CHAPTER-III

INDIA’S NUCLEAR POLICY UNDER SINGLE PARTY GOVERNMENTS

The atomic Bomb has deadened the finest feeling that has sustained mankind for ages. There used to be so-called laws of war which made it tolerable. Now we know the naked truth. War knows no law except that of might... The moral to be ultimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter bombs even as violence cannot be, by counter violence. Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence.

Mahatma Gandhi

INTRODUCTION

The Congress party ruled the country for nearly four decades with one or two breaks without support of any other allies or constituents, so it is also known as single party rule or government. During, this particular period no other party or group of parties was able to win majority seats in Lok Sabha to stake claim for the formation of the government. The Congress party adhered to the principles of non-violence and class harmony as preached by Mahatma Gandhi. This strong foundation was furthered by Jawaharlal Nehru when he gave the principles of Panchsheel and Non-Alignment. These values also became basis of all the developmental plans framed by the Indian Government in the initial years after independence. Nuclear policy like other national policies had the imprints of the doctrine of Non-Violence and Panchsheel at its outset. “Nehru’s policy of non-alignment called for judging international issues on their merit while taking into account India’s national interest. Non-alignment for Nehru did not mean neutrality.”

India always pursued the objective of peaceful usage of nuclear energy and promoted the cause of disarmament and proliferation. Murthy has illustrated five dimensions on which India’s nuclear policy was based. These are:

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1. The developing world has the right to nuclear energy. Advanced technology should be made available with reasonable safeguards;
2. Nuclear energy should be used for economic development and welfare of mankind;
3. Proliferation networks must be neutralized. Merely promising to move in this direction is not sufficient;
4. Nuclear security is as important as safety of nuclear plants. India is deeply concerned about the dangers of nuclear explosives and fissile material as well as technical know-how falling into the hands of non-state actors and desires effective measures to be taken; and
5. In the long term, the world should be free from nuclear weapons.

These dimensions were embedded in India’s nuclear programme of using the nuclear energy in civil and peaceful purposes and condemning its military or weapon usage. The official nuclear policy of India was based on the “peaceful-purposes-only approach.” According to which, “the ultimate rationale of Indian nuclearization was social development for which atomic energy was the solution. Indian military capabilities were developed gradually and almost inevitably…” However, India’s policy makers and intelligentsia were aware of the fact that if the major powers of the world continue to have the atomic weapons, their access would become mandatory for developing nations as well, hence, they kept the nuclear option open. Keeping in mind that there are no permanent friends and foes in international relations, therefore, every country need to be militarily competent in order to overcome all sorts of problems. Hence, it can be argued that,

India’s emergence as a true nuclear weapon power will more likely be a slow, gradual, and distinctive process, thanks to a number of factors-including India’s traditional and highly publicized commitment to disarmament; its continuing economic and developmental constraints; its susceptibility to pressures emanating both from existing nuclear weapons both from existing nuclear weapon states and from the global non-proliferation regime in general.

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While tracing the reasons for India’s stance of going for the nuclear explosions, the foremost cause which emerges out is the entry of China into the nuclear club. In 1964, when China conducted its nuclear explosion, a big debate arose in India regarding the security and nuclear issues. A number of seminars and conferences were held on this issue and a general public opinion was sought. In one of the seminars organised by the Indian Parliamentary and Scientific Committee, it was opined that, “India not only can, but must go nuclear.” Consensus was also made on the point that India’s nuclear step was “scientifically feasible, politically highly desirable, strategically inescapable and economically not only sustainable but actually advantageous.” After this event it took ten years for India to finally go for nuclear explosion. The world was scandalized by India’s nuclear explosion as none of the big powers was able to make out beforehand that India was working on such project. India’s nuclear explosion was named as Peaceful Nuclear Explosion as according to the official statement, it was only for peaceful purposes of utilizing the nuclear energy in civilian and development reasons. Although, the world especially the big powers officially never accepted India’s nuclear capability at that time and did not include India in nuclear club. On the other hand, these developed nations imposed a number of political and economic bans on India prohibiting the further development of India in this sphere. During this period a number of regimes evolved in the nuclear field and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was amongst the foremost. In spite of external pressures imposed from above India continued to pursue its nuclear policy though with ups and downs. The single party governments were very clear and straightforward with the nuclear issue. These governments are said to be standing on the fences of both sides of weaponisation as well as disarmament, not pursuing directly for weapon option but at the same time keeping the option open.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF INDIA’S NUCLEAR POLICY

Political Scientist Scott Sagan has discussed the reasons which make the states to pursue nuclear option. He in his work, Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons

6 Ibid.
discussed three theoretical frameworks or models namely “the security model”, “the domestic politics model”, and “the norms model”. These models try to analyze the basic reasons, which propel the States to build or refrain from making nuclear weapons. “The security model”, maintains that states make nuclear weapons to increase national security against foreign threats, especially nuclear threats. “The domestic politics model”, envisages nuclear weapons as political tools used to advance parochial domestic and bureaucratic interests. “The norms model”, holds that nuclear weapons decisions are made because weapons acquisition, or restraint in weapons development, provides an important normative symbol of a state’s modernity and identity.7

As far as India is concerned, a mix of the security model and the domestic politics model justifies the making of its nuclear bomb. After China went nuclear in 1964, it was expected for India to follow the suit as per the security model and it did. So much so that reacting to China’s Nuclear Bomb in 1964, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee (who later became Prime Minister of India) said, “…answer to an Atomic Bomb is an Atomic Bomb, nothing else.”8 Mr. Vajpayee proved his statement by the Pokhran II nuclear explosion in 1998.

Weixing Hu, a Chinese scholar, writing in Journal of Chinese Political Science mentions, that in the Indian case, the ‘national security model’ seems to be the most useful in explaining the bomb motivation. India suffered a humiliating defeat in the 1962 border war with China, which taught New Delhi that it must deal with Beijing through strength. When China tested its first bomb in 1964 as a response to the superpower nuclear threat, the testing reverberated in India. New Delhi felt compelled to respond to the Chinese bomb. But the security rationale is elusive in explaining the Indian tests in May 1998. Further Weixing Hu argues that India’s security concern of China was not clear rather it was a perceived potential threat in geopolitical terms.

