



## Us Counter Proliferation Efforts: A Comparative Study of North Korea and Iran

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### Abstract

The use of nuclear weapons in the post-Cold War era made global security disastrous. But this nuclear acquisition has also given the states a stance that they are pursuing it only for deterrence against external threats. The states signed a non-proliferation treaty to further curb this proliferation. Prior to the non-proliferation treaty, only five states had nuclear weapons. However, following the signing of the non-proliferation treaty, Israel, India, and Pakistan became nuclear states. Moreover, Iran and North Korea also pursued their nuclear activities despite signing the non-proliferation treaty and finally withdrew from the treaty, claiming that these activities were very important for their national security concerns. The US and West believe that their nuclear activities pose a threat to them as well as to the world's human security. They devised a number of strategies to counter the threat of further proliferation and limit any threat of nuclear terrorism. They also applied coercive diplomatic policies in Iran and North Korea to hinder the proliferation of any explosive material. However, all of them remained unsuccessful, as both states remain reluctant to pursue their activities.

**Keyword:** Proliferation Efforts, Global Security, Deterrence, North Korea, Pakistan

### Introduction

In simple terms, proliferation refers to the transfer of nuclear energy, weapons, technology, infrastructure, and knowledge from a nuclear state to a non-nuclear state. There are two types of proliferation. One type of proliferation is horizontal, and the other is vertical. Horizontal proliferation refers to the transfer of nuclear-related materials and energy to other states with the aim of enhancing their military capabilities and gaining a competitive advantage. Vertical proliferation refers to the expansion of nuclear operations through the utilization of pre-existing technologies. Proliferation of nuclear activities using already available technologies.

The United States, in cooperation with the UK, Canada, Germany, Japan, and the USSR, initiated the development of nuclear weapons during WWII. The US served as the primary and sole provider of a weapon of mass destruction during the war, employing two bombs against Japan in August 1945. Iran's nuclear program began in the 1950s when the United States established a research facility in Tehran as part of the Atoms for Peace program. In the 1970s, Iran built a nuclear electricity system, eventually assembling as many as twenty nuclear power reactors to produce 20,000 megawatts of nuclear electricity. Iran expressed its concerns about the possibility of pursuing further nuclear weapons programs. In 1974, Iran took



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another significant step in this regard when they presented at the UN General Assembly about the nuclear free zone. ted at the General Assembly of the UN about the nuclear free zone.

The nuclear application of North Korea also started in the 1950s, while all through the Korean battle, the US threatened to apply weapons of mass destruction to it. North Koreans established the Atomic Strength Commission's research institute and the Sciences Academy in 1952, but they only began operations after signing an agreement with the Soviet Union in 1959. The agreement pertains to the peaceful use of nuclear power, and it also allows Americans to assist North Korea in developing a nuclear research complex. During the 1960s, the Soviet Union also provided some technical support to North Korea, which helped them produce radioisotopes. North Korea engaged in the construction of uranium milling centers in the 1980s. In 1985, they decided to sign a non-proliferation treaty in exchange for Soviet Union assistance in the development of a light-water reactor.

Iran completely stopped using nuclear weapons after the Islamic revolution in 1970. However, in 1982, within the wake of the Iran-Iraq war, Iran reinstituted its nuclear application, affirming that it was in basic terms for the technology of electricity and that it was no longer nuclear-gun-oriented. In the presence of Hashmi Rafsanjani and Muhammad Khatami, Iran endured to similarly develop its nuclear facilities. In 2002, Iran's secret nuclear weapons came to light and have become a problem for the western powers, especially the United States, which has pursued adverse coverage toward Iran since the very inception of the revolutionary regime. Iran made significant advancements in nuclear technology in the areas of mining, milling, conversion, and enrichment through 2003, which are considered necessary for the development of nuclear weapons.

With the passage of time, the US has taken paramount steps to counter Iran and North Korea's proliferation. In the case of the North Korean nuclear program, the US has devised a counter strategy in which South Korea is the most important player in the North Korean nuclear program. South Korea is the primary player to monitor North Korea's exports. It was also South Korea's responsibility to check the suspected items coming in or going out from North Korea. There are many other strategies that can help hinder the nuclear programs of North Korea. These strategies include bringing North Koreans back to Six Party Talks, bilateral talks with the US, and the removal of American forces from the Korean peninsula. The last resort option also includes navy strikes on the peninsula to stop them from pursuing nuclear activities.

Trump's response to the North Korean nuclear program is divided into two types. First, he intensifies the pressure on North Korea by enforcing sanctions, reducing their foreign currency earnings, and obstructing the importation of nuclear technology. In this regard, Trump also threatens China because some of them are involved in assisting North Korean nuclear efforts. Secondly, they have adopted a negotiation strategy that emphasizes stress. Trump's negotiation option helped them follow the road to the Singapore summit. This summit helped them arrive at the negotiation table for the discussion.



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In an attempt to curb Iran's nuclear activities, the US has imposed various sanctions such as monetary, travel, trade, and arms restrictions. However, these measures have not yielded any favorable trade outcomes within Iran's borders. The US's most significant effort was the 2015 signing of the Iranian deal, which involved Iran, the P5, Germany, and the EU. The P5 are the permanent members of the UNSC, which includes China, France, Russia, the UK, and the USA. Americans have an interest in this deal. This deal helps Iran halt its nuclear program's expansion in Middle Eastern countries with the help of US allies. This agreement aids Iran in lifting sanctions. It provides Iran with the opportunity to trade with the rest of the world. Under this deal, Iran must stop its uranium enrichment centrifuges and allow IAEAs to inspect their sites. Iran agreed with these commitments, but Trump, after coming into office, said that he does not want to comply with the demand for a nuclear deal. He wants to reimpose sanctions on Iran. He was of the opinion that, despite signing the deal, Iran is still pursuing nuclear activities, which is a clear threat to their state's national security.

## Literature Review

In his book "Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation: Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World," Sverre Lodgaard examines the non-proliferation and disarmament policies. The book also sheds light on the implementation of these disarmament strategies. Considering the global consensus on proliferation and disarmament, he outlined three key aspects of the non-proliferation treaty: non-proliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. He points out the problems with modern proliferation. He discusses how states, despite signing the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT), continue to pursue nuclear activities and have evenHe focuses specifically on Iran and North Korea. He also concentrated on evaluating the relationship between disarmament and non-proliferation within the multi-centric global context, which includes China, India, the United States, European powers, and Russia. He concludes the discussion of three different worlds without nuclear weapons and the impacts of nuclear disarmament policies.

Christopher Ferrero, in his publication "The Ideational Context of US Foreign Policy Decision-Making toward the Islamic Republic of Iran," elucidated that the relationship between Iran and America remained tense following the Islamic Revolution of 1979. In the US, there is a traditional belief that Iran bears responsibility for its dangerous actions and aggressive rhetoric. Between 1990 and 2003, the possibility of reconciliation between the US and Iran became a The vast array of expert analysis, ideas, and insightful reviews clearly portray Iran as America's most formidable threat and adversary. These reviews clearly show Iran as the most potent threat and enemy of America. This narrative is These types of reviews, which focus on the political cost and traditional desirability, have compelled American Presidents to avoid engaging



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in reconciliation with Iran. and traditional desirability forced Presidents of America not to engage in reconciliation with Iran.

Reza Sambar's article, "The US: Engagement or Confrontation," sheds light on the US's policy of hostility towards Iran following the Islamic Revolution. America continues to view Iran as a state sponsoring terrorism, a stance that directly affects the national security of both the United States and the region. They accused Iran of pursuing a nuclear weapons program, despite having signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. nga nuclear a nuclear weapons program despite signing the NPT. These nuclear activities by Iran are disturbing the US because they consider them a threat to the world and to the US as well. They imposed a number of sanctions on Iran, which include military, economic, and political, in order to stop further proliferation. By analyzing the facts of US-Iran relations, it is clear that our guidelines regarding Iran have been counterproductive. There is a need to set up a framework for mutual cooperation, keeping in mind mutual interests.

Arsalan Ghorbani Sheikhneshin explained in his publication, *"Iran and the US: Current Situation and Future Prospects"*, that since the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, Iran-US relations have been facing ups and downs. The two states have made numerous efforts to improve their relations. But all of this is in vain because Iran's nuclear weapons program has spread. This has further strained relations between the two states. On the other side, Iran rejected all the accusations and explained to the world that their proliferation program is for peaceful and civilian purposes. In this paper, he also analyzed the claims and counterclaims between both parties, especially over the issue of terrorism. Iran urges the other parties to shift their perceptions and policies from aggressive to negotiable and face-to-face discussions. He also discussed the possibility that imposing sanctions on Iran through a hard-line policy could be counterproductive.

