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Strategic Offensive Weapons and the International System

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Missiles and the Reduction of Distance: Strategic Offensive Weapons' Role in Changing the International System

Distance has become both more and less relevant today than it was one or two hundred years ago. In nearly every discipline imaginable, the means and mechanisms for traversing distance both large and small have improved. The barriers among cities, nations, regions, and continents no longer seem as insurmountable as they once did. However, with the benefits of such connectivity come associated dangers. Over the course of millennia, as humans have developed means to bridge the distance between one another, conflict has become an increasingly long-range global activity with global stakes. As connectivity has increased, the process known as globalization has accelerated in kind; with those two parallel developments the standard of living for many has improved drastically. In many parts of the world, the increased connectivity, globalization, and ensuing standard of living have brought a renewed desire for political and civil liberties. These developments have further altered geopolitical dynamics, thereby changing the value of distance and creating policy challenges that have only further complicated today's world.

Personal empowerment for individuals across the planet has meant that for authoritarian regimes, also referred to as rogue states, their hold on power is increasingly perilous – driving such states to turn to non-conventional weapon systems as the ultimate guarantor of survival. In response to domestic unrest, nations such as Iraq under Saddam Hussein, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Islamic Republic of Iran have historically taken increasingly draconian measures to suppress domestic civil liberties. However, the suppression of personal freedoms has not gone unnoticed by the international community. As traditional Western powers, generally speaking members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and other advanced democracies look to address the problems associated with authoritarian regimes, these states are increasingly demonized and isolated from the international community.

The negative characterization of rogue regimes within the global context has driven these states to opt for non-conventional security mechanisms. In the case of Iraq, "...the most significant aspect of [President] Bush's personal demonization of Saddam Hussein was his comparison of the Iraqi leader to Adolf Hitler" (Hurst 381), which demonized Saddam and made making the case for war more palatable. Equally important, it taught other rogue regimes two valuable lessons about late-twentieth and early twenty-first century warfare. First, pursuing nuclear capabilities and maintaining authoritarian domestic policies trumps international reputation. Second, victory against the US requires non-conventional forces. To reduce the threat of an externally led regime change, these nations either possess or are currently pursuing nuclear weapons and the delivery means necessary to threaten strategic targets around the world.

In the context of nuclear weapon acquisition globalization has made the process of acquiring strategic weapon capabilities much less daunting. It has played a significant role in expediting technology transfers and the speed with which these technologies can become institutionalized. The reduction in acquisition time has decreased the reaction time other states have in responding to the threat of nuclear technology transfers. In effect, globalization has created geopolitical leverage for rogue regimes. Traditional tactics such as embargoes, asset seizures, and the threat of

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conflict take time to have the desired effect(s). Faster, and potentially a more clandestine, acquisition of non-conventional weapons reduces the reaction time prior to full nuclear capability. Rogue states' ability to threaten strategic interests hundreds, or even thousands, of miles away allows states such as the DPRK and Iran to blackmail even the greatest superpowers. Over the long-term, nations like the United States (US), the Russian Federation, and the People's Republic of China (PRC) will be forced to reexamine their security capabilities and how they would need to respond to a nuclear strike from a rogue state. However, over both the short and mid-term, rogue regimes will continue to force concessions at the negotiating table. Only over the long-term is there then hope for this dynamic to change. Policy changes in the coming years will be critical in addressing the threats which globalization has further complicated.

The safety and security that distance once meant have now all but evaporated as ballistic missiles can travel thousands of miles in mere minutes. Globalization has brought people and nations together for better and worse. The resulting technology proliferation has altered the geopolitical landscape irrevocably. The looming question regarding the role of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems is this: What are the long-term prospects for such rogue regimes? Are their blackmail tactics sustainable? In light of the recent United Nations Human Right Council Commission of Inquiry report which stated, "The [DPRK] is accused of crimes that include execution, enslavement, starvation, rape, and forced abortion" ("North Korea" 33), it would appear that even in the case of the worst crimes, nuclear weapons and their delivery systems can provide protection. The fundamental shift in the value placed on distance has altered the geopolitical landscape and, for now, given rogue regimes the advantage.

In identifying the impact(s) globalization has had on space, five questions must be addressed. First, why do rogue states pursue nuclear capabilities over other weapon systems? Second, why do rogue states develop ground-launched ballistic missile technology over other alternatives? Third, what effect has rogue regimes' pursuit of nuclear weapons and the supporting delivery systems had on international relations? Fourth, what impact does and will ballistic missile defense (BMD) technology have on rogue regimes? Fifth, over the long-term, will the current relationship between rogue states and traditional states persist? By addressing these questions, policy-makers will be in a better position to manage the full-spectrum range of issues associated with nuclear proliferation. Through the examination of the historical development of missile technology and of the current environment, coupled with the analysis of three case studies, the dangerous short and mid-term impact of long-range missile technology becomes stark in light of nuclear proliferation to third world regimes; never less, the long-term development of missile defense capabilities could potentially offset such concerns.

Historical Context

The means by which war is waged are constantly evolving. In particular, long-range weapons, notably missile technology, have forever changed how wars are fought and won. Early long-range capabilities including the bow, rifle, and cannon changed battlefield tactics and reduced the value of manpower. Starting in the early to mid-twentieth century, airpower played a prominent role in strategic military thought due to its rapid deployment, range, and payload. The strategic value of the airplane was in many ways the impetus for one of the two most significant strategic offensive weapons of the twentieth century: the missile. First developed by Nazi Germany in the late 1930's, missile technology built upon many of the strategic advantages of airpower. The range, speed of maneuver, cost of production, and payload of missiles made them an attractive alternative to airplanes. As missile technology continued to develop, rather than being seen as an alternative, it came to be viewed as the more pragmatic option when compared to airplane delivery concepts. As missile technology improved, a new strategic capability was introduced that would forever alter geopolitics.

The development of the nuclear bomb, the most important enhancement of the strategic landscape in the twentieth century, has the potential to make manpower almost meaningless. Nuclear weapons have the ability to hold at risk assets for as far as the delivery systems have reach. When compared to the costs of an equivalent conventional capability, the relatively low costs of nuclear weapons should make it pursuit of non-conventional capabilities unsurprising. In effect, the costs of comparable conventional forces have driven policy-makers to develop nuclear weapons as a necessary alternative.