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National prestige and aspiration for a larger power status is part of New Delhi’s motivation.\(^9\)

Another plan which rationalizes India’s nuclear setup is the Plowshare Programme. This programme was named during 1956 and 1957 at the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory of the University of California (Livermore), after the Bible’s book of Isaiah and it meant attaining peace. It was quoted in the book that, “They shall beat swords by ploughshare...”\(^10\) Later it became a symbol of peace, therefore, the programme developed in order to foresee the peaceful use of nuclear explosion and utilize this energy for peaceful purposes in the field of technology enhancement or producing electricity or other civilian purposes was named after ploughshare. This programme visualized that information related to peaceful development of nuclear technology be made available to the non-nuclear weapon states as well. For sharing of information bilateral agreements under appropriate international observation were planned.\(^11\) During the same time India was also developing its peaceful civilian nuclear programme keeping in mind the advantages which it can generate for a developing country like her. The Plowshare programme was based on the objective to, “research and develop activity to explore the technical and economic feasibility of using nuclear explosives for industrial applications. The reasoning was that the relatively inexpensive energy available from nuclear explosions could prove useful for a wide variety of peaceful purposes.”\(^12\) Hence, the world was witnessing a wave for the civilian use of nuclear energy and India also tried to utilize these resources to accelerate its growth and development.


Indian nuclear programme is always justified by Indian scholars, political scientists and researchers as, against the discriminatory and flawed international nuclear regime, particularly the non-proliferation regime. But Weixing Hu does not agree with it, and he favours some other deep intention of Indian leaders which compelled them to take a bigger step towards the nuclear programme. Quoting Mr. Jaswant Singh, senior leader of the BJP, Weixing Hu mentions, what New Delhi is really interested in is that, “nuclear weapons remain a key indicator of state power. Since this currency is operational in large parts of the globe, India was left with no choice but to update and validate the capability.”

The domestic politics model provides insight on why India’s tests came at this particular time. It is the Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) rise to power that provided the political urge for the tests. There has been no political consensus since 1974 as to whether or not to carry out nuclear tests. The nuclear ambiguity was the result of the prolonged battle between those who favour nuclear deterrent (the nuclear “hawks”) and those who oppose it (the nuclear disarmers). The Indian nuclear establishment, Atomic Energy Commission has lobbied hard for nuclear testing and weapon development. The BJP, has made the development of an Indian nuclear deterrent as one of the most important election manifestos since its establishment in 1980. Mr. Vajpayee considered resuming tests in 1996, but the party’s 13 days in office was too short to deliver on that. When the BJP returned to office after the March election, the party already decided in advance that nuclear testing was one of the first steps it would take. For the BJP, nuclear weapons are an article of faith, part of the essential identity of a powerful, militarist India. Hence, it becomes clear that in Indian context it was not always the security reasons but the domestic politics as well, which headed the way towards the making of India’s Nuclear Programme.

OVERVIEW OF INDIAN NUCLEAR POLICY

Independent India’s policy-making has displayed two distinct strands: an Ashokan one for promoting global peace and a Kautilyan strand for protecting India’s

\[13\] Weixing Hu, 22.
\[14\] Ibid.
Both the strands have always been an integral part of Indian Foreign Policy and strongly adhered by the national leadership of India. During the Second World War, atomic attack on Japan by the USA brought the atomic power to the centre stage of World Politics. After the dramatic end of Second World War, the leaders of developing countries have paid increasing attention to science and technology on the assumption that an indigenous scientific and technological base would not only bring prosperity for their people but also power and status in international politics. After independence, India too adopted a broad based policy for the development of science and technology for solving her national problems. India’s nuclear policy, like its foreign policy was formulated to meet the fundamental problems of the country. Nehru considered nuclear power vital for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of an industrially and economically weak nation like India. It was probably his desire to reap the fruits of nuclear science and technology that within twelve days of getting freedom, a meeting of the Atomic Energy Research Board (AERB) was held.

Although India became an independent state only on 15 August 1947, the origin of its foreign policy can be traced at least as far as 1928. In that year, the Indian nationalist Congress Party sent its greetings to the people of Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Iraq “in their struggle for emancipation from the grip of Western imperialism” and authorized the appointment of a representative to the Second World Congress of the League against Imperialism. This resolution was the first indication that the Congress Party, which formed the government in 1947, saw its own struggle against colonial rule within wider international context. The nuclear era had already begun when India attained independence. A very grim situation was prevailing at international level for newly independent countries after World War II with regard to national security and independent conduct of foreign policy. A great consequence for India as the Cold War era unfolded was the fact that the US and its Western Bloc allies adopted an “if you

18 Agarwal, 10.
aren’t with us you’re against us” view. This situation forced them to either surrender their national interests and conduct of independent foreign policy by joining one of the two power blocs or pursue independent stand by remaining non-aligned from two blocs.\textsuperscript{20}

Since, its emergence as a sovereign nation, India has been following independent foreign policy even on very sensitive issues of international politics such as nuclear policy and for this credit goes to its first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru’s foundation, which was laid in the early years. He had chosen the difficult and challenging option of remaining non-aligned and followed a complete independent and free stand on almost all spheres of activity. In India, origin of using nuclear energy for peaceful uses can be traced to year 1944.\textsuperscript{21} He was an advocate of scientific temper.\textsuperscript{22} India saw nuclear weapons as a destabilizing factor with massive destructive potential that threatened the global security environment within which India had to exist as a sovereign nation.\textsuperscript{23}

On June 26, 1946, Nehru declared, “As long as the world is constituted as it is, every country will have to devise and use the latest scientific devices for its protection. I have no doubt that India will develop its scientific researches and I hope the Indian scientists will use the atomic force for constructive purposes. \textit{But if India is threatened she will inevitably try to defend herself by all means at her disposal} (emphasis added). I hope India in common with other countries will prevent the use of atomic bombs.”\textsuperscript{24} Speaking about objective of foreign policy Nehru stated, “Every country’s foreign policy, first of all, is concerned with its own security and with protecting its own progress.”\textsuperscript{25} Even though Nehru was staunch opponent of joining any military Bloc or


\textsuperscript{22} V.N. Khanna, \textit{India’s Nuclear Doctrine} (New Delhi: Sanskriti Publishers, 2002), 36.

\textsuperscript{23} Nair.


Group, however, in one of his speeches (delivered on December 4, 1947) he had made clear that whenever need would arise India would take its own independent stand.

