

ON CONCEPT OF ARMS CONTROL

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Abstract

Arms control is a distinctive concept. It concerns with the distribution of military power; both conceptual and material, in line with a particular conception of national/international security. Although the basic idea of arms control is as old as history of armaments and wars, it began receiving systematic treatment from the late 1950s and the early 1960s onward. It was conceived to support the fail-safe operation of the post-war strategic theory. Over time, there has developed different meanings about the form, nature, and functions of arms control. This article attempts to explore these different and often incoherent interpretations of the concept of arms control and works out a coherent position. The article establishes the distinctiveness of the arms control concept by assessing its position within military and international relations theories. This article will not only broaden, but also deepen our understanding about the concept of arms control. This improved understanding will help better frame arms control policies in the 21st century amidst transition in regional/international security orders.

Keywords: *Arms Control, Disarmament, Deterrence, War, Security Order*

Introduction

Arms control is a distinctive concept. It adjusts military means (both conceptual and material) in line with a particular conception of national/international security. It analyses the complex relationship among arms, context, and security and how they feed on each other. On the one hand, it seeks the positive effects of military means on the international relations. On the other hand, it mitigates the destabilizing effects of arms on the interstate relations. It in fact promotes rationality in the politics of military means and national/international security. It brings collectively and legitimacy in the distribution of military means. Fundamentally, it envisions enlightened arms-based security structures in the international political system.

Although the basic concept and practice of arms control are as old as the human history of armaments and wars themselves, the term itself is

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relatively new.¹ As *prima facie*, it started receiving systematic and methodical treatment in both theorisation and praxis from the late 1950s onward.² The concept of arms control emerged as an integral part of the post-war strategic theory. The nuclear revolution cast deep shadows over the strategic thinking of the time. The prime focus was to grapple with the implications of this new technology.³ In this context, the challenge of the modern strategic theory was quite straightforward: how states could best use nuclear weapons in their policy, while knowing the dangers of their actual exchange.⁴ This necessitated the need for multilevel concepts and multi-layered policies in this new era. As a part of this process, the traditional thought patterns about self-help, total war, deterrence, limited war, and arms race underwent a major refurbishment.

On this account, arms control was deemed necessary for perfecting this new facelift of the strategic theory.⁵ The idea of arms control was introduced to increase the prospect of the fail-safe operation of the post-war strategic theory. In addition, it was pitched as an alternative to the utopian theory of disarmament.⁶ Arms control is a counter-intuitive strategic thinking, as it seeks cooperation between potential adversaries. It expects a connection between conscious military cooperation and national/international security. It reinforces the interaction between military and diplomatic realms. Similarly, it attempts to harmonize the military strategy within a nation's wider national security policy.⁷

Despite voluminous production of literature on the subject matter to date, there are a few systematic reflections on the concept of arms control.

¹ Stuart Croft, *Strategies of Arms Control: A History and Typology* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 20-32.

² Jennifer E. Sims, "The American Approach to Nuclear Arms Control," *Daedalus* 120, no. 1 (1991): 262. Hedley Bull, "Arms Control: A Stocktaking and Prospectus," in *Hedley Bull on Arms Control*, eds., Robert O'Neill, and David N. Schwartz (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Limited, 1987), 100. Many principles and beliefs of the arms control theory had already occurred to many analysts. However, the whole was assembled and presented at the different conferences and workshops held in the Europe and the US only in the late 1950s and the early 1960s.

³ Wim A. Smit, "Military Technologies and Politics," in *The Oxford Handbook on Contextual Political Analysis* eds., Robert E. Goodin, and Charles Tilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 723-726.

⁴ Stephen M. Walt, "The Renaissance of Security Studies," *International Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (1991): 214.

⁵ It is to reiterate that modern concept of arms control was, largely, shaped up in the context of nuclear weapons and the Cold War. Robert R. Bowie, "Arms Control in the 1990s," *Daedalus* 120, no. 1 (1991): 53.

⁶ Ken Booth, "Disarmament and Arms Control," in *Contemporary Strategy: Theories and Policies*, eds., John Baylis et al., (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1975), 90.

⁷ Thomas Schelling, and Morton Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control* (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1961), 143.

Therefore, arms control lacks cohesion and specification, compared with other mid-range theories currently in vogue in Strategic Studies like that of deterrence, alliance-making, offence-defence, and so on. Among arms control literature surveyed, Keith Krause has forthrightly noted, "Canvassing the academic and policy-relevant literature of the past 50 years, one can find scattered contributions to theoretically-informed reflection about arms control...."⁸ Henry Kissinger has lent credence to this view by observing: "Unfortunately, the debate about arms control has often contributed more to passion than to understanding."⁹

This article attempts to explore these different and often incoherent interpretations of the concept of arms control and works out a coherent position. The article underlines the distinctiveness of the arms control concept by assessing its position within military and international relations theories. To this end, the proceeding section begins by defining arms control. It then elucidates arms control in relation to the theories of international relations, disarmament, war, and deterrence. Afterwards, it debates the purposes of arms control along with typology of its measures. Finally, it concludes by discussing the conceptual and policy implications of the distinctiveness of arms control for the 21st century amidst transition in regional and international security orders.

