



State Pursuit for Security in International System: Relevance for South Asia

Ashfaq Ahmed,¹ Muhammad Owais,² Muhammad Bilal,³ & Saima Kausar⁴

Abstract:

States accumulate power to ensure self-preservation, maintain sovereign status, implement independent foreign policy, and if possible dominate. Primary objective of this paper is to understand conditions leading states to carry out measures for self-preservation. It helps the readership to comprehend how states preserve their independence in the international system. International relations theories highlight essential features of the international system, global security environment, and conditions leading to wars. This paper highlights statesmen preserve state security through alliance formations, crisis escalation, crisis management, arms racing, arms control, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, and military modernization programs. The traditional concept of security is transformed post 9/11. States are posed with manmade hazards and natural disasters posing threats to state security and survival. State security as a subject remained ignored as military power lies at the center of security studies. Central objective of this academic research is, therefore, to understand state security in an anarchic international system by using different theoretical models advanced by realists.

Key Words: anarchy, nuclear, power, realism, security dilemma, neo-realism

INTRODUCTION

State security is a key concept in the available literature on international relations. It is safe to state that the sub-branches of international relations, strategic studies, military studies, and security studies are mainly based on the aforementioned concept. The available literature on theories of international relations also attaches significant importance to state security. Likewise, theorists explain the structure of the international system e.g. states are the primary actors in the international anarchic system. Aron rightly highlighted that the international system lacks world policeman (Aron, 1967). Waltz theory of neo-realism explains the aforementioned claim. Waltz

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: drashfaaq5@gmail.com

² Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: muhammad.owais@umt.edu.pk

³ M.Phil Scholar, Department of International Relations, University of Management and Technology, Lahore. Email: b.manzoor1997@gmail.com

⁴ M.Phil Scholar, Department of International Relations, Iqra University Islamabad. Email: Cyma_kausar@hotmail.com

asserts that the nature of the international system is anarchic (Waltz, 1990). Due to the absence of world policeman, neither mechanism exists to maintain equilibrium nor can disrupted equilibrium be restored. Anarchy necessitates self-help in a global anarchic system. If statesmen make efforts to change the global system in their favour they are labeled as revisionists. However, if statesmen make efforts to preserve the system in pursuit to continuously enjoy dominant position they are known as status-quo power. Efforts to change or preserve the system inevitably results in crisis, alliance formations, conflict, and use of force. Conflicts between or among states results from conflicting interests, misperceptions resulting in enemy images or security dilemma and efforts to dominate either new markets or international system. Unquestionably, use of force has far-reaching repercussions for international peace and security (Bull, 1968). State survival is, therefore, a constant feature of the international system. May et al. (2010), asserts that self-preservation has remained a constant national interest of all states. Survival/self-preservation., Waltz emphasizes, is the primary motive of every state in the international anarchic system. Self-help is a key to survival (Waltz, 1979) in the international system. States cannot rely on other states for their security hence constantly prepare for war (Devetak, Burke, & George, 2007). Theories of international relations highlight essential features of the international system, global security environment, and conditions leading to wars. Likewise, theories explain states' search for security through alliance formations, crisis escalation, crisis management, arms racing, arms control, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, and military modernization programmes.

States security consequently warrants academic interest yet it gained far less attention. Buzan highlights why the concept of security was neglected. First, states security is though a significant notion yet it is considered complex. Second, the terms i.e. power and security although are different still they are synonymously used. Third, Buzan believes the field of security could not attract the focus of scholars. Fourth, scholars neglected the importance of conceptual analysis and focused on highlighting the effects of technology on security. The conceptual framework to understand state security could not gain prominence hence remained embryonic. Fifth, security as a subject is ignored as military power lies at the center of security studies (Buzan, 1983).

