'Is less more?'

A Contemporary Debate on Nuclear Weapons

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Abstract

The global community has long been fascinated by – as well as terrified of – nuclear weapons. Since the introduction of the weaponry to the international arena in 1945, the goal has been to halt its proliferation. An ideal, future world is one that is free from nuclear weapons. If the goal is to ensure stability and peace in the world, one assumes that the presence of nuclear weapons has the opposite effect. Scott D. Sagan is one out of many scholars arguing that in terms of nuclear weapons, 'more will be worse'.

This thesis will challenge this assumption using the research of scholar Kenneth N. Waltz who argues that 'more may be better'. It will be argued that nuclear weapons can ensure stability and peace in the world, using rational actors and mutual deterrence. To verify this reasoning, it will be normatively adapted to the case of Iran's nuclear program. In this specific context and regional setting, the approach offers a new perspective on how the international community could, and perhaps should, respond to Iran's suspected nuclear weapon development.

The point is not *if* a nuclear weapon-equipped Iran can ever be justified, but rather that it *could* be.

Key words: Nuclear Weapons, Mutual Deterrence, Iran, Kenneth N. Waltz, Scott D. Sagan
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1 Introduction

Since nuclear weapons entered the international political arena at the end of the Second World War, their sheer existence has been characterized by fear and condemnation. Moving from a context in which only a handful of states possessed the destructive weaponry, the expanded proliferation has caused nuclear weapons to become one of the most scrutinized international issues of this century.

What this proliferation means in practice and what consequences this has on peace between states is regularly debated. Are the acquiring states' incentives to use them as a means of warfare or rather as a self-fulfilling security-option against other states? Opinions differ on this matter, although the universal assumption among scholars and policy makers seems to be one which condemns the weapons out of fear of a nuclear Armageddon. Hence, multiple international treaties have been created with the goal of halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons and limiting their presence to a selected number of states. The short term goal is to maintain stability and peace between states, while the long term one is a future nuclear weapon-free world.

If the goal of halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons is to maintain peace and stability in the world, one can assume that the presence of them has the opposite effect. Empirically, however, this assumption is challenged.

The universal definition of peace reads *the condition during the absence of war*. In a utopian sense, stability can be defined as *genuinely peaceful relations between different social groups and states.*[1] Even though war is usually defined as the usage of organized military force to achieve political goals in general, this thesis will adopt the definition for world wars in particular. There are numerous conflicts today in which organized military force is being used to achieve political goals. There are no conflicts, however, where nuclear weapons are used as a means of warfare.

No world war has taken place since the United States introduced nuclear weapons to the international political arena. The American nuclear bombings of Japanese cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 is still the only point in history where nuclear weapons have been used as a means of warfare. Considering this aspect, one can argue that nuclear weapons maintain peace through their stabilizing effects on the relationship between states.

This thesis will follow this line of argumentation while analyzing the case of Iran and its assumed nuclear weapon development. If stability and peace is what we are striving for, perhaps the international community needs to re-evaluate how

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[1] Definitions collected from the Swedish National Encyclopaedia.

to respond to the Iranian nuclear program in accordance with the afore-mentioned argument.

1.1   Problem Formulation and Research Question

Over the past decade, the focus of the universal nuclear weapon debate has been directed towards Iran and its assumed nuclear weapon development. The fact that Iran's nuclear plants are kept behind a veil of secrecy clearly contradicts the transparency requirements stated in the United Nation's (UN) treaty on *the Non-Proliferation on Nuclear Weapons* (NPT). This has given fuel to international fears concerning the development of the program. Iran has – by having signed the treaty – agreed not to develop nor proliferate the weaponry. However, in November 2011, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) published a report indicating that Iran had performed activities "relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device" (IAEA 2011-11-18). This statement was made despite Iranian claims of it being fictional data created by the United States and Israel.

Since the universal security policy assumes that Iran is in the process of developing nuclear weapons, the reasoning in this thesis will build upon this assumption. Many indicators suggest this – not least due to Iran's unwillingness to disprove this assumption by their continued refusal to allow complete international transparency.

If Iran is indeed in the process of developing nuclear weapons, one might question its incentives. Will the weaponry be used as a defensive security-insurance or as an offensive means of warfare? It can be argued that one of the motivating reasons for Iran to pursue nuclear weapons is the status such a weapon grants its owners, in the world in general and in the Middle East in particular (Betts 1979:1063). The nuclear program of Iran, therefore, carries a rather prestigious weight both internally and externally despite its purpose. It is also continuing, despite the resistance from the dominating West and its self-proclaimed nuclear weapon monopoly. It seems to be a question of enforcing Iran's position in relation to other states.

In this thesis, the contrasting theories of scholars Kenneth N. Waltz and Scott D. Sagan will be applied to the universal debate concerning the case of Iran. Waltz argues that more nuclear weapons in the international arena may be better if the goal is to maintain peace and stability. Sagan makes the counterargument saying that more will be worse. The arguments of these two scholars are described in depth in Chapter 3 of this thesis and will form the theoretical foundation of this paper.

In line with the problems being addressed above, my scientific problem will refer and add new perspectives to the debate involving nuclear weapons today:

How *should* the international community respond to the Iranian nuclear development if the goal is to maintain stability and peace – in accordance with Waltz's or with Sagan's approach?

Iran is being politically demonized by the West, mainly due to its nuclear program's assumed military dimension, in relation to its non-democratic regime. "The fear of Iranian nuclear weaponization seems motivated by more than the concern for treaty [NPT] compliance. Rather, it appears to be motivated strongly by western moral assumptions about what kind of government or people can be trusted with a nuclear arsenal" (Doyle 2010:88).

The long term goal with the international non-proliferation regime is a nuclear weapon-free world (Quinlan 2009:153). To achieve this, the short-term goal is to halt the proliferation of the weaponry, especially to relatively unstable states such as Iran. The possessing of nuclear weapons by undemocratic, unstable states is interpreted as a bigger threat towards world peace and stability. Internationally-led sanctions towards Iran have therefore been implemented and increased, however the situation only seems to worsen with them. The question is whether this is the right approach to take towards Iran – if the goal is to maintain peace in the region and in the world. Will more nuclear weapons be worse or may more be better? This thesis will argue in favor of the latter.

1.2   Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to make a contribution to the current nuclear weapon debate among political science scholars and policymakers regarding how to approach the case of Iran. Both presently and historically, the universal assumption has been one which demonizes the sheer existence of the weapons. Also criticized are the incentives possessors of nuclear weapons receive, which the case of Iran exemplifies.

Hopefully, this thesis can influence the debate by adopting a new and contrasting perspective on how the case of Iran can be handled – a perspective where more nuclear weapons can in fact be better if the goal is stability and peace.

