

An Understanding of the Challenges of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime

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Abstract

The Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime, which emerged in response to the international outcry in the midst of the nuclear proliferation upheaval, represents the universal determination to avert the condemnation of the nuclear apocalypse and the need and desire to enjoy the benefits of nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes. The Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons constitutes the Regime's fundamental legal cornerstone that seeks the pursuit of a safer nuclear-weapons-free world while enabling the international community to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, in the midst of this rapidly evolving industry and equally growing demand for nuclear energy and radiological materials, the international community has found itself intrinsically entangled in an expanding rhetorical web engendered by the technological, political and criminal aspects and implications of the nuclear era in the 21st Century.

This master thesis modestly attempts to concretize, according to the literature, some of the reasons for why nations decide to go nuclear and to present some of the reactions by the international community to counter the seemingly uncontrollable development of the nuclear industry for military purposes. Moreover, this thesis aims at examining the contemporary reliability and effectiveness of some of the measures evoked in earlier years to withhold the proliferation of nuclear weapons while providing Non-nuclear Weapons States access to nuclear science and technology for peaceful nuclear applications. After having assessed the usefulness of some of these conservative approaches, bearing in mind some of the new and present threats, this work aims at revising some of the current efforts to thwart the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the use of nuclear and radiological materials for malicious purposes and, based on past and present experiences, attempts to forecast the success of these efforts. Finally, this work hints at the need to reexamine the effectiveness and reliability of some of the different instruments and methods intended to ensure and to endorse the effectiveness of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime.