

The Smiling Buddha: How India refused the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty / The Smiling Buddha: Penolakan India Terhadap perjanjian non-proliferasi nuklir

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Abstrak

Proses India dalam mengkonsepsikan senjata nuklir sebagai alat politik telah melalui berbagai macam dinamika, baik dari faktor internal maupun faktor eksternal. Desakan faktor eksternal, yaitu kondisi keamanan yang terancam, diikuti dengan perdebatan antara pemerintah dan golongan terkemuka di India memunculkan pemahaman yang berbeda mengenai kebijakan nuklir. Kebijakan India dalam pengembangan senjata nuklir dilakukan dengan pendekatan yang berbeda dari pemahaman dunia internasional pada senjata nuklir pada umumnya memunculkan banyak kontroversi, dimana salah satunya adalah tidak menandatangani perjanjian non-proliferasi nuklir. Melalui tulisan ini, akan dibahas bagaimana India membuat kebijakan nuklir berdasarkan pemahaman mereka terkait penggunaan senjata nuklir dan mengapa India menolak menandatangani perjanjian non-proliferasi nuklir.

Kata kunci: kebijakan luar negeri, India, nuklir, pertahanan negara, perjanjian multilateral

Introduction

“India stands for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and ushering in of a nuclear weapons free world. However, till such time as this is achieved, India will be constrained to keep her nuclear option open”

– Indian Ministry of Defence, 1996-97

On May 1974, the whole world were shocked when India’s first preparations for a nuclear weapons test was caught unnoticed and, successfully conducted at Pokhran.¹ The nuclear test was formally named ‘*Peaceful Nuclear Explosive*’ (PNE) and famously referred to as the *Smiling Buddha*. As the name implies, the establishment of nuclear weapons test was never in the intention to entering the wars

¹ Srinivas Laxmani, “‘Smiling Buddha’ Had Caught US off-Guard in 1974’, *The Times of India*, 12 July 2011, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/amp39Smiling-Buddhaamp39-had-caught-US-off-guard-in-1974/articleshow/11013437.cms>.



of nuclear weapons. *The Smiling Buddha* was referred in the history of Vaishali's destruction by Magadha. As the legend said, Buddha was upset with the thought of the war that could have been avoided if Vaishali choose to had deterrent military power rather than the direct democracy. As the nuclear weapons test acquiring deterrence for India, we can conclude that Buddha was happy with it.

The history of India's attempt in achieving nuclear capability have gone through many pros and cons coming from internal and external factors. The prolog of India's nuclear program started in the pre-independence era by a group of scientist under Homi Bhabha that find the significance of nuclear energy and actively persuaded political leaders to invest resources in the nuclear sector.² It was then, supported with justification by India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru stated that "As long as the world is constituted as it is, every country will have to devise and use the latest devices for its protection. I have no doubt India will develop her scientific researches and I hope Indian scientists will use the atomic force of constructive purposes. But if India is threatened, she will inevitably try to defend herself by all means at her disposal".³ Nuclear weapons and energy development began with the objectives of attaining world power and improving the quality of life of the people and self-reliance in meeting the energy needs.

Throughout the following years, the internal debate over whether India should develop a nuclear device has continued from scientist stance and politicians opposition. As the scientist argued that nuclear development was necessary as nuclear deterrent, pointing out the threats coming from China and Pakistan, the politicians opposed with economic and moral reasons, stated that nuclear weapons would not make India safer. They eventually emerged with acknowledging the demand in security interests as the China helped Pakistan in advancing the nuclear weapon

² 'About Us - Bhabha Atomic Research Centre(BARC)', accessed 13 April 2017, <http://www.barc.gov.in/about/index.html>.

³ M.V. Mathai, *Nuclear Power, Economic Development Discourse and the Environment: The Case of India*, Routledge Explorations in Environmental Studies (Taylor & Francis, 2013), 75, https://books.google.co.id/books?id=NBq2W_YUdpEC.



programs. The development of nuclear policy back then was influenced by India's international security condition and followed by domestic aspects such as political change and bureaucratic elites. As the scientist have defended to keep nuclear programme alive, the bureaucratic elites helped in raising political awareness towards India's declining on the development of nuclear weapons.⁴ As the involvement of bureaucratic elites stated that India's approach to nuclear weapons was in the purpose of reinforcing the dominant tendency towards political rather military approach, India sought to go nuclear, and this does not include on what India should do with nuclear weapons as India sees nuclear weapons as something to provide political space and strategic autonomy.

India's position towards nuclear development in international realms was not going smoothly in the first time. Despite India's official stance in nuclear research and development programs are intended for peaceful purposes only, India has receives several opposition from other nuclear powers countries towards their perspective on nuclear weapons. India was an initial advocate of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBC) and rejected disarmament initiatives that based on a desire from non-discriminatory international agreements which would embrace both nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states and be set in the context of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.⁵ India eventually refuse to sign NPT as they see discriminatory within the treaty that denies other countries nuclear right and less at disarmament. India sees the NPT as a threat to international stability and has repeatedly touted its "exemplary non-proliferation record of four decades and more.". Through this, India does not think nuclear weapons can stabilized the region as the NPT standpoint, it rather increases the nuclear risk in the region and seen as irresponsible.

⁴ Bōeichō Bōei Kenkyūjo (Japan), *Major Powers' Nuclear Policies and International Order in the 21st Century*, NIDS International Symposium on Security Affairs (National Institute for Defense Studies, 2010), 95, https://books.google.co.id/books?id=Vo_eYgEACAAJ.

⁵ Shuja, S. M. (2001). India and nuclear weapons. *American Asian Review*, 19(3), 103-119. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/211380278?accountid=31495>



As the concept of India's nuclear policy was built with the involvement of various actors and influenced by how India sees nuclear weapon differently than other nuclear power countries, this paper will analyze India's nuclear policy and understanding the reason why India refused to sign the NPT.

Theoretical Framework

To acknowledge the reason behind India's rejection towards Non-Proliferation Treaty, offense-defense theory and Scott Sagan "Models of Nuclearization" will be the primary framework in understanding India's nuclear doctrine. First, we will explain the reason behind India's nuclearization with Scott Sagan "Models of Nuclearization" and then analyze India's nuclear perspective with basic variables from Offense-defense Theory by Robert Jervis. By understanding India's nuclearization and nuclear perspective, we will understand the concept of India's nuclear policy how that policy made India rejected the NPT.

Offense Defense Theory

Offense-defense theory is built under Theory of International Politics and argues how major war can be avoided by advantaging defense over offense. This theory consists with two variables as described by Robert Jervis, (1) the offense-defense balance argued whether it is easier to take territory or to defend it, and (2) offense-defense distinguishability – whether the forces that support offensive missions are different from those that support defensive missions.⁶ Offense-defense variables are influenced by the work on structural realism, which reflects a state's ability to convert the power into military capabilities. Through this we can conclude that offense-defense balance set the cost ratio of the forces the attacker required to take territory to the cost of the forces the defender has deployed.⁷

⁶ Charles L. Glaser and Chairn Kaufmann, 'What Is the Offense-Defense Balance and How Can We Measure It?', *International Security* 22, no. 4 (1998): 44–82.

⁷ *Ibid.*



As offense-defense balance determine the cost ratio, we can also ensure state's potential military capability and its ability to maintain its security as well as achieving non-security goals. The cost of fighting is set by employing conservative defense planning standards that are traditionally employed by defenders with assumption that other states likely to have expansionary objective and could only be deterred by the prospect of suffering the high losses in a war. Through this, the offense-defense balance will become the minimum investment ratio which the attacker can not only take territory without acceptable cost of fighting.

Within the nuclear studies, the comparisons between attacker's value for territory to the costs that the attacker would incur as a result of nuclear retaliation against its society. Through this, offense-defense balance will be the ration of the cost of forces required to undermine the defender's assured destruction capability to the cost of the defender's forces as the retaliatory damage determined the effectiveness of forces towards defense advantage.⁸

Models of Nuclearization by Scott Sagan

Scott Sagan's Models of Nuclearization focused on the reason of why states decide to build or refrain from developing nuclear weapons. Within this, Scott Sagan concludes an examination of the policy dilemmas produced by the existence of these three models.

The first model is The Security Model that stressed on nuclear weapons and international threats. The main idea of this model came from neorealist theory statement towards the existential states in an anarchical international system that relied on self-help to protect their sovereignty and national security.⁹ In the context of nuclear weapons as weapon mass destruction, to maintain its national security, state must balance against any rival that develops nuclear weapons by gaining access

⁸ Ibid., 4.

