it will take a considerable amount of time to make it a part of international norms. But with three of the permanent five members of the UN Security Council – France, Russia, and the United States – in favor, though to different degrees, of accepting India's nuclear status, the situation will now change rapidly. The US-India nuclear agreement of July 2005 was only a modest preface in advance of a full revision of India's role in the nuclear world. But it definitely boosted the whole process of bringing India into the club, and now it is more a question of time rather than of general direction.⁸

With its maturing nuclear arsenal and dramatically increasing missile capabilities, India, which is not an NPT member state, is joining the nuclear club and enjoying its privileges free from significant limiting commitments or pressures.

Non-state actors

I have been studying the phenomenon of the interest of violent non-state actors in WMD and their components for more than a decade. During this time, it has become clear that the key question has shifted from *whether* terrorists are willing to use weapons of mass destruction to *when* and *how* this will happen.

Technological development has made it possible for major international terrorist networks – those with extensive financial and intellectual resources – to eventually succeed in acquiring

or producing WMD components and, as a result, to commit a spectacular terrorist attack with resulting mass destruction.

While access to, and detonation of, a nuclear warhead still seems to be a highly unlikely scenario (perhaps only Pakistan could be the source for such an operation, as already discussed above) even for the most advanced terrorist organizations, sabotage of highly sensitive nuclear facilities (including, but not limited to, nuclear power plants), access to considerable amounts of HEU, or production of an improvised nuclear device are all *real and present dangers*. For less advanced terrorist networks, an attack on a major metropolitan area using biological weapons could be the most attractive scenario, and preparations for such attacks have been detected in places like Waziristan (Pakistan/Afghanistan) and the Pankisi Gorge (Georgia).

Responses

The good news is that there is still a wide variety of options for the international community to respond both to traditional proliferation threats (involving state actors) and to non-traditional ones (involving non-state actors).

Among such responses, the following are the ones cited most often:

A. A combination of legal and practical steps aimed at strengthening the nuclear nonproliferation regime:

- Put a five-year hold on the construction of additional facilities for uranium enrichment and plutonium separation. There is no compelling reason to build more of these facilities, as the nuclear industry has more than enough capacity to fuel its power plants and research centers. To make this holding period acceptable to everyone, get the countries that already have the facilities to commit to guaranteeing a supply of nuclear fuel for bona fide uses. Then use the hiatus to develop better long-term options for managing the technologies (for example, in regional centers under multinational control).
- Speed up existing efforts to modify research reactors worldwide that are operating with HEU, particularly those with metal fuel that could be readily employed as bomb material. Convert these reactors to use low-enriched uranium, and accelerate research on how to make HEU unnecessary for all peaceful nuclear applications.
- Raise the bar for inspection standards by establishing the "Additional Protocol" to safeguard agreements with the IAEA as the norm for verifying compliance with the NPT. Without the expanded authority of this protocol, the IAEA's inspection rights are limited. It has proven its value recently in Iran and Libya and should be brought into force for all countries.

- Call on the United Nations Security Council to act swiftly and decisively in the case of any country that withdraws from the NPT, in terms of the threat the withdrawal poses to international peace and security.
- Urge states to act on UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (April 2004) to pursue and prosecute any illicit trading in nuclear material and technology.⁹

B. Counterproliferation measures:

- Strengthening of national and international systems of export controls in relation to sensitive materials and technologies (including intangible technology transfers), stopping any suspicious transfers in accordance with the “catch-all” principle;
- Preventing states of concern and particularly violent non-state actors from gaining access to weapons-grade materials, as well as to teams of skilled nuclear scientists and engineers. The Proliferation Security Initiative can play a significant role, particularly when detentions of ships at sea are concerned; and
- Destroying facilities for WMD production.

I argue that: (a) only a combination of measures can bring fruitful results in combating proliferation; and (b) each case of proliferation concern is unique, i.e., no *general rules* exist that are applicable to situations as different as Iran, North Korea, and Pakistan, or non-state actors.

Dilemmas

There are at least four major dilemmas the international community currently faces in regard to WMD proliferation:

- First (relating particularly to India), whether the NPT should be treated as a foundation of international security that cannot be altered, even if needed; or whether a set of practical measures can be undertaken to complement the NPT and, to a certain extent, to start building a new regime that meets the challenges of a new century;
- Second (relating particularly to Iran), whether any state participating in the nuclear nonproliferation regime can be deprived of its right to develop peaceful nuclear technologies simply as a result of others’ suspicions of its intentions, whether the right to benefit from new technologies and technological development can be monopolized by a few traditional players in the international arena;
- Third (relating particularly to Iran, as well as North Korea to a certain extent), whether sanctions, even if legally approved by the UN Security Council, can be a useful tool for the containment of nuclear military programs and/or intentions, or whether they will only irritate countries subject to sanctions, causing them to move toward complete

isolation and non-transparency and, at the same time, helping to consolidate public opinion within that nation in support of its regime;

- Fourth (relating particularly to non-state actors, as well as to certain state actors, like Pakistan), whether preventive military operations that destroy WMD-related sites, stop suspicious activities, or allow dangerous weapons to be seized and removed from this or that country can help reduce global proliferation risks, or whether they will be unable to eliminate sources of proliferation.

