

Denuclearization: Revisiting Gandhian approach to Conflict Resolution

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Abstract: In a world defined by competition over cooperation, and the acquisition of arms prioritised over the pursuit of diplomacy, the threat of a nuclear weapon being used is higher than it has been in generations. Promising national Security, the modern state has come to regard nuclear weapons as an irresistible force for peace, strategic stability and a more tranquil future. They are regarded as the most powerful and destructive weapons held in the arsenals of modern state capable of inflicting a remarkable degree of overkill. It is in this context that various forms of less militant response, including the methods of conflict resolution adopted by India's nationalist leader, Mohandas Gandhi, deserves a second look. Gandhi was an ardent believer of substituting non-violent resistance for war, and a sharp critic of the bomb which he regarded as the most diabolic use of science. From a Gandhian perspective the extensive level of nuclear employment is a form of violence motivated by greed, prejudices and historical animosity and the results are devastating with socio-cultural, economic and political consequences. For Gandhi, the most potent weapon to save the world is non-violence, which emanates from courage to stand against oppression and injustice. The bomb, he said, will not be destroyed by counter-bombs. Indeed, hatred can be overcome only by love.

This paper aims at exploring Gandhian philosophy and its applicability to contemporary global problem of nuclear escalation. The authors employ an inter - disciplinary approach. The discourse is based and conceptualised in the historical, quantitative and comparative context with social insights to the contemporary development of events. The historical part includes a thorough understanding of the evolution of the Soviet - American nuclear arms race. The theoretical part involves a critical analysis of the different approaches to conflict resolution with an overview of

concepts like nuclear deterrence, nuclear proliferation, disarmament and Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). Further we comparatively analyse the Gandhian concept of conflict resolution based on Satyagraha and non-violence with the contemporary strategies of International organisations - like UN, ICAN, CTBTO, Pugwash Conferences and so on. In particular, we apply these insights to gain a better understanding of how Gandhian philosophy can further strengthen these institutions to lay foundation of a nuclear free world. The recent collapse of Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty in the backdrop of diplomacy failure between Washington and Moscow makes this research more imperative in the present context. The dissolution of INF treaty marked the beginning of the end of the arms control architecture that has regulated nuclear weapons since the Cold War. In this scenario, Gandhian philosophy of conflict resolution embedded in mutual trust and non-violence can lay the framework for creating an environment for nuclear disarmament.

Key Word: diplomacy, conflict resolution, non-violence, nuclear proliferation, nuclear disarmament, Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), Satyagraha, INF treaty

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I. INTRODUCTION

In a world defined by competition over cooperation, and the acquisition of arms prioritized over the pursuit of diplomacy, the threat of a nuclear weapon being used is higher than it has been in generations. This paper aims at exploring Gandhian philosophy and its applicability to contemporary global problem of nuclear escalation. The discourse is based and conceptualized in the historical, quantitative and comparative context with social insights to the contemporary development of events. The historical part includes a thorough understanding of the evolution of the Soviet - American nuclear arms race. The theoretical part involves the analysis of the different explanations to conflicts from Realism, Neo-realism and Liberal perspective. Further we comparatively analyze the Gandhian concept of conflict resolution based on Satyagraha and non-violence with the series of challenges of failure facing the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty and the recent collapse of Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty in the backdrop of diplomacy failure between Washington and Moscow which makes this research more imperative in the present context. The dissolution of INF treaty marked the beginning of the end of the arms control architecture that has regulated nuclear weapons since the

Cold War. In this scenario, Gandhian philosophy of conflict resolution embedded in mutual trust and non-violence can lay the framework for creating an environment for nuclear disarmament.

As per SIPRI Yearbook 2019, nine states—the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, North Korea) possessed approximately 13,865 nuclear weapons, of which 3750 were deployed with operational forces. Nearly 2000 of these are kept in a state of high operational alert. Overall, the inventories of nuclear warheads continue to decline. This is mainly due to Russia and the USA, which collectively account for over 90 per cent of global nuclear weapons, reducing their strategic nuclear forces in line with the 2010 Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START).

