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NATO'S ROLE IN THE POLICY OF NON-PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AND GLOBAL SECURITY: A SHORT OVERVIEW

Alika Guchua[1*]

[1]Caucasus International University - Tbilisi, Georgia https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0347-9574 alika_guchua@ciu.edu.ge

Abstract: *The purpose of this work was to determine what role NATO plays in the policy of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the modern world. The research primarily examined the threats that come from weapons of mass destruction and how it affects global security. As for research methods, to get reliable information. The methods of policy analysis and document analysis were used to analyze and describe the challenges faced by NATO in the non-proliferation policy of weapons of mass destruction. In order to obtain reliable and objective information, a wide range of documents, strategies, and scientific papers were analyzed. The mentioned study showed us that NATO's policy of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction faces many challenges and threats from aggressive states, terrorists, extremists, criminal groups, aggressive religious actors, and in the overall context, asymmetric and symmetric threats. The role of NATO is very important in the security policy of the alliance and the policy of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the world. NATO should be able to protect global security from weapons of mass destruction threats through pragmatic policy and dialogue.*

Keywords: *Weapons of Mass Destruction; NATO; Disarmament; Non-Proliferation; Global Security; Arms Control*

INTRODUCTION

The world faces numerous threats and challenges that are increasingly difficult to combat. The global security environment necessitates proactive measures and the establishment of effective defensive security systems by states, regional organizations, and international bodies. In the 21st century, NATO continues to face the same threats it has encountered since its inception. These include international terrorism, cyber terrorism, nuclear terrorism, biological terrorism, hybrid warfare, aggressive non-state actors with religious motivations, hypersonic weapons systems, new missile technologies, autonomous weapons systems, and advancements in space and biotechnology. Among these threats, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction poses an escalating danger due to growing conflicts and destabilization in various regions.

Moreover, the existence of aggressive states driven solely by their national interests further compounds these challenges. A prime example is North Korea, which serves as an illustration of such aggression. The development of new technologies has made it possible to easily manufacture and distribute certain elements of weapons of mass destruction. For this reason, it is very important to actively engage and influence NATO to prevent and eliminate threats from weapons of mass destruction, that is, to work actively in the direction of its non-

proliferation policy. All this requires the development of new approaches and strategies. Throughout history, the primary threat to humanity has been the emergence of destructive forces during armed conflicts, particularly when weapons of mass destruction are employed. Various definitions exist for weapons of mass destruction, but they generally refer to exceptionally potent and destructive weapons designed to inflict extensive casualties and cause widespread devastation.

THE ESSENCE OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AND THE CURRENT THREAT TO THE WORLD

Before delving into the discussion of threats and risks associated with weapons of mass destruction, it is crucial to establish their meaning and comprehend the essence of their proliferation. The United Nations General Assembly, in Resolution A/RES/32/84-B of 1977, endorsed the definition of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) as follows: "[WMD are] atomic explosive weapons, radioactive material weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons, and any weapons developed in the future which have characteristics comparable in destructive effect to those of the atomic bomb or other weapons mentioned above" (CARUS 2012, 5). In the United States of America (US), according to the Department of Homeland Security definition, a weapon of mass destruction is a nuclear, radiological, chemical, biological, or other device intended to harm many people. The Department of Homeland Security works daily to prevent terrorists and other threat actors from using these weapons to harm Americans (Weapons of Mass Destruction 2023, 1). To better understand weapons of mass destruction, we can outline the acronym CBRNE, which represents Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive (Giorgadze and Guchua 2021, 109). Weapons of mass destruction can cause significant loss of life and inflict catastrophic damage upon cities, countries, natural environments, and the biosphere. These weapons are primarily classified as nuclear (including "dirty bombs"), biological, and/or chemical agents (Hayoun and Goldstein 2017). It is evident from this categorization how lethal and perilous these weapons can be, capable of annihilating humanity. It is crucial to acknowledge that if any of these components were to fall into the hands of terrorists or non-state aggressive actors, it could present the world with substantial and formidable challenges.