Future Scenarios

This section includes descriptions of possible scenarios of proliferation-driven developments in the world in the next five to ten years:

Scenario A: Nothing will change

As a result of the efforts of the international community (mostly multilateral, but combined with certain unilateral initiatives by the permanent five members of the UN Security Council), the number of states with nuclear weapons stabilizes. The list of states of concern will be similar or even the same as it is now. Iran will temporarily freeze its full-scale nuclear enrichment in exchange for European “carrots” and US security assurances. North Korea will continue bargaining but will never test its nuclear weapons, which will raise questions about whether it really has them or is only blackmailing the international community. Thanks to the strengthening of export controls, internationally and nationally, along with strong efforts to improve the physical protection of fissile materials, terrorists will fail to successfully commit a major WMD terrorist act, though a terrorist act involving chemical or radiological weapons may take place, in Europe or in East Asia.

Scenario B: Success story

The international community, under pressure from deteriorating proliferation-related developments, agrees on a set of measures to strengthen the NPT and the whole nonproliferation regime. Iran, under international pressure and as a result of domestic calculations, renounces its advanced nuclear program in exchange for full-scale cooperation with Europe and the United States. North Korea returns to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon state, destroys its weapons-grade stocks under IAEA supervision, opens up its economy, and works with South Korea on a reunification plan. Russia and the US sign the Moscow-2 Treaty on significant reductions in their arsenals of strategic nuclear weapons, as well as in their arsenals of non-strategic weapons. As a result of intelligence sharing, the labs of terrorists working on the preparation of a biological or radiological attack are destroyed by preventive missile strikes. The new government in Israel agrees to start talks, with no preconditions, on establishing a zone free of WMD in the Middle East.

Scenario C: Collapse

Thanks to international sanctions, Iran's leadership consolidates its power domestically and advances toward building nuclear weapons. US strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities fail to destroy most of them and leads to an impeachment in the White House. But Iran does not want to maintain dialogue with other forces in the US or in Europe and tests its nuclear weapons, declaring itself a new nuclear-weapon state. In regional response, Egypt declares that it is developing nuclear weapons. Pakistan provides Saudi Arabia with a dozen ready-to-detonate nuclear devices and with teams of engineers for technical support. Turkey, frustrated both by the regional developments and by its non-acceptance in the EU, withdraws from a declining NATO and rapidly develops its own nuclear-weapons capabilities, supported by scientists and engineers from Russia, its new closest ally. In East Asia, North and South Korea merge, with the North's nuclear weapons and missiles and with the South's technological and financial capabilities. In response, Japan renounces its nuclear-weapons-free status and produces plutonium-based nuclear weapons within five weeks of its declaration. Nobody remembers what NPT stands for.

Scenario D: Something will change, but not much

This is the same as scenario A, but with three major developments. First, India is officially invited by the Security Council's permanent five to have observer status in relation to the NPT, de facto recognizing its nuclear-weapons status. The "Nuclear Five" becomes "5+1" and later the "Nuclear Six". Second, with domestic instability in Pakistan increasing, the US, Russia, and China implement a joint operation: US Special Forces seize and remove Pakistan's nuclear devices, which had been previously decoded; China provides its territory for "temporary storage"; and, finally, the weapons are dismantled in Russia, where the fissile materials are stored. Third, six-party talks result in the denuclearization of North Korea, mostly thanks to China's efforts, and in extensive international assistance programs to Pyongyang.

How realistic are these scenarios? In terms of probability I would rank them D – A – C – B, in which D is the mostly likely scenario and B is the least likely. The situation is, however, very fragile, and any significant proliferation-related crisis could change the ranking toward C – D – A – B.

Policy Recommendations

1. On the global level, the international community (through NPT review conferences and through the IAEA) should adopt a set of measures to strengthen the nuclear nonproliferation regime as proposed in the section "Responses".
2. On Iran and North Korea, the security concerns of these nations should be taken into consideration. Security assurances should be provided to them, under international patronage, as well as international technical assistance, including in nuclear energy projects, but under strict international (special no-limit IAEA inspections) control.