However, the pace of their reductions has slowed compared with a decade ago, and neither Russia nor the USA has committed to making further negotiated reductions in their respective nuclear force.¹ At the same time, both Russia and the USA have extensive and expensive programmes under way to replace and modernize their nuclear warheads, missile and aircraft delivery systems, and nuclear weapon production facilities. These trends reveal a continuous reliance of states on military nuclear programme as a central element of their national security strategy. Promising national security, the modern state has come to regard nuclear weapons as an irresistible force for peace, strategic stability and a more tranquil future. They are regarded as the most powerful and destructive weapons held in the arsenals of modern state capable of inflicting a remarkable degree of overkill.

In International Relations, a vast, sophisticated and contradictory literature has evolved on the implications of nuclear weapons to determine the patterns of international conflict and war. This theoretical and empirical work has principally focused on two broad theoretical camps - one set of theorists regard the spread of nuclear weapons as good for peace because of their brawny deterrent strength.² They consider that nuclear weapon under certain conditions would provide peace and strategic stability. Others are sceptic about the asserted robustness of the nuclear deterrence. To them extensive level of proliferation of the nuclear weapon would raise the propensity to conflicts and threat strategic stability.³

The structural neo-realist paradigm in international relations can be useful in explaining the nuclear weapons policy of a state owning nuclear weapons. Neo-realists generally define power as the material capabilities of a state relative to the capabilities of other states; its military capabilities in particular.⁴ They argue that there is no better way for a state to maximize its military power than through obtaining nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons being the absolute pinnacle of military capabilities, every state attaining – and maintaining – a nuclear threat vastly increases its chances of survival.⁵ Thus, Neo-realists adhere to nuclear deterrence theory: the idea that a state's nuclear weapons, thanks to their sheer destructive power, deter a potentially more powerful foe from attacking it with its own nuclear weapons.⁶ Nuclear weapons as such need not to be actually used: their mere existence is enough to scare away any potential opponent from nuclear attack.⁷

The most illustrious argument in the realist camp was made by Kenneth Waltz in 1981, in his monograph, 'The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better'. It provided a strong support to nuclear proliferation arguments.⁸ In the realist's view, the acquisition of nuclear weapons is a rational response of states attempting to protect their interests, since security represents the ultimate challenge to a state's survival. Although there is some commonality among the exponents of Neo-realism like Waltz and Mearsheimer in stating the reason for proliferation of nuclear weapon, they differ about the impact of the nuclear weapon in establishing peace and stability.

"According to Waltz, a widely proliferated nuclear world will be markedly peaceful and stable and perhaps one to be welcomed. Whereas, for Mearsheimer, since possessing nuclear weapons does not assure security, we should anticipate a future in which expansionist clashes aimed at thwarting the ability of rivals to undermine security are as frequent as they have been in the past but more dangerous because of the raised stakes inherent between actors that possess nuclear weapons".⁹

Neorealism thus, foresees that if the balance of relative military capabilities between states is upset in favour of one particular actor – or group of actors – other states in the system will automatically seek to counterbalance this. Thus, whenever a state acquires nuclear weapons, its rival states should do so too.¹⁰ This is what happened during the early stages of the Cold War: as soon as it became evident that the United States had acquired nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union stepped up its own nuclear weapons program.¹¹

II. Nuclear proliferation: A brief historical background

The vicious circle of nuclear proliferation began with United States led Manhattan Project (1942-46) which was directed by US physicist Robert Oppenheimer and General Leslie R. Groves. The destructive capabilities of the new weapon were tested in August 1945 in Japan when a uranium bomb "Little Boy" levelled Hiroshima and a plutonium bomb "Fat Man" devastated Nagasaki.¹² The World War II ended, but weapons development did not stop. By February 1949, the Soviet Union had completed its work on the

design of the first Soviet nuclear weapon which was essentially a copy of U.S Fat Man device.¹³ The first Soviet nuclear weapon made with plutonium, designated RDS-1, was detonated in 29 August, 1949 at a test site near Semipalatinsk. The uranium route to the atomic bomb was successful in August 1953, when the first thermo-nuclear weapon was tested.