We have proclaimed this past year that we will not attach ourselves to any particular group. That has nothing to do with neutrality or passivity or anything else…. We are not going to join a war if we can help it, and we are going to join the side, which is to our interest when the time comes to make the choices. There the matter ends.26

It is in the light of national interests of India, Nehru had to change his strict stance of using nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes. He spoke on different occasions very categorically that India would not hesitate to go for weapon option.

**NUCLEAR POLICY UNDER JAWAHARLAL NEHRU**

**Quest for Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy and Disinclination of Nehru to Atomic Weapons**

Jawaharlal Nehru during the early years of independence worked both as Prime Minister as well as Minister of External Affairs. In fact, the influence of this ‘modern architect of India’ was most monumental, singular and enduring in external relations and foreign policy making than in any other area.27 Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee considered Nehru’s contribution in Foreign Policy as part of India’s heritage28 and Vajpayee in May 1998, recounted and appreciated as:

Our leaders then took the crucial decision to opt for self-reliance, and freedom of thought and action. We rejected the Cold-War paradigm whose shadows were already appearing on the horizon and instead of aligning ourselves with either bloc, chose the more difficult path of non-alignment. This required the building up of national strength through our own resources, our skills, creativity, and the dedication of the people. Among the earliest initiatives taken by our first Prime Minister, Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru was the development of science and inculcation of the scientific spirit. It is this initiative that laid the foundation for the achievement of 11 and 13 May…29

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It is to mention here that, Jawaharlal Nehru never surrendered the foreign affairs portfolio to anyone else. Apart from his own deep understanding of history, he connected the strategic attributes of the country with its nuclear imperatives. He had deep and broad visualization whereby he foresaw India not within a narrow nationalistic role but playing an important role in the international sphere and India’s independence gave him an opportunity to evolve a foreign policy, which was to further international peace and promote the processes of nation-building. It was the result of Nehru’s worldview and his passion for peace. The primacy of national interests was the rule, but Nehru conceived India’s national interests in global terms, in terms that required friendship with all other States, in terms that demand maximum co-operation with other states.

The desire and need to put the country on the way to economic development determined India’s approach to issues concerning the atom in the international arena. Jawaharlal Nehru reacted to President Eisenhower’s proposal for the establishment of an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). He was apprehensive about the composition, organization and jurisdiction of the proposed agency and expressed his doubts because of reference to “normal uranium” in President Eisenhower’s speech sensing, in it an attempt to control the raw materials of the developing countries to stifle their growth. Michael J. Sullivan III expressed his observation that “In 1956, India opposed the creation of the IAEA and fought against the drafting of its statute.” However, that reference of Sullivan to India’s stance on the IAEA was completely negated by Indian leadership, as India according to them had not opposed the creation of the IAEA. Rather, India had expressed its opposition regarding the creation of an international agency for controlling the development of atomic energy for peaceful purposes through proxy. In fact, India’s representative to the United Nation, V.K.

30 Bhatia, 8.
31 Pathak, 6-8.
33 Pathak, 16-17.
Menon, played a very important and significant role in all the discussions and negotiations relating to the setting up of the agency. In reality, India opposed the discriminatory nature of the safeguards, and their advocacy by the countries advanced in nuclear technology and their allies, and the real and clandestine motives behind creating the agency. It was necessary to defend the legitimate rights of developing countries and to oppose what Nehru called “atomic colonialism” in the Lok Sabha on 10th May 1954 regarding his speech on Nuclear Energy Agency and later on 23rd July 1957, while talking in context of Atomic Energy Department.

Prime Minister Nehru was aware of the consequences of the piling of nuclear weapons and the possible nuclear catastrophe. In fact even before the use of the explosive power of the atom, he was aware of the fact that progress in science and technology was divorced from human values. Hence, on the eve of independence from Britain in 1947, India became a staunch proponent of nuclear disarmament at the United Nations and other international forum. India was an active member of the UN Eighteen-Nations Disarmament Committee that negotiated nuclear and conventional disarmament before the superpowers and started the bilateral arms control process. He was convinced that the increase in the number of the nuclear states would escalate local as well global tensions and that the tendency to acquire nuclear weapons would jeopardize the security of every individual state as well as the whole world. Therefore, India stood against the race for armament and advocated disarmament. Nehru rightly felt that joining either bloc would compromise with the freedom in foreign relations.

The capacity to master the atom represented modernity, potential prosperity, and transcendence of the colonial past, individual and national powers, and international

35 Pathak, 19.
37 Pathak, 4.
38 Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, Final verbatim record of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (Michigan: The University of Michigan, 14 March 1962): 2, (accessed March 19, 2012); available from http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/ende/4918260.0001.001?rgn=full+text;view=image;q1=Conference+of+the+Eighteen-Nation+Committee+on+Disarmament
leverage.\textsuperscript{40} Nehru talked of developing it for peaceful purposes, however he had never ruled out using nuclear energy for other purposes when compelled to do so.\textsuperscript{41}

**Shift in Stance of Nehru- not Averse to Atomic Weapons for National Interests**

In spite of the open and explicit opposition to nuclear weapons by India’s top leadership, it is a well-validated fact that the option to make weapons was built in India’s Nuclear Programme from its inception in the late 1940s. Both Jawaharlal Nehru and Homi Jehangir Bhabha, the chief of Indian Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), both were its principal architects. This built-in ability to weaponise came to be known as ‘weapon option’, and the term appears to be have been coined by Nehru. This ‘weapon option phase’ is supposed to start with the establishment of the AEC in 1947 and continue until the commencement of first nuclear test in 1974. The move towards establishing this ability was embarked on well before there was any perceivable nuclear threat to India.\textsuperscript{42} A memo of Homi Bhabha (on which Nehru purportedly had written) reports, “Apart from building power stations and developing electricity there is always a built-in advantage of defence use if the need should arise.”\textsuperscript{43} He was firmly committed to disarmament and peaceful settlement of international disputes. However, this did not mean that he compromised with national interests, particularly India’s security.\textsuperscript{44} Jawaharlal Nehru articulated pro-disarmament policies at different world platforms, as he believed that the nuclear arms race between the superpowers was heading towards a global war. Recognizing the peaceful and constructive role of nuclear energy Prime Minister Nehru stated:

> On the one hand, the nuclear bomb and the destruction of Nagasaki and Hiroshima illustrates the horrendous revolution that has taken place in military technology and on the other, the application of nuclear energy to peaceful and constructive purposes has opened up limitless possibilities


\textsuperscript{41} Khanna, 37.


\textsuperscript{44} Khanna, 36.
for human development, prosperity and overabundance. This major challenge confronts our times with a choice between co-destruction and co-prosperity and makes it imperative for the world to outlaw war, particularly nuclear war.\(^45\)

India’s official attitude toward nuclear weapons evolved slowly over the years, but these shifts were insufficient to motivate the national leadership to make a deliberate decision favouring the acquisition of a nuclear arsenal or declaring India’s status to be that of a nuclear weapon state. This lack of movement in the direction of overt nuclearization ultimately stemmed from the perception that despite all the strategic challenges it faced, the security environment in India had confronted for most of the post-independence period the American strength during the early part of the Cold War and by Soviet support. During the latter part of that epoch further buttressed New Delhi’s uncertain attitude toward nuclear weaponry, as did India’s own advantages vis-à-vis Pakistan, China’s weakness as a regional adversary, and the relatively harmless nature of both superpowers towards India. Finally, even when the temptation to demonstrate an overt nuclear weapon capability became more alluring than usual from the 1970s onwards –India’s weakness as a centre of power in international politics guaranteed that it would continue to show control out of fear that international pressures might hinder the attainment of critical strategic objectives such as economic development. All these factors were always in the background of India’s traditional nuclear posture which moved around the basic tenet of “keeping the option open.”\(^46\)

India kept the nuclear option open although at the same time it voiced its protest against manufacturing and testing of the nuclear weapons.\(^47\)

In January 1956, Nehru announced in the Parliament that if adequate resources were delivered, an Indian bomb could be made in three or four years. While speaking before the Parliamentary Committee on Atomic Affairs, (in December 1959) Homi Bhabha declared that India has progressed to such a stage where, if a political directive was received, a bomb could be made without external assistance. The time, however,


\(^{46}\) Tellis, 12.

\(^{47}\) Awasthi.
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was not specified. In 1961, when the Zerlina reactor went critical, Nehru stated that although India could make the nuclear weapon in two years, it chose not to do so. Nehru emphasized the importance of secrecy in nuclear matters and immunized himself and his colleagues from public scrutiny. The reason for such an implicit nuclear weapon policy was that Nehru was brought up in Gandhian traditions of non-violence, and given his abhorrence of violent conflicts and commitment to peaceful resolution of international disputes, it was but natural for Jawaharlal Nehru to openly oppose the manufacture of nuclear weapons. The peaceful use of nuclear energy was the official policy of the Government of India. This point was highlighted in bilateral agreements with Canada, the UK, US and USSR. A careful reading of Nehru’s speeches and policy declarations clearly reveal that he did not foreclose the nuclear option forever. It goes to the credit of Jawaharlal Nehru that he laid the strong foundations of atomic research, so that when the country decided to exercise the nuclear option, it could do so without much difficulty.\(^\text{48}\)

In the early years of 1960s, two events changed the dimension of nuclear policy making of India. It was the Sino-Indian war of 1962 and nuclear test by China in 1964, which made the Indian leadership to think over and to pay more attention to national defence. Already in 1962, the Jana Sangha party (forerunner to the BJP which came to power), called for building of nuclear weapons, the first time a voice was raised against the peaceful use policy of Nehru.\(^\text{49}\) Actually Nehru’s idealistic belief in the goodness of man and a global brotherhood was abruptly shattered in 1962 when Chinese President Mao Zedong surreptitiously took over 30,000 square kilometres of Indian territory in the Aksai Chin plateau and unleashed the People’s Liberation Army through Sikkim and the North East Frontier Agency (now the state of Arunachal Pradesh) to deliver a stunning defeat to the Indian military.\(^\text{50}\)

\(^{48}\) Suryanarayan, 4-5.
\(^{49}\) Sandip Pakvasa, India’s Nuclear Bomb (Hawaii: University of Hawaii, n.d.), 3.
\(^{50}\) China claims yet another 90,000 square kilometres of Indian territory in the eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, a claim Beijing supported by military offensives in 1967 and 1987 and continues to make with regular frequency to this day. For details see Nair.
NUCLEAR POLICY UNDER LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI

Lop Nor Tests of China and Acceleration in India for Nuclear Weapons

In 1964, Nehru died and Lal Bahadur Shastri became the Prime Minister of India. After Nehru, the link between foreign policy goals and the nuclear policy of India continued. His successor Lal Bahadur Shastri was a protagonist of the policy enunciated by him. Shastri accepted the linkage of nuclear energy with the socio-economic betterment of the people at the same time renouncing its military use. After the China’s nuclear test, the first major debate in Parliament on nuclear policy took place. Homi Bhabha’s misleading statements about readiness to build a nuclear arsenal and attempts to influence policy were criticized. Although it was realized that China's nuclear posture was meant against US (and probably Soviet Union) rather than India, still it would be a political/psychological boost for China vis-a-vis India in the non-aligned world. The arguments against going nuclear were economic costs, and the danger to democratic institutions, which would suffer greatly. In the end Prime Minister Shastri closed the debate by declaring that on both moral and economic grounds India would refrain from weapon development and would remain non-nuclear. He substantiated this stance again at the opening of the Plutonium Plant at Trombay:

We have developed this plant with a view to utilizing atomic energy for peaceful purposes. It is essential that this revolutionary technique in atomic energy should be used for peaceful purposes. It is essential that this revolutionary technique in atomic energy should be made use of for bettering the lot of the people and changing the face of the world….It is most regrettable that nuclear energy is being harnessed for making nuclear weapons. This constitutes a grave threat to world peace….India has decided not to enter this race for nuclear armaments. Asian and African nations have many more important things to do in order to build up their own country and countrymen cannot afford to spend millions and millions over nuclear arms when there is poverty and unemployment all around us.