Bearing in mind the increased proliferation and spread of nuclear weapons it seems crucial to pursue a contrasting approach that can explain why states would want to acquire the weaponry in the first place. Despite policymakers' and scholars' continuing condemnations and regardless of sanctions and threats of such, states nonetheless continue to covet nuclear weapons. Perhaps the only way to move forward in the debate is to scrutinize what incentives states developing nuclear weapons have and what the actual consequences of this spread are. Might a nuclear weapon-equipped Iran, in contrast to the current universal assumption, actually have a stabilizing effect? By following the directives of a *normative analysis in a strict sense*, the purpose of this thesis is to advocate for this reasoning. Whom would such an approach favor, and how, if the goal is to

maintain peace and stability between states? In the case of Iran, attention must be paid to the likely consequences a possession of nuclear weapons would have on the relationship between it and the West. In this thesis, regard is mainly paid to the fragile relationship between Iran and the United States and its protégé Israel. If Iran were to possess nuclear weapons, could this offer stability to the current hostile relationship between it and these two countries, in terms of mutual deterrence?

Obviously such reasoning fundamentally contradicts the international initiatives towards a nuclear-free world. But how can we strive for a nuclear weapon-free world, when some countries are authorized to possess the weaponry while some are not?

Despite the goal being a nuclear-free world, the development of nuclear weapons can never be erased. We can never return to a pre-nuclear innocence. We cannot resolve the *reduction ad absurdum*[2] and re-rationalize the use of nuclear warfare from the Second World War. Bearing this contradiction in mind, the question becomes not one which asks if nuclear weapons *will* ever be justified, but rather if they *could* be.

1.3   Limitations

The fundamental question of this thesis does not regard the technicalities and process of developing nuclear weapons. The emphasis is put on the actual and interpreted nature of nuclear weapons and what consequences their proliferation has in the case of Iran.

This thesis should not be interpreted as a generalization of the nature of nuclear weapons, but rather as an exemplification of how the current universal assumption regarding them can be challenged. The general focus on Waltz's Rational Deterrence Theory should therefore not be interpreted as a promotion of it but rather as an objective contribution to the debate. I have chosen this focus not because I necessarily agree with his arguments, but rather because I find it crucial to bring another perspective to the debate. The analysis should therefore be seen as a complementary measure, adding new contrasting perspectives to the situation regarding nuclear weapons. The negotiations with Iran are nearly exhausted and new measures need to be considered.

Further, my aim is not to categorize or classify the different standpoints or to generalize the result towards a global cohesive understanding of them – instead I would like to present an interpretation of Waltz's and Sagan's contrasting theories to the specific case of Iran.

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[2] Reductio ad absurdum – proof by contradiction – refers to when a proposition is proved true by proving that it is impossible for it to be false. (Quinlan 2009:12)

1.4   Disposition

In order the serve the purpose of this thesis, the disposition of it will be as follows.

Firstly, in Chapter 2, the method of how to execute a normative analysis will be presented. Analyses with a normative character are often criticized for their speculative nature. Hence, focus is laid on the different kinds of requirements necessary for the validity of such an analysis. Regard is also paid to normative ethical theories, in line of which the two different theoretical approaches can be justified.

Next, In Chapter 3, the theories of Kenneth N. Waltz and Scott D. Sagan are presented. Their different perspectives on nuclear weapons along with their supporting arguments are thoroughly explained, in order for the reader to be able to follow the scholars, and this thesis, line of thought. In order to maintain a critical approach towards their argumentation, each scholar's theories are followed by a sub-section of critique directed towards them.

In Chapter 4, the contrasting theories are put in practice, adapted to the case of Iran. The reasoning will follow Waltz's line of thought showing that the presence of nuclear weapons may in fact offer stability and peace in the world, in terms of rational actors and mutual deterrence.

In the final Chapter, Chapter 5, the result of the analysis will be outlined. It will argue that, in accordance with Waltz's 'more may be better' approach, under certain circumstances, the nuclear program of Iran could be justified.

2   Method

There is a continuous debate regarding whether or not it is possible to execute a valid, justified normative analysis and take a stand in value-related questions. It is therefore of paramount importance to initially clearly define the different conceptions regarding nuclear weapons (Badersten 2006:25). What should the moral concerning nuclear weapons be, in contrast to how it is today? Should our interpretation of and attitude against nuclear weapons be in line with Waltz's point of view and, if that is the case, on what grounds?

A normative study includes empirical observations based on the actual conditions of a scientific problem being examined. The study gains its normative status when the author states how a certain social phenomenon should be tackled (Esaiasson et al 2010:44). The aim of such a study is to show the principles that support a certain position.

2.1   Normative Analysis in a Strict Sense

The specific normative method being used in this thesis can be referred to as a *Normative Analysis in a Strict Sense,* in line with Swedish scholar Björn Badersten and his normative research. This specific method presumes that 'out of a clearly motivated value based foundation, a specific action or condition can be justified' (translated from Badersten 2006:47). In the case of Iran, it becomes a question of giving a value-specific and clearly justified answer to how a nuclear-equipped Iran might de facto maintain stability and peace.

Due to this precise and motivated foundation of value, this specific method stands in contrast to other normative methods that require openness and neutrality in the arguments. The dissimilarity between the different methods should however not be overrated. There are multiple overlaps, foremost regarding the necessity of initially presenting objections and contrasting matters of opinion to ensure the depth of the debate (Badersten 2006:47, 49).

2.2   Guidelines for a Normative Analysis

The analysis of the case of Iran will be disposed and conducted in accordance with the principles for a normative analysis in a strict sense stated in Björn Badersten's book "*Normativ Metod – att Studera det Önskvärda*" (translated: Normative Method – to Study the Desired) published in 2006. The following principles are formatted according to the different demands of a normative study, and will be adopted simultaneously while analyzing the case of Iran in Chapter 4.

As a foundation for the analysis, the value-base and reasoning relevant to our two contrasting approaches must be defined (Badersten 2006:103). Despite the general focus on Waltz's perspective attention will also be paid to Sagan's approach. Every normative analysis is based upon a value which defines what is good or bad, better or worse. These can either be defined in terms of intrinsic values, where the value itself is good, or as extrinsic values in which a value in relation to something good, becomes good (Badersten 2006:187). In this case, nuclear weapon is defined as having extrinsic value, since Waltz's approach argues that they can offer peace and stability through mutual deterrence.

A normative analysis, as all other types of analyses, must be empirically substantiated (Badersten 2006:10f). The empirical foundation will consist of an application of the above-mentioned debate on the case of Iran. The motivating focus will lay on how the international community is responding to the Iranian nuclear program. Additionally, the situation in the Middle East will be discussed. There seems to be a nuclear weapon arms race in the region, where Iran and Israel are the prominent figures. This empirical data will form the basis for the analysis (Badersten 2006:103).