Once the Soviets got hold of the nuclear power technology, United States under President Truman became determined to develop a much more advanced and lethal version of nuclear bomb, the hydrogen bomb. The fear - of Nazi Germany, of the Soviet Union, of someone else getting a yet bigger bomb - powered the nuclear quests in virtually all countries and was eventually elevated to a strategy of its own - the so-called "mutually assured destruction" (MAD).¹⁴ By 1954, the first "H- bombs" were successfully tested by both countries, but the world hardly became safer. The United States has produced an estimated 66,500 nuclear bombs and warheads of 100 types and modifications for its operational stockpile since 1945.¹⁵ To catch up with the United States, Soviet Union under Khrushchev created a separate branch of armed forces called the Strategic Rocket Forces and conventional tactical aviation and artillery were reduced severely. The Centre-piece of the nuclear strategy was preemptive global and theatre nuclear use.¹⁶

The US and Soviet tests of the hydrogen bomb in 1952 and 1954, respectively, led the British, French and Chinese government to launch an effort to also develop thermonuclear weapon, which was successfully tested in 1957, 1960 and 1964 respectively. Nuclear anxiety quickly spread all across the globe. The continuous quest for nuclear advancement between the Americans and the Soviets hardly made the world safer, instead the tests led to the beginning of Soviet-American strategic arms competition, every year of which would push the world closer to the brink of the nuclear war.

The Cuban missile crisis turned out to be a watermark in the nuclear arms race. Immediately after this crisis, a need for a comprehensive dialogue for nuclear disarmament was strongly felt. A search was undertaken for a more holistic approach to warfare with each type of weapon, including conventional weapons, having a distinct role. These efforts resulted in signing of nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968 which was followed by two arms control agreements in 1972: the Anti-Ballistic Missiles treaty (ABM) and the agreement known as Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty -I (SALT I).¹⁷ In June 1979, after many years of negotiations the Soviet Union and US agreed on Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty - II (SALT-II). But the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan marked the end of Soviet - American detente.¹⁸ The American reaction to this was the non-ratification of the SALT - II and the imposition of economic sanctions.

In January 1986, Mikhail Gorbachev, assumed the post of general secretary of the Communist party of Soviet Union and refined the Soviet objectives for an arms-control agreement by emphasizing on the elimination of nuclear weapons by the end of the century. From 1986-91, there was the adoption of defensive doctrine and realization that a nuclear war cannot be won and the new foundations of doctrine became deterrence, war prevention, and limited war.¹⁹ These constructive steps soon culminated in Geneva Summit of November 1986 between U.S president Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev. The two leaders held similar meetings in 1986, but the discussions broke down when Gorbachev linked the issue of the elimination of U.S. and Soviet INF in Europe to U.S. termination of its development of the Strategic Defense Initiative (the so-called "Star Wars" anti-missile defense system). This was followed by the Reykjavik Summit of October 1986. Though the talks collapsed but the progress eventually resulted in the signing of Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) treaty between U.S and USSR.

INF can be considered a landmark arms-control and disarmament treaty. Being of unlimited duration, the treaty eliminated all Soviet SS-20, SS-4, SS-5, SS-12, and SS-23 ballistic missiles; SSC-X-4 cruise missiles and launchers; all US Pershing II and Pershing IB ballistic missiles; and US Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCMS) and launchers. By 1st June 1991, a total of 2,692 intermediate-range missiles had been eliminated entirely.²⁰

In 1991 history accelerated. The political map was transformed and the values and notions that determined international stability and security in the wake of World War II lost their meaning. In the post cold war period as the world moved away from the familiar bipolar cold war era to a multi polar world, many international relations theorists renewed the old debate about which is more stable: a world with two great powers or a world with many great powers.²¹ The liberal ideology became one of the dominant models explaining modern state's behaviour in the post cold-war world. As per the liberal theorists in the post-cold war era, major powers will gravitate towards one set of shared norms-namely, economic liberalism and political democracy. These norms will enhance the incentives to avoid the use of military means to settle disputes between the great powers. Conflicts between the great powers will still be common, but they will be played out in boardrooms and courtrooms, not on battlefields or in command and control centres.²² In the core economic inter-dependence will lessen the security dilemma; the major powers will have less motives for expansion. In the liberal international order conflicts among states will not disappear, but they will not be resolved militarily.

To further boost the liberal model of international system and achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament several international non-governmental organizations like UN Office on Disarmament Affairs (

UNODA), International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs and Global Security Institute (GSI) etc. were strengthened in the post-cold war era to - (i) defend and build upon past disarmament and non-proliferation gains, particularly the NPT, CTBT, INF and START; (ii) encourage meaningful diplomatic engagements among states to reduce the tension of nuclear escalation; (iii) engage with new constituencies and stakeholders who have not been engaged on the nuclear weapons and disarmament issue, particularly members of the younger generation in the nuclear armed-states and non-nuclear weapon states; (iv) put meaningful pressure on government officials to advance practical, concrete nuclear risk reduction and disarmament initiatives.²³ The work of INGOs towards nuclear disarmament was further bolstered by significant disarmament agreements that took place between U.S and USSR - beginning from the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) and the 1992 Treaty on Open Skies which were followed by landmark unilateral decisions concerning nuclear arms reductions. To keep momentum in the nuclear arms reduction process, the United States and Russia signed START II on 1 January, 1993 to reduce the deployed strategic arsenals to 3,000-3,500 warheads, set the sub-limit for the number of strategic warhead deployed on SLBMs to 1,750, and banned the deployment of Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) ICBMs.²⁴ But the START II eventually failed as a result of the 2002 U.S. withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty. Instead Strategic Offensive Reductions (SORT) Treaty came into force from June 2003 until February 2011 when it was superseded by the New START treaty of 2010.

The next major achievement towards achieving the long-term goal of global nuclear disarmament was the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which was negotiated and opened for signature in 2017. The TPNW is the first legally binding agreement to prohibit the development, deployment, possession, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons. The Treaty also prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons on national territory and the provision of assistance to any State in the conduct of prohibited activities. It obliges states parties to provide adequate assistance to individuals affected by the use and to take appropriate measures of environmental remediation in areas under its jurisdiction that are contaminated as a result of activities related to the testing or use of nuclear weapons.²⁵ The treaty will enter into force once it has been signed and ratified by 50 states. Once implemented this treaty can act as a catalyst towards achieving nuclear disarmament.

But the recent withdrawal of U.S from the INF treaty has put a question mark on the future of nuclear arms control. The collapse follows months of public disagreements between the two states about the allegations that Russia has developed and deployed a mobile ground-launched cruise missile (SSC-8 / 9M729) with a flight range prohibited under the treaty—an allegation that Russia has consistently dismissed as baseless.²⁶ With the collapse of the INF Treaty, the US and Russia are now free to build and deploy intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles which would fall in line with their seeming determination to kick-start a new nuclear arms race. The US alone is projected to spend \$1.2 trillion in the coming 30 years to maintain and modernize its existing arsenal, and there have been indications that nuclear weapons producing companies are preparing to build nuclear weapons capable of striking within the 500 to 5500 km range.²⁷ The collapse of the INF Treaty is a significant loss that puts the world at increased risk. Thus, with the erosion of the disarmament and arms control framework that reaped significant post-cold-war-era gains, all states must work collectively towards a new twenty-first-century approach to the world of atomic bombs.²⁸ It is in this context that Gandhian approach of conflict resolution, deserves a second look.

III. THE GANDHIAN APPROACH TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The study on the philosophy of conflict management has been undertaken since 1820s, about the same time when Gandhi was engaged in resolution of conflicts like Anti-Apartheid movement in South Africa and India's freedom from British imperialism. But the philosophy took a systematic shape with the onset of cold war. As per Gandhi, the genesis and causes of conflict - be it of domestic or international nature - are well known to us and we broadly agree on these, but it is in the method of conflict resolution that - may include use of force, legal opinions, negotiations or cooperation - we may differ. Gandhi believes that best solution to resolve a conflict is through sacrifice and cooperation.