James Jay Carafano, in his literary work, *"Implications of Iran's Negotiations for North Korea,"*

explains that negotiations with Iran on a nuclear program have generated certain assumptions. Some of them have the potential to regenerate comparable deliberations with North Korea. The Obama administration's policy shift in Burma, Cuba, and now Iran may have the same impact on policy towards North Korea. Ironically, it did not happen because the Obama administration, in an attempt to cut off North Korean nuclear activities, failed. He tried to make engagements with North Korea in 2009 and 2012, but due to its failure, he did not try any third attempt in this regard. North Korea is the hindrance to normalizing relations between the two. Because the unending danger of nuclear attack against America and their allies does not create an atmosphere that proves conducive to diplomatic engagements, Additionally, North Korea has rejected any interest in engaging Iran in denuclearization talks with the United States.

Samman Chung's research, *"North Korea's Nuclear Threats and Counter-Strategies,"* is a well-defined piece of work on the proliferation of North Korea's nuclear weapons program and



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its ballistic missile programs. He was of the view that North Korean nuclear activities have a direct impact on South Korea and its allies, especially the US. Keeping this in mind, the US has reaffirmed itself by providing support to South Korea in order to deter the North Korean nuclear program. For this purpose, they are giving their full support to the army under the umbrella of conventional strikes and the capabilities of the missile defense system. In addition to that, South Koreans also want to locate and then disrupt the North Korean nuclear missiles. Further, no matter the legitimate choice to hold the air and missile protection gadget of Korea equitable to the missile defense device of the US, South Koreans want to develop many options for increasing interoperability with American missile devices.

Soul Park and Kimberly Pehin's joint work, "Between Hedging and Restraint: Iran and North Korean Nuclear Strategies in Perspective," sheds light on the emergence of nuclear states. They explained that the emergence of many new nuclear weapon states poses a threat to the non-proliferation regime, resulting in serious and devastating impacts on global security. They said many states are pursuing nuclear activities after the Cold War in terms of national security as well as peaceful use of them. As a result, each state exhibits unique behavior that appears to be challenging to control both politically and strategically. Nuclear hedging is no longer robotically ending in nuclear proliferation because some of the aspirants have decided to select the nuclear restraint direction instead of proliferation. They have analyzed the circumstances in which the shift from hedging to restraint occurs. They believed that the decision to give up nuclear activity was due to the uneven leveraging of political, economic, and security programs. Conversely, the restraining activity hinges on the fulfillment of the aspirants' basic interests and motives. They compared the North Korean 1994 Agreed Framework and the Iranian JCPOA to analyze the theoretical arguments.

In his research work "National Security to Nationalistic Myth: Why Iran Wants Nuclear Weapons," Charles C. Mayer discovers that both Iran and the US have a history of nearly twenty-five years of strained relations. The efforts by US policymakers to halt the nuclear program of Iran have remained unsuccessful. The US must acknowledge its inability to prevent Iran from pursuing nuclear proliferation. Behind Iran's nuclear program, there are three most important motivations. First, they want a nuclear deterrence program. Secondly, well-positioned government elites should promote the myth of nuclear safety to foster a sense of nationalistic support for nuclear weapons. Third, the bureaucracies wanted to develop Iran's nuclear infrastructure in order to fight against other organizations for their own interests. This study examines various factors at each level. Firstly, the US wanted to create a corporation related to Gulf security with Iran and Iraqi authorities, but without nuclear weapons. Secondly, the US aimed to form a multilateral coalition to curb Iran's proliferation activities, while simultaneously providing financial assistance to dismantle Iran's nuclear program. Third, by using US media, they can halt Iran's nuclear program by prioritizing public opinion.



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Dr. Nazir Hussain and Tooba Mansoor, in their combined research on *US Counter-Proliferation Strategies: A Comparative Study of North Korea and Iran*, highlighted that the proliferation activities of Iran and North Korea are considered to be a direct threat to the US as well as to world security. With this in mind, the US has consistently implemented numerous counterproliferation initiatives to halt Iran's and North Korea's nuclear activities. The objectives of these initiatives are to stop, slow down, and disrupt the nuclear activities of both the DPRK and Iran. These counterstrategies have different outcomes in comparative studies. In the case of the DPRK, these are unsuccessful, but when it comes to Iran, they are partially successful. However, the historic nuclear deal between Iran and the P5 plus Germany has raised expectations that mutually helpful diplomacy can still make these counterinitiatives by the US and international organizations successful.

In his book *Why the United States Coercive Diplomacy Against North Korea Failed*, Erik Brattstrom elucidated how diplomatic negotiations shape the process of coercive diplomacy, which aims to threaten the opponent through the use of military force or, alternatively, by assisting in the negotiations. He analyzed the American attempt from 2001 to 2006 to disarm and disrupt North Korean nuclear programs as an example of coercive diplomacy. He also examined the factors that explain why the United States failed in its policy of countering North Korea's nuclear activities. He tried to explain it by applying coercive diplomacy's theoretical framework. The United States has used coercive diplomacy to ensure that North Korea abides by America's initiatives and efforts. The US's failure stemmed from their inability to fully implement the crucial strategies necessary for the successful execution of coercive diplomacy.

### Significance of the Study

The study's significance is to highlight the actions and efforts taken by the United States against North Korea and Iran. The study's goal is to find out the real concerns of the US about nuclear developments in North Korea and Iran. It will also shed light on the motives of North Korea and Iran for their nuclear activities. It will elaborate on the concerns of Iran and North Korea about their nuclear activities. The research will also highlight that the proliferation of nuclear weapons is either moving the world towards a peaceful world or towards another world war. It will also explain whether these nuclear activities by Iran and North Korea have a future or will continue.

### Research Questions

The precursors of this research are the following research questions which guides researcher to focus on US counter Proliferation efforts regarding North Koreans and Iran:

- 1- Is nuclear proliferation of Iran and North Korea posing a real threat to US as soul power in international arena?
- 2- What are the real motives behind US counter proliferation efforts against North Korea and Iran?
- 3- Is US is successful in halting the nuclear proliferation of North Korea and Iran by introducing different initiatives?



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- 4- How Iran and North Korea's nuclear programs prove as instability factor in the new system of international relations?
- 5- Can nuclear proliferation of North Korea and Iran be moving the world towards peace?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study's objective is to examine the US's efforts to counter Iran's and North Korea's nuclear activities, which pose a threat to world peace and security. The objective is to find out why the US is taking an interest in the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea. This thesis also focused on how the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea play a role in challenging the power of the US as the supreme authority. The study's main goal is to determine how US counter proliferation activities will contribute to a peaceful world. This thesis also analyses the non- proliferation challenges facing the Trump administration.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Nuclear activities in the world started right after the use of weapons of mass destruction during World War II. For the first time, the US exploded its nuclear weapons on two Japanese cities, resulting in the destruction of infrastructure as well as the loss of many lives. This attack shocked the whole world and introduced a new concept during the war to gain victory and end it. But this proliferation, on the other hand, has devastating impacts in terms of losing lives as well as impacts on the economy and structure of the affecting states. The proliferation of nuclear weapons has prompted other states to develop their own nuclear weapons as a means of self-defense during times of war. As time progresses, some states will develop nuclear weapons. However, in order to halt the nuclear programs of these states, the US, along with other states and institutions, initiated many counterstrategies, which include CPI, PSI, CSI, MPI, GICNT, GTRI, and UNSC resolutions. Furthermore, over time, the US, along with its allies, imposed sanctions on both of these. These sanctions include economic and diplomatic cutoffs from the states. In the case of Iran, the US also adopted a hard stance. They signed a nuclear deal that was considered a historic agreement between the two for stopping nuclear enrichment. While the US has consistently attempted to negotiate with North Korea, this approach has not been successful in previous eras. Despite all these sanctions, both states are still pursuing nuclear enrichment, claiming that they are doing so for their national security.

### **Research Methodology**

Research is the systematic process of drawing inferences from data in order to answer a question or solve a problem. I used qualitative research methods to analyze the US's counter proliferation efforts against North Korea and Iran. I employ historical and analytical methods to ensure the validity of the research theme. The historical orientation of the topic makes it incumbent to employ this method, and the analysis of the facts drawn from history makes it inevitable to use the analytical prism.



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## Sources of Data Collection

We have collected data from secondary sources such as books, journals, articles, research studies, and newspapers. We also made an effort to gather original resources from impact factor journals. We also used the main library of Punjab University, the Political Science Department library of PU, and the Quaid-e-Azam library as sources for data collection.

## US Counter-Proliferation Efforts – A Comparative Study of Iran and North Korea

The threat of destruction by nuclear weapons to global security and protection, which in the post-Cold War era was presumed to have become a thing of the past, has reappeared. The Western world, led by the US, is cautious of the nuclear activities of North Korea and Iran, whose tightened non-proliferation regime has now not been able to cease developing (Mansoor, 2015). Since then, the Western world has introduced counter-proliferation approaches to stop and hinder these kinds of activities. These approaches include threats of force use, diplomatic cutoff, deception, dissuasion, and interdiction policies. These were designed to counter the threats of destruction. Americans were left with a lesser number of options to hinder the proliferation activities of Iran, which Iran was denied pursuing (Mansoor, 2015).

