

This article was downloaded by: [Columbia University]

On: 17 December 2014, At: 13:32

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



The Nonproliferation Review

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rnpr20>

CORRESPONDENCE

Stephanie Lieggi^a & Richard Butler AC^b

^a James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey, California

^b International Peace and Security, Penn State University, University Park, PA

Published online: 26 Feb 2013.

To cite this article: Stephanie Lieggi & Richard Butler AC (2013) CORRESPONDENCE, The Nonproliferation Review, 20:1, 9-12, DOI: [10.1080/10736700.2012.761787](https://doi.org/10.1080/10736700.2012.761787)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10736700.2012.761787>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

Technology, not Geography, Drives Current Nuclear Trafficking Decision Making

Justin Hastings's analysis ("The Geography of Nuclear Proliferation Networks: The Case of A.Q. Khan," 19.3, November 2012, pp. 429–50) provides a unique look at the workings of the A.Q. Khan network by examining the trafficking linkages from a geographic perspective. Previous research on Khan and related Pakistani procurement networks has primarily focused on the shifts in the network's operations by comparing activities related to the *importer* stage (when the aim was to build Pakistan's nuclear program) and the *exporter* stage (when the aim was to supply customers outside of Pakistan). But Hastings examines the shadowy entities coordinating the trade between the sellers and the buyers, and notes how their operations are dictated by the "tools and resources" open to them. He presents the geography of these networks as indicative of how much (or little) state-backed resources these "coordinators" can rely upon. Although the Khan network has been analyzed thoroughly from many different angles since the full revelations of its existence in 2004, the consideration of how state support influenced the overall efficiency and activities of the network's logistical operations provides a fresh perspective on this case.

Hastings differentiates between the coordinators who have access to state resources and those without such resources by contrasting the characteristics of the Pakistan-based network at different stages of its existence. As a model for a network with access, Hastings looks at the 'import'-focused period of Pakistan's nuclear weapons development efforts. In this period, when the emphasis was on the creation of an indigenous nuclear weapons program, Pakistani sovereignty was used to its maximum benefit; as the author notes, in this

situation, the state "can use the resources and prerogatives associated with external sovereignty." These prerogatives include use of diplomatic personnel who can work with a certain level of immunity in host countries and the access to state controlled supply networks—such as transport planes or diplomatic pouches. Looking at the methods used in this period, Pakistani procurement coordinators routed commodities in a relatively efficient manner—going straight from source country to end-destination.

For networks that have limited access to state resources, Hastings uses the example of the Khan network's operation in equipping Libya's nuclear program. Hastings notes that this phase involved far more elaborate routings and a less efficient use of the "spokes and nodes" system. Hastings attributes these inefficiencies to the need for coordinators to "rely on transportation infrastructure they neither created nor control."

For networks that have limited access to state resources, Hastings uses the example of the Khan network's operation in equipping Libya's nuclear program. Hastings notes that this phase involved far more elaborate routings and a less efficient use of the "spokes and nodes" system. Hastings attributes these inefficiencies to the need for the coordinators to "rely on transportation infrastructure they neither created nor control."

Hastings's article illustrates how the two differing coordinator characteristics can influence the ways in which these agents must operate. According to him, coordinators with access to state resources can often avoid going into the global marketplace altogether, whereas those with little or no access to state resources must inevitably turn to private companies and are at the

mercy of the laws and regulations of other states. This accounts for choosing “logistical pathways . . . through chokepoints that limit the non-state actors’ options for movement.”

An alternative approach must also be considered, however, one that challenges the extent to which Hastings’s model can be used in analysis of future trafficking cases. Although the involvement of state resources is one factor for the procurement choices made by traffickers, it is not a particularly strong indicator for predicting future activities. While this model worked well in the case studies that Hastings chose, the previous Pakistani-based networks are to some extent anachronistic and unlikely to be repeated in the near- to mid-term. This lack of possible replication of his model is the most notable flaw in Hastings’s otherwise strong analysis.

More contemporary cases of trafficking—such as current Iranian and North Korean-based networks that are highlighted extensively in open source reporting—demonstrate that the desired technologies are much more of a deciding factor for how traffickers make decisions than the level of state support and geographic location of the coordinators. Even in the case of A.Q. Khan and Pakistan, the shift from using state-facilitated coordinators to commercial routes was as much a reflection of the evolution of the end-user’s needs and coordinator’s preferences than access to state-supported logistics.

Although cases will likely still surface of coordinators accessing state resources to undertake the transfer of WMD-related materials, this type of transaction has become much less the norm. Coordinators, both from inside and outside proliferating countries, rely more heavily on commercial routes as they often prove more expedient than the state-sponsored options. For instance, even after the A.Q. Khan network was dismantled, other Pakistani brokers working to supply Islamabad’s program made the choice to rely on commercial operators from third countries and trans-

shipment points such as Dubai.¹ The use of diplomatic pouches, often undertaken by Pakistani and North Korean diplomats in the past, has notable limitation when dealing with larger, more complicated commodities. Recent reports of transfers by North Korea to Myanmar and elsewhere highlight that coordinators with access to state resources still chose commercial logistics routes; the decisions are often based on expediency and efficiency of operations.²

Using the geographical approach as means to gauge the access to state resources and to “understand the behavior of coordinators” is limited. Instead, what we can try to determine through Hastings’s research is the extent to which modern trafficking networks have evolved and taken greater advantage of the globalized trade system, moving away from reliance on state resources and toward the global marketplace. In the current climate, coordinators benefit from the virtual anonymity that can come with the use of major transshipment hubs and manufacturing locations with minimal bureaucratic encumbrances. In this way, traffickers work similarly to other global trade operations—looking for the best, most efficient supply chain for their business.