The Gandhian approach to conflict resolution is a perfect blend of religious influence and the ideas of western thinkers. Western thinkers like John Ruskin, whose book "Unto this Last" was translated by Gandhi himself in Gujrati as Sarvodaya; Leo Tolstoy, the central theme of non-resistance of his book "The Kingdom of God within you" finds description in Gandhi's book on Hind Swaraj and Henry David Thoreau's idea of 'Civil Disobedience' impressed on Gandhi's philosophical and practical life. On the other hand, religions like Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism and Islam taught the eternal message of non-violence to Gandhi and also contributed significantly in shaping the present discourse on Conflict management.

Gandhi emphasized on four basic methods of conflict resolution through - (i) negotiations and persuasion; (ii) satyagraha and nonviolent activism; (iii) education and (iv) institutional and organizational

reforms. Gandhi believed that violence is never a permanent solution to conflict management and proposed the method of sacrifice and peaceful solution instead. He acknowledged that willingness to sacrifice by either one of the parties or both will be helpful in resolving the crisis. Gandhi favoured the technique of smoothing-where difference between the conflicting parties can be sorted either by the parties, or by a middleman, an arbiter - to achieve peaceful settlement of disputes between the conflicting parties.²⁹

The next major norm that Gandhi adheres is the technique of satyagraha and non-violent activism. Gandhi regarded non-violence as the first pre-requisite for any conflict resolution and directed that - First, conflicts should be solved (do not continue the struggle forever, always seek negotiation, seek positive social transformation and seek transformation of both the self and the opponent); Second, one should insist on essentials rather than non-essentials (do not trade with essentials, be willing to compromise on non-essentials); Third, one should see oneself as fallible (be aware that you may be wrong, admit your mistakes, maintain consistency over time); Fourth, one should be generous with opponents (do not exploit their weaknesses, do not judge them harder than yourself, trust them); and finally that one should aim for conversion rather than coercion.³⁰

Another major tenant of Gandhian approach of conflict resolution is education which he regarded as an instrument of change and rationality. It is a basic premise to help society build character and evolve better institutions for peaceful resolution of conflict. Gandhi also credited institutional reforms and organizational changes a quint-essential for conflict resolution. As per Gandhi, the approach of institutions in case of conflict resolution should be to - First, define the conflict well (state the goals clearly, try to understand the opponent's goals, emphasize common and compatible goals, state conflict relevant facts objectively); Second, have a positive approach to the conflict (see the conflict as an opportunity to transform society); Third, act in a goal-consistent manner (by including constructive elements, using goal-revealing forms of struggle, acting openly rather than secretly, and by aiming the struggle at the correct point) and Fourth, not to polarize and escalate the situation.³¹

Thus, for Gandhi the spirit of sacrifice, compromise and cooperation, satyagraha and non-violent activism and collaborative problem-solving approach lay at the bedrock of peaceful resolution of all types of conflict including the contemporary global threat of nuclear escalation.

As aforementioned, the movement towards a sustainable nuclear disarmament is possible by adhering to Gandhian philosophies and ideals. In this context, this section seeks to appraise two cases of nuclear control treaties and examine their effectiveness in achieving the transition to zero nuclear weapons. It also highlights show Gandhian philosophy of conflict resolution embedded in mutual trust and non-violence can help them override their weaknesses and lay the framework for creating an environment for nuclear disarmament. The treaties in question includes - Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) treaty and the Nuclear Non Proliferation treaty (NPT).

IV. THE BREAKDOWN OF THE INF TREATY

The 1987 INF Treaty was the first agreement between Soviet Russia and the US in which both sides agreed to the elimination of all nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges of between 500 and 5,500 kilometers. At the height of the Cold War, the INF Treaty was seen as a great success of diplomacy as it banned and eliminated over 2,600 of the most destabilizing class of intermediate-range missiles, thereby pulling the world back from the brink of nuclear war and kick-starting further deep cuts in the two largest nuclear arsenals.³² Thirty-two years later, on August 2, 2019, the United States formally withdrew from the INF Treaty stating that Russian government has deployed new missiles that violate the terms of the INF treaty while Russia continues to reject the accusations. This shocking withdrawal is the result of change in circumstances and several concerns that had been brewing up between the two countries over the years.