Weapons of mass destruction can be used in almost all types of modern warfare, on any terrain, suddenly and massively. Its use can have a catastrophic impact on the natural environment and biological diversity. The emergence and rapid improvement of means of remote delivery of weapons of mass destruction (primarily rocket and space technology) has led to radical changes in military art. The role of strategy has sharply increased since deep nuclear missile strikes against the enemy state made it possible to obtain huge strategic advantages quickly.

Here, it is important to focus on what reactions the spread of weapons of mass destruction can cause in different societies. The term weapon of mass effect (WME) describes the human reactions and events surrounding using a WMD that may result in limited or no casualties or physical damage. The mass effect may be sensationalized media reporting, panic, and social and political change (Purpura 2013, 1).

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When discussing NATO's role in disarmament and non-proliferation policy, it is crucial to clarify the concept of disarmament. Disarmament means eliminating or abolishing weapons, particularly offensive arms, through unilateral or reciprocal measures. It may involve reducing the number of weapons or eliminating entire categories of armaments (Arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation in NATO 2023). Pursuing a policy of disarmament holds significant importance due to the abundance of weapons worldwide that could potentially fall into the hands of non-state actors, terrorists, or criminals, who could employ them for malicious purposes and cause harm to individuals. Additionally, nuclear weapons are of particular concern, as nine states currently possess such capabilities. To reduce existing nuclear arsenals, NATO actively seeks cooperation with its allies to engage in discussions with nuclear-armed states, encouraging them to diminish their nuclear stockpiles.

In addition to the disarmament policy, pursuing non-proliferation is equally important and poses a significant challenge for NATO. To better understand, let us delve into proliferation and non-proliferation concepts. Proliferation entails the spread of nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons technology, materials, and information that could assist a state in developing nuclear weapons (Dorner 2018, 4). In the context of NATO, "non-proliferation refers to all endeavors to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and, should it occur, reversing it through means other than military force". Non-proliferation encompasses efforts concerning weapons of mass destruction (including nuclear, radiological, chemical, and biological weapons) as well as conventional capabilities like missiles and small arms. Since the Cold War, NATO has contributed substantially to the non-proliferation policy, which is crucial in establishing certain security parameters globally.

NATO'S POLICY ON NON-PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Limiting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is recognized as a significant security concern in the 21st century (Guchua 2021, 55). NATO's engagement with its partners plays a crucial role in addressing this issue and fulfilling NATO's objectives. Establishing trust and confidence are essential prerequisites for effective counter-proliferation measures. Openness and transparency are fundamental for achieving the desired outcomes. Ensuring international security remains a pressing global challenge. The proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, including the employment of ballistic missiles, terrorism, border instability, cyber-attacks, and energy security, poses new threats to NATO (Cobo 2022, 35). Before discussing the non-proliferation policy of weapons of mass destruction, it is important to clarify its meaning. WMD proliferation refers to attempts by state or non-state actors to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, or transfer nuclear, radiological, chemical, or biological weapons or devices and their means of delivery or related material, including precursors, without prejudice to the rights and obligations of the States Parties to the following agreements: Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons or Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling, and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (CWC) and Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons

and on their Destruction (BWC) (Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in NATO 2023, 1).

Nuclear disarmament and the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are two of the most important aspects of international peace and security. There are numerous resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, as well as several international instruments, the most famous of which is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the purpose of which is to achieve concrete progress in the field of disarmament and prevent the development of proliferation-related crises nuclear weapons.

NATO faces various complex challenges arising from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD); chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) materials; and their delivery systems. The Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated the massive impact of natural biological hazards on our societies, and CBRN materials pose an equally significant threat to NATO forces and populations. NATO's Combined Joint CBRN Defence Task Force supports NATO's efforts in preventing, protecting against, and recovering from WMD attacks or CBRN events (Combined Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence Task Force, 2022).

NATO's security environment had grown more complex and challenging since 2009 when allies agreed to NATO's Comprehensive, Strategic-Level Policy for Preventing the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and Defending against Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear threats (CBRN) (NATO's Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence Policy 2022). NATO policy supports consultation and practical cooperation in many areas. These include: conventional arms control; nuclear policy issues; promotion of mine action and combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW); preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD); and the creation and harmonization of forces and means for protection against radiological, chemical, biological and nuclear (CBRN) threats. Pursuing this policy has enabled NATO to protect its security and stability over the years.