Realists highlight that the key problem with military alliances is sooner the danger is neutralized competition starts among members of the same alliance. For instance, Soviets and Americans were allies against Germany and Italy in the Second World War (WW-II) yet they turned to be arch-rivals in post WW II era to dominate the international system (2016). Offensive realism enables statesmen to understand the foreign policies of other states. Theory serves twofold purposes. First, it enables statesmen to predict foreign policy outcomes of other states by simply analyzing rival states' economic and military capabilities and their external strategic environment. Second, it guides statesmen in their pursuit to preserve the sanctity of their national borders (Waltz, 1979). Chou a proponent of realism believes that there is no permanent friend and foe in the international system (Chou, 2005). Existential threats posed by relatively strong states coerce statesmen to sign covenants in pursuit to form alliances, evolve security umbrellas, or form defence organizations to repel external threats and ensure state existence. The development of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a notable example to prove the above claim. NATO was developed under American leadership to balance against and prevent Soviet Union from invading Western Europe. Certainly, alliances are formed to maintain a balance of power (BOP) vis-à-vis imminent and

potential security threats. In May 1954, Warsaw Pact was signed in Warsaw, Poland between Soviet Union and Central and Eastern European States to balance against NATO.

This paper endeavors to highlight the available literature on state security. The researcher adopted qualitative method for the completion of this study. This research attempts to bring into limelight strategies states adopt to preserve their sovereignty. It explicates how states thwart external security threats to preserve peace. It highlights different war fighting schools that emerged particularly in the US during the Cold War and in contemporary South Asia. This academic research also endeavors to explain the role of nuclear weapons in state security.

CONCEPTUALIZING STATES SECURITY

State security in this paper is viewed as a state capacity to deter aggression, prevent other states from enforcing their policies in pursuit to change their behaviour or relinquish its national interest by use or threat of use of force. The substance of the matter is state can thwart external aggression to preserve the inviolability of its territorial borders. This definition manifests realists' view that state is a primary actor in the international system. Second, self-preservation is states' primary duty. Third, self-help ensures state security. Fourth, conflict in the international system is inevitable, and states continuously prepare themselves for war. Fifth, it establishes the fact that hard power is a prerequisite for state survival. This is a narrow definition. It is, therefore, pertinent to include security of citizens, economic system, and state institutions. In post-Cold War era, state security is under threat from natural disasters including epidemics, floods, tsunamis, famine, drought, and global warming. Man-made hazards for example terrorism, cyber-attacks and pollution also bear significance. The multitude of threats posed to state security emerged due to technological advancements. However, this academic research is focused on explaining the traditional concept of state security.

Uncertainty breeds insecurity therefore states continuously prepare themselves for the worst case scenario by maximizing their military power (Waltz, 1979). Existential threats, Layne (2006) asserts, coerce states to make alliances in a quest to preserve balance of power (BOP) vis-à-vis imminent and potential security threats. Covenants help states to preserve their sovereignty. It is believed that there is no permanent friend and foe in the international system (Chou, 2005). Former allies, therefore, can compete against one another if a common threat to their security is eroded. Soviets and Americans fight against Germany and Italy in World War (WW) II. Yet, they turned to be arch-rivals after the end of WW II to dominate the international system.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Significance and relevance of the topic stem from the need to deal with and ascertain complicated concept of state security. Concept of security was regarded as "ambiguous symbol" by Arnold Wolfers (1952) who prescribed to prepare a list or specify threats in pursuit to overcome national security challenges and ambiguous national security threats. In *Security Studies: An Introduction* Buzan (1997) described five sectors of security affecting the human population. It expands the canvas and highlights nontraditional sources of conflict. State functions in an international anarchic system therefore human security is inherently associated with state security.

The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in speculations many experts in the field believed that realism is outdated. Threats posed to states' security in the changing strategic environment, threats of asymmetrical warfare, states represented by selfish human and the evolving multi-polarity in distrustful world ascertains that even today realism is an important theory. Evolving multi-polarity is gradually leading the world towards great powers' competition, use of proxies, and threat of the outbreak of war. Theory of realism helps predict future and immediate threats posed to states, behaviour of statesmen, and conditions leading states to war. This paper also focuses on state security only from realists' perspectives. The realist school of thought remained dominant and mainly contributed to the concept of state security. Due to Peloponnesian War by Thucydides which dates back to 400 B.C. theory of realism is considered to be centuries old and played a significant role in politics and security for a very long time.