The initiatives to counter the proliferation activities are not totally based on agreements. It is divergent from the legal norms of non-proliferation regimes. In order to counter the proliferation of nuclear weapons by North Korea and Iran, the US has adopted a number of divergent initiatives. These efforts prove a little effective in slowing down North Korea's activities. However, the P5, along with Germany, struck a historic deal with Iran. This deal proves to be a positive initiative in counter-proliferation activities by America (Mansoor, 2015). This deal is a step towards diplomatic initiatives, which, to some extent, might prove helpful in diffusing the threats.

The nuclear proliferation by both states is considered to be a direct threat to global security. To counter this threat, the United States has taken steps to secure its national security. They tried to make effective counter-efforts to stop the destruction in the future. We analyze these issues by considering the likely motivations of the concerned states behind these programs, as well as the effectiveness of US counter-proliferation efforts. There are various concepts, such as proliferation, tools and motives for proliferation, and counter-proliferation, that are explained in order to fully understand the topic.

## Proliferation

In simple terms, proliferation refers to the transfer of nuclear energy, weapons, technology, infrastructure, and knowledge from a nuclear state to a non-nuclear state. There are two types of proliferation. One is horizontal proliferation, while the other is vertical proliferation. Horizontal proliferation. *Horizontal proliferation is the spread of nuclear-related material and energy to other states for military buildup and monetary advantage. While vertical proliferation refers to the proliferation of nuclear activities using already-available technologies, in vertical proliferation, states continue to increase their existing nuclear weapons stockpiles (Sidel, 2007).*



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## Tools of Proliferation

There are many ways to proliferate. These methods of proliferation help to explain the intentions and motives behind proliferators, whether they develop nuclear weapons or use them for their personal interests. These different ways of proliferation are as follows;

1. To run the nuclear reactor, fissile material is an important ingredient. We can extract this fissile material by reducing the amount of highly enriched uranium through neutron capture, or we can steal it from another state for military purposes (Glaser, 2006). If technical faults lead to the leakage or embezzlement of nuclear material, a state or a non-state actor could potentially use this material to create a nuclear device.
2. When a state forms an alliance with another state and strikes a deal, proliferation can occur. In this case, the powerful state would defend the weaker one by taking control of their nuclear weapons. As a result, the weaker one has a strong deterrence. The existence of nuclear weapons enabled the state to deter conflict. Similarly, the non-nuclear state wants to join the nuclear club to protect their national safety (Taylor, n.d.).
3. After 9/11, the world was in shock, and the main concern of all the leaders was to protect their national security. The spread of nuclear weapons technology to less stable regions posed a major threat to world security, which in turn threatened the US (Coulombe, 2013). The main concern of the US national security strategy was the threat of terrorists's access to these technologies. The threat to the US also revolved around those states in which anti-US sentiments are very high. Another area of concern pertains to the expertise in Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) that some underprivileged agents possess. There is a continuous threat that these poor agents, for the sake of financial benefits, may sell their talent to smaller states or terrorist groups (Sharon K. Waron, 2011).
4. The nuclear spare parts consist of the reactor pressure vessel, the vessel 's internals, primary pipes and pumps, cables, concrete structure, pressurizers, steam generators, primary loop re-circulation pipes, and valves. If these spare parts can be used for the construction of nuclear weapons if they ever get into the wrong hands. The article "Heavy Component Replacement in Nuclear Power Plants: Experience and 2008" discusses this issue in detail.

## Motives for Nuclear Development

Besides these proliferation tools, there are numerous motivations that force states to go for nuclear development. Scott D. Sagan has given impetus to this debate. According to Sagan, the consensus on national safety considerations for becoming a nuclear weapon country is naive; there are other factors that force states to pursue nuclear status. He believes that nuclear weapons, like other weapons, regardless of their significance as tools of national security, also serve political targets at the domestic as well as international level as symbols of identity and prestige (Scott, 1997). Sagan has identified three models that explain the motivations behind states' nuclear activities;



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1. Nuclear weapons have destructive effects, so a state seeking to protect its national security must acquire deterrence towards its rival. Nuclear weapons serve as deterrents against conventional threats or as coercive tools to bring about favored changes in the status quo, leading to proliferation. International politics also demonstrate that when one state acquires nuclear weapons, other states in the region often follow suit due to security concerns (Scott, 1997).
2. The second model of nuclear weapons proliferation relates to domestic politics or individual actors within the state who inspire or discourage acquiring nuclear weapons. These individual actors are of three types. One of them is the state's nuclear energy establishment. The second is military personnel, and the third is politicians, whose parties or masses force the state to develop nuclear capabilities and functionalities. Whether or not the acquisition of nuclear weapons would serve the national security interest, it would definitely serve the individual actors' parochial or bureaucratic interests. Whenever these actors come close together, they can directly or indirectly influence the decision-making of the government or state. (Scott, 1997).
3. The third is the normative model, wherein the state's decision to acquire nuclear weapons is symbolic. In that model, norms and beliefs about what actions are legal in international relations politics, rather than the leader's decision to move toward nuclear development to maintain national security interests or the parochial interests of bureaucratic actors, determine the state's behavior. (Scott, 1997)