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When coupled with advanced missile technology, the range and likelihood of a successful nuclear strike increases dramatically. "A large, unwieldy nuclear bomb that is dropped from an airplane, like in World War II, is not nearly as strategically impactful as a miniaturized warhead that can be placed on the top of a long-range missile" (Cha 224). Whether stationary or mobile, Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) and even Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBM) can reach targets hundreds or even thousands of miles away in minutes vice hours or days. Making missile technology even more important in late-twentieth and twenty-first century geopolitics is the potential to arm a weapon with a nuclear warhead. When armed with a nuclear capability, a single missile can eliminate senior leaders in a regime or alter the adversary's popular support for conflict in a single thrust. The notion of a quick first strike has fundamentally altered the geopolitical context of the world today, giving leverage to rogue regimes even in the face of overwhelming odds.

The growing use of missile and nuclear technology can be explained through the transformation of the international political system which occurred as the Cold War began to draw to a close. Throughout much of the Cold War, the world was essentially bipolar with nations supported either by democratic states in the West or by various communist states. While some, like the DPRK, may have claimed to be non-aligned, they could always count on the support of their larger patrons. However, as Soviet and US policies began to change in the 1970's, so too did the patronage system both had utilized. In the case of both North Korea and Iran, the loss of patron support starting in the 1970's forced a reexamination of their national security architecture. In the process of looking for other security measures, the DPRK began working with "Egypt and Syria [which] provided Soviet-based missile technology for the North's Scud missile between 1976 and 1981" (Cha 226). Two episodic events in the 1980's in effect hastened the acquisition of missile and nuclear technology in the third world. The simultaneous improvement in relations between the US and Soviet Union and the rise of globalization made it both easier and more imperative for other nations to begin acquiring missile and nuclear technology by any means possible, because the global political divisions of the Cold War no longer served to protect many authoritarian regimes.

As policies in the US and Soviet Union began to change, the willingness to accept brutal authoritarian regimes suddenly decreased dramatically. The US, which had been previously willing to overlook some of its international partners' less scrupulous domestic policies, no longer needed their support within the Cold War context. For the Soviet Union's part, it simply could not afford the patronage system that had once existed at the height of the Cold War. As the Soviet economy began to slow, nations like the DPRK were simply cut off from the below-market prices and gifts they had once received. In 1990 "Moscow informed Pyongyang that it was cutting off patron aid to the North and instead demanded that the North now pay market prices. Moscow also indicated that it was terminating military cooperation with the North" (Cha 122). While Soviet support had been slowly waning for some time, "the need of [Russian] assistance spelled the breakdown of the economy" (Cha 122). Even in North Korea, the public began to reach disillusionment with the bureaucratic system. Reflecting the disillusionment of the people, there were roughly eight coup attempts, of varying severity, in North Korea in the 1990's. In order to retain power, many authoritarian regimes resorted to brutal measures to keep their populations in line. In the case of the DPRK there are numerous cases of soldiers being executed after failed coup attempts. The use of political prisons, executions of political dissidents, and selective disenfranchisement became increasingly evident in some parts of the world and proved to be intolerable for those in the West now free of Cold War rigidities.

NATO and other advanced democracies increasingly looked at brutal authoritarian regimes with scorn – fearing externally driven regime change – rogue states sought to acquire increasingly lethal offensive capabilities. Their brutal domestic policies became part of the narrative on the merits of military action in some scenarios. Case in point was Iraq under the rule of Saddam Hussein. The dictator regularly murdered even the most remote political rivals and brutally repressed both Shi'a Muslim and Kurdish populations in order to promote his Sunni compatriots. While Saddam was ultimately punished for his invasion of Kuwait in 1991, the ensuing peace and the tacit autonomy given to both Kurdish northern Iraq and Shi'a southern Iraq were clearly motivated by his brutal authoritarian policies. The Iraqi example during and in the aftermath of Operation Desert Storm in 1991 taught rogue regimes much regarding conventional militaries. Regardless of size, conventional forces alone would not be enough to win a twenty-first century conflict against the world's major democracies. Ensuring regime survival forced policy shifts on the part of many rogue states around the world toward non-conventional military capabilities.

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Largely due to costs, development timelines, and strategic value, investing in IRBMs and ICBMs became the most logical delivery method for states such as Iran and North Korea. The potential costs associated with the larger frames of both bombers and submarines made both unattractive options. Furthermore, the size and technical hurdles associated with research and design of those two capabilities made their respective development timelines far longer than that of a comparable missile program. Ultimately, though, the strategic value—in particular the minimal indication and warning timeline associated with missile capabilities—made this the best option in developing a nuclear delivery system. Moving into the second decade of the twenty-first century, rogue regimes are likely to pursue missile capabilities as the delivery system of choice.

The role of globalization has only eased rogue states' ability to acquire nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. Regimes in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and South and East Asia can now reach out to one another to exchange information needed for each nation's survival. When one nation develops a nuclear capability, others then offer compensation in an effort to trade for the technology and expertise required to support nuclear weapons. A second country might then develop an improved delivery system, leading to an additional technology transfer. Regarding the DPRK for instance, "the first reverse-engineered Scud-B missile, known as the Hwasŏng-5, was tested successfully in April and September of 1984. Iran immediately became a customer, as they wanted the Hwasŏng for use against Iraq and agreed to finance part of the DPRK's production in return for scores of the finished product" (Cha 226). In this way, rogue regimes across the planet reach out to one another for regime survival. The notion of trading information for mutual-benefit is nothing new, but globalization is improving connectivity and the speed with which individuals can operate.

Current Situation

The economic underpinnings of globalization, primarily capitalism, have altered the geopolitical context of the international system. Globalization is an infectious process often leading to the introduction of capitalism. People across the world see the impact globalization, and by extension capitalism, has on others around them and desire that same success for themselves. The concept of capitalism then not only spreads through globalization but also has become an increasingly tenable vision for many through the growing use of the Internet. "Internet connectivity has indeed condensed the lifespan of authoritarianism. Even in ancient countries like China and India, individuals are increasingly at the service of systemic objectives, and authority is slowly but surely gaining legal underpinnings" (Sariolghalam 122). Places where destitution and hardship have historically been daily realities have been irrevocably changed as a result of capitalism. The economic transformation that has come about through globalization has had a transformative effect on people across much of the world.

Politically, globalization and the rise of capitalism have been closely tied to the emergence of self-determination. To compete in the global economy, even authoritarian regimes are confronted with the dilemma of opening up their states. Entering the globalized economy is fraught with danger for these regimes. Allowing economic growth, the import of new ideas and improved standards of living risk increased awareness and therefore dissatisfaction domestically. The challenge becomes striking a balance between economic growth and authoritarian control. In order to ensure regime stability, restrictive regimes often use violence as the ultimate tool in suppressing domestic political discord. To thwart external attempts at intervention, nuclear weapons and their associated delivery systems become vital. Therefore, from a political standpoint the fine line that rogue regimes walk can be made a little easier with the possession of non-conventional weapon systems.