All branches of realism classical realism, neo-realism, defensive and offensive realism unquestionably agrees that the state is the primary actor in the international anarchic system. Self-preservation is the primary interest of every state. International anarchy is an inherent and dangerous characteristic of the international system. To ensure their security states constantly evaluate threats and remains on guard, if necessary states go to (preemptive) war to ensure self-preservation. The recipe for state survival is to accumulate power because states' ability to inflict harm and punish aggressors prevents the outbreak of war. This leads us to another important aspect of classical realism highlighted by the classical realist Morgenthau. He believes that states are represented by humans. Human are selfish by nature (Morgenthau, 1954). Powerful states run international system is in this context Thucydides stated that "the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must," (Thucydides, n.d.). The primary responsibility of statesmen is to constantly preserve sanctity of state borders. (May, 2010).

Position of strength ensures state security, maintains states' sovereign status, and enables states to pursue independent foreign policy. This significant feature, "position of strength," is highlighted by Jervis (1978). In addition, states can achieve or preserve national interest. Changes in the strategic environment of a state initiate change in foreign policy, national interests, security policies, and defence procurements. Consequentially, uncertain intentions and interests of states result in fear of conquest and war. For Jervis war is either defensive or offensive. He believes that WWI was offensive and WWII was defensive. Fear also produces security dilemma in the minds of statesmen and makes cooperation less likely (Jervis, 1978). Jervis prescribes that states can avoid war by adopting one of these three prescriptions. First, ensure maximum gains through mutual cooperation. Second, increase the cost of defection. Third, the flow of information and transparency can make defection less likely. Jervis emphasizes the development of a robust mechanism to detect and prevent defection at an early stage and ensure cooperation leading towards war avoidance and enduring peace.

Gilpin (1981) highlights that the international system evolved because the members e.g. states and non-state actors decided to develop social relations (Gilpin, 1981). The international system can be a uni-polar, bi-polar or multi-polar. However, it remains anarchic. Anarchy endows states to gradually maximize their power. Consequentially, potential benefits associated with great power status persuade opportunistic states to change the prevalent system in their favour. The temptation of revisionist states to change the status-quo becomes strong if potential benefits exceed the

potential cost of change. The probable change can be introduced in terms of the political sphere, economic realm or by expanding the state's territory. If the hegemon fails to resist or prevent the change, the international system reflects a new hierarchical structure and redistribution of power. War becomes inevitable if the hegemon does not accept the change, the cost of maintaining the status exceeds and capabilities are inadequate to maintain it. Hegemon in pursuit to preserve the status-quo refuses to share the benefits of the international system or give up power to the challenger so there will be a war. However, the likelihood of change will decrease if no one can seek benefits from the change or if the potential cost of change exceeds the potential benefits. Gilpin asserts that the structure of the international system reflects the hierarchy of states and distribution of benefits among states. Military capabilities rather than intentions develop security dilemma among states. Certainly, power maximization is a prerequisite for state survival (Gilpin, 1981).

In pursuit to preserve state sovereignty statesmen form alliances and strategic partnerships. Failure to seek external support paves the way for "self-help," to use national resources and ensure state security. In the existing literature on strategic studies phenomenon of self-help is known as states' reliance on their internal capabilities including economic, military and natural resources to ensure their survival (Weber, 1990). John J. Mearsheimer asserts that the international anarchic system generates fear and feelings of insecurity among states. Power maximization is the only recipe to thwart external threats, prevent rivals from acquiring power and hegemonic position. Consequentially, states ensure self-survival. If possible state should acquire maximum power to become a hegemon in the international system (Mearsheimer, 2001). For Mearsheimer states for example Germany and Japan before WWII and Soviet Union before and after WWII wanted to change the settings of the global system or status-quo in their favors. In *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, the word dissatisfied great powers is used for these states. It is pertinent to state here that the term revisionist was used for these states. Theory of *offensive realism* based on the anarchic structure of the international system and offensive state behaviors is central theme of Mearsheimer's book. It is descriptive and attempts to explain states' behaviour on past instances to predict states future foreign policies. Likelihood of wars increases due to unbalanced multi-polarity. Ongoing Cold War between US and China can be better understood in the light of this discussion. Mearsheimer viewed Beijing as the most destabilizing force and advised Washington to prevent China's rise by all means.

Gideon Rose (1998) highlights that offensive realism serves twofold purposes. First, it serves as the basis and form theoretical framework to understand the foreign policies of other members of the global system. This framework requires students to simply analyze states' indigenous capabilities and its external strategic environment. Foreign policy outcomes are determined by capabilities and external environment. Second, it serves a significant purpose to guide statesmen in their pursuit to preserve the sanctity of their national borders and achieve or preserve national interest.

