



**OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS ON THE SECURITY CONCERNS DURING  
THE COLD WAR**

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**ABSTRACT**

After World War II (1939-1945) a bipolar world order emerged under the leaderships of the United States and the Soviet Union. The postwar period was later called as the Cold War Era that witnessed a great tension between the Western and Eastern blocs. Both sides abstained from a direct war and generally competed in such fields as military, political, economic, cultural, and so on. Although avoiding from military interventions was the main principle, the continuous hostility between two nuclear superpowers inevitably forced them to consider military options. In this point, security question became a vital subject between the United States and the Soviet Union, and deeply influenced the shaping of characteristics of two powers' relations. It was foreseen that the security concerns based on nuclear threat would come to an end with the collapse of the Soviet Union and with the end of the Cold War. However, the expansion of NATO to the Eastern Europe and Baltic region, and possibility of new member's admission to NATO, including Ukraine, in one hand, Russia's efforts to be a superpower in the world politics, on the other hand, revealed that the security concerns have not completely disappeared with the end of the Cold War. Thus, revisiting some discussions on the security concerns during the Cold War, and bringing them to the attention of academic world would be stimulating. This article will focus on some fundamental discussions on the security concerns during the Cold War. Firstly, the formation of the US national security understanding, and the role of National Security Council Report 68 (NSC-68) in shaping of the US security concept during the Cold War will be explained. Secondly, the role of nuclear deterrence in the establishment of national security concept will be discussed. Finally, the concept of 'security dilemma' and the opinions of Robert Jervis on security dilemma will be evaluated.

**Keywords:** National Security, Deterrence, Cold War, Nuclear Threat, Security Dilemma

**SOĞUK SAVAŞ DÖNEMİ GÜVENLİK KAYGILARI ÜZERİNE GÖZLEMLER VE TARTIŞMALAR**

**ÖZ**

İkinci Dünya Savaşı (1939-1945) sonrasında Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyetler Birliği liderliğinde iki kutuplu bir dünya düzeni ortaya çıktı. ABD liderliğindeki Batı Bloku ve SSCB liderliğindeki Doğu Bloku arasındaki düşmanca ilişkiler Soğuk Savaş olarak tanımlandı. İki tarafın direkt askeri çatışmadan kaçındığı bu dönemde askeri, siyasi, ekonomik, kültürel vb. alanlarda büyük bir rekabet yaşandı. Her ne kadar sıcak çatışmadan uzak durmak temel prensip olsa da nükleer silahlara sahip iki büyük gücün düşmanlığı askeri seçeneklerin her zaman masada olmasını kaçınılmaz hale getirdi. Bu noktada güvenlik sorunu hem ABD hem de SSCB için hayati bir konu haline geldi ve Soğuk Savaş döneminde devletler arası ilişkilerin karakterinin şekillenmesinde etkili oldu. SSCB'nin dağılması ve Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesiyle nükleer tehdit temelli güvenlik kaygılarının sona ereceği öngörülüyordu. Ancak bir yanda NATO'nun Doğu Avrupa ve Baltık bölgesindeki genişlemesi ve Ukrayna dahil yeni ülkelerin katılma olasılığı diğer tarafta Rusya Federasyonu'nun dünya siyasetinde yeniden süper güç olma çabaları güvenlik sorunlarının Soğuk Savaş ile kapanmadığını gösterdi. Bu çerçevede, Soğuk Savaş dönemine dair bazı konuların akademik

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camianın dikkatine yeniden sunulması faydalı olacaktır. Bu makale Soğuk Savaş döneminde güvenlik sorununa dair bazı temel tartışmaları ele alacaktır. Öncelikle, ABD'nin Soğuk Savaş dönemi ulusal güvenlik anlayışının şekillenme süreci ve bu süreçte hazırlanan *National Security Council Report 68*'in (NSC-68) önemi açıklanacaktır. Sonrasında nükleer caydırıcılık kavramı ve bunun Soğuk Savaş döneminde ulusal güvenliğin sağlanmasındaki rolü tartışılacaktır. Son olarak da "güvenlik ikilemi" kavramı üzerinde durulacaktır. Bu çerçevede, özellikle Robert Jervis'in güvenlik ikilemine dair görüşleri değerlendirilecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ulusal Güvenlik, Caydırıcılık, Soğuk Savaş, Nükleer Tehdit, Güvenlik İkilemi.