Defining Arms Control

Defining arms control is stimulating. In the course of time, it has assimilated a number of different interpretations, as it embraces a variety of objectives and measures. Moreover, the relative esoteric character of arms control process has made it difficult for commentators to describe its dynamics and functions precisely. Resultantly, some feel tempted to describe it in terms of its measures, while others in relation to its purposes. Not surprisingly, one finds the definitions of arms control either too restrictive or too generic.

In the light of this, it will be appropriate to broach the discussion straight from the word "arms." The word "arms" denotes more than just armaments.¹⁰ It refers to both the potential and the real military capability of a state. It may also subsume the conceptual dimension of the military doctrine and strategy.¹¹ Subsequently, the word "control" is interpreted as "induced or

⁸ Keith Krause, "Leashing the Dogs of War: Arms Control from Sovereignty to Governmentality," *Contemporary Security Policy* 32, no. 1(2011): 20.

⁹ Henry A. Kissinger, "We Must Put Our Intellectual House in Order," in *Arms and Arms Control: A Symposium*, ed., Ernest Lefever (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), 140.

¹⁰ Patrick Morgan, "Elements of a General Theory of Arms Control," in *Arms Control: History, Theory, and Policy* eds., Robert E. Williams and Paul R. Viotti, vol. 1, *Foundations of Arms Control* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012), 17.

¹¹ David Edwards, *Arms Control in International Politics* (New York: Holt Inc. 1969), 11-13.

reciprocated” regulation/restraint in relation to certain aspects of the military capability.¹² This regulation/restraint may merely seek preservation of the existing military means (both material and conceptual) or aim at bringing about some modifications into them. Thus, arms control involves reciprocated or induced adjustment of certain elements of the military assets of the states involved. The preceding analysis is instructive along two lines. Firstly, states are the primary referents of the arms control activity. The non-governmental actors may only participate in a supporting role with regard to the arms control activities. Secondly, the scope of arms control is restricted to only military resources. The firearms of police, individuals, and domestic groups are usually categorised under a separate category of “gun control.”

Here, a reference of what motivates the states to go for arms control in the definition may also be seemed logical. Given the anarchic nature of international politics, states tend to rely on unilateral actions for their security. That is, they view military power as a key instrument not only to preserve but also to advance their security interests in the external environment. The value of armaments increases manifold when states have to pursue competing security interests, especially against their rivals. In their wider deliberative processes, states may reach a conclusion, however, that their military assets are of no substantial use in the pursuit of particular security interests against their rivals. Conversely, their unilateral military actions have appeared to be generating additional unrequired politico-strategic challenges either in the present, or in the anticipated upcoming security landscape.

On this account, states feel encouraged to reconcile with the limits of the self-help principle.¹³ Under enlightened security thinking, the rival states tempt for reciprocated or induced restraint in relation to some aspects of their military assets as a policy option to stabilize the strategic competition and to generate leeway to resolve their basic political conflict amicably. Putting all these considerations together, we can finally define that arms control seeks reciprocated or induced restraint on selective military means of states (especially of rival states) to reinforce an evolving politico-strategic structures of security relations between them.

From this working definition, we can glean that arms control is a technical and political instrument. It is not equivalent to a security system. It

¹² Schelling & Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control*, 5. The carefully and closely knit bilateral and multilateral arms control measures are more effective to constitute stable strategic and political relationships between contending parties as compared to the isolated and unilateral measures. As a matter of fact, this process invariably involves the members of executives, legislation and other political actors, military men, civil servants, diplomats, civil society and public from all parties concerned, which is essential to construct enduring peace and security.; Rose E. Gottemoeller, “Arms Control in a New Era,” *The Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (spring, 2002): 46.

¹³ Michael O. Wheeler, “The Philosophical Underpinnings of Arms Control,” in *Arms Control: History, Theory and Practice*, 64-65.

instead works as a sophisticated regulator in a given security system.¹⁴ By its function, it develops its own system within the broader security system to discharge its regulatory functions. It is an instrument of both national and international security. It complements as well as supplements the states' conventional security arrangements.

Arms Control and Theory of International Relations

Strategic Studies is a sub-field of International Relations (IR). Theory of IR provides a general framework to analyse the problematique of Strategic Studies. With this pattern of widespread and critical engagement between these two academic fields in place, one can fairly anticipate the influence of IR theory in the development and praxis of arms control.

