

Journal of Sociology & Cultural Research Review (JSCRR)Available Online: <https://jscrr.edu.com.pk>Print ISSN: [3007-3103](#) Online ISSN: [3007-3111](#)Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)**THE U. S. HEGEMONY ON INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR REGIMES TREATIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF COLD WAR AND POST-COLD WAR ERA****Fateh Najeeb Yasar**

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Abstract

Over the course of nuclearization history, covering the time period since the inception of cold war, the United States has proved and established itself as a hegemon controlling and managing different initiatives to install, facilitate or even control proliferation of nuclear weapons. Different treaties and arrangements starting from SALT I to START and up to CTBT, NPT or modern day Civil nuclear deals give ample evidence that the US hegemonic posture, tactics and policies are directed and devised to sustain it. More appropriately, it gives the impression that for the US, much important is the capability to sustain and strengthen its traditional stature rather than culminating any posed or perceived threat in anticipation or deterring any suspect seemingly.

Keywords: SALT I, SALT II, MAD, Proliferation, Nuclear Proliferation, ABM, START, NPT

Introduction

This paper presents an analysis of the origin of the United States hegemony on nuclear regime and agreement. This paper primarily focuses on the concept of nuclear threat and preventive measures and how it has been utilized by the U.S. in dominating and to maintaining its hegemony in the international system. By employing qualitative research techniques, this paper also provides a comparative analysis of the U.S. nuclear policy since the end of Second World War. Nuclear deterrence was crucial in averting a major conflict between the USSR and the U.S. during the Cold War, when the USSR was viewed as a genuine danger to US interests. Nuclear weapons were termed as diplomatic tool for crisis management and crisis bargaining. However, in the era unipolar world, the “threat of nuclear weapons” was utilized by the U.S. to dominate the world. The invasions made by the U.S. most particularly in Iraq by Bush I in 1990-91 and Bush II in 2003 were under the excuse of a nuclear threat from Iraq as that policy tool. Though the ultimate power capability of states is nuclear weapons, their primary (though not exclusive) use nowadays is to prevent other nuclear-armed nations from using them first by threatening nuclear retaliation, as they are militarily useless in practically any situation. After the Second World War, the U.S. nuclear weapon policy was to prevent other states from developing nuclear weapons. For this objective, Bernard Baruch, the U.S. advisor, introduced

Baruch Plan in 1946 the purpose that to stop the then Soviet Union and other countries from developing a nuclear weapon. Similarly, the proposal, calling for the inspection and International control of the nuclear facilities presented to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission revealed the concerns related to the Soviet Union nuclear weapons (Bresolin & Gautam, 2014).

Post-cold war, the Bush I “New World Order” era was rooted in Discriminate Deterrence, it also reflected a new doctrine that was not articulated after the war. However, under the leadership of Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and his assistant Paul Wolfowitz, a new doctrine was presented in Defense Policy Guidelines and portrayed the Pentagon's dangerous ambitions “Our first objective is to prevent the emergence of a new rival”. Apparently, the U.S. policy after the cold war was to sustain its hegemonic gesture in the world through the policy of preemptive action under the excuse of a nuclear threat. In the nuclear domain, U.S. policy in the era following cold war aimed to advocate disarmament and non-proliferation for the rest of the world under the guidelines of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In this regard, there were other bilateral and multilateral agreements scrutinizing nuclear weapons continued at home and contained others. The argument is based on the apprehension which poses certain queries tracing the motive and rationale behind the U.S. policies over the course of history.

Research Question

This paper primarily addresses that, why and how the U.S. hegemony has impacted the international nuclear regimes treaties in the post-cold war era of global politics? The subsequent research based discussion is an attempt to find the answer of this very question.