### Counter Proliferation Efforts by the US

A non-proliferation treaty came into being in the late 1960s. The treaty aimed to eliminate, remove, and restrict sensitive material. It was the first initiative toward a non-proliferation regime. This treaty prohibited non-nuclear states from taking, transferring, or accumulating nuclear material from nuclear weapon states. But as the USSR disintegrated in the early 1990s, the concept of nonproliferation changed to counter-proliferation. Threats to US national security from terrorist groups and organizations led to this change. The concept first originated when Israel bombed the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osirak in 1981. Later, during the eras of Clinton and Bush, this new policy of counterproliferation against the weapons of mass destruction became evident. During the Bush era, a US-led coalition attacked Iraq, alleging it possessed WMD (Danish, 2009).

Although the idea and purpose behind both non-proliferation and counter-proliferation are to stop the spread of weapons of destruction, the policies and approaches used to accomplish the task by both ideas are of a different nature. The US largely dominates the counterproliferation efforts (Danish, 2009). The strategies used in the anti-proliferation efforts to counter the proliferation of nuclear weapons among the states include the use of military force, covert operations, maneuvering, dispersion, deception, and intelligence. The use of limited types of



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conflict is also one of the strategies of counter-proliferation, which helps the states fight against the proliferating states (Counter Proliferation Investigations Programme, 2017).

### **Counter- Proliferation Initiatives (CPI)**

American management expertise in protecting the rights of their people, allies, and homeland is highly dependent on the methods by which they can guard them. To counter the rising threat of weapons of mass destruction, Bush management has introduced new counter-proliferation initiatives. Although the non-proliferation regimes were not successful in getting the desirable outcomes, the era of post-9/11 enabled the environment to enforce the counter-proliferation initiatives (Danish, 2009). Many of the strategies had been designed to counter the proliferation activities. These activities are as follows.

### **Container Security Initiative (CSI)**

The proposal for this counter-proliferation initiative first surfaced in 2001. Because of the 9/11 attacks, American customs services developed a program to counter terrorism and combat his counter-initiative primarily aims to address the threats and border trade posed by the terrorists. Terrorists have the capability to transport nuclear explosive materials through containers. plusive materials. In this strategy, more than one actor is involved. These actors' responsibilities include sending their customs officers to major US ports. The US is establishing a forum to protect maritime activities for the effective implementation this initiative was introduced by the United States, and it is particularly concerned with US interests. As a result, various participating states encounter difficulties in determining which cargo poses a greater threat to their security. Additionally, the initiating state, the US, receives the rights to the record. This type of data could be beneficial for the US, enabling them to use it against the participating states in the event of a conflict or emergency. regency with them. (Danish, 2009)

### **Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI)**

The US launched this initiative in 2003 during the Bush administration to halt the shipments of nuclear explosives to terrorist groups and proliferators. The design took into account the national security of the United States. Its main objective is to protect US shores from any kind of destructive weapon. It is a kind of political measure in which likeminded nations work together. Its main area of concern is to protect the land, sea, and air from any kind of proliferation action. The legality of PSI remains questionable, but the US has attempted to strengthen it by imposing different conditions. Universally, its membership continues to be lacking due to its highly introverted nature (Harbaugh, 2004).

### **Megaports Initiative (MPI)**

It is also part of the US national security strategy. Its main objective is to prohibit terrorists and any state from taking, smuggling, and using radioactive material to make explosive material. It covers three basic areas that have an impact on the seas. These areas include engagement, implementation, and sustainability. Under this initiative, partner states have provided detection equipment. The sea ports can use this equipment to detect containers coming and going. We are



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expanding it to include an increasing number of states. This helps to focus on the latest technological trends to counter the upcoming ones. However, this lacks performance metrics and constricts the deployment of gadgets for radiation detection (Combating Nuclear Smuggling: Megaports Initiative Faces Funding and Sustainability Challenges 2012, 2012).