### Introduction

The pursuit of security has always been an objective for states throughout the history. However, it had rarely been so important issue before the Cold War. Military, political, economic, and social dynamics of the Cold War period made the security question an important issue. Leadingly the United States and Soviet Union, and many other states, had to reorganize their security policies according to the changing conditions and they had to develop new understanding during the Cold War.

After the World War II, the world was mainly divided into two blocks as Western and Eastern, which were led by the United States and Soviet Union. The differences between the sides were extremely huge and the protection of interests as well as security was vital. Especially the invention and use of atomic bomb by the United States in 1945 clearly revealed that the new era would witness completely different developments. Thus, a security policy based on the nuclear weapons and deterrence was developed by the superpowers.

The concept of national security was a key term for the United States in the policy making processes. The United States had stood as the greatest power in the world before the World War II and this power was presumably unchallenged. However, the war deeply devastated all established structures and the world had to be reshaped thereafter. The Soviet Union, especially, emerged as a superpower having politically, economically, and ideologically distinct values, or better to say as an antithesis of the United States. Thus, the United States had to make a great effort to strengthen its position. And all these developments were tied to the national security perceptions of the United States.

### 1. Emergence of the US National Security Strategy in the Cold War

Kissinger once stressed that "no statesmen, except perhaps Churchill, gave any attention to what would happen after the war" and he continued that Americans "were determined that we were going to base the postwar period on good faith and getting along with everybody" (Leffler, 1984: 346). It is not possible to measure how much the Americans had 'good faith' during the war about the postwar, but it is certain that reality of the postwar was very far from being a period of 'good faith'. As soon as the war ended, the United States began to make policies to strengthen its position and naturally to weaken the Soviet Union.

Two key elements which shaped the US national security interests were strategic and economic considerations. In the second half of the 1940s, the United

States seemed to have an advantageous position thanks to its technological superiority, especially nuclear monopoly, and strong economy. Moreover, the postwar gains of the United States were seemingly satisfactory. According to the US strategists, Western Hemisphere including Latin America and Western Europe had to remain within the American sphere of influence. Moreover, the United States had to maintain some strategic bases in different parts of the world, namely in Asia, Near and Middle East, and in Far East (Leffler, 1984: 348).

The US objectives were ambitious, and they required great political, military, and economic efforts to accomplish. First, the United States had to make careful calculations about the Soviet Union for conducting new policies. George F. Kennan, a State Department bureaucrat, and the US embassy to Moscow for a while, played a critical role in the determination of the first grand-design policies against the Soviet Union. His 'Long Telegram' from Moscow in 1946 and his article 'The Sources of Soviet Conduct' in 1947 were very significant for crystallization of the US policies. Kennan argued that the Soviet regime had strong 'expansionist ideals' and it had to be 'contained' in the areas of 'vital strategic importance' to the United States. Kennan stated his thoughts as follows:<sup>1</sup>

The main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies... Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the Western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy, but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence (Kennan, 1947: 575-76).

Kennan also served as the head of the State Department's policy planning staff from April 1947 to December 1949. Thus, his views became influential in a certain extent in the shaping of the US foreign policy during the early phase of the Cold War. However, there were some problems with the containment policy that he suggested. The financial cost of such a policy was extremely high and even beyond the economic power of the United States. Kennan argued that the containment would be achieved if the Soviet Union could be excluded from four strategic industrial regions in the world, namely the United States, the United Kingdom, the Rhine Valley, and Japan (Gaddis, 1981: 80).

Beginning with 1949, the US national security policy underwent very deep changes in the 1950s under the Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who did not consider the Soviet threat as only political one. Some significant developments like Berlin blockade which began in 1948, and communist victory in China in 1949 increased the suspicions about the Soviet intentions (Gaddis, 2005: 88). The creation of the German Democratic Republic on October 7, 1949 clearly demonstrated that the Soviets had no intention to accept a unified Germany. These events were accompanied by some other political developments. Moreover, the national security understanding of the United States was strongly challenged by the Soviet nuclear testing. President Truman announced on September 23, 1949, an US intelligence

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<sup>1</sup> The article is also called as X Article because it was published under pseudonym "X".

which reported an atomic explosion in the Soviet Union. It meant that “after development of a bomber with sufficient range and payload the Soviets would for the first time be able to threaten the continental United States with nuclear destruction...this marked a sharp reduction in basic security” (Wells, 1979: 117).