In the post 9/11 era, states confront different types of challenges to ensure the sanctity of their borders and ensure security of their masses. In the new millennium, states are faced with political and economic challenges and strategic instabilities. Manmade hazards have resulted in terrorism, insurgencies, civil wars, hybrid warfare and independence movement, and full-scale wars.

The discussion in this section underpins realists' approach to state security in an anarchic international system. Discussion begins with defensive realist approach to state security.

- a) Classical Realism:** Hans J. Morgenthau believes that humans are selfish by nature, and states are represented by humans. Conflicts in the international system based on states stem from the man's desire/ lust to accumulate power in pursuit to dominate the state system (Morgenthau, 1954). Anarchy provides the opportunity to opportunist statesmen to fulfill their desires- to dominate the state system. However, human nature rather than anarchy is the driving force behind international conflicts.
- b) Defensive Realists and State Security:** Proponents of defensive realism believe that states possess military technology, distinct strategic cultures, and maintain strategic alliances in an international anarchic system. However, it is not volatile and dangerous. A state can maintain its sovereign status by adopting balance of power technique- to raise, preserve and modernize adequate defense forces capable of thwarting external military threats. Jervis asserts that states can achieve security by adopting moderate strategies including economic assistance programs, diplomatic channels, military alliances, and cooperation and restraint (Jervis, 1978). Moderate policies suit states due to economic interdependence, while revolution in military affairs (RMA) has made war futile activity and a tool of foreign policy.
- c) Offensive Realism and State Security:** Proponents of offensive realism include John J. Mearsheimer (2001), Fareed Zakaria (1992) and Randall Schweller (1996). Offensive realists criticize defensive realism. First, offensive realists believe that defensive realism cannot explain states' expansionist policies leading to war. Second, defensive realists believe expansion does not inherit incentives, therefore, it is a flawed policy. Offensive realists opine that the US will withdraw its forces from Europe. Once US withdraws its forces from Europe, European Union (EU) fearing American hegemony, security problems in the EU's periphery and US coercive policy will emerge as an American competitor to thwart regional security problems, Washington's bellicose policy towards EU and balance international system (Posen, 2004). Posen claims EU distrusts US due to its military might which can provoke change in its benign intentions. Therefore, EU is calmly and clandestinely pursuing the policy of balancing. Keeping in view sixty percent success rate (Mearsheimer, 2001) of offensive policies offensive realists have suggested defensive realists to prepare for future wars. Third, states are living under condition of anarchy and state of nature, state survival can be ensured by maintaining robust military power.
- d) Balancing Technique:** Modern sovereign states below the rank of major power are called second-tier states as they adopt the balancing technique. It aims at achieving national interest and avoiding war through making compromises. China, EU and Russia can be listed in this category of states.
- e) The Role of Balance of Threat Theory in State Security:** Primary assertion of the proponents of balance of threat theory is that states feel threatened by other states due to their intentions, capabilities, and border proximity. Capabilities include military power, economic weight and political stature in the community of nations. Conversely, competing states tend to balance against one another military capabilities to thwart threats.

THE ROLE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN STATE SECURITY

Nuclear weapons are being labeled as absolute weapons, which are mainly possessed by nuclear weapon states (NWS). The Article IX of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) asserts that “a state which has developed and tested nuclear device before January 1, 1967 is called NWS.” possess massive military power. Development of nuclear weapons boosts military capabilities and strength of NWS. Nuclear proliferation threatens regional and global peace and security as it alters the balance of power among competitors (Lee, 2008). NWS, realists agree, even pose threat to the great power of the system. Great powers constantly develop and modernize their war capabilities because they feel threatened by other emerging powers. Nuclear war is a deadly business while exchange of nuclear weapons is meant to be a collateral suicide. Furthermore, radiation that spread after their use would affect other members of the international system. Constant efforts are, therefore, made by the members of the international community through various means i.e. arbitration, reconciliation, diplomacy and forums i.e. United Nations Organization, to prevent the outbreak of war between nuclear belligerents (Sharp, 2009). Despite the introduction of WMD, structure of the international anarchy could not be altered (Weber, 1990). However, this notion is changing and can be read in “Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity,” article published by Thomas J Christensen and Jack Snyder (1990). Nuclear weapons are considered absolute security guarantors. States vulnerable to nuclear weapons will therefore join hands in future against or with powerful NWS (Christensen & Snyder, 1990).