This paper will have several supporting arguments, formatted according to the theoretical perspectives of Waltz and Sagan. Perhaps nuclear weapons play a vital role in ensuring stability and peace in the Middle East and the world. Perhaps it is this optimistic approach the international community must adopt while handling the Iranian nuclear development. In line with Waltz's theory, it will be argued that nuclear weapons can actually preserve peace, a statement which makes them justifiable. It seems crucial to expand the debate and see it from differing perspectives, especially in the case of Iran where the situation seems to be in a deadlock. By offering these contrasting explanation factors, one is invited to see the situation in the 'bigger picture'. To maintain the credibility of the normative analysis, varied sources with varied values will be adapted. The intention is to maintain a, from the readers point of view, transparent procedure (Badersten 2006:103f). This bares more importance, considering the normative character of the study. Building an argumentation and hence research on a value-foundation is often criticized for its lack of scientific and empirical proof. But how can we move forward, if we refuse to move outside 'the box'? Can an approach in line with Waltz standpoint under certain premises be justified, and should that be how we respond to the Iranian nuclear plants? If so, what would be the consequences?

All of these above-mentioned principles and guidelines will be taken under consideration during the course of the analysis (Badersten 2006:15).

2.3   Normative Ethical Theories

The aforementioned strategy for a normative analysis is based on abstract and formative natured requirements, which needs to be complemented with substantial ones (Badersten 2006:108). In order to do so, certain *Normative Ethical Theories* can be taken into consideration, concerning the nature of the value of nuclear weapons.

Adopting Waltz's approach offers a variety of different argumentations. "A normative logic responds to the question *how* – how to reason in normative value founded questions – rather than the question of *what* is being justified" (Translated from Badersten 2006:108). Two of the different types of ethical theories that can be adopted are D*eontology* and *Consequentialism* (Translated from Badersten 2006:109,114).

The discipline of Deontology underlines the value of upholding a duty. Some actions are by nature good (or evil) and should therefore be defended (Badersten 2006:109f). According to this principle, Sagan's approach to nuclear weapons is probably preferred, since the universal assumption on the weaponry is that they are bad, evil, in their inherent nature.

In contrast to this approach, you find Consequentialism which core lies in the consecrating of the means. Here the act in itself is irrelevant – it is rather the *consequence* of the act that determines the nature of the act (Badersten 2006:114f).

People reason differently when it comes to questions regarding values and ethics. A deontologist might argue that 'nuclear weapons will never be justified due to their destructive effect'. A consequentialist, on the other hand, might say that 'nuclear weapons could be justified, depending on the consequences of such a justification' (Badersten 2006:34).

If Waltz's theory that more nuclear weapons may be better is to be given preference, then we must analyze the consequences of such a justification. Instead of relying on the existing universal assumption, could a proliferation of nuclear weapons actually lead to stability and security between states? Could the world find enduring peace? According to Waltz's theory it could – a statement that justifies his approach in line with the values of Consequentialism.

If we theoretically should take a stand in questions regarding our society on the basis of its assumed consequences, is an entirely different question.

2.4   Empirical Materials

In order to increase the validity and reliability of this thesis, the theoretical foundation will be complemented with other sources that speak to the political context of Iran. Others will explain the current nuclear weapon debate. One of these sources is scholar Michael Quinlan. In his book "*Thinking About Nuclear Weapons: Principles, Problems, Prospects*", he discusses nuclear weapons present and future international significance. Another is Paul Huth, who in the article "*Deterrence and International Conflict: Empirical Findings and Theoretical Debates*" discusses the utility of military threat as a means of deterrence.

In the absence of sufficient empirical data regarding the use of nuclear weapons, one must rely upon universal concepts and hypotheses. The nuclear weapon debate is diversified by different reasoning's and conjectures regarding what leads to or prevents a nuclear war. It also features a speculative dimension regarding such a war's potential course of action. It is impossible to give certain predictions, especially due to the mentioned lack of empirical data (Quinlan 2009:14).

Due to this, one can only see to the empirical data available – data showing nuclear weapons only having been used as a means of warfare in 1945. this data also shows that since then, no world war has taken place. Regardless of other major conflicts and wars between states since then, the world has never experienced a longer period of international peace and stability. This is *one* interpretation of the nuclear past and offers *one* prediction of the nuclear future. But to offer a broader view of the differing thoughts regarding nuclear weapons, Scott Sagan's opposing argument will be explored, as well as others. To complement the academic research, an interview has also been included.

2.4.1   Interview with a Representative from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Ms. Rebecca Söderberg works at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the Department for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Affairs. She, among many others, supports the international initiatives for a nuclear weapon-free world, such as the NPT. The core regarding the case of Iran, she argues, is to remember that it is a party of the NPT. Thus, Iran has obliged not to acquire nuclear weapons.

In her opinion, a nuclear-equipped Iran "*would be a major blow to the international efforts for disarmament and non-proliferation, and seriously risk harming the international non-proliferation regime*". She also notes the "*risk of this leading to an arms race in the region*" (Rebecca Söderberg 2012-05-07, translated by the author) which in turn could create further instability. "*In the extreme [this] poses a threat to the peace and stability in the region*" (Rebecca Söderberg 2012-05-07, translated by the author), she argues. In contrast to Waltz

and in line with Sagan, Ms. Söderberg argues that the objective should be a nuclear weapon-free world, which presumes halting their proliferation.

In the case of Iran this implies encouraging them, through diplomatic means, not to acquire the weaponry. This includes encouraging Iran to embrace the NPT-obligations and hence support the international non-proliferation regime. *"The goal should be a nuclear weapon-free world. As long as nuclear weapons exist, there is a chance that they will come to usage (even if one assumes that rational actors would not decide to use them, there is always a risk for mistakes, miss-calculations and terrorism etc.)"* (Rebecca Söderberg 2012-05-07, translated by the author). Regarding Iran, Ms. Söderberg thinks that the problem can only be solved through diplomatic means. Through this, one can create a durable, long-term solution including *"preserving that Iran remains a party to the NPT and do not acquire nuclear weapons"* (Rebecca Söderberg 2012-05-07, translated by the author).

The international community must demand that Iran meet their obligations and cooperate fully with the IAEA, in order to ensure that it's nuclear program only holds peaceful purposes. *"I do not share the 'more can be better' approach and a nuclear weapon-free world is the goal. This is the best means towards stability and safety"* (Rebecca Söderberg 2012-05-07, translated by the author). Rebecca Söderberg's opinion can hence be seen as a proponent to Sagan's approach as well as to the international non-proliferation initiatives.

3 Theories on the Spread of Nuclear Weapons

Theories are lenses. Theories help us understanding the world; to make sense of the past and predict the future.

In the book *"The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed"*, international relations scholars Kenneth N. Waltz and Scott D. Sagan emphasize different aspects of nuclear history and hence predicts very different nuclear futures. They explore two contrasting standpoints regarding nuclear weapons and their effect on state-state conflicts. These contrasting standpoints – being presented below – will form the value foundation for the normative analysis, which will also be complemented with the thoughts of other scholars. Waltz's and Sagan's dialogue will be recreated and thereafter applied on the case of Iran, where the focus will be brought to the inherent conflict of values and the normative dilemma formatting the debate. In terms of nuclear weapons, may more be better or will more be worse?

The disagreement between the scholars regarding nuclear weapons is of a fundamental nature. While they may agree on how nuclear states should behave in an *ideal* world, they strongly disagree on how states behave in the *real* world.