Theory of IR describes the dynamics of international politics, as well as prescriptions for the decision-makers. While inspecting the anatomy of the international theory, Martin Wight found three distinctive, but dynamically interweaving traditions of thought. He described them as the realist, the rationalist, and the revolutionist.¹⁵ Each tradition has its own description of the nature of international relations and a prescription for the behaviour of international players. These three traditions are seen coexisting although "in mutual tension and conflict."¹⁶ It is, therefore, logical to view these different approaches along a continuum rather than in isolation.¹⁷

At one end of the continuum are the realists (Machiavelli, Hobbes, Hegel, Carr, Morgenthau, and Waltz etc.), who traditionally understand international politics in terms of anarchy, power politics, and war. Sovereign states are seen as the primary actors and viewed pursuing their interests freely. Along with this, international political reality is equated with international system of states. At the core of the realist's tradition is the doctrine that power is anterior to law and morality. It is also maintained that sovereign states constitute an international system, as they, in their mutual interaction, operate under pre-contractual condition. Finally, the prescription for rulers involves the pursuit of self-interest with unilateral military means.¹⁸

The rationalists (Grotius, Locke, Gladstone, Roosevelt, Bull, and Schelling etc.) believed in the existence of the element of international

¹⁴ Richard K. Betts, "Systems for Peace or Causes of War? Collective Security, Arms Control, and the New Europe," *International Security* 17, no. 1 (1992): 10.

¹⁵ Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, eds. Gabriele Wight, and Brian Porter (London: Leicester University Press, 1991), 7.

¹⁶ Wight, "An Anatomy of International Thought," *Review of International Studies* 13, no. 3(1987): 227.

¹⁷ A continuum signifies theoretical overlap. Each of the mentioned traditions contains sub-variants, and some of these variants intersect each other. Henceforth, the continuum sketch is analytically more useful rather than pitching them separately. Rationalists hold middle ground in the continuum.

¹⁸ Wight, *International Theory*, 15.

intercourse in the predominate condition of international anarchy. This international intercourse involves both conflict and cooperation. For that reason, anarchy is not seen as an anti-social condition. This leads them to conclude that since states are not subjected to any common superior, they essentially constitute a society of states.¹⁹ They faithfully cite the workings of diplomacy, international law, balance of power, and so on as persuasive examples of the existence of the international society. Moreover, they presume that the issue of morality is real but complicated in politics. The Grotian prescription subjects the international dealings to a series of rules, institutions, and structures of morality.²⁰ Finally, the rationalists propose that power ought to be balanced and regulated.

On other end of the continuum, the distinctive tradition of the revolutionist is situated. The adherents of this tradition (Kant, Cobden, Lenin, Hoffmann, and Keohane) view humans rather than the sovereign states as the primary actors. They explicate that states actually reflect the wills of the individuals who manage their affairs. The Kantian tradition believes that the faculty of reasoning unites humans.²¹ There is a harmony of interests amongst them, and this develops a great deal of interdependence among them. Building on this, the tradition discards the conception of international relations in terms of a system of states. Rather, it presents it as a global cosmopolitan community of humankind.²² In this global community, moral issues are simple and constitute the real driving force behind international relations. The adherents of the tradition advocate for human security. Their prescription emphasizes the value of revolutions and radical institutional transformations to bring about enduring peace and progress.²³

These traditional images of the international relations have different implications for the value and practicality of arms control. Inasmuch as there are two main relevant sub-variants of the realists (offensive and defensive), the realism pole of the continuum has two telling implications for arms control. The adherents of offensive realism believe that states try to maximize their power, and this mostly precludes the opportunities for cooperation.²⁴ The states may show some interest in arms control if it can reinforce and seal their

¹⁹ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: MacMillan Press Limited, 1977), 25.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Robert Jackson, and George Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, 3rd ed.(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 98.

²² Hedley Bull, "Martin Wight and the Theory of International Relations," in *International Theory*, xiv.

²³ Bull, "Martin Wight and Theory of International Relations," xiv.

²⁴ John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (summer, 1990): 12.

visible preponderance.²⁵ The defensive realists view this argument of the offensive realists as incomplete and flawed. They instead posit that states seek security, not the maximization of power. For security purposes, under some restricted conditions, they can engage in arms control activities.²⁶ To a certain extent, their thoughts about the possibility of military cooperation under anarchy intersect with the rationalist thought.

The English School, while drawing mainly on history, law, and political theory, categorically reckons the existence of cooperation along with conflict in the international politics. The rationalists subscribe to a wider conception of security, which embraces the security of the state, as well as of the international system of states. Because of this, they concentrate not only on the immediate challenge of nuclear stability, but also on larger issues of the security order.²⁷ They seemingly tend to link arms control with the manifestations of the balance of power theory. Moreover, they view arms control as a useful policy instrument to bring about progressive and just peaceful international change among the states.