51 Pathak, 23.
52 Pakvasa.
However, a dramatic change in Prime Minister Shastri’s stance was seen with regard to India’s nuclear policymaking. Perceiving the developments in the aftermath of China’s nuclear explosion in Xinjiang’s Lop Nor region in 1964 Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri gave direct instructions to Homi Bhabha to work toward reducing the time needed to develop India’s nuclear explosives.\(^{54}\) Later Prime Minister not only drew up plans but also gave green signal to go-ahead with the Subterranean Nuclear Explosion Project (SNEP) in November 1965.\(^{55}\) His approval was, “to sanction research up to a point where, once the go-ahead signal was given, it would take three months to have an explosion.”\(^{56}\) In November 1965, the *Washington Post* carried a sensational report that claimed that “India is believed to be working in the strictest secrecy towards completion of a nuclear device”. The report was from the American columnist Marquis Childs. He asserted that when Homi Bhabha visited the US in 1964, he had discussed the possibility of setting off an underwater nuclear explosion to deepen the channel between the southern-most tip of India and nearby Ceylon.\(^{57}\) Pakistan taking serious note of this reacted firmly when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto declared in 1965 that, “his compatriots would “eat grass” and suffer other deprivations in order to possess nuclear weapons.”\(^{58}\) In 1966, Homi Bhabha died in a plane crash in the Alps on the way to a meeting in Geneva. In the meantime, Shastri had died of a heart attack, and with dissension in the party, Indira Gandhi (Nehru's daughter) who was a compromise choice as a prime minister had come to power.\(^{59}\)

**NUCLEAR POLICY UNDER INDIRA GANDHI**

**Early Developments of Peaceful Nuclear Explosion and its Culmination**

The Nehruvian legacy of suspicion about militarized power politics and its attendant distaste of nuclear weaponry as the “currency of global power” interacted with the older Gandhian moral synthesis, which emphasized “community” over “state” and

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\(^{55}\) Sidhu.


\(^{59}\) Pakvasa, 4.
“service” over “coercion,” to reinforce this ambiguous stance. Mrs. Gandhi continued to adhere to the nuclear policy enunciated by her predecessors. She had to carry the nation with her in following this policy at a time when the pressure from within the country to opt for the nuclear weapons probably was the greatest. Prime Minister Nehru and Shastri had categorically declared that India would never manufacture nuclear weapons. In theory, Mrs. Gandhi was committed to the same policy, but in practice, her attitude became ambivalent. The impression created by her various utterances was that she wanted to keep her options open with regard to nuclear weapons. She had instinctively felt the prestige value, if not the deterrent value, of a nuclear explosion might be of useful at a strategic moment either for domestic or for international purposes. Mrs. Gandhi pursued a strongly personalized politics; the nuclear energy became another ace in her power game. She was Minister of Atomic Energy as well as Prime Minister ever since September 1967 and even in her later term from July 1984 to October 1984, she continued to hold both the Ministries together. Morganthau, amply clears in Politics Among Nations that, “It stands to reason that not all foreign policies have always followed so rational, objective, and unemotional a course. The contingent elements of personality, prejudice and subjective preference, and of all the weakness of intellect and will which flesh is higher to, are bound to deflect foreign policies from their rational course.”

In fact, in the initial years of Indira Gandhi’s government a complete slowdown in the process of nuclearization took place. This was reflected in appointing Dr. Vikram Sarabhai to fill the gap that was created with the departure of Bhabha. Dr. Sarabhai had an aversion to nuclear weapons and did not share Bhabha's enthusiasm for grandiose and self-aggrandizing projects. He ordered the people like Raja Ramanna (leading man

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60 Tellis.  
61 Pathak, 24.  
behind success of the PNE in 1974) to stop work on the PNE and such projects.\textsuperscript{64} However, the country was aware of the growing Chinese nuclear capability and her hostility towards India. This was the period, when the country felt that the super powers were pressurizing India to accede to the non-proliferation treaty. However, the Indian government stuck to its policy of peaceful uses of nuclear energy without either conceding to the internal pulls and pressures or bowing to the external pressures to accept an international agreement detrimental to the national interests.\textsuperscript{65} By 1966, international negotiations on a prospective nuclear non-proliferation treaty were in full swing, and India was playing a major role.\textsuperscript{66} When the non-proliferation treaty was being pushed for acceptance in the Eighteen-Nations Disarmament Committee, India reiterated her policy of uninhibited freedom to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and her opposition to nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{67} India demanded that a fair treaty must obligate existing nuclear weapons states (the haves) to freeze and then eliminate their existing arsenals, and must provide security guarantees to states that do not acquire nuclear weapons. By the end of 1967, it was becoming clear that neither United States nor Soviet Union would agree to the kind of the NPT India was proposing.\textsuperscript{68} When the USA and the Soviet Union jointly sponsored the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968 and tried to pressurize India into signing it, Indira Gandhi stoutly resisted this pressure.\textsuperscript{69} In April 1968 Mrs. Gandhi explained in the parliament that India would vote against the treaty; but India would not find security in acquiring nuclear weapons and an attempt to build them would weaken the country by diverting precious resources which were needed elsewhere.\textsuperscript{70} She, in April 1968 referring to India’s Atomic Programme, emphasized:

\textsuperscript{64} Pakvasa.\textsuperscript{65} Pathak.\textsuperscript{66} Pakvasa.\textsuperscript{67} Pathak, 25.\textsuperscript{68} Pakvasa.\textsuperscript{69} Bandhopadhyaya.\textsuperscript{70} Pakvasa.
Our programme of atomic energy development for peaceful purposes is related to the real needs of our economy and would be effectively geared to this end. Atomic energy power stations would play a very valuable role in future…  

As far as nuclear weapon programme was concerned Indira Gandhi decided not to go ahead with testing. She also sent her emissaries to the USA to seek guarantees in her favor. By 1970, the nuclear debate intensified and three camps emerged. The First camp argued against nuclear weapons; the second camp advocated a crash programme to build a small nuclear arsenal that could be delivered first by aircraft and subsequently by crude, liquid-fuelled ballistic missiles; and the third camp supported a steadier, less provocative long-term course to develop the capacity to deploy a small but sophisticated missile-based arsenal with attendant command, control, and warning infrastructure.

Most of the scientific intelligentsia was in favor of building the bomb. For an instance the statement of Director of the Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory in Chandigarh, Sampooran Singh made in his book, *India and the Bomb*, “China’s entry of the nuclear club has enhanced its national prestige and influence on the international scene. Its nuclear forces are now a symbol of national greatness, political power and importance” and advocating a strong case for India he further states, “So long as nuclear power and political power are correlated elements in world politics, it is necessary that India take a close hard look at its defence posture on a long term basis, and view nuclear power as an integral part of its defence and deterrence system.”