### **UNSC Resolution, 1540**

This resolution legally binds the state to curtail the spread of nuclear materials in an international framework. It has three primary obligations under which it operates. These obligations include the prohibition of providing any assistance to non-nuclear states in their pursuit of nuclear weapons, the establishment and implementation of a legal framework to prevent the spread of explosive material to non-nuclear states, and a focus on effective measures to ban this type of explosive material. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) mandates that states formulate policies and domestic laws to counteract the activities of proliferators. Under this resolution, it also allows states to use force, which is a hallmark (Danish, 2009).

The UNSC passed a resolution in 2010 to counter the spread of nuclear development in Iran. Under this resolution, the UNSC forces states to make laws and regulations against Iranian nuclear activities (Sanctions Against Iran, n.d.). The UNSC adopted Resolution 1874 in 2009 to stop North Korea's activities. Moreover, the US and South Korea, through the UN, also imposed sanctions against North Korea (Sanctions Against North Korea, n.d.).

### **Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT)**

Many terrorists' outfits emerged after the 9/11 incident. Nuclear terrorism posed a threat to international security after that. Subsequently, the US and Russia jointly launched an initiative to bridge the gaps, particularly in the international non-proliferation regimes. Its goal was also the same as the other initiatives: to prevent any kind of explosive material from gaining and transferring. The flaws in that initiative are the lack of international requirements for nuclear safety and the lack of safety measures for military materials and weapons (Mansoor, 2015).

### **Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI)**

The US proposed GTRI in 2004 with Russia's assistance. It was decided to work jointly to identify, remove, and store nuclear or radioactive materials that can be vulnerable to disruption or terrorist attacks. The Russians were the only ones who had large stockpiles of radioactive material. GTRI functions specifically on three levels, including the conversion, elimination, and security of nuclear or sensitive radioactive material (Galan, n.d.). This approach has the advantage of being capable of denying terrorists access to nuclear material available at research facilities. Other than the Russians, Canada, France, and Norway are also collaborating to increase the effectiveness of this initiative and make it acceptable to the international community (Tittmore, n.d.). GTRI can be effective and powerful in detecting and protecting nuclear material from threats of theft or sabotage; however, its safety upgrades are voluntary and may have cost implications for the operator.

### **North Korea and Non-Proliferation regime**



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Nuclear development in North Korea is considered to pose serious challenges to the non-proliferation regime. Despite their membership in the NPT, the Bush administration's declaration of them as an axis of evil prompted them to withdraw from it in 2003. In 2005, they officially declared their withdrawal from the NPT and declared themselves to be a nuclear weapon state (Chronology of US-North Korea Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy, 2015). They tested their nuclear weapons in 2006, and again in 2009. These tests strengthened their position and made it clear to the world that they possess enough nuclear weapons material and technology.

Following North Korea's tests, negotiations were initiated with them to cease their operations. In 2010 and 2011, North Korea attempted to denuclearize, but failed due to a military confrontation with South Korea at that time (North Korea Nuclear, 2013). Given the recent developments, it is evident that North Korea is pursuing its nuclear activities in the name of national security. According to North Korea, their nuclear program could secure itself against external threats and make them a successful state, which will help to protect their people's interests.

### **Motives behind Nuclear development in North Korea**

Studying North Korea's perception of threat and risk can assess the motivations behind its nuclear program (Pinkston, 2013). The threat of America using its nuclear weapons during the Korean War influenced North Korea's decision to acquire nuclear weapons. Due to the breakdown of the USSR and the 1990s economic reforms in China, the military relations between the Soviet Union and China on the Korean peninsula had weakened. Following this incident, North Korea made the decision to independently develop its nuclear weapons program for self-defense. North Korea considered America the biggest and most potential threat to its national security when President Bush described them as the Axis of Evil. In this regard, the role of domestic policies was also a major factor. According to North Korea, their nuclear program will best serve the interests of domestic actors. However, national security interests were the main motive behind their nuclear program (Yemon Ji, 2009).

### **Counter-Proliferation efforts against North Korea**

After North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT, their nuclear activities became a major concern for regional and global security. Their actions also pose a threat to the non-proliferation regime. The nuclear development program of DPRK, which America considered a threat, wants its dismissal with the support of regional countries, as it fears that unless stopped, it could inspire a domino effect as South Korea and Japan also cherish nuclear ambitions. If Japan acquires a nuclear weapon, it will pose a threat to the security of these states, as well as force South Korea to have its own nuclear device. On the other side, China favors a denuclearized Korean peninsula for its security concerns (Jun, 2003). Since 2005, when DPRK declared itself a nuclear state, these fears of America have not come true, and no other state in the Korean Peninsula has become nuclear yet.

