The reasons why states pursue weapons of mass destruction programmes and why they defy the norm of non-proliferation regimes are varied. One explanation is that non-proliferation regimes such as the watchdog International Atomic Energy Agency and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty historically lack effective monitoring and inspection mechanisms, and of course enforcement capability, permitting proliferators to avoid serious punishment. Other causal explanations for proliferation include the ‘security dilemma,’ in which a state’s search for greater security by developing WMD programmes makes its neighbours less secure. According to one author, “the India–Pakistan conflict is the direct consequence of the imbalance of power between the two states and Pakistan’s insecurity about this imbalance.” While New Delhi’s nuclear deterrent made India feel more secure in a dangerous region (especially considering its fear of Pakistani and Chinese collaboration), it made Pakistan feel less secure, prompting Islamabad to develop its own nuclear programme. Pakistan’s nuclear and missile development has had the same effect on India (neither India nor Pakistan acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty). Finally, states seek prestige and great power status from membership in the nuclear club, for example leaving Germany and Japan’s non-possession, despite enormous economic might, as secondary powers.
However, these explanations ignore the complexity of regional politics and the multiple games being played at different levels of analysis and often simultaneously. By focusing on a single game or the ‘wrong’ game, American diplomats, intelligence officers, and policy makers will find it difficult to understand the motives and intentions behind Pakistan, India, Iran, Iraq, and North Korea’s acquisition of WMD, or Libya and South Africa’s abandonment of WMD. The import of this perspective is that Washington cannot have a ‘template’ or a ‘one-size-fits-all’ non-proliferation policy that it can apply mechanically to all WMD proliferators. This chapter examines the three different games, or levels - systemic, sub-systemic, and domestic - to explain the varied reasons why states pursue WMD programmes, and then focuses on the interaction between these levels with the goal of encouraging discussion on a more differentiated non-proliferation policy.

DIFFERENT LEVELS AND MULTIPLE GAMES

Politics for regional powers consists of three inter-related games played at the systemic, sub-systemic, and domestic levels. The systemic and domestic ‘games’ typically receive the greatest attention. The systemic level consists of the great powers and their impact on regional dynamics. During the Cold War, the American-Soviet bipolar rivalry penetrated regional politics to different degrees. One view is that in highly ‘penetrated’ locales, the great powers kept a lid on regional rivalries and restrained their allies by exerting influence and thereby ensuring that regional conflicts did not escalate into global conflicts between the superpowers. A contrary view is that the bipolar superpower competition for global influence internationalised and stoked
regional and local disputes. In the current unipolar world of the new security environment, some scholars argue that American hegemony contributes to regional stability because Washington provides important public goods and services which moderate local and domestic rivalries. The U.S. is also freer to intervene in local conflicts. Others counter that American preponderance allows Washington to act unconstrained and without the fear of retaliation. The outcome is a unilateral and ‘preventive’ policy that threatens regional states which oppose American policy.

The domestic level reflects internal politics. Many states in non-Western regions are not classic nation-states, where the geographic territory overlaps with a group of people who have a common identity: a sense of ‘us’ in contrast to ‘them.’ Instead, there exist divided loyalties amongst the population, with sub-national groups owing allegiance to interests other than the state government. Often lacking legitimacy, leaders may use repression to remain in power, and are primarily concerned about the ruling regime’s survival rather than the nation-state’s survival. Even inter-state war can serve this goal by diverting attention and creating internal solidarity due to the rally-around-the-flag effect and by expanding the power of the state over society.