Increasing Soviet fear reflected itself with the issue of National Security Council Report 68 (NSC-68) in 1950. NSC-68 was written by the Secretary of State's Policy Planning Department led by Paul Nitze and issued on 14 April 1950. In the beginning, there were some reservations about the document for it required great amount of military expenditure and favored military actions rather than political and other means. Kennan also stood on the side of critics. President Harry Truman had seemingly some hesitations about the document and did not sign it immediately. However, the outbreak of the Korean War changed the parameters and Truman officially signed NSC-68 on September 30, 1950. The document deeply changed and shaped the US national security dynamics for the next 25 years until it was declassified in 1975.<sup>2</sup>

In NSC-68, it was asserted that “the fundamental purpose is to assure the integrity and vitality of our free society which is founded on the dignity and worth of the individual”, and it continued that “our determination to create conditions under which our free and democratic system can live and prosper” (NSC-68, 1975: 54). To strengthen the free world, NSC-68 suggested a comprehensive foreign economic policy that can support the allies of the United States. Some of the suggestions were as follows: a recovery program should be introduced for Western Europe; grants and loans should be provided to such countries as Japan, Philippines, and Korea; military assistance should be offered such countries as Greece and Turkey (NSC-68, 1975: 75).

In terms of military aspects, NSC-68 considered military capacity of the United States and its allies as insufficient. It stated that “the actual and potential capabilities of the United States, given a continuation of current and projected programs, will become less and less effective as a war deterrent” (NSC-68, 1975: 92). The military readiness of the United States, according to NSC-68, had to be improved to prevent the Soviet Union from waging a war, and to reverse unfavorable trends in international relations. Thus, it was argued that “a building up of the military capabilities of the United States and free world is a precondition to the achievement of the objectives outlined in this report and to the protection of the United States against disaster” (NSC-68, 1975: 92).

NSC-68 was sometimes criticized for unnecessarily escalating the Cold War. NSC-68 was heralding a considerable change in American foreign policy, and it introduced a detailed strategy of containment which was followed by the US administrations. Gaddis (1981: 80-81) urged that there were “two distinct styles of containment in the post-war era: symmetrical and asymmetrical response...George Kennan's original containment strategy was an example of asymmetrical response...Washington shifted, with NSC-68, to symmetrical response”. Kennan, as the theoretician of the containment, criticized the document due to several reasons. He

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<sup>2</sup> After its declassification the NSC-68 was published in various sources. In this article, the one which is published as a full document in the May-June 1975 issue of *Naval War College Review* has been used. Some annexes of the NSC-68 were declassified later. To visit annexes, see *Newly Declassified Annexes of NSC-68* in the Winter-Spring 1999 issue of *SAIS Review*.

believed that “balance of power would be maintained and unfriendly regimes, despite their undesirability, were not big threat to global stability so long as they lacked means of manifesting their hostility” (Gaddis, 2005: 89). However, NSC-68 assumed a different position as follow: “any substantial further extension of the area under the domination of the Kremlin would raise the possibility that no coalition adequate to confront the Kremlin with greater strength could be assembled” (Gaddis, 2005: 89).

When NSC-68 and successive National Security Council reports considered, it can be argued that the United States aimed to remove its national security concerns by adopting grand design policies in the strategic parts of the world. The US strategic plans included the military and economic aids to its allies; the establishment of military bases in NATO countries; social and psychological propaganda; the investment in internal and international intelligence services; support of anti-Soviet aspirations in all over the world etc. All these activities were obviously costly and required too many expenditures. For the US administrations, this was considered a price which had to be paid to protect the US national interests and to contain the Soviet Union. In fact, the United States was leading “the free world” which was economically capitalistic, and politically liberal-democratic. However, well-being and security of its allies mattered the United States if they served to its interests. It can be speculated that the US security strategists had seen a great part of the world as a buffer zone between the United States and the Soviet Union. This can also be argued for the Soviet Union.

## **2. National Security Based on Nuclear Deterrence**

The world was introduced with the destructive power of nuclear weapons in 1945 when the United States dropped the atomic bombs to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Sudden and immense effect of the atomic bombs was beyond all conventional weapons of the previous times. Thus, the United States with the nuclear monopoly clinched its position as the greatest power in world, especially against the Soviet Union, its ally during the World War II.