In order to block the export of nuclear explosives to North Korea, America has proposed many initiatives in which South Korea plays an important role. Their role is to maintain exports and



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monitor suspected goods from and to North Korea. These efforts contain both kinds of implications, i.e., regional and global (Bruce, 2012). There are many initiatives that have been taken from time to time since the nuclear activities of North Korea, which include the following:

### **Iranian Nuclear program and Non-Proliferation regime**

Since 1970, Iran has been a party to the non-proliferation treaty. But they have remained non-compliant with the demands of the NPT. On many occasions, they have violated their safeguarding measures. As a result, they are subject to state sanctions. According to the inspecting team of IAEAs, Iran was not following the safety measures over and over again. They also claimed that Iran has been trying to use the explosive material for military purposes. Iran has responded to the allegations made by the IAEA's monitoring team. They explained that their nuclear development program has become their sole power. They can use nuclear energy for civil purposes under the NPT's Article IV. They claimed that they always complied with safety measures' demands and allowed the monitoring team to monitor their program.

In spite of all these measures, the international community remained unaware of Iran's nuclear development. However, the United States keeps the criteria clear for countries to prohibit converting their civil nuclear energy programs into nuclear weapons programs. (Ford, 2012).

### **Motives behind Nuclear Development of Iran**

National security is the primary motive behind Iran's nuclear development program. Many nuclear weapons states, including Russia, India, Pakistan, and Israel, as well as the nuclear armed forces in the region, surround Iran. For Iran to seek a reputable deterrence in such a neighborhood is quite natural, as it perceives threats to its national safety from Israel and the US as well. Israel is a primary driving force behind Iran's nuclear enrichment. Israel is one of the undeclared nuclear weapon states in the region that enjoys US support. Because of their political conflicts with Iran, the US supports Israel and opposes Iran's nuclear development program in order to protect its regional interests. The second is the Iran-Iraq war (1980–1988). Iraq allegedly possessed nuclear weapons. If Iraq were to use its nuclear weapons, Iran would be at risk. Additionally, the lack of an international response to these pressured Iran to develop its own nuclear program (Schmidt, 2008).

A close group of policymakers formulates Iran's foreign policy, aware of the mass support and help that their political leadership requires. Iranians hold their historical past in high esteem, and their strong sense of national pride propels them to be the leaders in the region. This serves as a domestic political drive of national honor to have a nuclear reputation, if simply as a symbol of pride and prestige. Iranians reject any kind of dominance over their foreign policy. Having a nuclear position would help them demonstrate that they are an independent and fully sovereign state. Israel is the only country in the Middle East that possesses nuclear weapons and exercises hegemony over the region. Iran's nuclear development program will help them gain political power. Additionally, it will assist them in achieving international recognition, enabling them to confront Israel's regional hegemony and dominance. (Schmidt, 2008).



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## Counter-Proliferation Efforts against Iran

The United States has imposed a number of sanctions, including economic, trade, arms, and travel restrictions, to halt the Iranian nuclear development program. However, these measures have proven ineffective and useless in bringing about any desired and favorable change in Iranian policy. The United States has also explored military options against Iran, including a limited missile strike against Iran's missile system and attacks on the main sites of military and civilian activity (Rodhan, 2006). However, common sense has prevailed, as the benefits of either covert or overt action could be at best illusory. These actions on both sides may make any future compromise difficult. (Maher, 2012) We can apply the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) to Iran, as it focuses on gaining access to illicit global nuclear networks. To oppose in 1920, the UNSCR targeted Iran, imposing a ban on the imports and exports of nuclear explosive materials and technology again. Similarly, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism clarified Iran's support for non-state actors in Lebanon and Palestine. The Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI) specifically deals with Iran because they consider it the main proliferator and NPT violator. They were also thought to be supporting Hamas and Hezbollah organizations (Katzman, 2009).

2013 saw the signing of the National Defense Authorization Act for the fiscal year. This act also mentioned Iran-related clauses such as the Iran Freedom and Counterproliferation Act of 2012, imposing numerous new sanctions on Iran. The existing sanctions were additionally strengthened. The IFCA applies sanctions to individuals and activities involved in Iran's shipping and energy sectors. The IFCA also applies to individuals who are involved in the sale and purchase of explosive materials to and from Iran. It also regulates the trade of precious metals and provides underwriting services. The International Emergency Economic Power Act (Fact Sheet: Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act of 2012, 2014) also addresses bank offerings that support the Iranian energy program. IFCA mainly concerns Iran's economic sector, and the US is strict in enforcing sanctions, which have a severe impact on the Iranian economy and finances.



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