3.1 Kenneth N. Waltz – "More may be better"

Kenneth N. Waltz is an Adjunct Professor of Political Science at Columbia University. He is a proponent of the school of Rationalism and Realist Theory. His specific approach to nuclear weapons can be referred to as a *Rational Deterrence Theory.*

In line with the fundamental thoughts of Realism, Waltz argues that states coexist in a condition of anarchy where every state preserves their own interests through self-help. "Self-help is the principle of action in an anarchic order [...] in which states help themselves by providing for their own security" (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:5). In this case, the self-help refers to the obtaining of nuclear weapons.

Waltz argues that an increased amount of nuclear weapons in the international arena may have positive consequences considering the assumed annihilation of warfare it brings between states. He illustrates this by saying that the current nuclear weapon equipped states have not yet utilized them. He also says that new nuclear states are likely to use their nuclear capabilities to deter threats and

preserve peace, rather then utilizing them as an actual means of warfare (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:4ff). This is commonly referred to as *mutual (nuclear) deterrence*, where states are inhibited of attacking each other due to the expected high number of casualties. He builds this assumption primary on the relationship between the United States and the USSR (Soviet) during the Cold War. In 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis[3] between the two states had a peaceful outcome due to, according to Waltz's and other rationalists, the mutual deterrence that occurred between the superpowers (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:32f).

In order to justify his thesis, Waltz puts emphasis on the fundamental difference between a conventional world and a nuclear world. "In a conventional world, one is uncertain about winning or losing. In a nuclear world, one is uncertain about surviving or being annihilated" (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:9). In accordance with this statement, in contrast to conventional wars, he argues, nuclear wars encourage both defense and deterrence mechanisms due to the weapon's destructive power, as well as the social and economical costs a nuclear war would bring. Not only do nuclear weapons deter and ward off attackers, but they also offer strategies to the states that possess them (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:5).

To strengthen this argument, Waltz refers to the fact that there has been no actual use of nuclear weapons since 1945, despite the increased proliferation of them. "The world has enjoyed more years of peace since 1945 than had been known in modern history, if peace is defined as the absence of general war among the major states of the world" (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:4). Hence, this can be seen as a testimony to the argument that nuclear weapons serve as a means of security-insurance rather than as a means of warfare.

Assuming that Waltz is right, a gradual spread of nuclear weapons is better than no spread or a rapid spread regardless of which states that acquire them. Despite the following being the general universal assumption, Waltz argues that unstable and non-democratic states are not more likely to use their nuclear weapons irresponsibly unless their survival is perilous, considering the social and economical costs such an act would bring. "States are not likely to run major risks for minor gains […] [thus] the presence of nuclear weapons makes states exceedingly cautious. […] Why fight if you cannot win much and might loose everything?" (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:6-7). Unstable states, Waltz argues, acquire nuclear weapons solely due to its security-insurance character. A nuclear state is a state one cannot afford to make desperate, hence the weaponries stabilizing effect.

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[3] In October 1962 the United States learned that the USSR was developing nuclear missiles on Cuba - with an ability to strike most of the continental United States. During the following thirteen days the world has never been closer to witness a nuclear conflict. Luckily, it never occurred. (Allison 1999:3ff)

3.1.1 Critics against Kenneth N. Waltz

Kenneth N. Waltz's beneficial logic of deterrence regarding nuclear weapons is often, and highly, debated. As will be mentioned below, Sagan implies that this logic cannot be applied to unstable states or to terrorist organizations. His nuclear weapon pessimism is fuelled by the belief that different biases intervene in decision-making and that this may have horrendous consequences to the presence of nuclear weapons (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:157f).

Nicholas J. Wheeler is another scholar who opposes Waltz's Rational Deterrence Theory. In his article "*Beyond Waltz's Nuclear World: More Trust May be Better*", Wheeler rejects Waltz's proposition that fear of nuclear destruction can serve as a permanent basis of international order. He argues that international security rather depends upon the building of trust between nuclear states (Wheeler 2009:429). Trust, rather than deterrence, is the recipe for stability and peace.

> The impossibility for governments in accepting that 'more may be better' is that it rests on a gamble of cosmic proportions, namely […] that deterrence can 'last out the necessary time-span, which is roughly between now and the death of the sun'. One might assume 99 percent confidence that nuclear deterrence will indefinitely prevent war between states possessing nuclear weapons, including conventional wars that might otherwise occur. But it is the price of a 1 percent likelihood that deterrent rationality might one day fail worth paying given the terrible consequences of any nuclear weapons that do occur? (Wheeler 2009:433).

Established trust between governments is the safest path towards security, considering the risks linked with the 'more may be better' approach. Despite Waltz's sustained arguments to the contrary, Wheeler presents what in his opinion can be regarded as historical evidence that suggest that the risks of nuclear weapons will increase systematically with the proliferation. It is too great a wager to rely on the deterrence mechanism, considering the consequences of a nuclear war (Wheeler 2009:441f).

Sagan stresses that states have to learn how to avoid these accidents and build trusting, survivable relationships. Wheeler argues that it is becoming increasingly more evident that nuclear weapons cannot rescue leaders from the mistrust and accidents which have propelled states into war in the past. In the nuclear age, such mistrust could lead to unparalleled catastrophe.

3.2   Scott D. Sagan – "More will be worse"

Scott D. Sagan is a Professor of Political Science at Stanford University and is a proponent of Organizational Theories in International Politics. In the case of nuclear weapons, Sagan brings attention to the negative consequences of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. He argues that they increase the likelihood of war between states. In contrast to Waltz, these are assessments of a far more pessimistic nature – more will be worse (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:46). Sagan builds his assumption on two central arguments.

First, he argues that professional military organizations often display behaviors characterized by common biases. These biases are likely to lead to deliberate or accidental wars. If not professionally managed through a strong civilian control, the operational requirements for a stable nuclear deterrence are unlikely to be fulfilled, hence contributing to unstable situations.

Secondly, in accordance with his first argument, Sagan argues that there are reasons to believe that future nuclear-armed states will lack this necessary successful civilian control. Many emerging proliferators have either military-run governments or weak civilian-led governments in which the professional military has a strong influence on policymaking. In such states the parochial interests of the military can influence decisions of the state – often regarding the issues of domestic stability. Military biases in favor of preventive wars[4] are to be feared (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:47f). Another problem closely linked to both of Sagan's arguments, is the one concerning terrorism. Sagan fears what would happen if nuclear weapons fall into the hands of terrorist groups with or without different agendas than the respective government. Considering terrorism being a relatively new political phenomenon, it remains uncertain how a nuclear-equipped terrorist group would rationalize.