To become a nuclear power and to develop a nuclear strategy were roughly synchronous processes for the United States. Although the existing technology gave an enormous advantage, the nuclear capacity of the United States was still limited in terms of number of nuclear weapons and the capability of using them in the beginning (McDonough, 2005: 812). According to Blackett, as one of the first analyst of nuclear strategy, the Allied aircraft “had dropped nearly 3 million tons of ordinary bombs on the enemy” during the World War II and one atomic bomb used in 1945 had only produced “the same material destruction as 2000 tons of ordinary bombs”. Thus, he insisted, “it is certain that a very large number of atomic bombs would be needed to defeat a great nation by bombing alone...(and) a long-drawn out and bitter struggle over much of Europe and Asia, involving million strong land armies, vast military casualties and widespread civil war would be inevitable” (Howard, 1985: 90).

By making the mentioned statement, Blackett had stressed the defective aspects of the existing US nuclear power against the Soviet Union. It was possible for the United States to remove the defects, but it did not remain as the sole nuclear power for a long time. The Soviet interest to the nuclear technology and to develop an atomic

bomb had started before the first use of atomic bombs by the United States in 1945. After the discovery of nuclear fission in 1938, the Soviet physicists realized the significance of the discovery and followed the scientific developments. There were some important Soviet scientists who had studied at the distinguished research centers in various European countries in the 1920s and 1930s, and they published noteworthy articles on the nuclear technology since 1939. At that time, the Soviet Academy of Sciences became the center of nuclear studies, and the Uranium Commission was created with the directives of the government in 1940. The members of the Commissions were the Academy members, and they were instructed to focus on the uranium problem (Holloway, 1981: 163-167). The studies were continued during the World War II, and the State Defense Committee of the Soviet Union, which had the knowledge of the German and American efforts to develop atomic bomb, approved the atomic bomb project in 1942. The Soviet administration realized the importance of having atomic bombs, and what difference they could make when the United States used the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Then all the available sources to develop an atomic bomb were allocated by the Soviet administration (Holloway, 1981: 171-187).

The Soviet Union produced its first atomic bomb in 1949 and the strategic advantage of the United States became uncertain when its monopoly ended. Thereafter, the United States had to consider nuclear power of the Soviet Union as well as its own power. Thus, the United States needed more complicated policies and calculations. The United States had not had a documented nuclear strategy until the Soviet Union turned to a nuclear power. However, it was sure that the United States needed a new and clearer policy based on nuclear strategy.

Increasing the nuclear capacity, shaping the national security based on a nuclear strategy, and even developing more destructive hydrogen bomb was widely discussed by the US national security makers in 1949 and 1950. Alarmed by the Soviet nuclear capacity the idea of building a hydrogen bomb began to be discussed by the nuclear community. The scientists were generally opposed to build the hydrogen bomb because of political and ethical reasons. Similarly, the Atomic Energy Commission recommended not to develop a hydrogen bomb. However, "members of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy of the Congress and defense leaders, both civilian and military, strongly opposed this recommendation and launched efforts to win Truman's endorsement of immediate development of the hydrogen bomb" (Wells, 1979: 118). On the matter, Senator Brien McMahon, Chairman of the Committee, expressed the thoughts of the hydrogen bomb proponents with a letter to President Truman. In his letter, the Senator asserted that "if we let Russia get the super first, catastrophe becomes all but certain- whereas, if we get it first, there exists a chance of saving ourselves" (Wells, 1979: 118). Truman was influenced by the developments and formed a special committee to prepare a report on the matter. It was submitted to the President on January 31, 1950, and suggested "accelerated development of all forms of atomic weapons, including the hydrogen bomb, and that it proposed a major review of US strategic programs. Truman accepted both recommendations...at the same time without publicity, the President directed the strategic review which would result in NSC 68" (Wells, 1979: 118-119).

Some critical aspects of NSC- 68 had been previously evaluated. In addition to them, one of the most important aspects of the document was that it closely attached the US national security to the nuclear strategy. According to NSC-68, the hydrogen bomb would preserve the American nuclear advantage for the 1950s, but it also stressed that the advantage would not continue for a long time because the Soviet Union could catch the United States in this area in a similar way it had done it before. Thus, nuclear advantage “was therefore best used as a shield, providing cover while a process of conventional rearmament was set in motion” (Freedman, 1986: 738).

NSC-68 seemingly regarded the nuclear power as the greatest defensive and deterrent mean for the US national security and this power began to shape the general frames of the US military policies. In the time of ‘nuclear plenty’ and from “a starting point in which American nuclear superiority was already seen as a vital counter” against the Soviet Union which had advantages in terms of mobilized manpower and geography so “it was going to take an act of unusual self-restraint for any American administration to keep nuclear weapons on the strategic sidelines” (Freedman, 1986: 739).