NATO's factor in the direction of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction worldwide is very important. It spares no effort to achieve positive results in this direction slowly. With the launch of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Initiative in 1999, NATO strengthened its WMD non-proliferation activities. Moreover, in 2000, the Center for Weapons of Mass Destruction was established at the NATO Headquarters. As part of an active political arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation agenda, NATO allies work to prevent the proliferation of WMD by state and non-state actors. They also counter the WMD threat by building and harmonizing defense capabilities. At the same time, with political decisions to support non-proliferation goals. The political and military components are essential to NATO's security, as is preparedness should the Alliance experience a WMD attack or a CBRN incident.

Under the 2022 Strategic Concept, NATO has committed to investing in defense against CBRN threats, improving related policies, plans, and exercises, and ensuring defense against CBRN threats within the alliance's integrated deterrence and defense capabilities. Furthermore, in June 2022, Allies agreed to NATO's CBRN Defense Policy, which commits NATO to possess the military capabilities necessary to counter WMD proliferation and operate effectively in any environment, ensuring the ability to fight and prevail. Allies have also committed to

strengthening their national and collective defense and resilience against all CBRN threats (Arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation in NATO 2023, 1).

NATO also strengthens international security through relations with partner countries and other international organizations. Its partnership programs provide an effective dialogue, consultation, and coordination framework by actively contributing to NATO's arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. Developing connections and cooperation with the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), and other organizations and multilateral initiatives are particularly important. All this is related to WMD proliferation issues. NATO is well aware that one particular organization alone cannot cope with the challenges and threats that may arise from the proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction.

In the direction of the policy of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the US, one of the NATO Member States, is significantly involved by implementing various flexible measures and actively participating in international agreements. We can give an example: the United States is party to three treaties that refer directly to controls on WMD in addition to those limiting specific types of WMD, such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC); the Outer Space Treaty; the Seabed Treaty; and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) (CARUS 2012, 5).

Banning the proliferation of chemical weapons is also a very important direction in NATO's non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Since it entered into force in 1997, the Chemical Weapons Convention has become one of the pillars of the global non-proliferation regime. The Convention prohibits developing, transferring, and using chemical weapons; all NATO countries are parties to it. They commit to refraining from developing, producing, acquiring, stockpiling, or maintaining chemical weapons and directly or indirectly transferring them to anyone. States Parties also commit to refraining from conducting military training for using chemical weapons and assisting, encouraging, or compelling others to engage in prohibited activities. NATO considers any use of chemical weapons by state or non-state actors to threaten international peace and security.

Biological Weapons - In 1972, the International Convention on the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Destruction of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxic Weapons was signed (Maisaia and Guchua 2020, 205). Today, this convention is recognized by 182 countries worldwide. The states that are not part of the convention pose a certain threat to global security, as they may be actively producing and working on biological weapons. However, there is also a threat from states that are parties to the Convention and may secretly engage in producing biological weapons. Therefore, control and monitoring are necessary mechanisms for detecting such threats. Biological weapons falling into the hands of international terrorists can cause thousands and millions of casualties. All NATO countries are States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and fully comply with its prohibitions on the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling, and use of biological and toxin weapons. NATO is committed to strengthening BTWC action against the proliferation of these weapons.

Taking into account all the threats mentioned above, which can be followed by the aggressive action of state and non-state actors, this is an asymmetric threat that can be implemented in the form of technological terrorism, which means - the use or threat of use of

nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons, highly toxic and biological substances by terrorists; Also, to seize or attempt to seize nuclear, chemical and other industrial facilities, the damage or disruption of which may endanger people's lives and health (Maisaia and Guchua 2020, 301).

Nuclear security policy is one of the most relevant issues for modern global security. NATO Allies support the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. However, as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance, at a level consistent with its deterrence and defense posture, based on an appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defense capabilities, complemented by space and cyber capabilities (Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in NATO 2023, 1).