In particular, since the fall of the Soviet Union, the world has become less stratified. As barriers have been torn down, the opportunity for financial success has driven individuals and populations to demand more freedoms. While the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) is perhaps the most significant example of economics driving political change in recent history, political volatility in general has only increased. Whether looking at the Arab Spring or similar movements elsewhere, one does not have to look far to see governments changing the world over. In large part, globalization has served as a natural carrier for the transfer of ideas and technology that have hastened political instability, particularly in authoritarian states. Nations that were once closed off to most, or all, of the outside world are now being forced to open up causing the influx of first world concepts. It is no surprise then that for many third world rogue regimes, globalization is characterized as a threat.

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While rogue states have found it undesirable to allow their populations to reap the benefits of globalization, in recent years regimes shunned by most of the international community have found the cooperative means to reach out to one another for the purposes of mutual-survival to be not only necessary but imperative. Globalization has improved those mechanisms for cooperation, thereby reducing the effects of distance that had once existed. In particular, the exchange of technology and expertise regarding advanced strategic offensive weapon delivery systems has changed the geopolitical environment of today. Countries separated by thousands of miles can exchange ideas over the Internet and move goods by air or by sea. In the past the US and many other advanced democratic states had successfully inhibited some of the bilateral and multilateral cooperative efforts emerging today. More recently though rogue states have overcome those barriers while risking their citizens' exposure to the outside world. While it has become imperative for regime survival that nations reach out to one another, it comes at potentially great peril. Striking a delicate balance between receiving vitally important goods and services and exposing the masses is a tightrope act not easily achieved. Mentioned previously, for many rogue states it either ends in regime change or a reoccurring vicious cycle of draconian domestic control policies and need-based economic exchanges.

Today nations like the DPRK and Iran have sought to develop IRBM and ICBM technology to protect their regimes against the possibility of forced removal. Standing in the face of overwhelming conventional odds, a strategic nuclear strike could be a rogue regime's only chance of survival. Given the treatment of Saddam Hussein and his senior cohorts after Iraq's defeat in 2003, it would seem reasonable that a rogue state's leadership would believe their collective fate would be sealed in the event of major conflict. As such, the use of weapons of mass destruction would represent a last-ditch effort at regime survival – a “use it or lose it” mentality. This has forced countries such as the US, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Saudi Arabia, and Israel to develop missile defense capabilities that can reduce the likelihood of a successful preemptive strike. However, developing adequate countermeasures is not a simple task. When working on the basis of minutes rather than hours, the speed of defensive measures and the value of space are of paramount importance. With such little room for error, an accurate and rapid response is vital. Thus paradoxically distance has become both less and more valuable depending on perspective. As rogue states recognize the value of missile technology and the challenges with missile defense, the markets demand for such offensive systems only increases. As a result, both the volume of transfers and the clandestine nature of the market have also increased. Expediting this process, as mentioned earlier, is globalization. Even for military hardware, globalization has made the processes and procedures associated with material and technology transfers far more effective and efficient. The transfer of technology and knowledge which globalization has brought about has changed the perception and value of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems leading to an inexorable altering of the geopolitical landscape.

Through three case studies, the role of globalization and space and the effects of both with respect to geopolitics become readily apparent. First, Iraq prior to Operation Desert Storm in 1991 is important because while the regime had a powerful conventional force, it lacked the long-range strategic weapons to force NATO into a negotiated settlement. Second, present-day Iran is unique because of the impact of global economics and what that has done for oil and for Iran's position in the international political system. In particular the PRC needs access to vast quantities of oil to run its economic revitalization, and this situation has led to increased political, economic, and military support for Iran. Third, the DPRK is perhaps the most significant case because of the role the globalized world has had on its continued survival. The role of nations such as the US and Japan in propping up the DPRK regime despite its development of IRBM's and ICBM's is put in particularly stark relief and is arguably the best example of blackmail as a geopolitical tool. Each of these cases is significant in tracing the impact space has played and will continue to play in geopolitics.

Iraq

For much of the first three quarters of the twentieth century, Iraq was a third world state attracting little interest in Europe or the US. However, shortly after a young dictator named Saddam Hussein took power, political activists overthrew the Shah of Iran, and Ayatollah Khomeini asserted himself as the leader of a modern-day theocracy. The Grand Ayatollah's strategic decisions and public statements made the situation in the region especially volatile. Given the Ayatollah's actions and rhetoric, Saddam Hussein emerged as the lesser of two evils. In the latter stages of the Cold War, Iran's political radicalization became an opportunity for Iraq to attempt to leverage an opportunistic

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situation and invade Iran. Believing Iraq to be more amenable given its secular government and progressive public service system, the West, led by the US, provided Baghdad with the arms and munitions necessary to prosecute a war against the much larger, more populous Tehran. While the Iran-Iraq War would end in a stalemate, it left Saddam Hussein's nation bankrupt and with considerable sectarian rifts emerging. In response to mounting debt problems, Iraq invaded Kuwait. This was done largely to gain access to the small kingdom's oil riches, but also to quell domestic turmoil as Baghdad's thriving economy of the late 1970's had been replaced by a failing state by the late 1980's.

During the Iran-Iraq War, however, there proved to be a first in the history of the nuclear age that would later shape Iraq's conflict with Kuwait and the US-led coalition. For the first time since World War II, military aggression was used to prevent the development of nuclear weapons. In 1981 Iraq was far along in its nuclear weapons program, in addition to having the delivery capabilities necessary (Scud missiles) to send those nuclear warheads against its neighbors. In response, "Israel directed air strikes against Iraq's Osirak reactor" (Ramberg 124). The Israeli action at the time was both astounding and unprecedented. "Israel's successful acts stunted nuclear activities without defeat, occupation, or inspectors. The attack bought time—but it did not eliminate Saddam's program. Rather, Iraq dramatically increased its nuclear investment from \$400 million pre-1981 to \$10 billion through early 1991" (Ramberg 124). For a number of reasons, rogue regimes seeking nuclear capabilities around the globe have not forgotten this event. First, the delays it caused to Iraq's nuclear program arguably bought time on the back end for NATO to act. Had Baghdad been allowed to remain on its earlier trajectory, it may well have possessed nuclear armaments prior to the First Gulf War. That would have significantly altered the US coalition's strategic decision space. Second, facilities in places such as Iran and North Korea have been built underground with hardened structures making it increasingly difficult for an Osirak-like airstrike. While the Iraqi nuclear program played a major role in the shaping of the First Gulf War peace agreement, it has also taught other rogue regimes valuable lessons in developing their own nuclear programs.