In 1954, the United State Secretary of State J.F. Dulles announced that the United States had decided to rely on a great capacity of retaliation to deter any aggression. This policy was to be known as ‘massive retaliation’ and interpreted as a threat against the Soviet Union and China in case of any aggression directed by them to the United States. In such retaliation, all political and economic centers could have been targeted by the United States (Freedman, 1986: 740). Dulles had urged that the United States would respond any “provocation and aggression at places and with means of our own choosing”. The doctrine of massive retaliation was based on the increasing fear of the United States at the “perceived imbalance of power in conventional forces, and the corresponding inability to defend itself or prevail in conventional conflicts”. By relying on plenty of nuclear weapons for deterrence, President Eisenhower believed that “conventional forces could be reduced while still maintaining military prestige and power and the capability to defend the Western Bloc” (Freedman, 1986: 740).

The doctrine of mass retaliation would be meaningful if one side was superior to other side in term of nuclear capacity. However, when the ‘balance of terror’ and ‘mutual assured destruction’ occurred, the credibility of mass retaliation was disputable. Balance of terror was an expression to define the capacity of nuclear weapons of the Soviet Union and United States that both sides had enough capacity to destroy adversary. This balance made ‘mutual assured destruction’ possible. In case of any attack, the other side would retaliate and destruct its adversary. It can be said that it was the balance of terror and mutual assured destruction that made the use of nuclear weapons impossible.

Under the existing circumstances, following a national security policy based on nuclear deterrence was difficult for both the United States and the Soviet Union. However, it remained “cornerstone of the national security policies” of not only the superpowers but also of the other nations. According to the nuclear deterrence policy,

“by threatening untoward action against an opponent who initiates conflict, even at great potential cost to oneself, one seeks to deter the opponent from committing aggression in the first place” (Brams and Kilgour, 1986: 645).

The credibility of nuclear deterrence has always remained as questionable. In the simplest sense, a possible attack between the superpowers meant suicide. The nuclear retaliation capacity of each side was strong enough to destroy adversary after a possible attack. Thus, the policy of massive retaliation was highly criticized when it was firstly introduced for being ‘unbelievable’ and consequently ‘lacking credibility.’ Richard Smoke (Kilgour and Zagare, 1991: 306) put it as follow:

The threat was not credible in the face of growing Soviet strategic power. As the Soviet arsenal of atomic bombs, and long-range bombers to deliver them, grew during the mid-to late 1950s, it became less believable that the United State would actually launch an atomic war over some invasion in Asia and elsewhere.

The credibility of any threat was closely linked to its rationality. In the nuclear age, it was highly difficult to impart credibility to wage a war because “adversary knows the inherent irrationality of such threats” (Kilgour and Zagare, 1991: 306-307). Blackett had also stressed the problem of credibility in very early stages of the Cold War. He had stated that “a strategy based on initiating a nuclear strike lacked credibility as a deterrent unless one was ready and willing to absorb the adversary’s subsequent nuclear counter-blow-a problem, incidentally, to which nobody has ever come up with any very convincing answer” (Howard, 1985: 90-91).

When North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded on 4 April 1949 by twelve countries under the US leadership, the security concept of the Western world had to be redefined. NATO ratified a “Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic Area” (DC 6/1) on 1 December, 1949. According to the concept, in case of an attack by the Soviet Union, the American air forces would launch a nuclear attack to the strategic Soviet industrial and military facilities. To use nuclear bombs “*de facto* militarily evacuating Continental Europe and attempting a liberation later...for convenience, this earliest form of North Atlantic Strategy might be called that of immediate strategic nuclear response against a conventional attack” (Heuser, 1995: 42). However, the nuclear concept of NATO was mainly shaped according to the American concerns. Thus, the other important NATO members like the United Kingdom and France were eager to take a greater role in the decision-making processes. In the early 1950s, the British governments tried to persuade the US administration for strengthening bilateral arrangements, and to share responsibility in NATO. Despite the strategic and close relations between two countries, the United States rejected the demands of the United Kingdom. Smith (2011: 1386) claims that the reason for the US attitude was that “in practice, American political and military leaders were no more interested in ceding significant command authority to NATO as a whole than were their British counterparts”.