All NATO countries are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which entered into force in 1970. The NPT is the only commitment to the goal of nuclear disarmament that is binding in a multilateral treaty and includes both nuclear and non-nuclear states. It provides a balanced, step-by-step framework for nuclear disarmament and is based on three mutually reinforcing pillars: non-proliferation (Articles I and II), nuclear disarmament (Article VI), and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science, and technology (Article IV) (Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in NATO 2023, 1).

In NATO's Strategic Concept 2022, the Allies underlined their strong commitment to the NPT as the most important pillar of nuclear non-proliferation and its full implementation, including Article VI. The nuclear non-proliferation system gained significant success due to the negotiations; thus, several nuclear programs could be stopped. Brazil, South Africa, Argentina, and some post-Soviet republics ended their nuclear weapons programs, some of which were either completed or technically quite advanced. In modern times, nine states possess nuclear weapons: the United States, Russia, China, India, Great Britain, France, Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea. Moreover, Iran is enriching uranium, despite US sanctions. The emergence of a new nuclear state increases the threat of further nuclear weapons use, considering the world's extensive arsenal of weapons of mass destruction that can destroy it multiple times. In essence, the proliferation of nuclear weapons presents a classic nuclear dilemma: while such weapons may reduce the likelihood of war, they significantly amplify its brutality in the event of conflict (Kissinger 2020, 481). Numerous articles discussing the Cold War often attribute nuclear weapons as the key factor in maintaining a prolonged period of peace (Gvenetadze 2017, 245).

NATO does not support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (Treaty Ban), which conflicts with the existing non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. It is inconsistent with the Alliance's collective defense obligations and does not enhance the security of any nation. Unlike the NPT, the ban treaty lacks a verification mechanism and threatens the NPT, which has been at the heart of global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts for over 50 years. Also, the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards regime supports it.

A ban treaty will not create the global security conditions necessary to eliminate nuclear weapons. Moreover, it risks creating unrealistic expectations. This Treaty will not help the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons. Similarly, NATO opposes the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). NATO allies believe that the TPNW does not reflect the increasingly challenging international security environment and is at odds with the existing non-proliferation and disarmament architecture (Perrin 2021, 18).

In addition, NATO countries strongly supported maintaining the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF Treaty). Despite years of efforts by the United States and other NATO countries, Russia continued to develop and deploy the SSC-8/9M729 missile system in violation of the INF Treaty. In December 2018, the foreign ministers of NATO expressed their support for the United States' assessment that Russia had legally breached its obligations under the INF Treaty. They called upon Russia to promptly return to full and verifiable compliance with the Treaty. Despite these calls, Russia persisted in its violations of the Treaty.

Consequently, on 1 February 2019, the United States suspended its obligations under the INF Treaty. The withdrawal of the United States from the agreement came into effect on 2 August 2019, six months after the initial announcement. Throughout these six months, Russia continued denying any Treaty violations and failed to fulfill its obligations by verifiably dismantling its SSC-8/9M729 system. As a result, the NATO countries unanimously agreed that the responsibility for terminating the agreement rests solely with Russia.

On 3 February 2021, the United States and Russia agreed on a five-year extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START). However, on 3 February 2023, the North Atlantic Council released a statement noting with concern that Russia has failed to comply with legally binding obligations under the New START Treaty (Weapons of Mass Destruction 2023, 1).

NATO's attitude towards the possible proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons is important. Despite some progress in this matter, the possibility of creating and using such weapons in many countries remains a problem for NATO. Also, risks related to terrorist activities, sabotage, organized crime, disruption of the supply of vital resources, illegal migration, etc., are the main obstacles to the implementation of the strategic goals of the Alliance (Chitadze 2011, 276).

NATO actively contributes to the effectiveness and verifiability of arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation efforts through its policies, activities, and the collective efforts of its allied countries. While NATO is not a party to any specific treaty, it supports and facilitates dialogue among its allies, partners, and other nations to assist in implementing their international obligations (Arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation in NATO 2023, 1). The fact that NATO cooperates with the United Nations, the European Union, other regional organizations, and multilateral initiatives on weapons of mass destruction is important. Also, strengthening regional and international cooperation worldwide is quite important to realize the policy of non-proliferation of mass weapons more effectively. NATO allies participate in the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, and other treaties and agreements that promote arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation.