On the issue of transformation, they share some common ground with the moderate Kantians, who consider arms control to be a first step towards disarmament. Nevertheless, the hardliners of the Kantian group show distaste for arms control. For them, arms control legitimises the arms build-up, and preserves the status quo. Thus, it postpones the change.²⁸ Since they believe in revolutions for progress, they call for general and complete disarmament.²⁹

The preceding discussion shows that the existence of different theoretical traditions within the theory of international relations has different implications for the desirability and the undertaking of the arms control system. If the governments in question hold a point of view from the extreme right or left of the continuum, they will show reluctance for adopting arms

²⁵ Anthony J. Eksterowicz, "The Balance of Power Foundation for Contemporary Arms Control Praxis," *The Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies* 13, no. 3 (1988): 318.

²⁶ The followers of the contingent/defensive realism like Charles Glaser reject the pessimistic assumptions of the offensive realists, and believe that states prefer arms control to express their benign security intentions, which essentially mitigates the effects of security dilemma. Nevertheless, Glaser ties down arms control with the offense-defense variables. He argues that in the realm of security, states cooperate on the principle of mutual benefit rather than relative gains. See Charles L. Glaser, "Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-Help," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (winter, 1994-1995): 50-90.

²⁷ Nancy W. Gallagher, "Re-thinking the Unthinkable: Arms Control in the Twenty-First Century," *The Non-Proliferation Review* 22, no. 3-4 (2015): 485.

²⁸ Phil Williams, "Arms Control and European Security: Competing Conceptions for the 1980s," *Arms Control: The Journal of Arms Control and Disarmament* 4, no. 2 (1983): 83.

²⁹ Hans Gunter Brauch, "The Three World views of Hobbes, Grotius, and Kant: Foundations of Modern Thinking on Peace and Security," Free University of Berlin, AFES-Press, 9, http://www.afes-press.de/pdf/Hague/Brauch_Worldviews.pdf.

control. On the other hand, the policy makers adhering to the theoretical precepts of the rationalist school will extend broader support for arms control. Taken together, arms control draws inspiration and responds across the international relations theories.

Arms Control and Disarmament

Arms control and disarmament are two distinct ideas relating to national/international security. Arms control is not disarmament, as it is merely concern with the regulation of armaments. While it is true that they overlap in some of their measures and objectives, there are clearly some values in preserving the difference between them.³⁰ First, the theory of arms control arose partly in response to the rejection of complete disarmament in international politics. Arms control was put forward as a pragmatic and practical idea against the utopian and rigid approach of disarmament. Secondly, each idea holds different prescriptions about international politics. The arms controllers suggest step-by-step and progressive change in the politico-strategic settings of national/international security.³¹ On the contrary, the disarmers recommend quick and radical change in international politics.

In addition, each carries contradictory views about the relationship between the armaments and the onset of war. For arms controllers, there is a complex relationship among political conflicts, armaments, and war. Therefore, they pursue a prudent and deeper line of thinking. They maintain that war comes about primarily due to the processes that are essentially political in nature. At the same time, they underline that the size, structure, and posture of the military forces play a role in aggravating the conflict between the adversaries.³² That is to say, each reflects and affects the other. While talking about these conceptual linkages, Thomas Schelling and Martin Halperin have meticulously noted:

It is true that modern armaments and military plans are a response to basic international conflicts. It is also true that the size and character of military forces are an important determinant of national fears and anxieties, and of the military incentives of our potential enemies. There is a feedback between our military forces and the conflicts that they simultaneously reflect and

³⁰ James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*, 5th ed., (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., 2001), 374. Jozef Goldblat has also stated that arms control and disarmament are often used interchangeably. Jozef Goldblat, *Arms Control: The New Guide to Negotiations and Agreements* (London: SAGE Publication Limited, 2002), 3.

³¹ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Armaments and Disarmament in the Nuclear Age: A Handbook* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1976), 274-75.

³² Marc Trachtenberg, "The Past and Future of Arms Control," *Daedalus* 120, no. 1(1991): 206.

influence.³³

Conversely, the disarmers propagate a crude and sweeping assumption that the weapons and arms races are the basic causes of war. Moreover, the arms controllers perceive a 'weapons-stability' nexus, and thus focus on their management. Whereas, the proponents of the disarmament view a direct link between weapons and war and therefore, call for the abolition of the weapons. Accordingly, arms controllers promote the idea of restraint and disarmers plainly seek the reduction and abolition of the weapons. The restraint may entail preservation of the military balances or the increase of certain categories of weapons. Finally, the disarmament activity may involve the unconditional and uncontrolled reduction of weapons, which is hard to find in arms control practices.