Mostly ignored is the sub-systemic level. A region has its own dynamic which is semi-autonomous but not independent from the global great power system and domestic politics. Competition occurs among the major regional players for leadership or hegemony over the locale. Most regional states lack the ability to project significant power (i.e., a substantial standing army) beyond their own frontier. As such, the most serious threats come from proximate neighbours, not the distant great powers or other extra-regional states. This characteristic often results in foreign meddling and subversion in domestic politics rather than foreign military intervention or invasion. A classic example of this sub-systemic perspective is
Malcolm Kerr’s account of the 1960s “Arab Cold War” or competition between the moderate/conservative states of Saudi Arabia and Jordan and the more radical/revolutionary states led by Nasser’s Egypt, but also including Syria, Algeria, Iraq, and the Republic of Yemen. In the preface to *The Arab Cold War*, Kerr makes clear that, “one of my main concerns of the book has been to dispel the notion of Arab politics as the projection of decision made in Washington, London, Moscow, and Jerusalem.”

Like a three-dimensional tic-tac-toe board, the regional ‘game’ is played simultaneously on all three levels. The boundaries dividing these tiers are blurred but interrelated. Leaders often act on one level, but the objective is to influence the outcome of game(s) played on the other levels. This is precisely what Rose McDermott is referring to in her contribution to this monograph with her discussion of ‘multiple audiences.’ Regional leaders act locally with the intent of pulling reluctant extra-regional great powers into the conflict until all are involved, or in the Middle East context to derail any peace process that might be in motion. Regional leaders act at the global level, defying the great powers in order to flex their muscle and thereby gain status amongst regional competitors. Finally, regional leaders act externally with the intent of redistributing political and economic power within their society. In this context, foreign actions are an instrument for domestic political change.

What can this ‘tiered’ general perspective tell us about the intentions of WMD proliferators and the difficulty of developing a comprehensive American non-proliferation policy? Most importantly, it warns that while the United States has the universal goal of non-proliferation, it cannot apply a blanket policy to all proliferators. The reason is that regional states have different systemic, sub-systemic, and domestic purposes for pursing WMD
programmes. A successful non-proliferation policy will involve a differentiated response across locales and states.

At the systemic level, the hegemonic literature implies that as the preponderant state, the U.S. is more willing to provide regional services such as mediator, security guarantees, international regimes, and other confidence building and conflict resolution mechanisms.\(^\text{16}\) This action will contribute to regional peace and stability, which is conducive to non-proliferation, such as the 1994 U.S.-North Korean Agreed Framework. Hegemony will also make it easier for the U.S. to block foreign assistance, which is essential to many regional states’ nuclear programmes.

Yet, the collapse of the Soviet Union also meant that in locales where the Cold War penetration was high, former Soviet allies with concerns about American intentions interpreted the international system as bipolar; an extra-regional state (i.e., the United States) threatened their regional position.\(^\text{17}\) Such ‘middle powers’ viewed themselves in direct competition with the U.S. in their respective locale, and their WMD programmes as attempts to counter-balance against Washington, although of course no rational middle or regional power seeks to challenge the U.S. on the systemic or global level.\(^\text{18}\) Consequently, Saddam Hussein called for Pan-Arab cooperation and sought to demonstrate himself as ‘leading’ the struggle against the United States, including with his WMD programme. To avoid Saddam Hussein’s fate, the lesson for Iran and North Korea is that even a minimal nuclear programme is necessary to deter an American-led multilateral disarmament campaign. North Korea, for example, has used its WMD programme to provoke a crisis with the intent of pulling in extra-regional powers such as China, Japan, and Russia to internationalise events as a counter-balance to U.S. dominance on the
Korean peninsula. As another example, one author claims that New Delhi’s nuclear tests “challenge[d] directly the NPT hegemonic order and indirectly the Yalta Potsdam order.”