To understand the changing circumstances, we have to accept that the INF treaty was the product of a specific moment in history, and its successful negotiation depended on a number of conditions that do not exist today. Negotiations toward the INF Treaty succeeded in part because of the personal characteristics of Soviet and US leaders at the time. Unlike his predecessors, Gorbachev favoured an improved relationship with the West and believed that arms control negotiations could contribute to Soviet security. Gorbachev and Reagan also seemed to hold nuclear weapons in a different regard than did other Cold Warriors. Reagan famously pronounced that “[A] nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.” Gorbachev called for the “complete elimination of nuclear weapons.” Although some dismiss these stances as political posturing, the attempts by Reagan and Gorbachev to rid the world of nuclear weapons at Reykjavik demonstrated their commitment to disarmament.³³

In the post cold war phase, the relationship between the leaders of U.S.- Russia have been strained by everything from Syria to sanctions imposed in the wake of events in Crimea as well as the

recent allegations of Russian interference in U.S. politics. A major dent in relations came after the G-20 meeting between Trump and Putin in Hamburg in July 2017, which yielded mixed results, in which the negatives outweighed the positives. After the meeting, the US Congress passed sanctions against Russia that were not only much harsher than anything ordered by Barack Obama, but which for the first time since the start of the Ukraine crisis enshrined US sanctions against Russia in law.³⁴ The result of this constant confrontation is that today US-Russia agenda has shrunk to just one item: avoiding a direct military collision between the two countries' militaries.

Another factor that added to the slow demise of the INF treaty was the absence of transparency between the two countries in the reporting of reliable information on the status of the nuclear arsenals. As per SIPRI 2019 report on Armaments, Disarmaments and International security, USA has disclosed considerable information about their respective nuclear stockpiles and capabilities but Russia refused to publicly disclose a detailed breakdown of its forces counted under New START. Moreover, the recent denial of Pentagon to disclose the current number of nuclear weapons to Federation of American Scientists (FAS) for declassification of the 2018 nuclear weapons stockpile further raised questions on U.S nuclear transparency policy.³⁵ This opaqueness heightened the insecurity among the actors and ultimately paved way for its withdrawal.

The demise of INF can also be accorded to negligence on the part of the actors to act in goal consistent manner, which ultimately delayed process of negotiations and raised the suspicions. For example: the 2010 New START agreement on strategic nuclear arms lasts until 2021, and there are currently no talks about prolonging or replacing it; and Russia's constant allegations that the USA is technically violating New START by converting some of its nuclear launchers to non-nuclear use. As a result of this uncertainty, the Russian government decided to halt the work on prolonging New START, despite its imminent expiry date.³⁶ This clearly shows that the two actors have failed to kept aside their personal security dilemmas and work towards achieving the higher goal of nuclear disarmament. The constant blame-game of charges and countercharges on the part of United States and Russia and the emergence of China as a threat further acted as fuel that catalyzed the demise of INF.

V. NUCLEAR NON PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT)

NPT is one of the best case study in a way to appraise multilateralism. Multilateralism seeks to integrate national interest with global values and norms. NPT built on the idea of multilateralism views non proliferation as a mean to pursue common security benefits that would be most reliably achieved through the "complete physical elimination of the deadliest weapon".³⁷ It has been the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime for almost 50 years. With 191 parties, it has become the most universal of all treaties.

When adopted in 1968, the NPT was genuinely perceived and treated as a bargain by the vast majority of non-nuclear weapon states, which agreed to never acquire nuclear weapons if the countries possessing them would eliminate theirs. Yet the nuclear-armed states, while at times reducing the overall numbers of their arsenals, have never engaged in multilateral nuclear disarmament efforts with the goal of eliminating their arsenals. Instead, they have spent billions of dollars modernizing their nuclear weapons, delivery systems, and related infrastructure. They have written into their security doctrines new justifications for the use of nuclear weapons. Some, like the United States and Russia, are building new types of nuclear weapons, "upgrading" their delivery systems, and engaging in proxy conflicts with each other. They have failed to implement previously agreed actions and steps to nuclear disarmament, including from the 1995, 2000, and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.³⁸