On the other hand, there are those who view arms control and disarmament as substitutes for each other. This perspective has arisen from the fact that both the arms control and disarmament activities invariably deal with the military assets, and, at times, employ specific types of techniques to control and reduce anxieties and fears of catastrophe. Therefore, these two terms can be, and often are used interchangeably. The arms controllers like Schelling and Halperin believe that the approach of arms control, in the literal sense, is not in opposition to disarmament. Rather, it is a broader concept, which is meant to embrace many of the problems and challenges of the disarmament.³⁴ Marek Thee, a distinctive figure of the disarmament community, believes that it is the other way round, and has presented disarmament as the mother concept. In his interpretation, arms control was understood as a workable opening towards the goal of general and complete disarmament.³⁵ Reinforcing this pertinent interpretation, former director of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, William Epstein has noted that the word disarmament is used in the UNO as a generic term, encompassing all the measures related to confidence building, arms regulations, and general and complete elimination of the weapons.³⁶

This occasional academic and public bewilderment about these two terms cannot mask the real underlying differences between them. Arms control and disarmament are not exact opposites, but are essentially two different concepts. Both chart different strategies to reinforce international peace and security. They are differentiated based on the arguments behind their undertakings.

³³ Schelling and Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control*, 4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁵ Marek Thee, "Arms Control: The Retreat from Disarmament the Record to Date and the Search for Alternatives," *Journal of Peace Research* 14, no. 2 (1977):99.

³⁶ William Epstein, *Disarmament: Twenty-Five Years of Effort* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1971), 3-4.

Arms Control and Causes of War

Many commentators believe that insofar as arms control seeks to reduce the likelihood of war, the theory of arms control must be predicated on the theory of the causes of war.³⁷ There is in fact a centrality as well as disagreement about this perspective. The significance of this argument lies in understanding the post-nuclear revolution strategic thinking, which opened the door for arms control. Nuclear revolution brought about a revolution in strategic thinking. It questioned the feasibility of brute force/general war in international relations. In this regard, the influential strategist Liddell Hart noted that the purpose of strategy was to reduce the “fighting to the slenderest possible proportions.”³⁸ The strategy was contemplated to produce results, without escalating to serious fighting. This indirect approach of strategic thinking views the responsibility of the strategist as being “not so much to seek battle as to seek a strategic situation so advantageous that if it does not itself produce the decision, its continuation by a battle is sure to achieve this.”³⁹

Three themes clearly flow from this exposition of strategy. One, war is not the preferred objective. Secondly, achieving a relatively peaceful advantageous strategic environment is the prime strategic choice. Thirdly, there is space for the calculative use of force. The idea of arms control implicitly or explicitly embraces these strategic themes.

Arms control shows great sensitivity towards certain approximate causes and paths to war so as to reduce the likelihood of war. It prudently underlines both political and technical causes of war. Nevertheless, the idea of arms control, to a larger extent, inspires from the spiral theory of war (security dilemma) by inadvertence and accident in which neither side expects the war. To curtail the prospects of unintended war, it works on certain technical causes (arms race, types of weapons, and operational practices), especially in the line of a crisis and catalytic war. This means that arms control is designed to prevent some, but not all sorts of the wars.⁴⁰

Quite apart from this, the concept of arms control concerns with the realm of peace.⁴¹ Peace is a much more complicated affair than war. The

³⁷ Robert Jervis, “Arms Control, Stability, and Causes of War,” *Political Science Quarterly* 108, no. 2 (1993): 239.

³⁸ Basil Liddell Hart, “Strategy: The Indirect Approach,” in *Strategic Studies: A Reader*, eds., Thomas G. Mahnken, and Joseph A. Maiolo (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 101.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁴⁰ Coit D. Blacker, and Gloria Duffy, eds., *International Arms Control: Issues and Agreements*, 2nd ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 338.

⁴¹ The ‘long peace’ thesis emphasizes factors other than arms control which include balance of terror, rules of game, respecting spheres of influence, reconnaissance revolution, bipolar order, regional security regimes and so forth. However, the arms control measures play a crucial role in framing and supporting most of these factors. See Sterling Kernek, “The Long Peace: Interpretation and Implications,” in *Arms Control: Moral, Political and Historical Lessons*, ed., Kenneth W. Thompson (New York: University Press of America, 1990), 120. For the role of regional

theoretical foundations of peace and war overlap, but mostly differ.⁴² Traditionally, peace is understood as the absence of war. This is a bleak and hardly comprehensive conception. At most, this is what we usually describe as negative peace. As understood today, the conception of peace involves much more than this. The conception of positive peace involves the values like that of the quality of relationship, cooperation, integration, and conflict management.⁴³ Among others, just socio-political order also, distinctively, characterizes a positive peace.⁴⁴ Undeniably, the conditions of negative and positive peace, themselves, provide the impetus for the arms control activities. The arms control agreements, mechanisms, and procedures play a critical role in the large processes to invent both negative and positive peace as well.

Similarly, the concept of arms control, in conjunction with the post-war strategic theory, does recognize the possibilities of calculated use of force in international relations. For that, it proactively engages the parties to formulate the tacit rules of the game. To summarize, arms control is partly based on the causes of war and partly on the notion of peace. It certainly transcends the theory of causes of war.