Research Methodology

This research paper relies on qualitative research design to assess the U.S. hegemony on international nuclear regimes treaties while utilizing historical comparative analysis of Cold war era with post-Cold war era in global politics. Since this is qualitative research therefore, contextual data from books, journals, published research articles and online sources is utilized while drawing conclusions based on empirical evidences (Creswell & Poth 2017). Along with that the theory of hegemonic stability provides best explanation in this context of tracing the rationale behind the U.S. hegemony in nuclear regimes treaties. Moreover, this work may have its own limitations of potential bias of available knowledge but is done while adhering the ethical considerations of academic integrity to present research findings.

The U.S. on International Deals Through Theoretical Context

The above policy of us can be examined through a theoretical perspective that how the U.S. has been sustaining its hegemony on international nuclear regimes in a realist international system.

The Hegemonic Stability Theory

Hegemonic stability is a perspective put forward by the realist paradigm. According to realism "International system is anarchic and there is no central government in the international system. In this anarchic world, states maximize their power for the attainment of their national interest." The structural realist such as Kenneth Waltz in 1979 argued that "it is the power-based structure of the international system that explains the behavior of state as the system principal actors". The classical realists have more faith in the international institutions for maintaining stability than the structural realists. Some scholars suggest how under the condition of anarchy international cooperation is sustained. One of the ways to achieve cooperation is the systemic distribution of power and hegemonic leadership (Viotti & Kauppi, 1987).

In this context of a realist approach in the international system, Charles P. K. proposes hegemonic stability theory in his famous book "The World in Depression" (1973) where he draws his argument that the reason for the 1930 "Great Depression" is the lack of single dominant and economically powerful state and the weakness of Britain for stability in the international politics. Robert Gilpin in his book "War and Change in World Politics" (1981) argues that the international politics is created because states interact and create a structure for their interests. According to Gilpin, the structure shows the dominant interest in the system, which is known as the interest of the hegemon. The hegemon maintains the system intact and seeks to maintain its hegemony in the international order (Gilpin, 1981).

The basic postulation of the HST is that in anarchic world stability and cooperation are only possible, when there is a single dominant state, having the politico-economic and military capability, which further ensures cooperation and stability among states. The hegemon or stabilizer will act as a norm for the rest of the other states and the other states will also cooperate for the common good and stability of the system (Bartholomew, 2006). However, those states who refrain from complying with the values and norms presented by the hegemon would face punishment in the form of sanctions. The control of the hegemon over resources, capital, and currency and higher exchange rate over the other currencies hegemon can establish and maintain world order. A hegemon exerts its influence by its military power and economic strength and exerting influence through

different institutions. These institutions further help the hegemon to strengthen its hegemony in the world.

The key Concept of hegemonic power

Firstly, in order to achieve superiority, system must have an actor who possesses the power and resources. Such a powerful actor must assume the position of leadership. The “will” to be a hegemon is the motivation of the prospect that the benefits of the hegemony are relatively more than its costs. The hegemonic state's presence serves as both a prerequisite for a hegemonic order and a starting point for its replication when it is established. Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane define “hegemony as the structural form of the international system in which one state is powerful enough to maintain the essential rules governing interstate relations and willing to do so.” Mearsheimer defines hegemony as the domination of the system. According to Robert Gilpin, hegemony characterizes structural form of the international system in which “an overarching dominant power state controls and dominates the lesser states in the system”. It's important here to mention that hegemony is different from imperialism. Imperialism is the direct acquisition or having control over a certain territory or state, while hegemony refers to indirect control and dominance of a single state over the system (Rauch & Wurm, 2013).

Analyzing the U.S. Nuclear Hegemony

In the Cold War era, the U.S. primarily focused on the nuclear non-proliferation which includes both prevention of horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear technology. To this end, the U.S. and former U.S.S.R. reached an international agreement called as NPT (Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty) which creates nuclear haves and have-nots. NPT's Article VI states that “states will pursue negotiations in good faith for the global disarmament”. NPT's articles primarily prevented the emergence of additional nuclear-weapon nations. However, disarmament always remained a myth. Here it states that a hegemon should be economically, militarily, and technologically strong enough to maintain its hegemony. After the Cold war when the U.S. became the sole dominant power in the world it utilized the threat and danger of nuclear weapons for its hegemony. Operation Desert Storm in 1991 during the Iraq–Kuwait war was the use of nuclear danger by the U.S. under the Bush senior Presidency for the U.S. hegemonic designs (Reiter, 1995) . Operation Desert Fox in 1998 the four days bombing of Iraq was planted to create a crisis for the future preemption in 2003. In the nuclear domain, U.S. policy in the Post-Cold War era was to keep its dominance on nuclear weapons. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which was not ratified by the Senate and jargon of minimum deterrence, also remained a myth. The Cooperative