At the oft-overlooked sub-systemic level, regional states view themselves in competition for leadership or dominance with other powers in the locale. India views its role as benign hegemon or manager of South Asia, including the Indian Ocean and its sea-lanes, which Pakistan will not acknowledge. Regional states pursue WMD as a means to boost their local standing. Second-rank states will likely bandwagon with such a regional power, encouraging them to exaggerate WMD programmes, rather than balance unless weaker states can find an extra-regional ally. Defiance of proliferation regimes can enhance a regional state’s status or legitimacy among more radical powers in the locale by demonstrating their opposition to the West. Even though Baghdad was the target of intense non-proliferation efforts, Saddam Hussein turned severe sanctions and an intrusive U.N. inspection regime into a ‘victory’ by not cooperating and by claiming that Iraq was the only Arab state to stand up against the ‘Great Satan’ for broader pan-Arab security interests. This dynamic seems to go furthest towards explaining why “Saddam would choose to put his country through the pain of sanctions without having anything significant to hide.”

Likewise, Pakistan can claim that the ‘Islamic bomb’ provides a nuclear umbrella to Arab countries against an Israeli nuclear threat.

Great power-induced shifts in the regional distribution of power will create new opportunities or constraints for local states. The destruction of Iraq’s Army during the recent Gulf War and in its aftermath means that Iran is now the dominant power in the region, with Iraq unable to act as a counter-balancer. This regional imbalance might unleash Tehran (and perhaps Iraq’s other neighbour, Syria) to pursue a more activist and aggressive foreign policy, including continuing its WMD programme. The regional danger of weakening Iraq is made clear by an
interview conducted with General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander of American Forces in the Persian Gulf, prior to the first Gulf War:

there are alternatives to destroying Saddam Hussein or to destroying his regimes. I like to think that the ultimate objective is to make sure that we have peace, stability, and a correct balance of power in the Middle East … Obviously one way would be the total destruction of Iraq, but I am not sure that is in the interest of the long term balance of power in this region.  

The rise of China as a major economic and military power is bound to upset the balance of power in Asia. China’s growing assertion of power in South Asia was a contributing factor in India’s decision to renew its nuclear programme. If nuclear-weapon deployments increase in South-East Asia, Japan (and likely South Korea and Taiwan) might also pursue its own nuclear arsenal, instead of relying exclusively upon the U.S. nuclear umbrella.

At the domestic level, WMD programmes are a sign of self-sufficiency, progress, and a source of national pride. Western calls for non-proliferation are portrayed internally as another attempt to weaken and hold back regional states from attaining their rightful place in the world through the creation of security dependencies (while also denouncing the First World nuclear hypocrisy that Doug Giebel alludes to in his chapter). WMD programmes are also used to rally domestic support, extract societal resources, and repress opposition groups. For instance, after conducting a series of nuclear tests in 1998, Prime Minister Vajpayee and his BJP successfully rallied Hindu nationalist supporters. He noted: “Millions of Indians have viewed this occasion as the beginning of the rise of a strong self-confident India.” Illicit WMD programmes also strengthen internal constituencies who favour nuclear deployment, redistributing power within society and thereby bringing particular groups, especially hardliners and nationalists, into new
positions of influence. With a nuclear programme, such domestic proponents are now a power to be reckoned with. In the case of Pakistan, the military enjoys immense control over the decision-making process in that country and, thus, the defence budget has been prioritised over the social sector.\textsuperscript{26} It is the country’s most powerful institution and is the largest organised national force with approximately 700,000 personnel.

\textbf{THE MULTI-TIERED GAME AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY}

While the Iraq case offers a variety of ‘lessons’ and points for debate, such as in regards to managing the non-proliferation regimes or as to intelligence procedures, the most important lesson is in fact for American decision makers. The greatest failure to emerge from the Iraq experience has not been in intelligence or allowing the NPT to be ‘shattered,’ but is rather the failure of U.S. policy makers to understand the dynamics between the three ‘games’ of interaction and the signalling by regional actors engaged in this process. It is important to understand this multi-tiered game and the varied proliferation motives that regional states have for pursing WMD when devising American counter-proliferation policy. Three essential considerations must be applied to American policy if its long-term national security goals are to become attainable.