Arms Control and Deterrence

The relationship between arms control and deterrence also requires specification. Many commentators consider arms control a handmaiden of the theory of strategic deterrence.⁴⁵ The concept of nuclear deterrence aims at preventing war through threat. To this end, it requires actual force preparation to make the threats credible. Meanwhile, its actual use has to be guarded. This causes a classic usability dilemma. If the nuclear forces are built around the notion of non-use, they may lose their deterrent value. On the other hand, if employed, they would destroy the security values, which they were supposed to protect.⁴⁶ This suggests that deterrence requires a delicate balance between certain factors. Albert Wohlstetter rightly emphasized, "Deterrence demands

security order in long peace, see John S. Duffield, "Explaining the Long Peace in Europe: The Contributions of Regional Security Regimes," *Review of International Studies* 20 (1994): 370.

⁴² Paul F. Diehl, "Exploring Peace: Looking Beyond War and Negative Peace," *International Studies Quarterly*, no. 0 (2016): 6, <http://isq.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2016/02/25/isq.sqw005>.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁴ Michael Howard, *The Invention of Peace: Reflections on War and International Order* (London: Profile Books Limited, 2000), 3.

⁴⁵ Michael Sheehan, *Arms Control: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1988), 153. It is worth mentioning here that some analysts tend to argue that deterrence is the ultimate form of contemporary arms control. Analytically, this conception lacks cohesion and precision. Patrick M. Morgan, "Criteria for Developing Arms Control Accords Arms Control: A Theoretical Perspective," *Policy Studies Journal* 8, no. 1(1979): 107.

⁴⁶ John C. Polanyi, "Arms Control," *International Journal* 17, no. 1 (1961-62): 40-41.

hard, continuing, intelligent work, but it can be achieved.... The balance is not automatic."⁴⁷

Deterrence is an attention-holding and intricate phenomenon. In the nuclear era, the immediate goal of arms control is to articulate and stabilize the delicate balance of terror between the nuclear rivals. To this effect, it helps to straighten up the technical requirements, as well as the intent of the deterrence between the potential rivals. Arms control efforts are also directed to address the challenges of crisis stability and arms race. In essence, arms control attempts to make deterrence less likely to fail and dampen the impetus to build forces to achieve military advantage.

Although arms control undergirds the smooth functioning of deterrence, it is not the sister concept of the theory of strategic deterrence. To explicate, states can even achieve the deterrence condition without having arms control measures in place. A fragile condition of deterrence might be achieved between adversaries as an unintended consequence of their arms competition. For illustration, this kind of deterrence existed between the Soviet Union and the United States during the 1950s and early 1960s, without the support of arms control.⁴⁸ Secondly, the operational strategies of deterrence hinder achieving the political objectives of arms control. Ostensibly, deterrence and arms control are compatible with each other. It is believed that the threats and promises must work together to enhance stability. Practically in some ways, they deflect each other. Like, the operational strategies of deterrence exacerbate the political animosity through the action-reaction process of arms race and conflict escalation. Actually, the deterrence theory and conflict-spiral model are complementary to each other. This situation, in turn, creates challenges for arms control to work.⁴⁹ Thirdly, the fluffy conception and ever-changing requirements of strategic deterrence poses additional challenges for arms control undertakings. Fourth, inasmuch as arms control is a regulator, it is equally compatible with security arrangements other than the balance of terror. Thus, it is a mistaken to conceive arms control as a mere sister concept of deterrence.

⁴⁷ Albert Wohlstetter, "The Delicate Balance of Terror," *Foreign Affairs* XXXVII, no. 2 (January 1959): 221-22.

⁴⁸ The researcher derived this argument through the analysis of James King's idea of 'fortuitous stability'. See James E. King, "The Price of Military Stability," in *Arms Control: Issues for the Public*, ed. Louis Henkin (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Publishers, 1961), 85-90.

⁴⁹ Actually, the deterrence theory and conflict-spiral model are complementary to each other. This situation, in turn, creates challenges for arms control to work. Frank C. Zagare and D. Marc Kilgour, "Deterrence Theory and the Spiral Model Revisited," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 10, no. 1 (1998): 85; Also, Jervis, "Arms Control, Stability, and Causes of War."

Objectives and Measures of Arms Control

Taken together, the preceding specifications guide to comprehend the objectives and measures of arms control. As distilled, arms control tends to seek diverse objectives. It is conceived as a means, not an end in itself. According to first distinctively proclaimed objective, arms control works to curtail the occasions, where war arises due to the mismanagement of military means (strategy, doctrine, weaponry, deployment, and other related activities). Along with this, it engages the contending parties to lay down mechanisms, procedures, and facilities for early termination of the war, if it erupts.⁵⁰ The second widely recognized objective of arms control is to reduce the economic cost for military programmes. According to Bernard Brodie, saving money is the only genuinely important and achievable objective of arms control. Importantly, this line of reasoning tends to de-emphasize the relationship between the military industrial complex and economic growth of a country.⁵¹