Peace can only prevail if the relative capabilities of states are balanced (Naseer & Amin, 2011). Proponents of nuclear weapons claim that superpowers of the Cold War did not fight WWII because both the superpowers expressed their resolve to resort to nuclear weapons use to protect their national interests. Development of secure second strike nuclear capability by superpowers induced fear of collective suicide and restored the balance of terror between Soviet Union and the US. Consequentially, Soviet Union and the US refrained from executing war fighting strategies (Lebow & Stein, 1995) and waging full scale war. The transformation of the Cold War into a hot war was thus thwarted (Roth, 2010). US officials were, however, divided on the issue of credibility of deterrence of US nuclear forces. Differing opinions among US officials and civilian strategists produced data on the role of nuclear weapons in national security. Likewise, nuclear strategic thought flourished during the early years of the Cold War. In this early era, different schools of thought emerged including finite deterrence nuclear war fighting and assured destruction school of thought (Jaspal, 2011).

Finite Deterrence: Division in US officials led to the rise of proponents of “finite deterrence.” The main idea of finite deterrence had been that Soviet leaders were as cautious as US leaders had been to deter or overt nuclear war (Lebow & Stein, 1995). Nuclear weapons are weapons to prevent external aggression. Nuclear deterrent ensure self-preservation and preserve sanctity of state borders.

Nuclear War Fighting School of Thought: The war-fighting school of thought was developed by William Borden (Coetz & Eysturlid, 2013). The proponents of war fighting school consider that nuclear weapons are modern which can be used against enemies. However, William cautioned that before using these weapons user must ensure that it has already wiped out a similar type of weapons in the enemy’s possession.

Assured Destruction School of Thought: It was developed and advanced by Bernard Brodie (Jaspal, 2011). Brodie believed nuclear wars cannot be won, therefore, should be averted. Use of nuclear weapons results in horrendous loss of life and life on earth can perish, for which we are not prepared. The realization by nuclear weapons possessors that the enemy possesses overkill capabilities and any misadventure will result in mutual harm or destruction results in strategic stability and war aversion.

Mario E. Carranza, (2006) highlights the renewed significance of nuclear weapons in post 9/11 era. Carranza argued that basic features of the international system remained unchanged in the post-Cold War era. Incentives, for the Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS) to develop nuclear weapons, remain high. Certainly, the renewed significance of nuclear weapons would result in horizontal nuclear proliferation in the post-Cold War era. Mearsheimer predicted that the US would withdraw its forces from Europe, wherein Germany would develop its nuclear weapons to dominate European continent. European states will thus indulge in competition to dominate the system and overall system would develop “unbalanced multi-polarity.” Furthermore, the US would also withdraw its forces from Northeast Asia which would compel Japan to develop its nuclear deterrent (Snyder, 2002).

The rational deterrence theory: Waltz evolved theory of rational deterrence. It explains the logic of nuclear weapons development and nuclear proliferation. Waltz’s theory of rational deterrence views states and their decision makers as rational actors. Nuclear weapons possession by belligerents induces caution among decision makers. Theory brings into limelight the consequences of the use and exchange of nuclear weapons use (Waltz, 1981). It demands rational decision making, nuclear war avoidance and undercuts the chances of the outbreak of war. Waltz is one of the leading experts on nuclear proliferation and represented the optimist school. In his article Waltz advocated that more states should be included in nuclear club by providing them gradual access to nuclear weapons. On this occasion, he mentioned two points: First, entry of newer NNWS into nuclear club should be named as “spread” rather than proliferation of nuclear weapons, and; Second, nuclear weapons possession guarantees strategic stability because nuclear weapons possession overrules the possibility of conquest.