First, American officials need to determine the regional state’s intended target, is it extra-regional actors such as the U.S., EU or Russia; other regional powers in the locale; or domestic constituents and opponents. Bluster, pinpricks and defiance of all international non-proliferation norms and the United Nations Security Council served Saddam’s interests at all three levels,
allowing him to: 1) claim that he was defending the Arab world against the U.S., Israel, and Iran; 2) launch ideological attacks on oil rich and Western leaning conservative Gulf regimes; and 3) destroy domestic opponents, especially the Kurds and Shiites. In the case of Pyongyang, its nuclear ‘brinkmanship’ programme is as much an external deterrent as a desperate bargaining chip to get international economic concessions for food and capital to sustain its withering domestic economy and maintain Kim Jon-Il’s political machine. One danger of concessions is that other potential proliferators might violate the NPT, or threaten to withdraw from the regime altogether in the hopes of obtaining a ‘deal’ as well. Forcing the U.S. to the negotiation table would be a domestic victory for Kim Jon-Il’s regime (creating the Gordian knot of who goes first), while how to respond has contributed to division between Washington and Seoul. 27

Regimes and states engaged in economic and political transition (especially China, but including Pakistan, which has experienced parliamentary and authoritarian forms of government, and also, Iran which is a mix of theocracy, authoritarianism, and democracy) are especially prone to engage in aggressive regional foreign policy, including WMD band-standing, for domestic and internal reasons. 28 The rationale is that the process of transition causes severe economic and political dislocation, such as high levels of unemployment, intense political divide, and increasing economic problems. An aggressive foreign policy can divert internal opposition. 29 In the case of Iran, where conservative and reformist opponents have clashed, heightened regional tension over Tehran’s WMD programme has benefited the hardliners. 30 One casualty of this domestic rivalry is strained U.S.-Iranian relations, which further strengthens the position of the conservatives in that country and weakens the reformers. 31

Second, American leaders need to understand the close relationship across these three tiers of interaction, and that changes in one level can have a cascading and unplanned effect on
the others. The end of the Cold War altered the regional balance of power in the Middle East, thereby almost overnight strengthening U.S. allies - Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia - and weakening Soviet proxies - Iran, Syria, North Korea, and Iraq - thereby giving the latter an ‘excuse’ or justification for their WMD programmes. The War on Terrorism for example has had unintended regional consequences. The demise of Saddam Hussein’s regime, its army, and its WMD programme means that Iran’s nuclear weapons programme has lost a compelling strategic rationale. Yet, the American defeat of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and also of Saddam Hussein, improved relations with Pakistan. Turkey’s long-standing membership in NATO means that Tehran is now encircled by countries that are sympathetic to Washington, and in some cases, host large U.S. military forces. This turn of events reinforces the Bush Administration’s emphasis on preventive military action to counter proliferation and terrorist threats at the source.³² Tehran’s fear is that its conventional military offers little protection against the U.S. Whether Tehran’s WMD programme makes it more secure, or will serve as a pretext for pre-emption (e.g. Israel’s attack on Iraq’s Osirak nuclear reactor) is unclear. While Sino-American relations have dramatically improved following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and especially after Clinton’s ‘engagement’ of Beijing, this détente has put India on edge. According to some, Sino-American courting accounts for the timing of New Delhi’s nuclear tests in 1998.³³

Third, U.S. officials must recognise the need to differentiate its non-proliferation policy across different regions and states, whether acting at the systemic (direct intervention), sub-systemic (regional powers), or domestic (internal groups) levels. A coercive multilateral U.S.-led response to WMD programmes can provoke a harsh counter-punch from a regional power. For the regional state, countenance is admired and will have the intended outcome of bolstering
its standing in the locale and at home, even if it harms relations with the U.S. and the West. More importantly, threats to regional states often emanate from within the region. For illegitimate leaders, since the primary danger to a regime’s survival in power is local or internal, they may fear the regional and domestic political cost of compliance with IAEA pressure for disarmament, or other non-proliferation regimes more than the systemic punishment from non-compliance (especially states which are not embedded in the international arena). In this instance, the threat of a highly intrusive inspection regime and perhaps even the threat of military intervention would be insufficient to deter significant cheating by determined proliferators. The import is that even if the great powers are willing to invest in non-proliferation, or impose it, the success of such regimes requires the indigenous reconciliation of major regional and domestic disputes.\textsuperscript{34} This might not be possible until legitimate nation-states dominate the region.\textsuperscript{35}