> "The spread of nuclear weapons to new states in the Islamic world will place tools of indiscriminate destruction closer and closer to the hands of terrorists, who will use them without fear of retaliation […] Iran has a long history of supporting terrorism against the United States and other countries. Nuclear weapons here would increase the risk of terrorist access, either through theft or through sympathizers inside the government" (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:166)

Iran has been cooperating with extremist groups Hezbollah and Hamas, generally regarded as groups with terroristic tendencies. Their acts are politically motivated and aimed at influencing a country's society and/or policy, often

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[4] Preventive wars, a war initiated to prevent another party from attacking despite the absence of an imminent threat, are not legitimate according to the UN Charter and require particular allowance in order to be used. Pre-emptive wars, when a state strikes due to an offensive threat from another party, are legitimate according to the UN Charter seeing that states have the right to protect themselves against threats. (Aggestam 2004:139ff).

without regard for civilians. Their acts are with other words generally regarded as irrational.

Waltz's Rational Deterrence Theory assumes that states and other actors, such as terrorist groups, behave in rational manner. Sagan claims that this is an assumption rather than an empirically tested knowledge. Assuming that states have a high degree of rationality, we can assume they will behave rationally in the future. States' perceived interests are linked with their expected, rational behavior. Sagan's organizational approach rather "views government leaders as intending to behave rationally, yet sees their beliefs, the options available to them and the final implementation of their decisions as being influenced by powerful sources within the country" (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:50). In other words, Sagan argues that Waltz and other nuclear proliferation optimists are confusing what rational states *should* do with predictions of what real states *will* do.

3.2.1 Critics against Scott D. Sagan

Scott Sagan shares his pessimistic approach to nuclear weapons with many others. Halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons is of paramount importance to the international community and should be prioritized, considering the devastating consequences a nuclear war would bring to the civil society. Despite the standpoint that nuclear weapons jeopardize global stability and peace being rather common, history seems to prove it wrong.

The Murphy's Law[5] of nuclear weapons holds that something will eventually go wrong. This is supported by the fact that nuclear accidents, however remote ones, have already occurred. In 1960, American scientist C.P Snow said "we know, with the certainty of statistical truth, that if enough of these weapons are made […] some of them are going to blow up" and that within "at the most, ten years some of these bombs are going off" (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:125ff). Statistics now tell us that we are more than sixty years overdue.

Sagan's concerns regarding terrorist groups are another point of criticism from Waltz. Waltz argues that terrorists live in the shadow of others. Terrorists work in small groups where secrecy is equated to safety. To obtain and to maintain nuclear weapons would require enlarging terrorist organizations, and risking detection. Fundamental terrorists, nihilists, might gamble everything for one spectacular destructive act. But Waltz insists that this assumption is comparable to the one implying that if unstable states acquire the weaponry, they will use them for aggression (Waltz, 2003:128-130). When discussing conventional warfare, these two assumptions can be true. However, regarding nuclear weapons the assumptions are un-substantiated.

Sagan also dismisses the assumption that nuclear weapon states always behave rationally, due to organizational biases. This may yet again be true in theory,

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[5] The epigram Murphy's Law states that "anything that can go wrong, will go wrong" (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:125).

however empirically no nuclear weapon state has yet behaved in an offensive, irrational manner. No nuclear weapon state has used the weaponry as a means of warfare, despite the United States whom is considered as one of the legitimate five nuclear weapon states in the world under the NPT[6]. With this in mind, Waltz and other opponents of Sagan's organizationally-based theory claim that efforts should rather concentrate on keeping large arsenals safe from accidents, rather than keeping relatively weak states from obtaining a small number of nuclear weapons for the sake of national security (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:154).

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[6] China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States are the five nuclear weapon states (NWS) under the NPT. North Korea, Pakistan and India also possess the weaponry. (IAEA and Sagan & Waltz 2003).

4   Analysis – the Case of Iran

Kenneth Waltz along with a prominent group of scholars has pointed to the apparent contradiction between a peaceful nuclear past and a fearful nuclear future. He, therefore, argues that a further spread of nuclear weapons may well be a stabilizing factor in international relations. The possession of nuclear weapons by two hostile powers can reduce the likelihood of war precisely because it makes the costs of war so great (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:46f). The presence of nuclear weapons has proven to have a stabilizing effect on the relationship between states, according to the available empirical data. At least it has so far – many people fear what the future holds if the proliferation continues. The optimistic approach of nuclear deterrence is therefore and for other reasons highly criticized, especially in certain regional settings such as the Middle East where the incentives in states such as Iran are seriously questioned due to their non-democratic regime and related concerns (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:166).

   Sagan, Rebecca Söderberg and others, argue that the assumption that all states behave rationally is not an empirical statement. The mere presence of nuclear weapons offers a risk of accidental or deliberate usage, regardless of the assumed level of rationality in states. Sagan affirms that, "If neighboring, hostile, unstable states are armed with nuclear weapons, each will fear an attack by the other. Feelings of insecurity may lead to arms races that subordinate civil needs to military necessities" (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:10). Even if Iran's intentions with their nuclear program are in fact peaceful, their neighboring states' and enemies' opinion might differ, hence an escalation of conflict and instability is a concern.

   Israel, among other countries, has reacted aggressively to the developing nuclear program of Iran and has stated that if the Iranians are to continue the development, military measures will be adopted to stop them (Goodman 2011:11). The fragile relationship between Iran and Israel is already affecting the mood in the Middle East. If Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons, the international community fears an escalation in the conflict that could lead to an arms race in the region. Some scholars argue that an Israeli strike on Iran would have already been executed, were it not for the fundamental difference between a conventional and a nuclear war. The rationality of the two countries has hindered each from acting out their threats. Considering the anti-Semitic rhetoric of the Iranian president Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Khamenei, Israel sees a nuclear weapon-equipped Iran as a threat to its national security and to the existence of the country. Some of the Iranian rhetoric has been interpreted as a wish to 'erase Israel from the map' Goodman 2011:1). This has caused international and national concern regarding a possible Israeli preventive attack on Iran. These suspicions are fuelled by the fact that the Israeli security policy has been characterized by pre-emptive and

preventive warfare, internally referred to as legitimate self-defense in accordance with the UN-Charter (Russell 2008:87)[7].

With situations like the one regarding Iran and Israel in mind, the optimistic approach of Waltz is in opposition to the international initiatives aimed at halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons, leading towards a nuclear weapon-free world. The international non-proliferation regime fears that a major clash lies within the near future (Quinlan 2009:113).

Regardless of the aforementioned critique, the following sections will challenge the assumption of nuclear weapons de-stabilizing effects. In order to do so, different core elements of Waltz's approach will be adapted to the case of Iran.

First, the Rational Deterrence Theory will be used as a means to analyze the situation from a rather general point of view, with a focus on the positive consequences of mutual deterrence. Next, the situation will be seen in the context of the Middle East. Finally, the different approaches will be outlined in terms of whether or not a justification of a nuclear weapon-equipped Iran can be made.

4.1   Rational Deterrence Theory

The essence of Waltz's 'more may be better' argument lies in the assumed rational behavior of states. Nuclear weapons, he argues, annihilate the possibility of warfare between nuclear weapon-equipped states, through its deterrence mechanism (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:4).