The Director of Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, K. Subrahmanyam contradicted the Government’s stand over the risks and costs and insisted that China posed a threat that must be countered through a nuclear deterrent and it would “stabilize the confrontation and ensure peace.” It would serve India’s moral objective, as “India does not subscribe to the outmoded war-fighting doctrine (as followed by the United

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73 Perkovich, 13.
74 Singh, 100.
75 Perkovich, 156-157.
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States and the U.S.S.R.). Therefore, there was division in the opinion regarding India’s nuclear programme.

Peaceful Nuclear Explosion: Pokhran I (Rationale and Repercussions)

The high water-mark of national agreement in India in the nuclear field was the Pokhran explosion of the May 18, 1974. Advertised as a “Peaceful Nuclear Explosion” it obviously had military applications and India produced a small stockpile based upon this basic fission design, the test, codenamed “Smiling Budha”, was carried out in a 107 m deep shaft at the Pokhran test site in the Rajasthan desert in the western India, 9 km north-west of the village Khetolai. Initially the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre claimed the explosive yield of the test was 1200 kilo tons. Later they reduced the estimate to 8 kilo tons. Its key players were Raja Ramanna who led the atomic bomb team, R. Chidambaram, and P. K. Iyengar. This was shrewdly timed and it coincided with a period of mounting anti-government agitation directed chiefly against Mrs. Gandhi. Personally, the agitation had adversely affected her and her government’s image at home and abroad. Developments in early 1970s in the South Asian Region and the American dispatch of the 7th fleet in the Bay of Bengal during the Indo-Pak War in 1971, and also President Nixon’s repeated advice to Henry Kissinger to be “more tough” on India, had an overwhelming impact on Indira Gandhi that it was necessary to demonstrate India’s power and technological prowess, which finally culminated into the nuclear explosion in May 1974. The expenditure on the Indian PNE at Rajasthan was somewhat less than the cost projected by US Atomic Energy Commission for PNEs. The nuclear energy through PNEs was meant to be used not only for generating electricity rather PNEs according to Ramanna, could be used to make harbourers or dams and to build canals. Besides PNEs could also be used to increase the permeability

76 Tellis, 262.
Map 3.1: Location of India’s Nuclear Test in Pokhran (Rajasthan)

Photograph 3.1: Crater formed at the Site of Pokhran on May 18, 1974.


Photograph 3.2: Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at the Pokhran Nuclear Test Site

of the rock in the natural gas reservoir, to increase the driving pressure on an oil reservoir and to expose the metal values in a copper or body to leach solution.\textsuperscript{81} This was her bold decision but a risky one. Without being sensitive to international criticism, she decided to carry out the nuclear explosion, described by her as a peaceful one. Though opposed to arms race and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, she did not subscribe to the theory of nuclear monopoly enjoyed by a few privileged nuclear weapon states.\textsuperscript{82} Talking about the reasons for the conduct of the PNE in 1974 India’s Former Foreign Secretary, M. Rasgotra, mentions that the move of the US fleet to the Bay of Bengal, “helped make up Indira Gandhi’s mind to go in for a nuclear deterrent,” he also furthered that, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s decision in 1972 to develop his “Islamic Bomb” and China’s nuclear capability always remained the basic motivations behind this decision.\textsuperscript{83}

The declassified documents of Nixon administration reported in early 1972, two years prior to the test, the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) had predicted that India could make preparations for an underground test without detection by the US intelligence. After the Indian test, reaction that was going within the US intelligence establishment, according to the declassified document was as, “India’s peaceful nuclear explosion on 18 May, 1974 caught the US by surprise in part because the intelligence community had not been looking for signs that a test was in the works.”\textsuperscript{84}

However, Kissinger and the US administration remarked quite differently than the US intelligence that the US respected India as the major power in South Asia and that a “more mature and equal relationship” could now be constituted between the two countries. The nuclear explosion was a great image-booster for Indira Gandhi and the Congress.\textsuperscript{85} Overwhelming majority (approximately 90\%) of Indians felt proud and felt that it has raised India’s stature internationally, reflected in the polls conducted by Indian Institute of Public Opinion. It uplifted the mood of every section of society; this

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{81} Rammana, 18-19.  \\
\textsuperscript{82} Jain, 59-60.  \\
\textsuperscript{83} M. Rasgotra, “The Long Shadows the Bomb Cast on India,” \textit{The Tribune}, September 9, 2012.  \\
\textsuperscript{84} Declassified Documents, 1.  \\
\textsuperscript{85} Bandhopadhya, 263.  \\
\end{flushleft}
was manifested in the statements of the media and opposition leaders. All the leading newspapers of the country next day came out with very positive and highly eulogising frontline headlines. *The Times of India* published front-page headline, “Thrilled Nation Lauds Feat”, *Motherland* mouthpiece of Jana-Sangh Party printed headline as, “India Goes Nuclear at Last”, reporting on explosion *The Hindustan Times* wrote, “The Nation is Thrilled.” Charan Singh described it as a “good development”. The Central Working Committee of Jana-Sangh passed resolution the next day and termed the explosion as a, “A Red Letter Day in History,” it also saluted Indian Scientists. The party demanded the building of nuclear weapons showing consistency with its earlier strand. L. K. Advani marked, “the demand for an atom bomb is no longer confined to a section or sections which can be termed a lobby. It is the nation’s demand.” Dealing with the nuclear policies of successive Indian Prime Ministers, L.K. Advani said, “Nehru’s ‘No Bomb Ever’ was reformulated by Lal Bahadur Shastri as ‘No Bomb Now’. The same policy has continued under Mrs. Gandhi. I think it is time even this stand is re-examined and modified.”