Threat Reduction Program (CTR), established by Senators Sam Nun and Richard Lugar through the passage of the Soviet Threat Reduction Act in 1991, was responsible for the development of the Nun-Lugar Act (Bresolin & Gautam, 2014).

The United States' actions and policies towards the West Asia, NATO nations, and East Asia serve as justification for its hegemony; however, the hegemon attempts to stabilize itself through disarmament, nuclear nonproliferation, counter-proliferation, and preemption, but this does not stabilize the system and instead strengthens the dominant state. Various criticisms of the Cold War deterrence strategy turned it into a monster policy. Henry Kissinger, who was still Secretary of State, warned NATO's defense minister. "Asking for more strategic assurance that we cannot provide and if we can provide, we will not execute because if we execute, we will destroy a civilization," he advised the European allies (Waltz, 1990).

The concept of threat has a direct influence on the policy-making and decision-making process. The nature of the threat helps the policymakers to decide their suitable actions. The concept of deterrence in the cold war was to prevent a major war between the U.S. and U.S.S.R which was a present threat to the United States' survival in the world. However, in the post-cold war era, the policy of nuclear deterrence was changed from prevention to preemption. This is a significant dynamism in the U.S. nuclear weapon policy. In the unipolar world, the U.S. nuclear weapons have remained as the key source for its preemptive strikes and policy of preemption. The change in the U.S. nuclear weapon policy rests upon the threat in the international system. After 9/11 the threat of nuclear terrorism has remained a key matter of concern for U.S. policymakers. Hence, there is a difference in the logic of deterrence in the cold war and the era following cold war. The U.S. nuclear deterrence policy was shifted towards preemption against states who try to acquire nuclear weapons and nuclear technology through illegal means. The core argument of the above-mentioned debate is that the U.S. has always tried to control nuclear weapons and nuclear-related technology (Bresolin & Gautam, 2014). The key aim of this strategy is to maintain its monopoly on nuclear weapons and project its nuclear imperialism in the global nuclear world order. The strategies and policies adopted by the United States for nuclear hegemony are explained in detail below.

The Prospects of the U.S. Nuclear Hegemony and Regimes

Mutual Assured Destruction and Nonproliferation

The remarkable event during the early 1960s was the Cuban missile crisis in which the U.S. policymakers had to adopt a strategy that provides them

higher payoffs while reducing the risk propensity. The Soviet Union stationed medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles in Cuba in 1962 in response to three primary concerns: first, to prevent the Cuban revolution from being destroyed and to deter America from invading Cuba; second, to correct the disparity in the supply of strategic nuclear weapons that favored the Washington. Finally, to use its equal right to place weapons in a region next to America in order to offset the United States' deployment of nuclear weapons on the Soviet perimeter. In response to this, the U.S. installed its Jupiter missiles carrying nuclear warheads in Turkey and threatened the U.S.S.R. The concept of MAD played a key role in reducing the threat of a nuclear war. The Cuban missile crisis was the most important event in which the U.S. maintained its monopoly on nuclear weapons and nuclear diplomacy through optimal choice strategy and reduced the risk of a nuclear war with the Soviet Union. After the Cuban Missile Crisis SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) and START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) and Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) through which the U.S. policymakers further strengthened their monopoly on nuclear weapons and nuclear diplomacy (Welch, Blight, & Allen, 2015).

Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT)

Following the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the treaty was adopted in 1968. The Nonproliferation Treaty has three major pillars i) nonproliferation of nuclear weapons (ii) peaceful use of nuclear technology (iii) nuclear disarmament. The treaty itself creates nuclear haves and have nots. The P5 states, particularly (U.S. UK, France, China, and U.S.S.R) are considered as nuclear haves who can possess nuclear weapons, while the rest of the other states who are party to it cannot develop their nuclear weapons. The treaty aims towards disarmament, which is not fulfilled by any of its Dejure member states. Such treaties are curated by the U.S. and its allies to restrict the newly emerging states from attaining nuclear capability and to restrain them from acquiring nuclear technology even for civilian use (Welch, Blight, & Allen, 2015).

The SALT I treaty was the result of the Soviet-built up of the ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile) to reach parity with the U.S. President Lyndon Johnson in the year 1967 announced that the Soviet Union has started constructing a limited ABM (Anti-Ballistic Missile) system around Moscow. By shooting down the incoming missiles, the ABM system enables one side to launch the first attack and stop the other from retaliation. In New Jersey, President Johnson and Soviet Premier Alexi Kosygin called for the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, or SALT. According to President Johnson, they need to take charge of the ABM race. Limiting both the Soviet Union's and the United States' strategic and

nuclear weapons will calm U.S.-Soviet relations; eliminating nuclear weapons is not feasible (Britannica., 2020).

Détente and Arms Control

Détente (peaceful co-existence) emerged between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R right after the event of the Cuban Missile Crisis. After the U.S. diplomatic success in the Cuban missile crisis, the United States policymakers signed different arms control agreements with the U.S.S.R. The key agreements of which is the ABM Treaty of 1972, which limit the use of Anti-Ballistic Missile during the cold war. These agreements brought limitations to the strategic and conventional weapons of the bi-polar world adversaries (Office of the Historian).

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II)

The negotiations for SALT II were begun in 1972, the SALT I was not able to limit the force modernization through the deployment of Multiple Independently Targeted Re-Entry Vehicles (MIRVs) on their ICBMs and (Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs). The SALT II treaty focused on limiting and reducing the number of MIRVs the agreement includes a “2,400 limit on strategic nuclear delivery vehicles (ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers) for each side; a 1,320 limit on MIRV systems; a ban on new land-based ICBM launchers; and limits on the deployment of new types of strategic offensive arms”. Due to the U.S.S.R.’s interventionist actions and the wide alliance of conservative Democrats and Republicans, the SALT II accord was never enacted. They delayed the treaty’s vetting process and were highly dubious of USSR policies. “Ratification of a SALT II Treaty will not reverse trends in the military balance adverse to the United States,” stated President Jimmy Carter in a letter dated December 17, 1979, with 19 senators.

Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty

The ABM treaty was a part of the SALT Talks and it was negotiated between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. It was signed on May 6 1972 and entered into force on October 3, 1972. The pact states that the two sides agreed that limiting the anti-missile system would effectively end the race for strategic offensive weapons. The defensive system's restriction would lessen the need to develop additional offensive weapons in order to get past any defenses that others could put up. The ABM treaty is no longer in effect as a result of the United States' withdrawal on June 13, 2002, and President Bush's announcement that the United States and Russia are no longer in a confrontational situation (Armscontrol, 2012).

Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) or Star Wars

The Republican President Ronald Reagan on March 23 1983 addressed the nation his intentions that the U.S. is making remarkable research in the

national defense program which will make the nuclear weapons obsolete. The research was called the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). The SDI program, space-based missile defense program, protects the country from a nuclear attack. The Regan administration was interested in the SDI program because of the domestic critique in large spending on defense. The SDI also disturbed the basic notion of the deterrence theory, because if one nuclear power has no fear of nuclear attack, then the fear of retaliation no longer exists to stop from making a first strike against the adversary. Regan administration was stuck to the SDI program but it was diminished after the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) and Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) treaty (SDI, 2009).

Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START)

Before five months' demise of the U.S.S.R., the START treaty was signed on 31 July 1991. According to the treaty, both sides began to eliminate ICBMs and launchers SLBMs and launchers and heavy bombers in advance of the START treaty. Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine became a party to the START I treaty as the legal successor of the U.S.S.R. Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine inherited the strategic assets of the U.S.S.R became a party to the START Treaty and signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). These states eliminated their nuclear programs. The U.S. became the sole major power in the world and the age of bipolarity ended with the demise of the U.S.S.R. The threat from U.S.S.R. was over with the end of the Cold War. The U.S. remained a sole superpower. The sense of insecurity increased when the U.S. became a superpower in the unipolar world and the nuclear policies were more based on preemption and promotion of the U.S. hegemonic designs (Sherman, 1991).

Preemptive Nuclear Treat in Post-Cold War

After the demise of the U.S.S.R., the U.S. nuclear primacy once again became the point of discussion. In the unipolar world, U.S. supremacy was a point of reference in its nuclear weapon policy. Iraq was the first theatre after the Cold war where the U.S. exercised its preemptive policies and coercive diplomacy. The preemptive threat or preemptive war is commenced to defeat or repel a threat that is perceived by one state or person. The Operation Desert Storm of 1991 and Desert Fox in 1998 was a preemptive operation of the United States to curb the emerging threat from the WMD of Iraq. Nuclear weapons during the cold war were used by the U.S. for crisis management and crisis bargaining and war prevention, however, in the era following cold war, nuclear danger was used by the U.S. for invasion and U.S. nuclear imperialism. The United governments' post-Cold War nuclear weapons strategy aims to prevent nuclear overhang,

especially in the Middle East, and to draw attention to the threat posed by other governments' nuclear weapons. Since the September 11 attacks, terrorists have increased their threats against the United States. The U.S. withdrawal from the ABM treaty and the Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) remains no longer in practice in U.S. nuclear weapon policy. In place of MAD, the Bush administration was pursuing full spectrum deterrence that can efficiently defeat and discourage multiple ranges of opponents that threaten the United States and its allies and the hegemony of the United States (Jingmei, 2003).

Hegemonic Manifestation through Nuclear Deals with India, Iran and AUKUS:

An important dimension to look at the apprehensions and ambitions of the US policies for de-nuclearization can be averted while focusing few bilateral and multi-lateral agreements of the US with different nations in the 21st century in post-Cold War era. For instance taking Indo-US nuclear deal into consideration which started during 2005 and completed in 2015 specifies its role in assisting its ally through violating NPT's roles and regulations via helping a non-signatory state i.e., India for nuclear trade. Interestingly, for that purpose the US amended its own Hyde Act of 1954 to provide India with nuclear waiver (CFR,2010). Secondly, the JCPOA successfully reached during Obama administration concerning Iran's nuclear program was dismantled by president elect Donald Trump during his first tenure without measuring the consequences. It is noteworthy that IAEA safeguards scrutiny is also conducted in such cases keeping in view the narrative based pressure tactics according to the US foreign policy designs. Similarly, another important factor in this discussion is the recent AUKUS arrangement in the Indo-Pacific region which is solely based on core agenda of tackling China through maritime nuclear weapons hence signaling nuclear hegemony (Marvin Ott, 2021).

Conclusion

In the era of cold war, the U.S. adopted a preventive policy. U.S. nuclear deterrence posture has seen dynamism. Initially, the policy was based on nuclear restraint; however, after the development of nuclear weapons by the U.S.S.R. the policy was based on responsive threats from the U.S.S.R. From the policy of massive retaliation to mutually assured destruction (MAD), the nuclear policy throughout the cold war was more dynamic instead of static. In the era following cold war, proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear threats was the prime focus in U.S. nuclear decision making. The Republicans throughout the Cold war were more nuclear prone and force modernization such as President Regan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) and the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM treaty and making

a new Triad for the Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD). In the post- Cold War era, CTBT, NPT and influence over IAEA has proved successful in restricting few states from acquiring nuclear energy for weaponization yet certain foreign policy objectives have distracted US nonproliferation efforts.

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