¹ See, for example, reporting on the case of Asher Karni and Hyumun Khan, including “The Nuclear Underground,” on *Frontline*, June 2005 <www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/nuclear/>; and Stephanie Lieggi, “The Case of Asher Karni and Humayun Khan,” *NIS Export Control Observer*, May 2005, pp. 19–22, <http://cns.miis.edu/observer/pdfs/ob_0505e.pdf>.

² See cases mentioned in: Catherine Boye, Melissa Hanham, and Robert Shaw, “North Korea and Myanmar: A match for nuclear proliferation?” *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, September 27, 2010, <www.thebulletin.org/web-edition/features/north-korea-and-myanmar-match-nuclear-proliferation/>; and Stephanie Lieggi, Robert Shaw, and Masako Toki, “Taking Control: Stopping North Korean WMD-related Procurement,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 66 (September/October 2010), pp. 21–34.

When identifying the overall policy implications of his research, Hastings notes that countries that contain “logistical chokepoints”—i.e. transshipment and transit hubs, as well as locations where brokers may set up their operations—should be brought in to the global nonproliferation regime, shoring up efforts currently centered on supplier countries. Hastings’s research highlights how these chokepoints ultimately affect the long-term success of efforts to fight illicit trafficking. As the international community moves forward in combating weapons of mass destruction trafficking, through efforts like UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and Security Council sanctions against Iran and North Korea, more attention must be placed on strengthening capacity in countries that, through lax

legislation or lack of resources, facilitate the transfer of sensitive commodities. The nonproliferation community can best thwart trafficking efforts of the coordinators Hastings identifies by increasing the attention given to the third party territories where they are currently operating. Enhancing nonproliferation and securing trade norms while building relevant enforcement capacity in these states is essential if we are to halt, or at least slow down, current and future proliferation networks.

Stephanie Lieggi

*Senior Research Associate
James Martin Center for Nonproliferation
Studies
Monterey, California*

A Wiser Approach to Pursuing Middle East Regional Security

Dalia Dassa Kaye’s core proposal in her contribution to the recent special section on creating a Middle East weapons of mass destruction (WMD)-free zone (“The Middle East WMD-Free Zone Conference: A Reset for Regional Arms Control?,” 19.3, November 2012, pp. 413–28) is that, under the prevailing and likely continuing circumstances, it would be more constructive to establish a regional security forum to address the range of issues that shape or threaten that security. This approach is sound, for two main reasons: one of substance, the other of procedural significance.

On the substance, Kaye points out persuasively that, while the zonal idea has its origin in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and specifically its Review Conferences of 1995 and 2000 (and it should be borne in mind that the 1995 indefinite extension of the NPT relied on agreement to the proposal that such a zone be established), the deep seated contentiousness around the NPT, not least in the Middle East, recommends

that attempts to enhance security in the region should be de-linked from the NPT.

This should not be seen as ignoring the elephant in the room, but as a sensible proposal with some chance of bringing about much needed dialogue, and even some confidence, and thus make possible some incremental movement on weapons, including possibly WMD issues.

Kaye also proposes a similar de-linking of dialogue on a range of security-related issues from the underlying Middle East peace process, which should be continuing. This is also constructive.

Her case is sensible and well-argued as it rests, essentially, on two truths: the raw political arguments about the unfair central bargain in the NPT—enshrining as it does nuclear weapon haves and have-nots—and the need for justice for the Palestinian people and the security of Israel.

That security is determined by a number of largely non-WMD related issues: migration, terrorism, and arms shipments, to name only leading concerns.

These can and should be discussed. As Kaye points out, they have, in some measure, been discussed in the past. They can be again, with potential benefit to all concerned, because they are intrinsically important and of substance.

De-linking also makes great sense procedurally, for the simple and well-tested reason that if the discussion of deeply difficult issues starts with the hardest piece—with the idealized end state—then it is unlikely even to begin. A better approach is to start at the edge of the pool and work toward its, avowedly deeper, center.

This is perhaps particularly true in the case of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. Israel has them and implies that they are viewed as essential to its security. It is not a member of the NPT. Other regional states have sought and/or contemplated them and some continue to do so.

The region provides a classic case of nuclear proliferation pressures and, as Kaye points out with crystal clarity, the issue is characterized by the political sequencing problem: we can't get rid of our nuclear weapons until our security is assured (the Israeli argument); our security can't be assured until you first get rid of your nuclear weapons; and in the meantime, we won't join other WMD arms control regimes, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention, because you have nuclear weapons, (Egypt and Syria's stance).

Painful though it is, given the contribution the NPT has, in fact, made to

global security, it is difficult not to agree with security theorists Campbell Craig and Jan Ruzicka's criticism of what has become the real state of affairs with respect to the NPT: "selective non-proliferation and ineffectual abolition."³

Having been a delegate to four NPT Review Conferences, including the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, I can only lament the accuracy of their characterization of those Conferences: "a bizarre spectacle, involving much fractious debate over minor rewordings in order to produce—if any agreement at all is reached—'final documents' which are ignored by everyone concerned."⁴

Dr. Kaye's economical—but no less depressing—account of the debate on the zonal proposal at the 2010 Conference tends to support the "bizarre spectacle" characterization.

Her proposal for a new framework and process through which a more secure Middle East might be sought, both as an approach toward the WMD issue and otherwise, deserves serious attention. It is wise and more than procedural; rather it is a way forward, in substance. The hard heads might recognize it as such, and thus reject it. Those willing to try a new path will not.

Richard Butler AC
Distinguished Scholar
International Peace and Security
Penn State University
University Park, PA

³ Campbell Craig and Jan Ruzicka, "Who's in, Who's out?," *London Review of Books*, February 23, 2012, p. 38.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37.