

PREVENTING STATE-SPONSORED NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION: LESSONS FROM PAKISTAN APPLICABLE TO IRAN AND NORTH KOREA

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ABSTRACT:

The potential for North Korea or Iran to transfer sensitive nuclear technologies to other countries is a serious risk to the global nonproliferation regime. Assessing that risk requires an understanding of what motivates states to engage in “state-sponsored nuclear proliferation.” The project will develop a typology of motivations to explain why states share nuclear weapon technologies with other states and apply these theories to three case studies of Pakistan’s provision of sensitive nuclear technologies to Iran, Libya, and North Korea. Since the motivations differed in each of these cases, it is important to look at them individually in order to fully understand the range of motivations that can lead governments to provide assistance to other countries’ nuclear weapons programs. Pakistan’s status during the 1980s and 1990s as an unstable, isolated, and sanctioned nation riven by corruption and ruled by an authoritarian regime that felt under siege shares several similarities with contemporary Iran and North Korea. Lessons learned from these historical Pakistani cases will be used to identify the conditions under which Iran and North Korea may decide in the future to provide nuclear weapon technologies to other countries. Finally, this project will offer policy recommendations for preventing these states from engaging in state-sponsored nuclear proliferation.

Research in Progress describes ongoing PASCC research. For more information please contact INSS@usafa.edu.