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Elisabeth Roehrlich. "The Cold War, the developing world, and the creation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), 1953–1957." *Cold War History* 16:2 (May 2016): 195-212. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2015.1129607>.

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When the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was created sixty years ago, it was presented as a development agency turning nuclear swords into ploughshares. A small group of nuclear 'haves' negotiated the IAEA Statute between 1953 and 1957, securing privileged positions for themselves. Less-developed states were largely ignored during this process. Unsurprisingly, nuclear haves (states with advanced nuclear infrastructure and resources) and have-nots (everyone else) held different preferences about the main purpose of the IAEA: technology diffusion or nonproliferation.

Elisabeth Roehrlich's rich and impressively researched article argues that, despite these origins, the conventional wisdom – that the IAEA was created as a Cold War instrument for the superpowers - is incomplete. Her analysis sheds new light on how states first came to define the difference between nuclear haves and have-nots in the early nuclear age. The emergence of rival blocs between uranium exporters and prospective recipients of nuclear assistance in the global south led these states to argue about who among them should be counted as nuclear haves, rather than protest the basic distinction between haves and have-nots. More broadly, Roehrlich argues that the origins of the IAEA can tell us something novel about the Cold War.

The conventional view of the origins of the IAEA can be summarized as follows: the IAEA, and nuclear technology transfers more broadly, were conceived and utilized as political currency by the Cold War superpowers. At the same time, recent research demonstrates that the creation of the IAEA became an important channel for superpower cooperation in the area of international security at a tense moment in the Cold War.¹

Roehrlich does not challenge the core tenets of these arguments, but adds important nuance to them by placing the IAEA's creation in the context of the changing 'developing world', to use the parlance of the time. In the first part of the article she argues that the U.S. and USSR's policies with regards to the IAEA were shaped by their desire to provide nuclear assistance to friends and allies, particularly as new opportunities for influence opened up following decolonization. As with other forms of assistance during the Cold War, their motives were mixed, reflecting a combination of strategic interests, commercial interests, and a desire to "normalize" and share the benefits of peaceful nuclear technology with less developed economies.²

Roehrlich broadens the analytical lens by arguing that the negotiation of the IAEA was shaped by three momentous shifts: improving superpower relations, decolonization, and the growing influence of the global south in the United Nations. This, she contends, led developing states to contend that the IAEA "should not exacerbate global inequalities, practice discrimination, or institutionalize 'atomic colonialism'" (195).

At this time, states in the global south were becoming a more powerful force in the United Nations. Furthermore, developing states were in the majority at the special 1956 UN conference presenting the IAEA Statute (210). For many of these states, Roehrlich argues, "the creation of the IAEA was a litmus test for their new status in international relations" (210).

It is therefore striking that the IAEA was created as an agency that distinguishes between nuclear haves and have-nots, initially placing unequal privileges and burdens (notably safeguards, which would only apply to states receiving assistance) on these two categories of member states. Many countries, not just in the developing world, feared that the new agency would perpetuate the privileged position held by a small number of states, including many (current and former) colonial powers. Still, the nuclear have-nots accepted this arrangement.

If we consider the political science literature on fairness and international agreements, the puzzle deepens further. States rarely agree to obviously discriminatory regimes, particularly in the field of security and arms control. As Cecilia Albin and others have shown, a particularly sensitive issue is status: are prospective member states treated as equals under the terms of the treaty they are negotiating?³ This begs the question:

¹ David Holloway, "The Soviet Union and the Creation of the International Atomic Energy Agency," *Cold War History* 16:2 (2016), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2015.1124265>.

² See, for example, Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Holloway "The Soviet Union and the creation of the International Atomic Energy Agency".

³ Cecilia Albin and Daniel Druckman, "Bargaining over weapons: justice and effectiveness in arms control negotiations," *International Negotiation* 19:3 (2014): 426-458.

why was the creation of the IAEA different, in the sense that states accepted two categories of members with unequal rights and privileges?

The designation of someone, or something, as nuclear has been contested throughout the nuclear age.⁴ As Gabrielle Hecht argues, being counted as a nuclear power matters, not just for nuclear weapons states but also for uranium producing states. Whereas Hecht masterfully explores the consequences of this designation, Roehrlich's analysis tackles this important issue from another angle, by analyzing how states in the global south attempted to influence this definition at the outset of the nuclear age.

Roehrlich makes nuanced arguments about the impact that states from the developing world had on the creation of the IAEA. First, the 1954-1955 rebranding of the IAEA provided the developing world with the argument, in principle, that they ought to have a bigger voice in the creation of the Agency. Second, while these states largely failed to directly influence the IAEA Statute negotiations, India ensured that the principle of geographical representation was introduced in the IAEA's Board of Governors as a means of balancing the privileged position of the nuclear haves.

While pointing out these achievements, Roehrlich also presents several reasons why the global south was not a more effective negotiator.

First, she highlights the emergence of rival blocs among states in the global south, in contrast to the close working relationship that emerged between the superpowers. Specifically, India, and supporting states, protested (in vain) that uranium producers (South Africa, Australia, Brazil, Belgium and Portugal) should not be counted as advanced nuclear states (203, 206). This caused erosion in the potential alliance that could have formed among states in the global south. For example, Brazil aligned with the uranium producers, letting privilege trump solidarity with states in the developing world (206).

Second, Roehrlich shows that most nuclear have-nots did not protest this distinction, for various reasons, and that those that tried soon backed down. Many of the have-nots were states that had no demonstrated interest in nuclear technology. They may have believed that they had little to lose from accepting that the nuclear haves would largely control the IAEA. Some states tried to protest, but pulled back. Pakistan and the Philippines argued that the least developed states ought to be represented in the Statute negotiations, but ended up withdrawing their proposal (202).

The IAEA is a crucial international institution, and a pillar of the global nonproliferation regime. Still, it has received limited attention from scholars.⁵ This article provides a rich account of the creation of the IAEA,

⁴ Gabrielle Hecht, *Being nuclear: Africans and the Global Uranium Trade* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012).

⁵ With the exception of Lawrence Scheinman, *The International Atomic Energy Agency and World Nuclear Order* (London: Routledge, 2016); David Fischer, *History of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The First Forty Years* (Vienna: International Atomic Energy Agency, 1997), and Robert L. Brown and Jeffrey M. Kaplow, "Talking Peace, Making Weapons: IAEA Technical Cooperation and Nuclear Proliferation." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58:3 (2014), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002713509052>.

bringing multiple perspectives into the analysis. One of the article's biggest contributions is to shed more light on the varied perspectives, preferences, and strategies of the nuclear have-nots in the early nuclear age.

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