In broad terms, the invasion of Kuwait is a seminal moment in the history of the post-Cold War world. Previous to the invasion, Iraq had been considered to be a growing power in the Middle East. While Saddam Hussein would never be confused with a Western-style leader, he certainly presented himself as a responsible and affluent man when juxtaposed with the Ayatollahs and other regional autocrats. Foreign direct investment, technology transfers, and tourism played significant parts in the overall state of Iraq prior to the invasion of Kuwait. While the nation was in many ways still reeling from its war with Iran, the prospects for resurgence in Baghdad were undeniably better than for those in Tehran. Clearly Saddam planned to hasten his nation's return to regional dominance through continued aggression, perhaps still believing that the world would be paralyzed by Cold War politics. However, when war erupted, it became painfully obvious that the bipolar world that once existed was now unipolar. President George H.W. Bush personally played a significant role in bringing together a coalition of European and Middle East partner nations first to defend Saudi Arabia (seen as the likely next victim) and then to liberate Kuwait. According to President George H. W. Bush, "protecting freedom means standing up to aggression. You know the brutality inflicted on the people of Kuwait and innocent citizens of every country must not be rewarded. . ." (Bush qtd. in Hurst 381). In the ensuing months, the Iraqi military, with the fourth largest conventional army at the time, was soundly beaten.

Both the way in which the war was prosecuted and its outcome sent clear signals to the rest of the world. The high-technology capabilities the US and others demonstrated presented a new face of warfare. The US proved that through the use of stealth technology, precision-guided munitions, and other capabilities, conventional defenses such as those used by Iraq would in many cases not be enough. In the case of the next two nations to be discussed, both have clearly determined that conventional capabilities alone are not enough in a war with the US. After the First Gulf War and even more so after the second war, a key change took place in Iranian policy (Sanadjian 82):

There can be little doubt that the international situation became precarious for the Muslim rulers in Iran in the wake of the daily carnage and chaos created by the invasion of Iraq by the USA-led forces in 2003. Although the invasion and its aftermath widened the Muslim rulers' spheres of influence through the growing power of their shi'a allies in Iraq, it also heightened the external vulnerability of their own Islamic apparatuses.

Long-range assets, particularly IRBMs and ICBMs, more than likely armed with nuclear weapons, would be the only

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deterrent to a potential U.S.-led engagement for the purpose of regime change if the focus were to move from Iraq to Iran. The Iranian leaders saw that Iraq's chemical and biological stockpiles were simply too limited in range and effectiveness to prove a significant deterrent. While in a limited tactical or operational role they could have perhaps proven effective, the Iraq regime did not have the delivery systems to make such capabilities effective strategically. Ultimately, lacking in nuclear capabilities and their long-range delivery systems meant that Iraq could not deter an invasion or force the US and its partners to a negotiated settlement. In many ways, Iraq simply lacked the leverage needed to win through diplomacy.

The story of the First Gulf War is one of a belligerent thinking it was operating from a position of strength before discovering it lacked the means to achieve its strategic ends. After sweeping aside Kuwait, Iraq realized that it could not simply sweep away its debt or increase revenue through the selling of Kuwaiti oil. Instead of being able to declare victory, Saddam Hussein found an international community resolute in opposing his actions. Consequently, a stalemate took place as the Iraqi leadership deliberated on its next possible move. Regardless of its conventional capabilities, it lacked the necessary nuclear weapon systems to deter US aggression, and thus defeat became inevitable. Iraq even took to launching scud missiles into Israel in an effort to blackmail the coalition opposing its takeover of Kuwait. Unfortunately for Iraq, US-built ballistic missile defense assets were able to mitigate much of the threat. How might that have changed had those weapons been equipped with nuclear warheads? Had their delivery systems been better positioned or had greater range, Iraq could have stood in a better position to threaten not only Israel but also strategic assets in Europe at the very least. Instead, because Iraq lacked such capabilities, the US was able to protect a relatively small area (Israel) while making Iraqi defeat inevitable. As highlighted in the following two case studies, the lack of strategic capabilities possessed by Iraq at the time of the First Gulf War was in many ways the defining lesson learned for many rogue regimes. Iraq's inability to change the geopolitical landscape through blackmail would ultimately lead to its downfall.

Iran

Today the people of Iran have become victims of the regime's failed policies. A theocratic state, the current government gained power during a national revolution. The former Shah of Iran, Reza Pahlavi, had risen to power after the US supported the removal of the popularly elected Mossadegh in 1953. At the height of the Cold War, Iran under the Shah was a key ally of the US. Since the days of Peter the Great, Russia had desired a warm water port and saw access to the Indian Ocean as the only means to assure unfettered access to the high seas. The U.S., fearing subversive Soviet support for radical left-wing groups in Iran, ensured the Shah retained power through the provision of financial and military support to the regime. Indeed, the US even went so far as to offer nuclear development assistance when

"According to Sasan Fayazmanesh, in 1957 the Shah signed an agreement for cooperation on research on the peaceful usage of nuclear energy. Under this agreement the U.S provided technical assistance to Iran. During this time, not only the United States, but also other countries such as France and Germany tried to sell Iran nuclear equipment" (Aghazadeh 143).

Unfortunately, the Shah's personal greed and failed reforms led to a disconnect between the people and the regime. When he was eventually overthrown, the pro-democracy element of the revolution was quickly pushed to the side as the pro-theocracy faction surged to the forefront.

Over the next thirty years, the Ayatollahs consolidated power in the nation through the use of heavy-handed tactics. Cultural rivalries between Arabs and Persians that existed even prior to the founding of Islam have persisted to this day with a new twist, that being the difference between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. Today, Iran sponsors terrorist organizations the world over; provides weapons, oil, and other financial inducements to nations opposing the West; and is developing IRBM's, ICBM's, and nuclear capabilities to threaten Europe.

"Iran's attempting to export the Islamic revolution to other Muslim countries in the Middle East and North Africa; Hamas and Hizbullah (sic) could be exemplified as such groups which Iran is directly or indirectly assisting" (Aghazadeh 139).

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More directly however, in countries such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain, the Iranians have been blamed for inciting sectarian violence, yet the best the West and other Muslim countries can do is pass legislation leading to further trade restrictions. Unfortunately, those trade restrictions have had little impact on the regime, but have clearly weakened the economy at the expense of average Iranians.