The third objective of arms control is to establish international norms of behaviour about certain types of weapons.⁵² On the pragmatic moral ground, certain arms control efforts are meant to establish norms/taboo about the possession, use of certain weapons, and protection of non-combatants etc. It is important to note that related moral judgments are made after examining the politico-strategic trends in the international arena. The fourth purpose of arms control is to stop the militarization of the society. Bull noted that unchecked growths of the military establishments are inimical to liberal and democratic institutions. The overgrown military related activities and practices have adverse effects on the overall psyche of the society.⁵³ Similarly, Jack Snyder found that the military organizations develop and promote their sympathizers in the society and in the government circles. They inevitably put pressure on the governments to pursue aggressive foreign policies, which, in turn, contribute to the eruption of international crises and wars.⁵⁴

The fifth purpose of arms control is to strengthen civilian control of the military establishments. This is a less substantiated aspect of arms control. The former US President, John F. Kennedy, in his special message to the Congress on the eve of defence budget on March 28, 1961, fleshed out the basic principles of the defence policy. In one of his recommendations, he emphasized that "our arms must be subject to ultimate civilian control and command at all

⁵⁰ Schelling and Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control*, 2.

⁵¹ Bernard Brodie, "On the Objectives of Arms Control," *International Security* 1, no. 1 (summer, 1976): 19.

⁵² Hedley Bull, *The Control of the Arms Race: Disarmament and Arms Control in the Missile Age*, 2nd ed., (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1965), 20-24.

⁵³ Bull, *The Control of the Arms Race*, 3-4.

⁵⁴ Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 31-60.

times, in war as well as peace.”⁵⁵Taking this broad recommendation one step further, one can say that arms control provides inroads to the civilian authorities into the restricted defence policy processes. The sixth purpose of arms control is to promote peaceful international change. It is argued that arms control is also a vehicle for political change rather than merely preserving the status quo. Linked to broader processes of change, it manages and boosts the process of peaceful transformation of relationships starting from the present to the end point in the future between the contending parties. Importantly, arms control arrangements make the reversal process more difficult.⁵⁶

The final objective of arms control is to contribute in articulating regional/international security order. This is one of the implicit and rarely spoken objectives of the arms control enterprise. For some, it is the side effect of the arms control interactions. For others, it is the prime agenda. The underlying research, however, subscribes the latter perspective. Security order means fundamental organizing rules and arrangements for national/international security. In crude words, it is a settlement about the distribution of power and behaviour in the international relations. In the given anarchic environment, it seeks to turn power into order. It is a sophisticated power game in which powerful states, along with middle and weaker states, tend to tie down their security relations (political, military, and economic) to certain new rules and regulations, so as to achieve enduring peace and security, rather than relying on costly and risky unilateral actions. Security order tends to mute power asymmetries as much as possible in the international politics. Equally important, it injects restraint and increases predictability. Security order is thus seen as an important security value, as well as security instrument.

Major actors normally compete with each other to construct a favourable security order. Since arms control activities greatly affect the distribution of military power and behaviour in a given politico-strategic context, the potential adversaries often tend to link it with their broader defence, and foreign policy objectives. In this wider context, they feel tempted to see the interconnectedness between military and non-military issues. Also, they mark the link between bilateral and multilateral arrangements. Seen in this way, the arms control is thought to achieve from minimum to maximum ‘balance’ within the system of international relations as a whole. Fundamentally, arms control undertakings help to reconcile who, what, why,

⁵⁵ John F. Kennedy, “99-Special Message to the Congress on Defense Budget,” The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=8554>.

⁵⁶ John Baylis, “Arms Control and Disarmament,” in *Strategy in the Contemporary World: An Introduction to Strategic Studies*, eds. John Baylis, et al., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 203. Lawrence Freedman has also noted this value of arms control in the termination phase of the Cold War. Lawrence Freedman, “Arms Control: Thirty Years On,” *Daedalus*, 120, no. 1(winter, 1991): 70-71. Bull, “Arms Control and World Order,” *International Security* 1, no. 1 (summer, 1976): 3-16.

where, and how certain critical components of the military means will hold, in line with their projected geo-politico-strategic manoeuvrings, in a muted way. It gives rise to national, regional, and international institutional arrangements to regulate and reinforce mutually agreed conception of defence policy, foreign policy, and regional/international security order.⁵⁷

This shows that arms control significantly contributes to the political, strategic, economic, moral, and social realms. This also establishes why it is so important to pursue arms control in the first place. These objectives are both exploratory and analytical. Largely, these objectives are internally consistent and mutually reinforcing. At the same time, the relationship between some of these objectives is not without complications and to an extent, entails contradictions.⁵⁸ To substantiate, almost every listed objective positively contributes towards the prime objective of arms control-establishing security order. Meanwhile, objectives (a), (b), and (c) may appear offsetting each other to some degree. State parties may pursue one or more than one objective at a given time. In this regard, they decide upon and prioritize the objective(s) in the light of their current and anticipated politico-strategic environment. They make decisions chiefly in relation to their key politico-strategic and economic interests. In doing so, they also seem to keep their social and moral interests in view.