The NPT is described as having three fundamental "pillars"- Non-proliferation, Disarmament and Peaceful use of nuclear technology. However, the NPT presents a perfect case where it has failed considerably in the above three pillars. It faces challenges regarding:

(i) **No clear objective and definition of conflict:** the multilateral discourse of NPT has to date, lacked a comprehensive analysis of what a prohibition of nuclear weapons could mean. Therefore, there has been little progress on these various actions and steps. On the central issues – nuclear arsenal reductions, a diminishing role for nuclear weapons and commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons, the following assessment from the 2000 NPT review conference remains true today "Nuclear-armed states pay at best lip-service to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons, and none has committed to any "minimization objective", nor to any specific timetable for their major reduction – let alone abolition. On the evidence of the size of their weapons arsenals, fissile material stocks, force modernization plans, stated doctrine and known deployment practices, all nine nuclear-armed states foresee indefinite retention of nuclear weapons and a continuing role for them in their security policies".³⁹ Since the conclusion

of the NPT there have been no multilateral negotiations on nuclear arms reductions, and no negotiations seriously addressing how to achieve nuclear disarmament.

(ii) **Mutual Trust:** the lack of trust among the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) , between Nuclear weapon states (NWS) and Non- Nuclear weapon states (NNWS) and among NNWS themselves is a cause of concern. During the last five years (2015- 2020), the NWS , especially the non - NPT signatories (India, Pakistan , North Korea and Israel) have failed to considerably reduce the stockpiles of the nuclear warheads.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the stalemate in the aim to attain a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East (WMDFZME) has directly thwarted the confidence building mechanism adopted by the NPT as seen in the failure of the 2015 NPT review conference.

(iii) **Polarizing and escalating the situation:** the nuclear weapon states are the essential stakeholders in the nuclear disarmament process. Since the failure of the 2015 NPT Review conference, the non-nuclear states have approved the opening for signature of a new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, often called 'the Ban Treaty', at the United Nations in New York. Once 50 states have ratified the treaty, nuclear weapons will be considered illegal under this new treaty. The nuclear weapons states have fiercely opposed the establishment of this new treaty. Some of the non- nuclear weapons states have underlined the treaty's complementarity with the NPT and see it as strengthening the NPT. Others, however, see the ban treaty as a new legal instrument in its own right. These efforts by the non-nuclear states have considerably escalated the situation on other level. This polarization has raised a discussion as to which treaty has priority, the NPT or the Ban Treaty.

(iv) **Lack of participatory approach:** North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which has three of the world's nuclear powers in its ranks, strongly criticized the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons brought upon by the non-nuclear states in the UN. The NATO has called it "the wrong way to go about reducing the number of nuclear weapons". It also criticized International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)-the Nobel peace prize winner of 2017 over complete nuclear ban by saying that-"Effort towards disarmament must take into account the realities of current security environment".⁴¹ This shows lack of consensus building and participation among the NPT members.

VI. CONCLUSION

The central premise of this article from its very beginning lay in the assumption that the transition to a world with lower numbers of nuclear weapons and ultimately with zero nuclear weapons would most likely rely on the effectiveness with which the Gandhian principles of conflict resolution are applied in the present international scenario. This hypothesis was put to test with the help of case studies of two nuclear treaties namely the INF treaty and the NPT, which clearly highlighted the voids - be it trust issues, diplomatic failure , lack of clear definition of conflict , security dilemma , absence of transparency, lack of consensus building and the halfhearted approach of international actors - that delayed the pace of the international community towards achieving the novel goal of nuclear disarmament . The lessons that one can learn from the demise of INF treaty and the poor implementation of NPT are that the Gandhian principles of participatory courtesy, inherent clarity and transparency, institutional adaptability and non- violence lay at the bedrock of achieving a nuke free world. Thus, conversion over coercion, diplomacy over authoritarian attitude, trust over opacity and participatory over individual led approach should be the guiding principles of the international community to achieve the long, distant but realizable dream of a world free of nuclear weapons.

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