Waltz's proliferation optimism rests on the core assumption that all leaders – irrespective of the character or values of the state in question – will rationally decide to avoid war when faced with the risk of nuclear devastation (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:44). This includes generally regarded unstable states such as Iran. In this aspect, nuclear weapons do not have a "war-winning" ability; their only rational function is deterrence. Ultimately, though, Waltz argues that "deterrence does not depend on rationality. It depends on fear. To create fear, nuclear weapons are the best possible means" (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:154). This causal factor – fear – can reduce the risk of war between states. Nuclear weapons cause fear, which in turn causes deterrence.

Rational Deterrence Theory focuses on how military threats from the adversary can reduce the attacker's expected utility for using force, by persuading him that

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[7] The rational priority for Israel is to support the international initiatives having been implemented to stop the development of the Iranian nuclear programme. Were these to fail, Israel will weigh their value-maximizing options in accordance with the behaviour of Iran. If their national survival is interpreted as being at risk, they might, or already are, consider a preventive strike. This scenario can be compared to the one being debated by Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow during the Cuban Missile Crisis. (Allison & Zelikow 1999:15-17)

the outcome of a military confrontation will be both costly and unsuccessful (Huth 1999:26).

The utility of military threats as a means to deter international crisis and war has for long been a central topic of international relations research. This concept of deterrence has been increasingly important during the nuclear era. It is seen as the best available option regarding underpinning peace amid political disagreement, primarily regarding states in the possession of nuclear weapon (Quinlan 2009:59). This is a strategy adopted by Iran and Israel, where both parties have directed different kinds of military threats towards each other. These have however not been carried out yet, assumingly due to the deterrence mechanism of nuclear weapons, that both states are presumed to have and/or are developing. Were Israel to carry out a preventive attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, such an act could be light that starts a fire in the region. Were Iran, on the other hand, to use their presumed nuclear weapons on Israel, such an act would be condemned by the international community and revenged by the United States and their allies. Hence, the situation is in a deadlock, where neither party would gain from being the first one to attack. Despite at the time being of conventional nature, the mutual deterrence is working. Despite the rhetorical disputes between Iran and Israel, no military clash has occurred. The question is if it would still work, if both parties were to obtain nuclear weapons.

4.1.1 Mutual Nuclear Deterrence

Si vis pacem, para bellum. If you wish for peace, prepare for war (Quinlan 2009:20). If desiring peace, one must exhibit the capability of striking back, deterring the adversary from attacking in the first place. This is the core of mutual deterrence strategies.

Deterrence arises from basic human behavior and has become a salient concept in the international security discourse since the nuclear revolution. It can be argued that the distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons is not physical, but perceived and symbolic (Schelling 1980:257). Nuclear weapons are, after all, just another form of artillery. What makes them unique are the deterrence mechanism and consequence-derived behavior they give rise to. An effective nuclear deterrence is said to have two main components. Firstly, the adversary must be aware of the opponent's nuclear capability and the will to use it. Secondly, he must have an understanding that this is the action from which he must refrain (Sagan & Waltz 2003:20, 27   and Quinlan 2009:23, 183). In order to be deterred, one must know what to be deterred from.

> In deciding how to act, people customarily seek, whether consciously or not, to take into account the probable consequences of what they do. They refrain from actions whose bad consequences seem likely to outweigh the good ones. […] When a small boy is told that if he bullies his little sister

again he will be sent to bed without supper, he is being subjected to deterrence. Even when the warning is not voiced explicitly, if improvement in his behavior is shaped by his sense of the risk of punishment he is being deterred (Quinlan 2009:20)

Thomas Schelling is another scholar who has formulated a number of ideas regarding mutual nuclear deterrence. In a situation of mutual nuclear deterrence, he argues, the probability of nuclear war is reduced by the stability of the balance between states. He defines the balance as the number of forces on the two sides, which in a conventional war is of paramount importance. In a situation where both parties possess nuclear weapons, the balance is regarded stable if neither opponent can destroy the adversary's second-strike capability (Schelling 1980:232).

4.1.2 Second-Strike Capability

In order for a nuclear deterrent to be successful, a state must preserve its ability to retaliate by ensuring a second-strike capability (Schelling 1980:232). However, in a conventional war where one party is vulnerable towards the other, Schelling notes the possibility of a rational opponent attacking first, thus gaining the leverage by destroying the military capacity of the other. Such a scenario would bring imminent destruction between nuclear weapon-armed states. Considering the level of destruction, Schelling argues that no rational party would use nuclear weapons as a means of warfare. Not even a country with the characteristics of Iran. Such an initiative would be morally condemned by the international community, (Allison 1999:15) but also by the UN-Charter.

According to the UN-Charter, a strike is legitimated as pre-emptive if it's launched in fear of an opponent preparing to attack. But in order to justify the use of nuclear weapons in such a strike, the evidence must be extremely convincing. If it is not, the strike will be considered as preventive and un-legitimate (UN Charter 2005).

Considering the rhetorical disputes between these countries, Israel might attempt to justify a preventive attack on Iran, if they do not halt the development of their nuclear program. Due to the lack of diplomatic communication between the two countries, such a scenario is considered not being too foreign, despite it being irrational for either of the parties to initiate an attack. Such an attack would be in-compliance with International Law (Ibid).

Despite that Waltz does not think that unstable and non-democratic nuclear weapon-equipped states pose a bigger threat to international peace and stability, their behaviour may give rise to arms races. Iran is considered to be a relatively unstable state due to the character of their regime. If they were to acquire nuclear weapons, other states in the region, such as Syria and Saudi Arabia, might want to as well. It is assumed that an arms race in the Middle East, a region characterized of conflicts, could have negative consequences in terms of stability and peace.

4.1.3 Arms Race in the Middle East

Nuclear weapons alter the dynamics of arms races, perhaps in particular in the Middle East if regard is paid to the multiple conflicts and disputes in the region. In such a regional setting, it can be hard to determine who is leading the arms race and who is following (Quinlan 2009:91f). Both Iran and Israel seems to be the prominent figures and countries such as Syria and Saudi Arabia seems to soon be following.

   One might assume that the logic of deterrence would not work in this context, considering the hostile relationship between Iran and Israel amongst others. But if the conditions of this competition are not transparent, which they are, it is impossible for either of the parties to derive whether or not the other has a first- or second-strike capability (Sagan & Waltz 2003:29). Hence, the deterrence mechanism should work, and is in fact currently working, here. "Deterrence works because nuclear weapons enable one state to punish another state severely without first defeating it" (Sagan & Waltz 2003:34). "Victory", in the words of Thomas Schelling, "is no longer a pre-requisite for hurting the enemy" (Schelling 1966:22). It is quite the contrary, if used in the presence of nuclear weapons. The logic of a successful deterrence lies in what states can do to each other in the presence of nuclear weapons – not what they are actually doing (Huth 1999:25ff). The overlying threat of the consequences of if Israel were to attack Iran or vice versa, is in fact what is deterring them from initiating one in the first place.