The allies were not sure about the US policy in case of an attack from the Soviet Union directed to themselves. When the US administration adopted “New Look” policy in 1954, it both “increased reliance on the deterrent effect of its nuclear power



and forced its allies to associate themselves with the nuclear strategy under the NATO umbrella". The commitments of the United States were so high that the credibility of the U.S. nuclear weapons was almost tied to its ability to take risk on its allies' behalf. However, the United States administration quickly altered its strategy and adopted "new New Look" in 1956. The American officials declared that "America's allies could not rely on the United States to invoke nuclear deterrence on their behalf" and Secretary of State Christian Herter informed a Senate Committee in 1959 that "I cannot conceive any president engaging in all-out nuclear war unless were in danger of all-out devastation ourselves" (Freedman, 1986: 744-745).

It was certain that the superpowers had concluded that the use of nuclear weapons against each other meant a total catastrophe for both sides. Thus, they needed to assume and pursue new kind of policies for the future by keeping the balance of terror in mind. Above of all, both sides had to follow more cautious policies and raise their level of tolerance to the other side to avoid a nuclear war. However, the hawkish policy makers in each side being aware of other side's greater level of tolerance could be encouraged to force limits. Thus "mutual fear of the consequences of nuclear war...could have the ironic effect of encouraging higher escalation" (Leng, 2000: 12-13).

Although the United States and the Soviet Union were reluctant to use their nuclear weapons, they did not hesitate to use nuclear threat in case of crisis situations. During the Cold War, Halliday (2010: 4) states that there were around twenty nuclear alert cases between the states. One of the cases was the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 when the possibility of nuclear weapons' exchange was a nearer threat than it was previously perceived. However, both sides were aware of the possible result of the use of nuclear weapons, and the concept of deterrence fulfilled its function. Nuclear weapons served to political goals rather than military goals. The members of the 'nuclear club' including France and Great Britain benefitted from the political advantages of having nuclear weapons. They became the permanent members of the United Nation Security Council, and they had the veto rights. Moreover, the states which possessed the nuclear weapons were more advantageous in the crisis situations as it was shown in the Cuban Missile Crisis (Halliday, 2010: 4).

The changing characteristics of nuclear strategies required new kind of policy makers to make and pursue new policies. If a nuclear war was to be avoided, of course it was not sure, the national interests had to be protected and the further advantages had to be gained under the existing circumstances. Henry Kissinger had stressed the importance of military bureaucracy in the early stage of nuclear age. Kissinger asserted that "the flexibility and self-reliance of an American officer-corps drawn from a society in which individual initiative has traditionally been encouraged with the rigidity of Soviet military organization". However, this analysis was regarded by Blackett as a 'plain poppycock' by reminding "the British personal and technical superiority before the World War I" and outcome of the war (Howard, 1985: 91).

Despite some crisis situations during the Cold War, any nuclear weapons were not luckily used neither deliberately nor accidentally. They remained as the means of

deterrence throughout the Cold War. The retaliation capacity of both sides prevented a possible use of nuclear bombs. In case of a crisis, the powers had to negotiate and reconcile via diplomatic ways. There were many cases that the diplomatic efforts were not enough to remove differences. However, the powers avoided from involving a direct war under such circumstances. If they had involved in a direct war, this could have increased the risk of a nuclear exchange. There were attempts to stop the nuclear proliferation during the Cold War, and to reduce the nuclear weapons in the post-Cold War Era. However, despite some reductions, the nuclear countries had no intention to completely cede their weapons, which still serve to their deterrence capacity, and will seemingly continue to serve in the future.

### 3. The Security Dilemma and the Cold War

Some scholars tried to explain and theorize the security question of the Cold War with different theoretical models. 'Security dilemma' was one of the models that was first termed by John H. Herz in his article *Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma* (1950) and his book *Political Realism and Political Idealism* (1951). Although Herz developed his theory based on the previous historical developments and did not specifically apply his theory to the Cold War period he still believed that the existing situation was a security dilemma and stated that "the heartbreaking plight in which a bipolarized and atom bomb-blessed world finds itself today is but the extreme manifestation of a dilemma with which human societies have had to grapple since the dawn of history" (Herz, 1950: 157).

Robert Jervis became the leading applicant of the theory with his article *Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma* (1978). Jervis (2001: 36) defined 'the core argument' of the security dilemma as follows: "...in the absence of a supranational authority that can enforce binding agreements, many of steps pursued by states to bolster their security have the effect –often unintended and unforeseen- of making other states less secure". Here Jervis also claims that the international environment has "the anarchic nature' that imposes 'constraints on states' behavior'.