3. On Pakistan, the situation should be monitored with increased attention with regard to the capability of the government to provide adequate security for its nuclear arsenal.
4. On Israel and the Middle East, the US, France, and Russia should strongly encourage Israel to agree, with no preconditions, to start negotiations with its neighbors on establishing of a zone free of WMD in the Middle East.
5. On attempts by terrorists to get access to WMD and use them, there is little that can be done on the international or national levels. However, the most urgent steps should include: further increasing the physical protection of critical infrastructure, including nuclear facilities; improving export controls internationally and nationally; improving customs and border controls; exchanging information on terrorists' activities and intentions; making preventive strikes on terrorists' WMD labs, when there is reliable information about them; and carrying out regular international simulations and exercises on reducing the consequences of WMD terrorist attacks.
6. On India: it is already de facto a member of the nuclear club. And it is a reliable player. It should be formally brought into the club and should agree on acceptance of the NPT norms.
7. On nuclear weapons: Russia and the US should agree, in the near future, to reduce the levels of their strategic nuclear arsenals to around 1,000 warheads each. Further on, the Security Council permanent five should hold talks on further reductions, with obligations by all nuclear-weapons states (including India) not to increase the numbers of their nuclear arsenals and to negotiate gradual reductions.

References

¹ Breakfast with Frost TV Interview with President Putin, broadcast on June 22, 2003.

² India, Israel, and Pakistan are not parties to the NPT. North Korea has withdrawn from the NPT.

³ See, V. Malevannyi, "Israel's Intelligence Community" (original title appeared in Russian) *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, May 15-22, 1998, p. 7. In contrast to Malevannyi, I hold that Israel tends to exaggerate rather than understate the size of its military nuclear program.

⁴ R. M. Timerbaev, *Russia and Nuclear Non-Proliferation* (original title appeared in Russian) (Moscow: Nauka, 1999), p. 172, pp. 137-161.

⁵ *New Post-Cold War Challenge: Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction* (original title appeared in Russian) (Moscow: Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation, 1993).

⁶ V. F. Lata, A. V. Khlopov, "Iran: Nuclear and Missile Puzzle for Russia", *Yaderny Kontrol'*, No. 2 (68), 2003, p. 45.

⁷ C. D. Ferguson, "Preventing Catastrophic Nuclear Terrorism", Special Report by the Council on Foreign Relations, No.11, March 2006, pp. 12-13.

⁸ See R. Einhorn, "Nuclear Rapprochement between India and the U.S.: Pros and Cons" (original title appeared in Russian), *Yaderny Kontrol'*, No. 4, 2005, pp.75-82.

⁹ M. ElBaradei, "Seven Steps to Raise World Security", *Financial Times*, February 2, 2005.



Geneva Centre for Security Policy
Centre de Politique de Sécurité, Genève
Genfer Zentrum für Sicherheitspolitik

Program on the Geopolitical Implications of Globalization and Transnational Security

GCSP Policy Brief Series

The GCSP policy brief series publishes papers in order to assess policy challenges, dilemmas, and policy recommendations in *all aspects* of transnational security and globalization. The series was created and is edited by Dr. Nayef R.F. Al-Rodhan, Senior Scholar in Geostrategy and Director of the Program on the Geopolitical Implications of Globalization and Transnational Security.

Editorial of GCSP Policy Brief No. 3 Prevention of WMD Proliferation, Globalization, and International Security

Dr. Nayef R.F. Al-Rodhan
Senior Scholar in Geostrategy and
Director of the Program on the
Geopolitical Implications of Globalization
and Transnational Security
Geneva Centre for Security Policy

June 22, 2006

To comment, please email Bethany Webster at b.webster@gcsp.ch.

All copyrights are reserved by the author.

Review and Critique

Many academics and analysts argue that one of the most pressing issues facing global security today is the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), including limiting the proliferation of their components and delivery systems. This has certainly become an issue for the larger globalization debate and represents an area where there is a pressing need for the international community to engage, especially given recent key developments by potential nuclear states to arm themselves militarily with WMD and ongoing negotiations with other states regarding nuclear programs.

Since the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) came into force in 1970, the world has advanced further toward a nuclear-free status. However, in the past couple of decades, with the fall of the Soviet Union, the rising military force of China, the detonation of nuclear warheads in Pakistan and India, and evidence of terrorist groups seeking to acquire nuclear capabilities, there has arguably never been as much pressure on the international community to find solutions to these delicate issues. Currently, there are five nuclear states (China, France, United Kingdom, Russia, and the United States) and three others known to possess nuclear weapons (India, Israel, and Pakistan). Increasingly, the possible acquisition of nuclear weapons by other states and non-state actors makes the threat to international stability and security that much stronger.