4.2 Deterrence Success in the Middle East

In line with the arguments being raised above and the nuclear weapon optimistic approach, deterrence seems to work, even in the context of the Middle East. But there are other important factors shaping the situation. If deterrence is to be successful, one must consider other factors such as the military balance and territorial disputes, interests at stake and the behavior of the different parties influencing the situation.

4.2.1 Military Balance and Territorial Disputes

   Scholar Paul Huth recognizes two main categories of a deterrence policy. A policy of deterrence can be directed at preventing an armed attack against a country's own territory (direct deterrence) or that of another country (extended deterrence) (Huth 1999:27). "Situations of direct deterrence often occur when there is a territorial dispute between neighbouring states in which major powers (e.g. the United States) do not directly intervene. On the other hand, situations of

extended deterrence often occur when a great power becomes involved" (Huth 1999:27).

The case of Iran and their relationship to Israel and the United States can exemplify both of these deterrence policies. In this context, deterrence is often directed against "state leaders who have specific territorial goals that they seek to attain either by seizing disputed territory in a limited military attack or by occupying disputed territory after the decisive defeat of an adversary's armed forces" (Huth1999:30). A reason why Israel fears the development of nuclear weapons in Iran is because their territory is threatened. Regardless of which of these strategic plans the attacker adopts, the orientation is generally short-term and driven by efficiency demands concerning attrition of manpower and weapons. If Iran was to realize their threat of erasing Israel from the map, these efficiency demands would be taken into consideration. The usage of nuclear weapons in such an attack would not comply with these.

The attacking state benefits from utilizing their military force quickly and effectively in order to achieve these military-territorial goals. The defending state, therefore, needs to possess the military capacity to deny the attacker these objectives. If in lack of this mobility, the attacking state's political and military leaders gains confidence in that the military costs will not be extensive, and that the military successes can be converted into concrete territorial gains (Huth 1999:30-31).

4.2.2 The State's Interests and Behavior

As in all Affairs of International Relations, all states have different areas of interest. At the same time, they all have different interests at stake when in the prelude of a military conflict.

The balance of interests plays a vital role, in determining whether or not the deterrence will work, and a military conflict can be avoided. "When state leaders have vital interests at stake in a dispute they will be more resolved to use force and more willing to endure military losses in order to secure those interests" (Huth 1999:34). Depending on what these certain interests are, it can play an eminent role for the outcome of the situation. A distinction can be drawn between different kinds of interests however such a distinction tells us little about their inherent ranking. Scholars have drawn distinctions between international reputational interests, domestic political interests, and various intrinsic security and non-security interests. The presence or absence of certain relative interests may have an impact on the expected utility of one party in a conflict (Huth 1999:34). It is interests like these that shape the decision-making in Iran, Israel and other involved parties regarding the current situation. No matter what the interests of Iran are – utilizing nuclear weapons does not seem to fulfil any of them at this point. This would cause nothing but harm to their situation and reputation.

If a state seeks to communicate a credible deterrent threat against another state through these afore-mentioned diplomatic and military actions, the problem lies in the uncertainty of the defending state's reaction. Generally, all defending states have an incentive to act as if they are determined to resist an attack, with the hope of deterring the attacker from initiating a military conflict (Huth 1999:28).

In order for the attacker to identify truly resolved defenders, certain signals must show. These signals consist of actions and/or statements indicating a risk of a military conflict from the adversary. States that are in fact not in a position to deter will "be unwilling to cross a certain threshold and military actions in a crisis for fear of committing themselves to armed conflict" (Huth 1999:31). So far, both Iran and Israel may have expressed rhetorical threats towards the other, but they have yet to cross the threshold of initiating a military attack. Both parties seem to portray a military ability being able to respond to such an act, hence deterring the other from advancing.

4.3   Conclusion

Adopting this nuclear weapon optimistic approach towards a nuclear-equipped Iran offers new perspectives on the current nuclear weapon debate. According to Waltz's arguments on states as rational actors and mutual nuclear deterrence, his perspective can be justified by the principle of Consequentialism where "the ends justify the means". Nuclear weapons seem to offer positive consequences to the relationships of states in the Middle East. Rationality and mutual deterrence shape the relationship between Iran and Israel, regardless of the primary nature of their relationship and the different interests of the two parties. This presumes that the consequences of a nuclear weapon-equipped Iran can provide peace and stability. These are speculative consequences, shaped in light of the fact that no world war has taken place since 1945 when nuclear weapons where introduced. Waltz argues that "where states are bitter enemies one may fear that they will be unable to resist using their nuclear weapons against each other. This is a worry about the future that the past does not disclose" (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:12). Despite Iran's fragile relationship with the United States and Israel, nothing in the history of nuclear weapons seems to indicate that a nuclear conflict will take place. A conventional conflict may occur but bares irrelevancy in this context, unless it initiates the usage of nuclear weapons.

Implementing this optimistic nuclear weapon perspective towards stability and peace seems impossible under the current circumstances. This change would require a total re-evaluation of the international initiatives regarding nuclear weapons that are in place today. The current objective is that, in compliance with the NPT-requirements, Iran may only use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, not for developing nuclear weapons.

The question is if such a re-evaluation needs to be done in order for us to move past the deadlocked case of Iran and reach stability and enduring peace both

in the region, and in the world. The question is if Waltz may be right in his assessment that more nuclear weapons may be better; an assessment that is empirically substantiated by the fact that never in modern history, have the great and major powers of the world enjoyed such a long period of peace. This peace exists despite unstable states such as North Korea and Pakistan holding nuclear weaponry.

Waltz argues that "as ever with ethnocentric views, speculation takes the place of evidence" (Sagan & Waltz, 2003:14). Assumptions regarding the irrational behavior of unstable and non-democratic states points towards a future global nuclear catastrophe. Were Iran to acquire the weaponry, it would have disastrous consequences for the international proliferation regime and future stability and peace. Waltz, and the empirical evidence available seems to, argue for the contrary.

5   Concluding Analysis and Result

As we learn more about the era of nuclear weapons and the avoided nuclear conflict that permeated during the Cold War, we become reminded and more certain of the negative aspects of nuclear weapons. Considering how close the superpowers came to nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis, it is said that nothing can rescue state leaders from the mistrust and accidents that have propelled states into war in the past. Not even the presence of nuclear weapons. The problem, however, is the absence of substance of these arguments.

The superpowers came *close* to a nuclear catastrophe. The arguments in favor of Sagan's 'more will be worse' assumption, are all based on a lack of trust toward non-Westernized states, rather than on empirical evidence. This doubt based on instability and lack of democracy is understandable yet empirically un-substantiated when applied to nuclear weapons. States that are regarded unstable and non-democratic may behave irrational in general, but have yet not portrayed such behavior when it comes to nuclear weapons.

Today, the Iranian nuclear program is the biggest source of friction between Iran and the West, in general, and the United States and Israel, in particular. Iran seems to be trying to compensate for its relatively weak military capacity by developing nuclear weapons. The weaponry is domestically justified as necessary when considering regional threats such as Israel.