The Strategic Concept 2022, adopted at the NATO Summit in Madrid, strengthened the critical link between NATO's deterrence and defense efforts and arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation, two political instruments that complement and support Alliance security. NATO's continued adherence to this policy was reaffirmed in the 2022 Strategic Concept (concerning nuclear weapons): "The fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion, and deter aggression. As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. NATO's goal is a safer world for all; we seek to create the security

environment for a world without nuclear weapons" (Arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation in NATO 2023, 1). NATO's defense structure aims to eliminate potential risks of the proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. At the same time, the document mentions that work continues to improve the missile defense system.

On 24 February 2022, in response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, NATO immediately took additional defensive measures. Heads of state and government decided to strengthen security. On 25 March 2023, the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, issued new threats against Western countries supporting Ukraine, announcing an agreement with the ruler of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in the country. For the first time since the mid-1990s, the Kremlin intends to plant nuclear warheads outside the country. Putin also said that the Russian Federation would complete the construction of a storage facility for nuclear weapons in Belarus by July 2023. Tactical nuclear weapons are used to destroy targets on the battlefield and can replace conventional warheads in conventional weapons systems. They need a delivery system, such as Iskander missiles, short-range ballistic missiles that Russia has used to launch conventional warheads in Ukraine and Syria.

However, concerns about growing nuclear tensions between Russia and the United States resurfaced even earlier after Russia suspended participation in the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START-3) on 28 February 2023. This bilateral agreement limits the number of strategic nuclear weapons each country can have but does not cover the number of tactical warheads. Announcing a moratorium on Russia's participation in this Treaty means that mutual inspections will be stopped, and the control mechanism will be completely removed. Consequently, nuclear militarization will most likely begin at a new increasing pace. This decision by Vladimir Putin poses additional challenges to NATO's nuclear security policy. The policy of intimidation and blackmail that Russia has chosen will not bring good results. Russia is thus trying to demoralize the population, government, and soldiers of Ukraine, although they steadfastly protect their country's sovereignty. In all this, they are actively supported by the European Union and NATO Member States. The NATO leadership understands that using nuclear weapons in hostilities will seriously affect Ukraine. At the same time, its bordering states cannot be protected from nuclear radiation. Accordingly, NATO is trying to approach this issue with maximum caution, diplomacy, and pragmatic policy so that Ukraine and the world can avoid catastrophic consequences. Considering all this, it is clear how important role NATO plays in the non-proliferation policy of weapons of mass destruction. Thanks to such correct approaches of NATO, the alliance's contribution to global security and stability is great.

CONCLUSION

In the 21st century, the world needs to understand the importance of maintaining global security. It is also important to conclude new non-proliferation and disarmament treaties that should serve global security. The new treaties must respond to the challenges of modernity and the changes that are taking place in the world in the direction of weapons of mass destruction. However, before signing new agreements, it is necessary to effectively control and protect the

fulfillment of existing and valid agreements and obligations. In this, the Member States and partners of the NATO alliance play an important role.

The study shows that NATO can play an important role in the policy of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The policies and strategic documents adopted by NATO effectively affect and protect the stability and security of the alliance. It must be said that NATO will have to work even more seriously in this direction because, with the development of new technologies, risks and threats are increasing, which can come from aggressive states and non-state actors. Terrorism is the most dangerous of them. Countering symmetric and asymmetric threats is central to the Alliance's pursuit of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In modern times, NATO faces many threats and challenges, such as international terrorism, hybrid war, cyber war, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, etc. It should be noted that in modern times NATO plays an important role in ensuring international security (Maisaia and Guchua 2021, 41). It must be said that it is quite difficult to fight with all this. The Alliance's policies and strategic approaches allow it to effectively deal with and combat existing and potential threats. NATO should further strengthen its policy on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The issue of peace and security in the world depends significantly on this.

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