So where does this leave the global community in its efforts to stem the tide of WMD proliferation? With the invasion of Iraq initially based on the presumption that WMD existed and then rescinded, the precedent of such presumptuous decision-making has suffered tremendously. So how do states that willingly commit to nonproliferation hold accountable those states that do not and what type of negotiations and “carrots” should be offered in order to work toward the full attainment of global security in this realm of weaponry?

The policy brief “Prevention of WMD Proliferation, Globalization, and International Security” by Dr. Vladimir Orlov¹ addresses and responds to exactly these types of questions. He agrees that the implications for WMD policies are some of the most pressing issues to deal with in the security realm in the 21st century. Through a set of case studies (India, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, and non-state actors), Dr. Orlov analyzes the challenge that the potential proliferation of WMD presents to states, regions, and the international system and what this means for the risk and prevention of proliferation in the near and mid-term future.

Through a detailed yet concise measure of the current global policy issues related to this topic of debate, Dr. Orlov outlines the current nuclear situation in each of his case studies. He then explains that, while international responses have clearly not been sufficient, many options exist for the international community to respond to traditional and non-traditional proliferation

threats. It is Dr. Orlov’s belief that the only effective responses are those that are both balanced in approach and customized to each of a variety of potential situations.

Policy Dilemmas and Recommendations

The risk of continued proliferation of WMD worldwide, by states and potentially by non-state actors, brings into question the relevance and future of the nonproliferation architecture and thus presents the international community with a number of policy dilemmas. Most urgently, the international community faces a number of urgent collective decisions concerning potential nuclear states in the area of nuclear nonproliferation. Thus, the table below identifies eight policy dilemmas paired with relevant policy recommendations that aim to increase the confidence of states in multilateral solutions to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and are made in light of warranted concern for increased nuclear proliferation in recent years.



The above dilemmas and recommendations are all important, but only a few of them will be emphasized here, while also highlighting some of the cross-cutting issues. Using a multilateral forum to discuss nuclear proliferation is essential, as is basing action on the international legal instruments available. In this regard, the NPT is the legal cornerstone of the nonproliferation regime, and states rightly put a great deal of emphasis on its central role in encouraging nonproliferation. However, they face increasing pressure to adapt the nonproliferation regime to today's realities: for instance, of eight nuclear states, only five are recognized by the NPT. The NPT remains the bedrock, but other instruments, such as UN Security Council resolutions and ad hoc solutions, must also be instrumentalized.

Second, the determination of certain terrorist organizations to obtain nuclear material poses a grave risk to the world. States face a dilemma in responding to this threat because of the lack of information surrounding who has or is trying to acquire these weapons and the difficulty of detecting storage sites. There need to be tight controls and monitoring to ensure that these weapons do not end up in the wrong hands, including policies that put preventative incentives in place for potential sellers.

Third, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and states face policy dilemmas when trying to identify ways to encourage states to give up their nuclear ambitions. Certain potential nuclear states need to be offered important and attractive incentives in order to abandon their military nuclear programs, but these incentives are not always evident. Carrots, as much as sticks, need to be identified. States that are deemed suspicious by the international community still have the right under the nuclear nonproliferation regime to develop nuclear technology for peaceful, domestic purposes, but the international community are not very accepting of "risky states" using their rights to acquire the newest technology for this purpose.

Nuclear states need to offer incentives to maintain or create their nuclear status by ensuring protection, while, to avoid the perception of double standards, they could also reduce their nuclear stockpiles significantly without threatening their own security. Additionally, states should pursue the development of new non-nuclear technology systems. Reducing existing nuclear arsenals would have to be weighed in light regional security concerns and domestic pressures, but it would be an important confidence-building measure and testament to the importance of the multilateral arrangements under the nonproliferation regime. The trust that states have for one another is of paramount importance in dealing with these issues and quite often it is the first casualty of these discussions.

Conclusion

The threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction among state and non-state actors looms large over the international community. As some potential nuclear states claim to have a right to conduct nuclear research, countries like the United States find

themselves in a difficult negotiating position, being nuclear states themselves. Multilateral solutions must be sought at every turn, and organizations such as the IAEA and the UN must be supported in their nonproliferation endeavors. Specific and collaborative measures will help to further negotiations and the move toward a more secure and stable global society.

References

¹ For the entire policy brief, please see the policy brief series as part of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy's Program on the Geopolitical Implications of Globalization and Transnational Security at <http://www.gcsp.ch/e/publications/Globalisation/index.htm>.