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**Short Paper 2**

The Prisoner’s Dilemma is a theory that tries to explain the thought processes of 2 or more “sides” who are locked in a stalemate of gain versus loss versus status quo. In most scenarios, Side A and Side B have an agenda against each other, and, while not favorable to either side, there is a certain peace between them. The dilemma is that should one side be aggressive to the other, the former would benefit greatly while the latter would be punished. However, the side that is being aggressed has a window where they can be aggressive to the aggressor, causing both sides to be punished from where the status quo was, but not as much as if the had not acted.

The Prisoner’s Dilemma comes to a sort of economic game of chicken. You need to gauge your possibility for risk and reward. If you were the leader of Side A, you could help yourself be it with money, power, etc, if you attacked Side B and they did nothing. However, if Side B retaliates, the conditions for both sides go down but still remain even. If you contented yourself with the norm and Side B went on the offensive, your side would greatly hurt. You have to outthink what your opponent would do and determine the appropriate course of action.

Probably the most notable example of the Prisoner’s Dilemma in history is the Cold War, specifically the Cuban Missile Crisis. The US and the USSR were the 2 superpowers in the world, both nuclearly armed to the teeth. They had different political ideologies, one capitalist, the other communist, and they thought themselves the ideal society. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, the USSR were exporting missiles to their ally, Cuba. Cuba, however, is in close proximity to the US, within striking distance without time to retaliate. The US issued an ultimatum saying that if the missiles passed the embargo line, the US would launch a preemptive strike against the USSR. In the end, the ship did not cross, and nuclear war was averted.

I would offer one more example of a Prisoner’s Dilemma. The major video game console makers, Sony, Microsoft, and Nintendo, are locked in a battle of sales. Each side wants to make the most profit while having the most loyal fanbase. Whenever the years get on, everyone expects a new game console. Each side knows that if they are the first to release, they catch the “next-gen” buzz while the other 2 try to catch up. However, if they release something before it’s ready, they run the risk of having a buggy system that people will not enjoy or buy. If no one is buying, the company’s profits and reputation will suffer. If they catch the other companies off guard, they are expected to release their own systems shortly after, which might not be ready. however, if the initial console is weak and the subsequent consoles are strong, that translates into profits and good public relations for the latter company.

I would argue that the Prisoner’s Dilemma is still very much relevant in today’s society. While the catastrophic war disasters are not done anymore, other battles are fought, whether they be by individuals, political campaigns, companies, or countries. People are reactionary but will always try to act in their best interests, but the knee-jerk reaction will sometimes cause more harm for you than anything. As long as there are 2 factions against each other, I think the Prisoner’s Dilemma will always be on the table.