⁹ R.H. Wagner, *War and the State: The Theory of International Politics* (University of Michigan Press, 2010), 21, <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=nak4H9tTTYC>.



to a nuclear deterrent itself.¹⁰ Through this, there are several policy implications that coming through the logic of the security model itself. First, states that face nuclear opponent will eventually develop their own arsenals unless credible alliance with a nuclear power exist. To gain confidence and build measures, nuclear states determined to not use their weapon against non-nuclear states. Through the Security model logic, NPT is seen as an institution that permitting non-nuclear states to overcome a collective action problem.¹¹

The second Model is The Domestic Politics Model that focuses on domestic role in influencing the government decisions towards nuclear weapons. As the establishment of nuclear weapons could not be separated from the interest of bureaucratic or political interests, this model will stressed on how domestic actor affecting in pursuing the bomb. There are three kinds of actors that include in the case studies of proliferation according to this model; the state's nuclear energy establishment, units within the professional military, and politicians that favor nuclear weapons acquisition.¹² The approach of the model is influenced by the study if bureaucratic politics and the social construction of technology concerning military procurement in the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Through the study, bureaucratic actors are seen as the one who construct the favoritism towards weapons acquisition by propagate extreme perception of foreign threats, promoting supportive politicians, and actively lobbying for increased defense spending. Through domestic politics perspective, nuclear weapons programs are seen as solutions not directly to international security problems, as it is produced by responses from domestic actors. There is also feasibility that nuclear weapons programs can be also perceive as opportunity for gaining parochial interests.

¹⁰ Scott D. Sagan, 'Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?: Three Models in Search of a Bomb', *International Security* 21, no. 3 (1996): 5, doi:10.2307/2539273.

¹¹ Ibid., 12.

¹² Ibid., 14.



The last Model is The Norms Model that concerned on the standard of weapon acquisition by seeing the symbolic functions that reflects a state's identity. This model questioned the deeper norms and shared beliefs on the actions that legitimate and appropriate in international relations. Within the subject of nuclear weapons, the development towards international norms of the nuclear weapons acquisition have emerges to valuable alternative perspective on proliferation. From the sociology, the importance of the interests of individuals and organizations that shaped by the social roles actors promotes structures and behaviors that proven as rational and legitimate. Through this, military organizations become envisioned to serve similar functions to modern states as it is believed to possess legitimation. This enlighten the possibility of nuclear weapons programs served as symbolic functions that reflects leader perceptions of appropriate and modern behavior. The norms model produces a more optimistic vision of the potential future of nonproliferation as it gives suggestion that nuclear reactions as emerging security threats can be avoided or delayed with normative constraints.¹³ As the NPT regime eventually viewed with more optimism as it envisions the possibility of gradual emergence of a norm against all nuclear weapons possession, this model can predict that there will be severe costs involved if the nuclear powers are seen to have failed to make significant progress toward nuclear disarmament.

Analysis

When India decide to pursue achieving nuclear-capable country, the key points in the decision relies on the propositions on nuclear weapons development which consists of National Security, National Prestige, and domestic politics.¹⁴ Now

¹³ Ibid., 32.

¹⁴ Sharif M Shuja, *India's Nuclear Bomb and the Non-Proliferation Regimes* / by Shuja, Sharif M, Research Paper (Bond University. Centre for East-West Cultural and Economic Studies) ; No. 7., Accessed from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn245638> (Gold Coast, Qld: Bond University, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, 1999), 110.



we will comprehend the process of India's nuclearization by the key points that have been mentioned earlier and Scott Sagan models.

Within National Security, this key concept mainly born by India-Pakistan ongoing heated relationship as the environment of anarchy open the possibility of security dilemma and thus, all possible measurements will be taken to ensure its national survival. From here, we see the first model which is The Security Model, as the variable of National Security established the reason behind India's nuclearization throughout overwhelming threats that envisions India to serve deterrents. The nuclear weapons decisions was built because the growing threats from Pakistan which backed up with China developing the Bomb. India who faced the bomb from their opponent will eventually develop its own arsenal as the current political uncertainties concerned India. Through this, India regained the negativity towards the Non-Proliferation Treaty as their concern on achieving National Security contradictive with NPT permitting non-nuclear states to become nuclear capable states. From NPT, states with nuclear capable will not use their weapons against non-nuclear states, this does not ensure the security gains from non-nuclear capable. India's National Security was in threat from nuclear capable states coming from China and Pakistan even before India become Nuclear capable states. Through this, article VI from the treaty that stated "negotiations in good faith on measures relating to cessation of nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament" only seen by India as something to restrain the non-nuclear states from becoming capable and not including the incentives of National Security towards non-nuclear states.