The situation in Iran is strikingly similar to Iraq prior to the latter's invasion of Kuwait. While both conventional forces, on the surface, appear to have the manpower necessary to fight a prolonged campaign against the Western powers, they clearly lack some of the high-technology force multipliers of the West. Furthermore, similar to the situation in Iraq, the domestic favorability of the regime has been severely weakened due to the struggling economy. Where the comparisons end, though, is in their strategic capabilities. Prior to the First Gulf War, the US and many Western European intelligence agencies believed that Iraq had chemical and biological, but not nuclear, weapons. A major impetus on the part of the West for going to war with Iraq centered on Iraq's lack of nuclear weapons at the time and the imperative to dissuade Saddam from acquiring such technology. Conducting an invasion prior to the Iraqi regime's acquisition of nuclear weapons would significantly reduce the dangers involved not only to the soldiers conducting the campaign but also to the civilians at home that represented possible strategic targets. At this point, Iran is on the verge of developing nuclear weapons if it has not already done so. No longer would a decision to go to war with Tehran include the notion that fighting now might prevent a nuclear-armed conflict in the future; that reality is probably already here. In conjunction with the regional and budding strategic delivery capabilities of the new weapons, Iran's leaders can or will soon be able to hold strategic targets in Western Europe at risk of a nuclear strike. The Middle East and Southeastern Europe, which for the last thirty years had been an adequate buffer zone between Western Europe and the Islamic Republic of Iran, will no longer represent a sufficient defense to protect key strategic interests in Europe.

In recent years, public unrest throughout the Muslim world has been the focus of considerable attention. From Tunis to Islamabad, regimes throughout the Muslim world have been struggling in recent years to hold onto power. Public demonstrations demanding more extensive civil liberties have been an everyday occurrence. Even in Iran in the aftermath of the 2009 presidential election, Iranians took to the streets to protest what they regarded as preselected results. The regime responded with brutal crackdowns leading to fatalities, imprisonments, and house arrests, imprisonments, and even fatalities for some of the opposition leaders. While in many other Muslim countries the international community took steps to support opposition movements, many Western countries were powerless to support Iranian protesters. In conjunction with these events,

"the [EU] has imposed three rounds of increasingly comprehensive autonomous economic sanctions that go well beyond UN requirements. They have brought the EU increasingly close to a full or near-full trade embargo on Iran, a measure that recent reports suggest the bloc is also considering" (Patterson 135).

While the international community continues to pressure the Iranian regime through sanctions, the theocratic rulers of Iran remain defiant. Through brutal repression of political dissidents, the leadership is able to maintain its hold on the populace indefinitely.

Iran's pursuit of nuclear capabilities is clearly tied to regime survival. Iraq's use of biological and chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq War undoubtedly had a major impact on the political decision calculus of the regime. The use of such weapons and the international community's selective blind eye regarding the conflict demonstrated before Iranian leaders that they would forever be treated differently when compared to Iraq – even though they perceived Baghdad to be the aggressor. "For many key officials of the theocratic state, the best means of preserving the regime's security and Iran's territorial integrity was through possession of the bomb" (Takeyh 245). The nation's leadership does not simply see nuclear capabilities and their delivery mechanisms as an offensive capability but as an insurance policy against Western aggression. Against this backdrop, and in the aftermath of US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is no surprise that regime survival is tied directly with to nuclear capabilities.

In many ways, the government's control of the population and the ineffectiveness of international measures is a direct result of Iranian long-range military capabilities and the strategic impact that might pose. Iran has overcome space with respect to both the Straits of Hormuz and NATO countries in Europe. The ability to threaten both with missile

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technology has proven to be a valuable deterrent to dissuade stronger actions on the part of the NATO members. Globalization has undoubtedly played a role in the limited actions available to the more advanced democracies as nations across the globe have come to rely on the oil shipped through the Straits of Hormuz. In recent years, Iran has been able to use this need for oil as leverage against military action. Returning to the example of the Israeli airstrike on Iraq's Osirak nuclear facility, Iran has learned a great deal, as highlighted by Bennett Ramberg's article (125):

[Iran] has multiple nuclear sites and some are heavily bunkered. Three are key: The Esfahan Nuclear Technology Center, an industrial-scale uranium conversion center; the Arak facility, which houses the under-construction heavy water reactor that could provide a plutonium route to a nuclear bomb; and—what many see as the nuclear weapons lynchpin—the Natanz uranium enrichment plant sitting below some 23 meters of concrete and soil.

Furthermore, Cold War animosities and fears that are still pervasive today between Russia and the West have prevented a truly comprehensive missile defense capability in Europe designed to nullify an Iranian IRBM threat. Through the elimination of the distance that had once served to buffer Europe from Iran, the Iranian regime is now in a position to thwart any efforts at forcible regime change.

One would be remiss without discussing the recent agreement on Iran's nuclear program. On January 12, 2014, a Joint Plan of Action (JPA) was signed among the US, Russia, China, the UK, France, Germany, and Iran. "Verification that Iran is sticking to its side of the interim deal will come from the UN's nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency through stepped-up inspections and monitoring. In return, Iran will begin to receive, in monthly instalments, some \$4.2 billion in seized assets held in Western banks; some minor financial sanctions will also be suspended" ("Negotiating with Iran" 47). The irony in this agreement is that Iranian officials are already touting it both for what it says and what it does not. First, it provides legitimacy for Iran's nuclear program by recognizing its right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes. Second, it provides Tehran with badly needed liquid assets. Time will tell if the agreement has staying power; however, if one looks at the North Korean example, it would not be a stretch to draw parallels between both parties' activities. The net result being that Iran is likely to find loopholes in the current agreement that will allow it to continue towards nuclear weapon acquisition.

Yet while the recent nuclear agreement involving Iran will be touted in some corners as a victory for the West, it says as much about the current situation in Tehran as it does anything else. Since Mr. Hassan Rohani won the Presidency in June 2013 "the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reckons inflation fell from 45% to under 30%" ("Iran and the West" 39). The notion that thirty percent inflation is a victory in and of itself speaks to the calamity that has recently befallen the Iranian economy. Further evidence of its failings include statistics which show "Iran's Gross Domestic Product contracting by 1.5% last year . . . and . . . unlikely to pick up in 2014" ("Iran and the West" 40). Sadly the agreement struck recently is likely to achieve the best of both worlds for President Rohani: it will help him to overcome the economic devastation wrought by sanctions while also legitimizing Iran's nuclear program. The irony in this agreement is that, in a similar fashion to the ensuing case study, it provides Tehran with the benefits it desperately needs with little in the way of mechanisms to ensure compliance. The simple fact of the matter is that Iran is now in a better place to extract wealth from its oil fields while also growing a legitimate nuclear program.