In most instances, Washington’s preferred outcome is WMD disarmament of rogue powers and perhaps even genuine region-wide disarmament. If this can not be fully achieved, then a satisfactory outcome might be a balance among WMD regional powers (i.e., India-Pakistan) with each state checking the other, which will allow the U.S. to act as the off-shore arbiter.\textsuperscript{36} In other words, if one understands the motives behind proliferation and they are linked to the regional rather than the global balance of power, then in some instances limited proliferation might be a preferable option. In this context, a ‘worst regional outcome’ for the U.S. is the locale falling under the dominance of a single WMD rogue power, one which will threaten American allies and friends and provoke a local security dilemma.

CONCLUSION:
In this era of promoting the spread of democratic and trading states, since the conventional wisdom is such states tend not to fight each other, the goal is to reduce regional tensions and improve the regional security environment, thereby reducing the incentives for proliferation. More immediately, by appealing to opposition groups, especially internationalists or ‘outward oriented’ businessmen and elites, the intent is that they will lobby the regime to abandon WMD programmes or bring about regime change. This is in fact part of a larger policy debate on whether the U.S. should isolate or engage rogue states such as North Korea, Libya, and Cuba. While possible for internationally integrated states, in autarkic powers, such a strategy can have a backlash, allowing the regime to brand opposition groups as disloyal or enemies of the state, and thereby marginalize them.

The final question worthy of discussion here is why some states such as Libya and South Africa abandoned their WMD programmes. Systemic, sub-systemic, and domestic forces again come into play. Some scholars point to Qaddafi’s need for external funding in his battle against domestic Islamic fundamentalists and other internal discontents that posed the greater threat to his regime’s survival (in scholar Steven David’s terms, this is a case of “omni-balancing,” seeking secondary external allies in order to fight primary internal threats. While Libya’s programme was in its infancy, perhaps a more interesting example is why South Africa dismantled its advanced WMD programme, even after a ‘reputed’ successful nuclear test in 1979. In answer to this, the end of the Cold War had its greatest effects on highly penetrated regions. It contributed to renewed conflict in regions where Soviet clients sought autarky, such as Iran and Iraq. It contributed to regional cooperation where states sought integration into the global economy, such as South Africa. In the latter case, the collapse of the Soviet Union meant
the cessation of hostilities in Angola and the withdrawal of the 50,000 Cuban troops, thereby making any nuclear deterrent unnecessary. Concomitantly, acting domestically and internationally, the election of F.W. De Klerk in 1989 reflected South Africa’s rejection of apartheid, and turn towards political reform to normalise international relations. According to Etel Solingen, South Korea, Taiwan, Brazil, Argentina, and South Africa, are examples of how internationalisation strengthened domestic liberalising coalitions who advocated anti-nuclear policies, in contrast to North Korea and Iraq, over their inward pro-nuclear opponents. However, should international, regional, or domestic circumstances change, these states might restart their WMD programmes. In searching for the answers posed by Michael Friend, only understanding the game between the systemic, sub-systemic and domestic levels will lead to useful answers for policy makers.
ENDNOTES:

1) I would like to thank Benjamin Miller, David Pervin, and Galia Press-Barnathan for their comments and suggestions.


26) Victor D. Cha, *op. cit*.


34) Andrew Flibbert, *op. cit.*


40) Steven David, *op. cit.*


42) Etel Solingen, *op. cit.*