From the National Prestige, India believes that nuclear weapons will be functioning to serve the state power as the acquisition of nuclear power seen as a symbol of prestige and tool in International politics. This linked to the Norms Model of Scott Sagan that seen nuclear weapon acquisition as symboling functions that serve a state's identity and also giving importance towards deeper norms and shared beliefs on nuclear weapons power within international realm. As India's actions to build nuclear weapon does not only in response to threats from Pakistan and China but also



established the skepticism towards NPT, this disseminate India to feel inferior by making a structure of power where they have a little influence. Through this, India has shared their norms regarding the nuclear weapons as they see the importance of constructing the shared international norm that refrain non-nuclear capable to hold power in international realm. Throughout the Norms model, the international relations seen the symbolic function of nuclear acquisition only to be acknowledge by joining the nuclear war and therefore, have not assessing the progress toward nuclear disarmament as the NPT norms mostly influenced by the stronger country norms, this did not consider the importance of national prestige, as they consider international prestige more. Through this, we sees nonproliferation norms as group beliefs that embedded in domestic institutions and therefore, refuse to acknowledge the National Prestige of the states.

Lastly, from the domestic politics influence towards India's acquisition of nuclear weapons, we can see that the establishment of India's nuclearization can not be separated from politicians influence. Bureaucratic elites had helped in raising the awareness of the importance of nuclear weapons as India's security and expand political contribution towards the development of nuclear weapons. Analyze within Scott Sagan's Domestic Politics model, political interest plays big part in establishing the development of nuclear weapons in India. First, the establishment of nuclear energy was declined by bureaucratic elites and influence disapproval came from government and the citizens of India. After bureaucratic elites acknowledge the nuclear threat coming from Pakistan and China, they strive to raise awareness towards the importance for India in developing nuclear weapons, and thus, affecting the government and citizens to approve India's acquisition of nuclear weapon. Political influence also played big role in the development of an Indian nuclear deterrent as one of the main perspective of India's nuclear doctrine and as politicians favoring the nuclear weapons acquisition raised acceptance towards public and government, this proven that domestic politics has contribution to India's nuclear decision.



Throughout the process of India's nuclearization and the establishment of India's nuclear doctrine, we can see that India have different interpretation towards nuclear weapons and thus creating different aim within their capability in nuclear deterrence. The main motive of India's nuclear weapon establishment was to defend their national security from external threat coming from Pakistan and China, India seek defense domination within their nuclear weapon acquisition. Through this, the measurement that India has taken into their nuclear defense was to pursue a doctrine of credible minimum deterrence which focused on 'retaliation only' and only focused on the survivability of the arsenal. India prosecute their own definition of peacetime posture aims at convincing any potential aggressor that consists of; (1). Any threat of use of nuclear weapons against India shall invoke measures to counter the threat; and, (2). Any nuclear attack on India and its forces shall result in punitive retaliation with nuclear weapons to inflict damage unacceptable to the aggressor.¹⁵ Through their stance to use nuclear weapons for defensive purposes, the forces capability only to defend the nuclear weapons from any threat that can destroy the nuclear weapons and this ensure that the military can perform in maximum ability in defending the nation's security. India with their nuclear weapons help the main defensive forces in assuring India to defend their territory as well their national security

Conclusions

Through the background until analyzing the reason of nuclearization and India's perspective towards nuclear weapons, we can conclude that the different view towards nuclear weapons is the main reason on why India rejected the NPT. First, India main reason in establishing nuclear weapons was for defensive purposes to achieve nuclear security but non-proliferation treaty made it difficult for India to defend their nuclear security as there is limitation for non-nuclear states to develop nuclear weapons. Thus, India seen NPT as an obstacle for achieving their national

¹⁵ 'India's Nuclear Doctrine and Policy', accessed 18 April 2017, <https://www.idsa-india.org/an-feb-1.01.htm>.



security as it is proven to not consider the national security for non-nuclear states. Second, India seen the international norms that accepted in a NPT not considering the national prestige of nuclear-capable states. As India believes that nuclear weapons served as a symbol of state power, this contradicted with NPT norms. India also refused to join the nuclear wars as they used the nuclear weapons solely to defended themselves. This also contradicted the international norms that NPT shared towards acquisition of nuclear weapons only acknowledged by joining the nuclear wars. Lastly, as the domestic politics have big influence in building india's nuclear doctrine, this consider the establishment of nuclear weapon as political weapons rather than actual weapons, which are not accepted by the perspective within NPT.

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