There is a broad spectrum of measures under the rubric of arms control. The rival states normally agree to different arms control measures in line with the objective(s) in hand. The arms control measures significantly vary in terms of their content, intricacy, and implications.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, these measures may overlap and reinforce each other. They are arbitrarily classified into the following distinctive measures: a) declaratory, b) architectural, c) structural, d) functional, and e) data exchange.⁶⁰

Declaratory measures help to articulate the basic concept and structure of the security framework/order. The measures usually include joint declarations about security relationship, non-aggression pacts, rules of engagement, and so on. Architectural measures shape and reinforce the

⁵⁷ G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 3-20. Richard Falk explained the orientation of the Cold War arms control efforts by saying that "arms control measures have served mainly to ratify the bipolar dominance of international politics and to maximize the stability of this dominance from a managerial standpoint." See, Richard A. Falk, "Arms Control, Foreign Policy, and Global Reform," *Daedalus* 104, no. 3 (summer, 1975): 40.

⁵⁸ Jennifer Sims, *Icarus Restrained: An Intellectual History of Nuclear Arms Control, 1945-1960* (Boulder: Westview, 1991).

⁵⁹ Morgan, "General Elements of Theory," in *Arms Control: History, Theory and Policy*, 17.

⁶⁰ Johan Jorgen Holst, "Arms Control in the Nineties: A European Perspective," *Daedalus* 120, no. 1 (winter, 1991): 96-100.

political geometry of the region/world.⁶¹ They may embrace measures of demilitarization, denuclearization, and neutralization of particular geographical areas. Such geographical security zones work as vehicles for political rearrangements and assurances among the state parties. The structural measures concern the quality, size, and composition of the military establishments. The measures significantly affect the force posture and force level. The overriding purpose of these measures is to communicate reassurance about intentions and incentives.

The peacetime activity-oriented measures fall squarely into the category of functional measures.⁶² These measures regulate the size, composition, frequency of military exercises and manoeuvres, and other military related activities in the national border areas. These measures reduce fears of preparations and their potential impact on political relations. Finally, data exchange measures concern force planning and routine military activities. The parties can exchange data concerning military expenditures, major weapons holdings, developments, procurements, and objectives of future force planning.⁶³ In addition, these measures may also include notifications and observance of military exercises, missile test flights, nuclear installations, and reporting of accidents.

The different arms control undertakings- processes, measures, and related institutional arrangements- generate certain values to achieve different objectives. In so many ways, arms control is a negotiating process and negotiated outcome. It develops a communication link between contending parties, allowing them to discuss their contentious security issues ranging from politics to military, and economy. Freedman reinforces that arms control is a means of "providing a forum for dialogue on military issues, a means of signalling shifts on broader political questions, and so on."⁶⁴ Some analysts have gone one-step further in stating that arms control activities help adversaries to 'educate' each other in relation to their security conceptions, strategies, force postures, levels, and operational activities and their link.

The second value that arms control tends to produce is what Joseph Nye has called 'reassurance.'⁶⁵ Through the process of communication, potential adversaries may identify points of contention, and explore some relevant arms control measures to reassure each other. In doing so, they bring about transparency and predictability in their military behaviour, which certainly alleviate misperception and security dilemma.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Richard E. Darilek, and John K. Setear, "Constraints in Europe," in *Conventional Arms Control and East-West Security*, eds. Robert D. Blackwill, and F. Stephen Larrabee (London: Duke University Press, 1989), 402.

⁶³ Holst, "Arms Control in the Nineties: A European Perspective," 100.

⁶⁴ Freedman, "Arms Control: Thirty Years On," *Daedalus* 120, no. 1 (1991): 72.

⁶⁵ Joseph S. Nye, "Arms Control and International Politics," *Daedalus* 120, no. 1 (1991): 161.

Conclusion

Presently, there is the rise of great power political conflict, geo-political rivalries, and disruptive technologies amidst transition in international security order. As geo-politics evolves, the arms control structures are coming under great-stress. US, Russia, European Union, China, and other lesser regional players, are, now, increasingly involved in restructuring security order. US and Russia are unravelling their former bilateral arms control agreements one by one. Along with this, China, European powers, and other lesser regional powers are without a common arms control agenda. Yet worse, the world powers are committing themselves for burgeoning arms build-up, as part of their balancing act against each other.

What does this mean for arms control? Many commentators have viewed these developments as an end to arms control. As distilled, arms control is a skin not a sweater to the body of international relations. It adapts to changing geo-political context. It mutates its form and role, as international security landscape evolves. The emerging security order is less transparent and less stable. It needs to be replaced with transparent and well-functioning security order undergirded by expanded arms control structures. To this end, a greater strategic empathy and decompartmentalization of arms control are essential across national, regional, and international levels.