The absence of major wars in post WWII era perhaps impressed Waltz. Nuclear weapons influenced the behaviour of superpowers. The newly evolved international system was stabilized and the sanctity of states borders was preserved due to the development and possession of nuclear weapons. Waltz argues that nuclear weapons provide security relatively at a cheaper cost. Nuclear weapons program helps in controlling arms races (Waltz, 1981). Future leaders of present NWS can become tyrannical and start blackmailing NNWS. Therefore, nuclear weapons should be spread to NNWS. Nuclear weapons in the hands of new states would demand extreme care and rational decision making. Acute care would thus result in credible deterrence and war avoidance between NWS. Waltz fear that NWS can become an aggressor by waging war against NNWS, well explained by Clifton (2001) for instance US waged wars against NNWS Afghanistan and Iraq. However, nuclear weapons cannot help the occupant forces of NWS to control a conquered territory after conquering it. This feature does not deny the mere fact that states' inclination to develop WMD would reduce. A handful of NWS would also be able to play their role, by allying against a potential aggressor or tyrannical NWS, in deterring it from adopting a hostile attitude and becoming a threat

to international peace and security. Cautious attitude of nuclear belligerents stems from the fact that victory in the nuclear age is impossible, therefore, two competing states will not step up on the escalation ladder for minimal gains. As soon as nuclear states will climb up the escalation ladder, to achieve larger gains, they will violate the inherited precautions of nuclear weapons possession, i.e. NWS do not fight with NWS. Violation of this law would therefore result in retaliation leading to mutual suicide.

It has been observed that South Asian nuclear belligerents have frequently applied various Cold War models in dealing with one another. They have learnt lessons, drawn various conclusions from these schools, and tried to apply their teachings in pursuit to ensure the sanctity of their respective borders. Pakistan derived lessons from the war fighting school of thought developed by William Borden (Coetz & Eysturid, 2013).

Indian Land Warfare Doctrine manifests that Indian political, security and strategic establishment believes (similar to the military planners of war fighting school of thought) that to maintain and make its deterrent force credible and deter the enemy it will have to raise, modernize and sustain war fighting predominantly nuclear forces. However, Indian strategic circles have not forgotten William's caution. Therefore, they have introduced slight changes as per the modern day requirements to deter nuclear war in South Asia.

South Asia is being regarded as a laboratory for developing new and testing various old ideas and hypothesis. Efficacy of nuclear weapons in preventing preemptive strike, first use of nuclear weapons, limited wars, full-scale wars, crisis and crisis like situations is keenly observed by the students of strategic security, and nuclear non-proliferation studies. War fighting and assured destruction theories which were developed during the Cold War have been found effective in understanding South Asian regional rivalry, rising asymmetry, conventional and nuclear arms race and the security dilemma haunting these states. Pakistani security establishment and political decision makers contrary to war fighting school of thought are applying teachings of assured destruction school of thought. Pakistani decision makers believe that nuclear warfare cannot be wrestled and won. Moreover, enemy can only be deterred from launching conventional preemptive strikes or waging conventional war or the Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) and Land Warfare Doctrine (LWD) by assuring him of retaliation and punishment. During crises, Pakistan sent nuclear signals to express resolve, create fear of retaliation and punishment in the minds of Indian defence planners in pursuit to deter the outbreak of violence. It is observed that during crises and crises-like situations, India and Pakistan locked themselves into a situation similar to "chicken game." In chicken game two drivers from opposite side drive towards each other at maximum speed. Both the drivers pretend to be irrational and force the opponent to change his course otherwise they would have head on collision which is never aimed. "The first driver to lose his nerve and" change his course "is chicken and he losses the game," (Kahn, 1965). India-Pakistan strategic planners transmitted nuclear signals to express readiness, their resolves, determination, and war readiness to win the potential nuclear war. Furthermore, both manifested that they are not ready to back down.

CONCLUSION

Primary objective of this academic research was to explain state security. A state can thwart foreign forces from imposing their agenda or manipulate state foreign and domestic policies. The paper focused on external security threats posed to state survival. Secondary objective of this paper was to bring into the limelight strategies states pursue to ensure their survival. Theory of realism and offshoots of realism including classical realism, offensive, defensive realism, balance of threat theory and balancing techniques were deemed suitable to accomplish this task. All branches of realism tend to agree that state survival is a primary task of statesmen. States represented by statesmen take all steps including band-wagoning, alliance formations, and balancing threats. In the concluding section the discussion was focused on statesmen's quest to ensure state security by developing and subsequently deploying the nuclear weapons. States develop nuclear weapons because nuclear weapons are deemed absolute security guarantor, hence, should be spread as it makes statesmen cautious and prevents the outbreak of war.

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