### Contribution of Indian Scientists in Nuclear Field in Early Decades

The role of Indian Scientists became very important here and particularly the role of Homi Bhabha. Homi Jehangir Bhabha was undoubtedly the father of Indian nuclear research and the architect of India’s nuclear strategy and diplomacy. In 1930’s, Bhabha studied with the eminent nuclear scientist Lord Ernest Rutherford. He also associated himself with other great experts in the field like Niels Bohr, James Franck, Enrico Fermi and W.B. Lewis. On his return to India, Bhabha convinced the Tatas to finance the establishment of a centre for research to study nuclear physics. Thus, India’s efforts in nuclear programme predates the dawn of independence. The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) was established in Bombay on 19 December 1945, four months after Hiroshima and months before India became independent. Bhabha was already in command of India’s nuclear future. Bhabha frequently referred this institute as “the cradle of the Indian atomic energy programme.” The institute as well as the Atomic Energy Establishment at Trombay, (now BARC) became the home of offices,
laboratories, and eventually nuclear reactors, plutonium reprocessing, and uranium enrichment plants. In 1946, the Atomic Energy Research Committee (AERC) was formed under the chairmanship of Bhabha. It aimed to promote education in nuclear physics in Indian colleges and universities. At that stage, “experts” could only guess at the costs of constructing, fuelling and operating nuclear plants. Bhabha and Nehru were determined to move ahead on the supposition that nuclear power would provide the nation with cost effective electricity, development, prestige and if needed, nuclear weapon capability. On Bhabha’s request, the Constituent Assembly passed the Atomic Energy Act creating the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). The Act called for research and development of atomic energy in complete secrecy and established state ownership of all relevant materials, particularly uranium and thorium. In passing the Act, the Constituent Assembly engaged in a brief but illuminating debate. Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya and S.V. Krishnamurthy Rao emerged as the biggest critic of the Act. S.V.K. Rao was particularly concerned about the imposition of greater secrecy in India’s case as compared to the United States and the United Kingdom, which unlike India were also building nuclear weapons. In response, Prime Minister Nehru singled out Rao for having “criticized every feature of the Bill.” The Bill was passed with minor amendments. Six years later, the Presidential order created the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), which reported directly to Prime Minister, and the AEC was then relocated to the DAE. At the time of formulation of the Act 1948, the Government of India was evidently aware of research efforts in nuclear physics conducted at various Indian Universities. Dr. C.V. Raman, Dr. J.C. Bose, Dr. Meghnad Saha and others had done great pioneering work during the period 1930 to 1948. There were powerful bomb walahs in India at that time, which included highly influential specialists like Homi Bhabha, K.C. Pant, K. Subrahmaniam, Prof. Subramaniam Swamy, Inder Malhotra, Prof. J. D. Sethi, Prof. Raj Krishna and Prof. Sisir Gupta. By the end of 1966, the DAE had established to its credit more than a dozen research units, projects and other enterprises like:

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88 Perkovich, 17.
89 Ibid, 18-19.
91 Suryanarayan, 3.
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1. Atomic Energy Establishment, Trombay (BARC)
2. Tarapur Atomic Power Project
3. Rajasthan Atomic Power Project
4. Madras Atomic Power Project
5. Jaduguda Mines Project
6. Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station
7. Space Science and Technology Centre
8. Experimental Satellite Communication Earth Station
9. Atomic Minerals Division
10. Trombay Township Project

The DAE had also extended its administrative umbrella over the following five major national institutions by simply channelling the Central Governmental grants-in-aid under its name.

1. TIFR, Bombay
2. Tata Memorial Hospital, Bombay
3. Indian Cancer Research Centre, Bombay
4. Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad
5. Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, Calcutta.

The Indian Rare Earths Limited, a Public Sector Government Undertaking was also taken under the administrative control of the DAE, and before Bhabha’s death in 1966, proposals were already underway to take over industrial operations of the Electronics Production Unit at Hyderabad and Jaduguda Uranium Mines & Mill in Orissa under its administrative control.\(^{92}\)

The Map 3.2 shows the locations of major Indian nuclear energy establishments during the time of India’s first nuclear test at Pokhran. The Image 3.1 shows the Three-stage Indian Nuclear Programme. Overall India’s three stage nuclear programme with, “...the installation of natural uranium reactors in the first phase, followed by fast breeder reactors in the second phase, using plutonium from the first generation reactors with either uranium-238 or thorium in the blanket, followed

\(^{92}\) Sharma, 14-15.
Map 3.2: Major Indian Nuclear Energy Establishments During Pokhran-I

Source: Compiled by the author based on, Dhirendra Sharma, “India’s Nuclear Estate,” Philosophy and Social Action 31, no.4 (2005).
Photograph 3.3: Three Stages of India’s Nuclear Power Programme

Kalpakkam has the unique distinction of being the only place in the world, where all the three fissile isotopes viz., U-235 (MAPS), Pu-239 (FBTR) & U-233 (KAMINI) are used as fuel in reactors.

eventually by reactors based on the self-sustaining thorium uranium-233 cycle has been tremendous. Though presently India is on the verge of entering the second stage but it is amongst the few nations in the world with such an advanced blue-print of the programme.

INDIA’S RELATIONS WITH THE NUCLEAR REGIMES TILL POKHRAN-I

The development of international nuclear regime had started immediately after the Second World War in the form of Washington Communiqué and later as the Baruch Plan. Major treaties pertaining to the nuclear aspect till the time of Pokhran-I were Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) of 1963, Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968, Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT-I) of 1972 and Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) of 1972.

Since 1956, India has been recognized as, “one of ten most advanced States in the field of nuclear science and technology.” India was not only the founding member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but gave suggestions in order to amend the statutes and the annual reports of the agency, these amendments suggested by India were later incorporated after the approval of the General Assembly. Later, a number of the IAEA meetings were also held in India. But along with this, “India continued privately to argue against the Agency’s job of enforcing an international safeguards system, which aimed at preventing imported nuclear technology and materials from being diverted to non-peaceful purposes.” Hence, it has always been actively involved in the activities of the IAEA and this participation has evolved throughout the years into a deep relationship with the Agency. In spite of this India never compromised on any front, particularly when it is about the national interest of the nation. India has diplomatically proved itself and due to this such international bodies recognize her importance.

96 Shyam Bhatia, India’s Nuclear Bomb (Ghaziabad: Vikas Publishing House, 1979), 51.
On the other hand, “India trains 25 IAEA-sponsored fellows every year in its nuclear institutions and has donated sophisticated monitoring equipments to the IAEA laboratories.”97 Today the IAEA has 199 safeguards agreements in force with 118 states and these agreements cover around 800 facilities. With such agreements it plays a very important role in the implementation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.98

After the creation of the IAEA the talks on disarmament and nuclear proliferation got accelerated. The disarmament commission which had been created in 1952 became active and many countries joined it in a short span. Disarmament was and continues to remain one of the key goals of India’s nuclear policy. Hence, Indian interest to join such organisation gets explained. But another important reason for India’s pressing demand and wish to join the commission is elucidated by, “Nehru’s desire not to see any important international organization dominated by the great powers...It was also the result of Nehru’s conviction that India as a potential great power should be included in important international gatherings.”99 Nehru feared that if India does not join such international conferences or organisations, then there will be no chance to put forward her viewpoint and concerns and hence, any decision contrary to India’s national interest can be taken which can jeopardise India’s position. India also stressed for the membership of Afro-Asian bloc in the commission. “The reason here was that Indian government believed it could achieve its foreign policy aims far more successfully on the basis of being a leading member of the bloc.”100 India’s continued endeavour on the disarmament front led to the increase in the membership of Disarmament Commission and later in the formation of Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENCD) under the United Nation General Assembly Resolution 1722 (XVI).101 India was member of this committee and played an important role in the conclusion of the Partial Test Ban Treaty.