To strengthen the theory, Jervis developed the 'spiral model' and two variables: the offense-defense balance and the offense-defense differentiation. The spiral model focuses on the uncertain nature of the states' motivations. This means that the states cannot make sure whether "other states are simply security seekers or whether they have more aggressive motivation" (Kydd, 1997: 371). Since a state cannot make sure about the other state's intention it will probably assume any action of its adversary as offensive and take precautions. This will again cause the other state to respond in a similar way. Thus, the spiral model suggests a repeating action-reaction chain.

When we turn to variables, the offense-defense balance focuses on the cost-benefit calculations. Jervis (1978: 187-88) asks the following question: "Does the state have to spend more or less than one dollar on defense forces to offset each dollar spent by the other side on forces that could be used to attack?" Jervis asserts that the severity of the security dilemma decreases if advantage on the offense-defense balance turns to on the behalf of defense. Thus, the forces of a status quo power will try to increase its security rather than trying to decrease the adversary's security. However, if offense has the advantage, it will be impossible for the states to enjoy "high

levels of security simultaneously” so arms races will accelerate because “when one country adds forces, its adversary will have to make a larger addition to restore its ability to defend” (Glaser, 1997: 185-86).

The second variable suggested by Jervis is the offense-defense differentiation. This variable focuses on whether “weapons and policies that protect the state also provide the capability of attack” (Jervis, 1978: 199). Accordingly, if a state deploys weapons to only protect its territory it does not reduce adversary’s ability to defend itself. Jervis (1978: 214) believed that if the offensive and defensive weapons and policies can be differentiated from each other many misperceptions can be prevented.

Jervis had believed that the Cold War resulted from the security dilemma between the United States and Soviet Union, and he applied his theoretical models to understand the Cold War. He urged that after the World War II, both the United States and Soviet Union desired to maintain their gains. Thus, their primary goal was to keep security, or status quo. The United States was especially insistent on maintaining stability in Western Europe. Although the Soviet invasion was not considered a real threat in the beginning it was thought that economic, political, and social instability may eventually cause the rise of communism in Western Europe. However, increasing Soviet power and the Korean War shifted perceptions about the Soviet threat, which was now a real and close one.

The Soviet Union, on the other hand, had its own security calculations. Stalin aimed to expand the Soviet influence in North Iran, Turkey, and Korea. Jervis (1978: 214) evaluated the Soviet intentions as a defensive measure in his early interpretations. He thought that the Soviet Union like the United States sought the ways of improving its security by controlling some strategically critical regions. According to the security dilemma model, all these actions require to be called as defensive rather than offensive. Jervis (1978: 214) stressed the importance of negotiation and collaboration between the states to overcome misperceptions. If the sides believed in the advantages of defense and the maintenance of status quo there would be less security problems.

Although Jervis maintained his views on the validity of the security dilemma model, he later drastically changed his approach of defining the Cold War as a security dilemma. The main reason behind the change was the new archival documents which revealed new evidence about the intentions of the superpowers. In his article, *Was the Cold War a Security Dilemma?*, he gives examples from some secret documents which clearly reveals that both the Soviet Union and United States did not have only the defensive considerations but also they tried to expand their powers while reducing the adversary’s power. From the Soviet point of view, the ideological factors were very important. The Soviet Union did not accept the concept of ‘socialism in one country’ and believed that a transition for all nations from capitalism to socialism would be possible. And the Soviet Union regarded the support of all socialist movements in all over the world as its universalistic responsibility (Jervis, 2001: 48-52).

Although the United States was satisfied with the postwar conditions it did not consider the status quo sustainable. According to the United States, the reduction of

the Soviet Union would be the sole realistic objective. Moreover, the United States, likewise the Soviet Union's conception, did not believe in the viability of 'capitalism in one country', and the Soviet Union was regarded as a great danger for all American economic and political interests (Jervis, 2001: 52-55). Although Jervis (2001: 58) still believed that there were many elements of the security dilemma during the Cold War, he concluded that "the root of conflict at best was a clash of social systems. Mutual security in these circumstances was a goal that cannot be attained".

The early and late analysis of Jervis on the security question and security dilemma show that the Cold War security concerns were resulted from deep differences between two great powers. The United States and the Soviet Union were the leaders of two irreconcilable blocks. There was no ground to compromise so long as they defended their ideologies. Although all kinds of diplomatic efforts or negotiations for disarmament brought a *détente* between the powers, the fundamental differences could not be removed. Both powers aimed to strengthen their position in the expense of their adversaries. The Cold War did not end because of diplomatic efforts or good will. It only ended, as Jervis (2001: 60) stressed, with the fundamental changes in the political system of the Soviet Union.