North Korea

Of the three the DPRK is the most intriguing case study. In the face of overwhelming international pressure to reform, the regime continues the same draconian measures that have been in place for over half a century. More so than either Iraq or Iran, the regime in the DPRK has put not just its own survival but its own flourishing far ahead of the well-being of its people. To maintain control, a miniscule number of individuals in power has deliberately imprisoned vast numbers of citizens: "North Korea's labor camps have now existed twice as long as the Soviet Gulag and about twelve times longer than the Nazi concentration camps" (Harden 4) and "The most notorious prisons are the *kwanliso* – which translates as 'control and management places.' These are in fact a colony of labor camps that stretch for miles in the northernmost mountains of the country. Satellite intelligence suggests they house up to 200,000" (Demick 174). The food shortages which became a humanitarian disaster in the 1990's still persist, though not with quite the same severity. For citizens of North Korea, it is quite possibly more difficult than ever to escape the nation. "As the food shortage stabilized...the prison burst at the seams with newly minted criminals...At the same time

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Kong Jong-il sent reinforcements to patrol the 850-mile-long border with China” (Demick 180). Most humanitarian crises are addressed by the international community and resolved by that community with little or no help from the North Korean government. What makes the DPRK unique is the length of its humanitarian crisis. After decades of international hand wringing demanding a resolution to the crisis, many international leaders and the public writ large have simply stopped trying to resolve the North Korean problem. The numbness and hopelessness of the situation has allowed the Kim family reign to persist indefinitely and with the same blackmail policy as has been used for decades.

Sadly the regime has placed the struggles and hardships of the people second to the development of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. As mentioned earlier, the DPRK missile program has become an example for many other rogue regimes to emulate. In addition to Iran, nations such as Egypt and Pakistan have partnered with the DPRK for their missile technology. In particular, Pakistan’s relationship with the North is far deeper than many outsiders think. “In 2002 it came to light that the ‘father of the Pakistani bomb,’ nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer (A.Q.) Kahn may have aided the North Koreans in getting their uranium enrichment program off the ground” (Cha 228). Arms transfers are not only a means of improving the regime’s technology base but have come to represent one of its major revenue generators. While this may seem like a small development, the DPRK nuclear program coupled with their missile program have enabled the regime to conduct potentially disastrous policies unabated.

Despite all its struggles in recent years, the regime has launched multiple attacks on the Republic of Korea (ROK) in an effort to blackmail South Korea into offering more aid. Robert J. Fouser expounded on the subject in his article “A Cognitive Approach to North Korea (1):”

North Korea uses tensions to extract concessions from South Korea and other interested parties, such as China, Japan and the United States. North Korea pushes tensions to the point where it is offered aid and support in exchange for reduced tension. This is followed by a period of quiet and then another storm that leads to new concessions....Development of a nuclear capability is the main thrust of regime survival efforts because it gives the regime the ultimate bargaining chip.

Yet for all of the sins of the regime, it continues to survive. With the protection of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the North’s nuclear weapon and delivery system program, the ROK is nearly powerless to respond. While in recent years successive South Korean regimes have threatened retaliatory action, the risk of uncontrollable North Korean escalation has blunted such threats. Sadly, the DPRK’s nuclear capability and the missile technology providing the delivery mechanism for that capability have created a successful deterrent. Presumably the Kim family and their closest advisors have realized that Chinese support is not unbounded, but the challenges the Pyongyang’s collapse could bring to Beijing make patronage a necessary evil. With that being said, the current relationship between the DPRK and the outside world is one based on blackmail resulting in the perpetual need for nuclear capabilities and delivery systems capable of increasing the stakes within a geopolitical context.

While the DPRK currently has the backing of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), it has pursued nuclear weapons and the delivery vehicles for these assets as a means to ensure regime survival. Unfortunately for the regime in Pyongyang, “about half of its weapons are 1960s vintage; and the other half is older than that” (Cha 216). Rather than emphasizing the traditional military capabilities along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) with the ROK, Kim Jong-Il made the development of nuclear and missile technologies paramount in the DPRK. His propaganda campaign, the foundation of his regime, was predicated on a strong military leading to a strong nation. In many ways this approach has proven successful. Faced with two major nuclear crises, first in 1993-4 and second in the mid-2000’s, the regime was able to force major concessions from the US and other Northeast Asian nations. Through the use of blackmail and coercion the DPRK has received billions of dollars’ worth of food aid, energy assistance, a promise of light water reactors, a negative security guarantee, etc. Had the regime focused on conventional armaments it is unlikely they would have generated the same degree of attention and, in turn, received the same level of assistance from foreign powers. As missile and nuclear tests continue the DPRK has positioned itself once again in a position to blackmail the US into further concessions.

The case of North Korea is perhaps the best example of the political ramifications of overcoming space. For the last

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sixty years, the North has maintained artillery and tank fortifications along the DMZ to deter a possible ROK-US invasion. From 1960 to 1989, the DPRK conducted terrorist activities against ROK government and civilian personnel, but with little strategic impact. Starting in 1993 with the first nuclear crisis, the DPRK was able to force the U.S., the ROK, and Japan to the negotiating table for the purposes of receiving aid in various forms. This represented not only a major change in DPRK policy but of US policy as well. For one of the first times in the nation's history, the US was responding to blackmail. In this instance, despite the likelihood of heavy casualties, "US Commander in Korea, Gary Luck, famously told President Clinton that a second Korean War would kill 1 million [and] would cost the United States \$100 billion" (Cha 213); military options were being discussed. The DPRK military capabilities at the border, while significant in quantity, were aged even in the early 1990's. By today the equipment and refurbishments made to these weapons, if there have been any, have almost assuredly not prevented typical weathering and aging. Even though a military option has been discussed over the last few decades, the ability of the North's unconventional forces to overcome space has effectively deterred such US and allied plans from coming to fruition.

As the years have passed, the DPRK has developed IRBM and ICBM capabilities that hold not only Seoul but also Tokyo, and possibly US assets in the Pacific, at risk. Along with nuclear weapons, these delivery capabilities have changed the dynamics of the conflict. As the DPRK has demonstrated with its 2010 sinking of an ROK submarine and shelling of an ROK island, even mounting cries for a military response from the South's civilian population has done little to alter the status quo. The DPRK reduction of the safety and security which space had once provided to Japan, the U.S., and even the ROK has had a clear effect. The brazen activities by the DPRK in recent years only further the notion that regimes can open the aperture on what are considered acceptable behaviors to achieve their goals.