Despite it being essentially impossible to derive concrete answers as to how the international community should face the case of Iran, this normative analysis attempts to contribute to a deeper understanding as to why Iran would want to develop nuclear weapons in the first place. It seems to be a question of resistance towards the dominating West and its self-proclaimed nuclear weapon monopoly. The Iranian government sees the United States and Israel as national security problems. Therefore, the obtaining of nuclear weapons seems to be motivated by hopes to improve Iran's position in the Middle East, and as a challenge to the West's bullying. Possessing nuclear weapons offers Iran a certain amount of prestige and immunity towards its allies and friends, enemies and threats.

In terms of policymaking, one can seriously assume that all instances of contemporary nuclear proliferation are morally justified. The point here, however, is not to determine whether or not the Iranian nuclear program will ever be justified – the point is that it *could* be. This proposal finds conditional support not only in the Rational Deterrence Theory, but also in accordance with the theories of other prominent scholars and the school of Consequentialism (see Doyle 2010 for other conditions under which support can be found).

There is a widespread global commitment and will through political declarations to eventually abolish all nuclear weapons. There can be opposing views about whether the world would be safer and more peaceful if nuclear

weapons had never been invented. But that is a sheer academic issue; nuclear weapons cannot be 'un-invented'. A global disarmament would require all nuclear weapon states to trust in the mutual engagement of each other. In an ideal world, nuclear weapons would not exist. Under ideal conditions, the need for deterrence between states would be remarkably smaller. But considering the anarchic condition of the present world system, where a few states are authorized for nuclear-armament and some are not, such a degree of trust seems unreachable.

Unfortunately, these non-ideal conditions, shaping international politics today, make it necessary to put human security at eventual risk, in the pursuit of stability and peace between states. If the international efforts to halt the Iranian nuclear program become entirely exhausted, it will likely be because Iranian leaders are convinced that they have the right, stated in the NPT, for peaceful usage of nuclear energy. It may also be because they are convinced that they have the political and moral right to defend themselves from outer threats.

Our task should be to devise a system for living in peace, while ensuring that nuclear weapons are never used as a means of warfare and/or self-defense policy. This is a system that, according to Waltz, is already effectively in play. It may be considered flawed, but no safer system than deterrence is yet available. The deterrence mechanism of nuclear weapons has served its purpose so far. Nevertheless, one must always keep the terrible experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in mind. One must not forget the nuclear catastrophe in Fukushima in 2011 and its consequences for civilian society. One can only hope that Kenneth Waltz is correct in his optimistic approach for the future and that Scott Sagan's pessimistic predictions are never fulfilled.

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7   Appendix

7.1   The Interview with Ms. Rebecca Söderberg

Ms. Rebecca Söderberg (RS) works at **the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the Department for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Affairs**. The department is responsible for concerns regarding disarmament and non-proliferation, including export control of military equipment and products with a dual-use. Furthermore, the department is also focused on, among other areas, the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) work against the spread of nuclear weapons. More information regarding their work and responsibilities can be found on the Swedish government's website http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/12086.

The interview with Ms. Rebecca Söderberg was held May 7th, 2012, in Swedish and has been translated by the author. Hence, the author takes full responsibility for the content of the translated interview and errors that may have occurred.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank Ms. Söderberg, as well as Department Director Mr. Christer Ahlström, for their assistance and participation. Ms. Söderberg's contribution has offered valuable insight to the case of Iran and the current international initiatives regarding nuclear weapons.

The Interview
(RS) There are two central aspects which permeate my answers. I do not share the 'more can be better' approach and believe that a nuclear weapon-free world is the goal. This is the best means towards stability and safety. Iran is a part of the NPT and has thus agreed not to acquire nuclear weapons.

i)   What motives are there for states, in general, and for Iran, in particular, to acquire nuclear weapons?
       (RS) I will answer this question in quite general terms. Some of the motives may be that states want to ensure its safety, increase their deterrence-capability and avoid attacks. It may also be that they want to strengthen their position (globally or regionally), their capability to negotiate and gain an increased status and esteem. These motives can also have the opposite effect: states may choose not to acquire nuclear weapons precisely because this can strengthen the countries national security, increase its international status and esteem and strengthen its position and negotiation-capability.

ii) What would a nuclear weapon-equipped Iran mean for the situation in the Middle East and for the relationship with Israel and the United States? For the international community?

(RS) It would be a major blow to the international efforts for disarmament and non-proliferation, and would seriously risk harming the international non-proliferation regime. There is also a risk of this leading to an arms race in the region – including the risk of a further spread of nuclear weapons if the other countries in the region would feel forced to acquire nuclear weapons to balance the Iranian holding of them. This, in turn, would risk creating further instability, and in an extreme view pose a threat to the peace and stability in the region.

iii) How do you think that the international community, for example the UN and the IAEA, should face Iran's nuclear (weapon) program, if the goal is to maintain peace in the world, in general, and in the region, in particular?

(RS) The core in this question is to remember that Iran is a party of the NPT. Iran has thus consented not to acquire nuclear weapons. The question of the Iranian nuclear program should be solved through diplomatic means. It is through these means that one can create a durable, long-term solution which would mean that Iran remains a party to the International Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] and that they do not acquire nuclear weapons. The international community must demand that Iran meets their obligations according to the NPT and do not acquire nuclear weapons. The international community must also demand that Iran cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to ensure the outside world that the country's nuclear program only holds peaceful purposes. At the same time, the Iranian right to peaceful usage of nuclear energy, in accordance with the NPT, must be respected.

iv) If the goal is to maintain peace, should Iran be able to continue their assumed uranium enrichment in order to acquire nuclear weapons and on what grounds? (a comparison can be made to the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1967, and how this particular conflict had a peaceful outcome)

(RS) The international community should work towards Iran remaining a party to the NPT and to not acquiring nuclear weapons. Iran is enriching uranium. If Iran had cooperated fully with the IAEA, whose task is to inspect that states live up to their obligations and do not acquire nuclear weapons, Iran would probably still preserve the right to enrich uranium. Due to the fact that Iran have failed in their compliance to the treaty [NPT]with the IAEA, the UN Security Council has demanded that Iran suspend their uranium enrichment until it has re-established the proof that its nuclear program only holds peaceful purposes. Enriching uranium is not the same thing as acquiring nuclear weapons.

v) Could Waltz's assessment in any way be legitimate under the current circumstances (political, legal) and should this be how we face the Iranian nuclear (weapon) program? If so, what would be the consequences?

(RS) The goal should be a nuclear weapon-free world. As long as nuclear weapons exist, there is a chance that they will be used (even if one assumes that rational actors would not decide to use them, there is always a risk for mistakes, mis-calculations, terrorism etc.). In working towards a nuclear weapon-free world, the international community should try to halt the

spread of nuclear weapons – by preserving the international non-proliferation regime (including the NPT). In the case of Iran, this means requesting that Iran remains a party to the NPT and that they do not acquire nuclear weapons.