### **Conclusion**

A bipolar world order based on the rivalry of two great powers emerged during the Cold War Era after the World War II. The Western Bloc under the US leadership defended the ideology of liberal democracy, on the other hand, the Eastern Bloc and Soviet Union defended socialism. Both sides aimed to expand their spheres of hegemony and they regarded each other as an existential threat. The clashing interest of adversaries brought about the continuous security concerns. With NSC-68, which was invoked in 1950, the United States accepted a new national security understanding. The report urged that the survival and progress of "free and democratic system" was the fundamental aspect of national security, and the Soviet Union was defined as the arch enemy of the system. Likewise, the Soviet Union aimed to expand its political system as much as possible in different regions of world. These clashing interests of two adversaries caused the rise of so-called Cold War between two blocks.

The Cold War Era was marked by the serious security concerns. The United States had the nuclear monopoly when the World War II ended in 1945. However, the Soviet Union joined to the nuclear club in a short while and the United States had to make new security calculations. The existence of two nuclear powers that had a capacity of mass destruction of the other side, brought about a balance of terror. The use of nuclear weapons was the last resort because of each of the powers' retaliation capacity. The balance of terror reduced the possibility of using nuclear weapons, but the tension was always high and security concerns incited the mutual armament. In this point, a security dilemma was observed. Accordingly, the states assumed a more aggressive military and political stand to overcome their security concerns. Aggression of one side naturally caused the rise of mistrust and motivated the other side for further armament. This unceasing mistrust and rivalry cycle brought about huge number of military expenditures. However, as it was later reconsidered by Jervis, the cycle of mistrust or armament was not based on only defensive considerations. Both the United

States and the Soviet Union had two irreconcilable political systems, and they aimed to expand their ideologies in the expense of the other. This understanding also provoked the political and military rivalries.

In the early phase of the Cold War, in 1951, George F. Kennan wrote a noteworthy article about the Russian future and envisaged the end of Soviet regime in Russia<sup>3</sup>. In the article, Kennan (1990: 157-159) firstly sought an answer to the question of “what sort of Russia would we like to see before us, as our partner in the world community?” From the American perspective, a Russia which is economically capitalistic and politically liberal-democratic would be desired. He stressed that Russia would transform in future, and leave the Bolshevik ideology, but these had to be according to Russia’s historical processes and internal dynamics. Kennan (1990: 160) continued that “there is great good in the Russian national character, and the realities of that country scream out today for a form of administration more considerate of that good...Give them time; let them be Russians; let them work out their internal problems in their own manner”. According to him, the Iron Curtain that he described as an anachronic system, would be lifted from the world, and Russians, who had so much to give to the world and so much to receive from the world, would escape from the existing political system that insult them by threatening them as children (Kennan, 1990: 162).

As Kennan envisaged the Soviet Union collapsed and the world order has deeply changed in the 1990s. Thus, the Cold War and the bipolar world order has come to an end. The military, political and economic superiority of the Western Bloc under the US leadership seemed unchallenged in the beginning. Russia had to accept a new stand in her relations with the West, but the nature of the relations was not certain. In the 1990s, Russia made efforts to overcome the problems of post-Soviet era. On the other hand, NATO followed a policy of expansion in the regions which were in the Soviet sphere of influence before the collapse, namely Eastern Europe and the Baltic region. Russia, which was in a political and economic transformation in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century under the rule of Vladimir Putin, was alarmed by this expansion. The Western influence near her borders was regarded as a national security problem by Russia. Along with some other pretexts, the NATO expansion in its borders was one of the reasons for the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022. When these lines are written the war is continuing, and the outcomes are still uncertain. However, the increasing hostility between the West and Russia, and strongly alienation of Russia from the Western world can be seen the beginning of a new cold war era. One cannot be sure whether the differences will increase, or Russia will experience another transformation and will reconcile with the Western world. However, for a better understanding of contemporary discussions, it would be helpful to visit the security questions of the Cold War Era.

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<sup>3</sup> Kennan’s article of “America and the Russian Future” was firstly published in the April 1951 issue of Foreign Affairs. Some excerpts of the article were republished in the Spring 1990 issue of Foreign Affairs.

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