Today the Kim Jong-Un regime has made nuclear weapons and the delivery systems needed for those weapons to reach their intended targets a top priority for the nation. Currently the North Korean regime is positioned to threaten strategic assets throughout much of the Pacific. While the regime has taken on even more stringent measures to control its people, the world has been faced to sit idly by. Even in the face of failing support from the PRC, the DPRK has positioned itself for survival by blackmailing the West into providing the assistance it needs by threatening military action. The space that once existed, the distance that made it possible for the US to forget the DPRK as a backwater nation in a remote part of the world, no longer is present. The U.S., with the assistance of both the ROK and Japan, has been forced to deal with provocative actions taken by the DPRK for the last two decades. With the new development of recent capabilities, both domestic and international pressure on the US to address the North Korean nuclear issue will continue to mount.

Future Implications

Globalization has changed the way humans look at space in terms of distance. The flow of information, goods, and services can occur faster than ever before. In many cases, the state that acquires the new technology and/or knowledge is able to incorporate it with pre-existing indigenous capabilities, thereby delivering an operational value. The value of knowledge/technology transfers has created an opportunity for rogue regimes to acquire the technical expertise to develop long-range weapons capable of carrying nuclear warheads without being identified or dissuaded. Globalization has expedited the process of moving goods and services without some of the risks once associated with research and development. Circumventing some of the traditional barriers to entry in the case of both nuclear and missile technology has allowed nations to take tremendous leaps in capabilities in relatively short periods of time. Thanks to globalization, a considerable reduction in the value of space has developed and therefore a change in the conduct and tenor of geopolitics. Regimes in third world countries that could never threaten the homelands of the US and its partners and allies now have the technical means to do so.

Strategic offensive arms are now, in effect, holding the international system hostage. Consequently, asymmetry of stakes has developed. The emergence of a use it or lose it scenario has been reinforced by statements such as the one made by former President Clinton saying that "a nuclear war started by the North would mean the end of [North Korea] as they knew it" (Cha 218). In the event of a forced regime change in nations such as Iran and the DPRK, they are likely to use nuclear weapons because they have nothing to lose. Fearing similar fates to Saddam

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Hussein's, they will utilize nuclear armaments as strategic offensive capabilities to strike at civilian targets in an effort to bring all parties to the negotiating table. In places like East Asia and the Strait of Hormuz, the space that once served as a barrier to a land invasion now makes defending against a missile attack quite difficult. The space that once served to protect the US, NATO, and their East Asian partners now paradoxically works against them.

Unfortunately for rogue regimes, their window of opportunity to affect regional political dynamics is closing. Over the short and mid-term, dedicated missile sites will create substantial complications for defense systems. The obvious concern is the relationship between distance and time creating a reaction time requirement that cannot be attained. Nations like the ROK, Japan, Israel and Saudi Arabia are faced with having to respond to a potential strike in mere minutes. The uncertainty of such a scenario is quite problematic. To leverage an even shorter response window, the next logical step is the development of mobile missile launchers. The maneuverability of a mobile asset limits the ability to track the missile prior to launch, further reducing warning time. For many rogue regimes, the maximum leveraging of surprise will be reached with the development of mobile missiles. Beyond making it harder to track missile deployments, the next phase in such a strategy would be to overwhelm a ballistic missile defense capability with quantity. Launching an array of missiles could potentially cause too great a burden to defensive systems. However, nations like the DPRK and Iran simply lack the financial resources to invest in the high technology needed to develop the necessary quantities required to achieve such an advantage. The inevitable limits of where rogue regimes can take nuclear weapon delivery systems will severely limit their long-term geopolitical capabilities.

As an aside, it is important at this juncture to comment on the potential utility of cruise missiles. In particular, they present value as an offensive weapon with respect to their trajectory. Much like a ballistic missile response, time is an issue as well. However, just as with the financial constraints associated with ballistic missile development, there are significant cost barriers to developing cruise missiles in sufficient quantity to be effective. Furthermore, the technological requirements to make effective use of a cruise missile is an additional obstacle not easily overcome. Unique flight path characteristics, such as a cruise missile's ability to approach a target from a relatively horizontal plane, is not an easy feat to accomplish. The technologies necessary to develop the flight paths alone for a cruise missile pose a far greater challenge when compared to ballistic missiles. Diverting investment into this program is more than likely undesirable for most rogue states. In the case of both Iran and North Korea, the use of cruise missile technology to the extent that it would pose a serious problem for NATO or other nations' missile defense architectures is not a realistic concern based on the technological barriers to entry.

Regardless of the long-term outlook, short and mid-term geopolitics will be significantly altered due to globalization and the changes it has brought. Countries like the DPRK and Iran are proving that authoritarian regimes can retain power indefinitely if they can overcome the natural protection that comes with space. Nuclear weapons and the delivery systems necessary to employ them are the means to eliminate space as an obstacle. Perhaps of greater concern are the reverberations these nations actions are having. First, countries such as the ROK, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and Israel have been forced to reexamine their strategic postures due to the possibility of a preemptive strike. Second, countries such as Syria have recently hastened their research and development efforts in both the nuclear and missile fields following the DPRK and Iranian models. Third, in response to rogue nations expediting their nuclear weapon programs and first world nations developing their ballistic missile defense architectures; states that currently do not possess nuclear weapons will have to take a more serious look at acquiring such capabilities. Fourth, as the quantity of nuclear weapons begins to increase globally, the US, Russia, PRC, UK, and France (the five major nuclear powers known as the P-5) may have to reassess their strategic posture. While it may seem unnecessary today, over the mid to long-term, nuclear stockpiles may actually be driven up. The short and mid-term actions of rogue states may very easily lead to an unstable geopolitical and strategic balance in the long term. These disturbing trends will have lasting impacts throughout the international system.

Ultimately, overcoming space will work to the disadvantage of rogue regimes. While their development of strategic offensive weapons is potentially destabilizing to the international system, the fate of rogue regimes will be determined by economics. The globalized economy is changing the standards of living for people worldwide. Even in places such as North Korea and Iran, market forces are having an impact on the day-to-day lives of people living under the yoke of oppression. In order to make the acquisition of necessary technology and expertise possible, societies that were once completely isolated from the rest of the world are being opened even by the slimmest of margins. Even

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the slightest openings are likely to eventually prove fatal for many rogue regimes. While rogue states have to overcome the inhibiting role of distance in order to threaten strategic interests of the West and other advanced democracies, geography has and will continue to come at an ever-steeper price.

