

Benchmark III

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Concluding our research we are going to show our view and understanding of the role of nuclear weapons.

The unstable situation before World War II stimulated nuclear weapon researches, the war period even witnessed the nuclear catastrophe in Japan.

When the Second World War ended in spring 1945 it seemed that mankind would be very cautious not to begin a new one. Unfortunately, even the common victory of the two superpowers could not stop the following antagonism and hostility. And by 1961, there were enough bombs to destroy the world.

Of all weapons of mass destruction nuclear weapons are the most powerful and effective. First, they kill and destroy. You cannot protect from them while there is protection from chemical and biological weapons because they do not destroy but only kill provided that the environmental conditions are “favourable”.

Second, nuclear weapons are able to seriously affect the balance of power and world order. The use of non-nuclear types of weapons of mass destruction also has dire implications for the entire world. However, in the power games that take place in the international relations sphere they are no match to nuclear weapons kept in the arsenal or those already put into action.

Can nuclear weapons give a country the desired outcome of a military operation? They can help win a victory in a war against a non-nuclear state, but can hardly contribute to bringing the situation back to normal after the military conflict. The use of nuclear weapons will lead to disastrous consequences in and outside the target state, which will most probably outweigh the advantages of its use.

The fact of possessing nuclear arms does not ensure a state's international status or prestige. For example, North Korea's influence has not increased, and the country has turned from a headache that you can ignore into a problem that has to be solved. Nuclear weapons have not helped Israel become a world power. They have not made Pakistan equal to India, moreover, Islamabad's lagging behind was made worse after each of the two countries demonstrated their capability to the world by carrying out a series of nuclear tests in 1998. Nuclear weapons can hardly help a country run a nuclear blackmail against a non-nuclear country. This kind of policy will most probably prompt other nuclear powers to offer the injured party a compensating long-term deterrent to prevent any further attempts of nuclear blackmail.

The actual use of nuclear arms in a conventional war in order to even the score is highly unlikely. The violation of the nuclear taboo is very likely to cause a surge of

indignation and steps like sanctions and formation of alliances acting as a counterbalance. All this will adversely affect the violator's national security.

Thus, nuclear weapons do not give those who own it prosperity, respect or an easy victory. But the very fact of a country's owning nuclear weapons plays a role as significant as that played by nuclear weapons at a battlefield.

Nuclear weapons act as a deterrent only when it is necessary to counteract blackmail or a threat to use nuclear weapons. It was this incentive that has underlain the proliferation of nuclear weapons up until the present time (Soviet Union vs USA; China vs USA and Soviet Union; India vs China; Pakistan vs India; North Korea vs USA; Iran vs USA and, possibly, Israel). As proliferation continues (we are inclined to believe that it cannot be stopped) this motivation will provide a powerful stimulus for many governments to seek membership in the expanding nuclear powers club despite the fact that that would involve 2-3 years of international pressure.

Nuclear weapons act as a deterrent and means of survival for countries which are aware of their own uncompetitiveness in the field of conventional arms. Such considerations motivated countries like Israel to gain nuclear weapons. Pakistan and North Korea, which sought to counterbalance the means from unfriendly countries' arsenal, became nuclear powers for the same reason.

In the age of warfare revolution the phantom of ever expanding gap between military potentials of the most powerful states and states of average capability make the latter rely on nuclear arms.

They are the most efficient means of keeping more powerful states from a military intervention aimed at bringing down a state's regime. Such necessity, which is considered a strategic one, accounts for North Korea and Iran striving hard to gain nuclear weapons. The French president says that "strategic resources supplies" are part of those "essential interests" of his country, which are under protection of the French "nuclear umbrella". In this situation it is quite reasonable to suppose that strategists of five to seven countries are already thinking about the benefits they can receive in terms of security and survival of their countries.

Nuclear arms can also serve an evil purpose of disguising aggressive intentions to gain regional dominance, which will undermine the protective role of the external power providing security for the non-nuclear states of the region.

Finally, nuclear weapons cannot give a poor or an "outcast" country a "rich and noble" image, however, they will not let their status fall after countries of equal power take possession of nuclear weapons.

That is why Delhi moves, however logical and justifiable they might seem, may prove fatal for the non-proliferation regime. Other countries are bound to consider whether they should follow India's example, especially given the recognition and praise it received after 1998 (although, they may have been mostly due to their economic success, not the possession of nuclear weapons). Raising one's status and prestige may be something sought by Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, RSA and, surprisingly enough,

Iran.

The Cold War ended long ago but the problems of confrontation and nuclear proliferation are still topical. India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea's wish to strengthen their position as nuclear powers does not contribute to the disarmament and nonproliferation process.

Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is a public benefit. Everyone likes living in a secure environment when potential competitors and enemies forego development of nuclear weapons and many countries are ready to follow this example. There is hope that the recognition of the terrible consequences of nuclear confrontation by the world leaders will lead them to exercise caution and restraint. The exception is leaders with apocalyptic world-views, fanatics and mentally unbalanced statesmen who, unfortunately, sometimes reach the peaks of the political Olympus. But in any case you cannot expect deterrence to become as sharp as it was during the Cold War.

Some regions of the planet may see the establishment of a "stability-instability" paradox. There is a view that a limited war using conventional weapons without attacking the enemy's essential targets is not only possible but is a safer undertaking than it was before the invention of nuclear weapons when nothing could keep enemies from extreme escalation of conflicts. Pakistan's decision to attack India's region of Kargil in 1999 and a horrible series of terrorist acts against India in 2001 and 2002 appears to prove that this paradox was not invented by politicians but is a real approach widely used in the modern world.

The problem is that it cannot be guaranteed that the aggressor will not make a mistake in identifying the line beyond which lie the enemy's essential interests. Besides, countries coming under attack may decide that the aggressor objectives are not limited but total. That increases the risk of any confrontation finally leading to the exchange of nuclear strikes. That is why the world with a great number of nuclear powers is definitely more dangerous than the world with few or without them at all.

Concluding our report we must say that nuclear weapons were meant to be nuclear deterrent. But their role was changing in the process of history depending on political, economical, geopolitical situation in the world. The countries' leaders' personalities' and antinuclear movement also added to their changing role. Nuclear weapons have greatly influenced the world policy and world scientific technologies; as a matter of fact they have irreversibly changed the way of life and the way of thinking of whole nations as well as individuals.

Deterrence is still an essential concept in the post-Cold War environment, but today's circumstances, such as increasing proliferation, mean that weapons must be more flexible.

Today's threats are terrorist groups and regional powers armed with weapons of mass destruction and long-range delivery mechanisms.

The process of development can not be smooth. There is always someone who is more progressive. The competition exists and will exist. We wish India and Pakistan overcame their antagonism quicker than in case with the USA and the USSR. It is hardly possible that nuclear weapons will be totally eliminated.

The world without nuclear weapons is possible but from today's point of view is hardly probable.

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