To continue affording the steep research and development expenses of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, authoritarian regimes are forced to expose a certain portion of their population to the globalized economy. A simple example can properly highlight how quickly a regime can destabilize. As previously mentioned, the exposure to capitalism, free-market principles, and new found wealth will impact at least a segment of the population in a given authoritarian state. The desire to protect their recently accrued wealth will lead some to oppose government measures designed to curtail personal freedom and success. The government will then be forced either to enact stricter measures or relax current policies. If a rogue state chooses option one, the population will either more fervently oppose the government or acquiesce. Acquiescence is almost always temporary, and strife will simply occur repeatedly until the government is removed. However, if the government chooses option two, then the population will either see an opportunity to revolt or simply repeat the process as is the case in option one. Regardless, regime change is still inevitable.

While the previous example is a gross exaggeration of a more thorough and exhaustive process, the message remains the same. Irrespective of time, rogue states have a limited lifespan. Globalization has brought the possibility of economic vitality and along with that an increased awareness of the world. People living in rogue regimes not only are exposed to newfound wealth but also to new ideas, leading to self-determination in the long-run. The problem for rogue regimes therefore becomes the risk of destabilizing the status quo in the pursuit of greater resources. This problem has been born out repeatedly and is a major concern for the regimes highlighted in this document. In China, reform started with farming communities: "once liberated to sell crops and foodstuffs that made the most money, instead of staple grains, the next step was to focus on manufacturing and the introduction of market mechanisms and incentives" (Fenby 172). Less than a decade later, the PRC regime would brutally crackdown reformist demonstrators in Tiananmen Square. So while rogue states focus on the geopolitical utility of strategic offensive capabilities, the means to achieve those ends are further destabilizing their nation(s). In the long run, space will not promote their power through the threat of force, but rather it will demote and degrade their hold onto power through the injection of new ideas and aspirations into formerly closed-off societies.

Summary Discussion

Having provided a short history, current status, case studies, and future implications, at this juncture it is important to refocus the dialogue. There have been five questions raised pertaining to rogue state nuclear weapons acquisition and the geopolitical implications of such action. Addressing issues ranging from why rogue states pursue non-conventional capabilities to the long-term continuation of current geopolitical political trends is critical towards understanding the decision-calculus of rogue state leaders. Only by recognizing why a state chooses a certain policy direction can offshoots be developed to inhibit a decision reversal. However, more explicit answers are necessary to address some of the most basic policy challenges of the early twenty-first century.

First, why do rogue states pursue nuclear capabilities over other weapon systems? The costs associated with commensurate conventional capabilities create an overwhelming barrier. Furthermore, nuclear weapons have an existential value that moves far beyond its military benefits. The ability to threaten non-combatant populations at risk offers rogue regimes a negotiating tool when dealing with first world states. Invariably, budgetary constraints and political utility make nuclear weapon systems far more desirable than conventional capabilities.

Second, why do rogue states develop ground-launched ballistic missile technology over other alternatives? In examining traditional nuclear powers, there are three delivery systems: bombers, missiles, and submarines. Bombers offer a flexible deterrent option by both demonstrating resolve and having the potential to withdraw. Missiles provide a first strike capability. Submarines are the most survivable of the three capabilities. Yet, for a rogue state with limited financial reserves, the research and design complications and maintenance costs associated with bombers and submarines are often too significant to overcome. Furthermore, the limited indications and warnings with missile assets, in comparison to bomber and submarine forces, offer operational value. For these

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reasons and more, missile technology is the preferred option for rogue states.

Third, what effect has rogue regimes' pursuit of nuclear weapons and the supporting delivery systems had on international relations? The ability to hold first-world powers hostage has dramatically changed geopolitics around the world. The great states can no longer rely on distance and conventional forces to nullify threats posed by the third world. For instance, one hundred years ago, countries in South America and Asia posed little threat to the United States. Washington could act with impunity across much of the globe without fearing retribution. The erosion of safety has forced first-world states to negotiate from far weaker positions than they previously occupied with respect to third-world states. Non-conventional weapons in the hands of rogue regimes have served as a means to ward off the threats posed by NATO and like-minded states. Today, nuclear weapons have provided rogue regimes an ultimate guarantor of their survival, thereby permitting them latitude to challenge the authority of the first world.

Fourth, what impact does/will ballistic missile defense (BMD) technology have on rogue regimes? BMD capabilities complicate matters for rogue regimes. Faced with limited budgets, there are two options for rogue states. First, develop a new capability, i.e. cruise missile that possesses a more difficult flight path from a targeting perspective. Second, a rogue state could field additional missile forces in an attempt to overwhelm the BMD capability. The latter option is probably more likely given cost realities and the likelihood of an extended research and design timeline. With that being said, the expenses associated with such an investment may be too much for some, if not all, rogue regimes to handle. If they do field larger forces, the first-world powers will be faced with having to improve their BMD capability. This vicious cycle will only end when the barriers to entry become too high for rogue regimes.

Fifth, over the long-term, will the current relationship between rogue states and traditional states persist? Elements of the response to the fourth question should have served as a preview for the answer to question five. As the development of BMD capabilities catches up with missile technology, the advantage to rogue regimes will ebb. Over the long term, the relationship that exists today, one characterized by blackmail, will recede. Furthermore, as first-world states continue to advance economically, entering the globalized economy and accepting the loosening of domestic political constraints is the only viable option for many rogue states. In the end, today's period will give way to a reemergence of first-world dominance in the geopolitical arena as advantages of and perceived dangers associated with nuclear weapons continues to recede.

Conclusion

The role of space in geopolitics is constantly changing. Globalization has brought people and nations together thereby reducing the importance of space. However, rogue states have developed capabilities that increase the value of space. IRBM and ICBM technology can eradicate the old buffers that once existed between NATO and its partners around the world and possible adversaries. Thankfully, ongoing developments in defensive capabilities will thwart missile delivery systems. Missile defense has become an issue of increasing importance because while the sheer value of space between potential adversaries may be reduced, the need for defensive mechanisms capable of conducting timely actions are more important than ever. Nations such as the DPRK and Iran now find themselves in a unique position. They have the power to coerce the West and others into taking certain actions in their favor, yet at the same time these rogue states enjoy a precarious position. The military technology landscape is always changing. One day offensive weapons may enjoy an advantage, and the next day that pleasure may fall to defensive capabilities. Consequently, while rogue regimes can set the geopolitical tone today, which will not always be the case, only time will tell when the military shift occurs.

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