97 Gupta.
99 Shyam Bhatia, 55.
100 Ibid, 56.
The Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT)

The Partial Test Ban Treaty mainly called for the banning of the nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water. It was signed as a convention on August 5, 1963 at Moscow and entered into force on 10 October 1963. The treaty professed to be, “more of humanitarian or environment protection nature by way of saving humanity, flora and fauna from evil effects of nuclear fallout after nuclear test in air, ocean or on ground; but, it did not prohibit underground nuclear tests.”

India’s response to the treaty was overwhelming, since India was amongst the protagonist of the treaty so it was among the signatory countries, showing its concern for disarmament. Jawaharlal Nehru welcoming the treaty opined that, “…it formed an important landmark in the history of international co-operation and understanding and would lead to further disarmament measures.” Also the Indian representative at the Eighteen- Nation Disarmament Committee said that, “Its importance does not lie so much in what the treaty actually says, as in what it means and the hopes it aroused.” France and China were the chief opponents of the treaty as it kept the underground nuclear test option open. The treaty was criticised because super powers like the USA and the USSR had already conducted a number of nuclear tests in the air and space and now they did not need any more nuclear tests in air, space and water so such provisions of the treaty were made. India taking advantage out of this clause in the later years justified her position when it conducted nuclear test in 1974 and 1998, as India’s both nuclear test were underground hence, India never went against the provisions of the same. The charges employed by the critics came true very soon as between signing of the PTBT and July 1, 1973; around 437 underground nuclear explosions were carried out by the USA and the USSR and they were approximately half of the total explosion that took place since 1945.

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102 Yadav, 30.
103 Gupta.
106 Sisodia, 120. Also see: Pathak, 89.
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The very next year after the PTBT, i.e., in 1964 China conducted its nuclear explosion and the entire politics of the South-East Asia was changed after that event which took place in the Lop Nor. The non-proliferation movement got aggravated after China’s nuclear explosion and the biggest change which came was in India’s nuclear policy. It led to a U-turn in Indian nuclear policy as Indians started feeling that now it becomes important and mandatory for the country to develop its nuclear potential particularly from security point of view. India started working on the same lines so that it may not lag behind and in a number of debates and conferences, developing the nuclear potential as part of national interest became a common agenda of discussion. But the situation was kept secret as all over the world there emerged a whole wave against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was its result.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

Very dramatic events occurred at the international level in 1964. After both the super powers conducted a number of underground nuclear explosions and France and China criticising the PTBT, India for the first time in the history of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) came up with the idea of non-proliferation. On 10 October 1964, India initiated, “Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons” in General Assembly. And just five days after this China conducted its nuclear explosion on 16 October 1964. This situation put India into a dilemma of either promoting non-proliferation or being concerned about its security threat from China. The words of James L. George clearly explain this situation in his book that, “Finally no matter what the outcome of any arms control scheme now being proposed, nuclear weapons are here to stay. The Pandora’s Box has been irrevocably opened... to ignore nuclear strategy would be folly.”  

The Chinese explosion acted as a catalyst in all the activities leading to disarmament and non-proliferation. The UNGA agreed on certain points which can offer a solution to the problem which arose at the international front.

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These were:

1. An undertaking by the nuclear Powers not to transfer nuclear weapons or nuclear weapon technology to others;
2. An undertaking not to use nuclear weapon against countries which did not possess them;
3. An undertaking through the United Nations to safeguard the security of countries which might be threatened by powers having nuclear weapons capability or embarking on nuclear weapons capability;
4. Tangible progress towards disarmament, including a comprehensive test ban treaty, a complete freeze on production of nuclear weapons and means of delivery, as well as substantial reduction in the existing stocks; and
5. An undertaking by non-nuclear powers not to acquire or manufacture nuclear weapons.108

Different drafts of non-proliferation treaty were developed by the U.S and the U.S.S.R in 1965. These drafts were not acceptable to India because of several reasons like it ignored the security demands and favoured the existing nuclear weapons. In her statement to the Lok Sabha on April 5, 1968, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi stated:

We have already made it clear that the draft treaty in its present form does not fully conform to the principles, enunciated in the General Assembly Resolution No. 2028 of the 20th session.109

The matter was also discussed numerous times in the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee. Along with India a number of other non-nuclear nations like Japan and Sweden also criticised the draft of the treaty. Eight non-aligned nations (participant of ENDC) namely India, Egypt, Burma, Ethiopia, Mexico, Sweden, Nigeria and Brazil proposed a resolution in the UNGA Resolution No. 2028 (XX), which was later passed on November 23, 1965.110 This resolution framed a mandate of five principles on non-proliferation treaty negotiations. Out of those main principles includes:

108 As cited in K.K. Pathak, 92.
109 Indira Gandhi, Non-Proliferation Treaty (accessed July 23, 2013); available from http://meaindia.nic.in/pmicd.geneva/?50031138
110 GA/RES/2028 (XX), was adopted by the vote of 93 to 0, with five states abstaining i.e., Cuba, France, Guinea, Pakistan and Romania.
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1. The treaty should be void of any loop-holes which might permit nuclear or non-nuclear Powers to proliferate, directly or indirectly, nuclear weapons in any form;

2. The treaty should embody an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations of the nuclear and non-nuclear powers; and

3. The treaty should be a step towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament and, more particularly, nuclear disarmament.\footnote{111}{As cited in Perkovich, 104-105.}

In the coming years till 1968, the discussion on the non-proliferation treaty took place, but it hovered round these basic principles of “balanced and mutual obligation.”\footnote{112}{Ibid.} Finally in 1968 the final draft of the treaty was prepared. On June 12, 1968, the General Assembly opened it for signature and ratification. The Governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, were designated as the Depositary Governments by Article IX (2) of the Treaty. After the ratification by 49 countries it came into force.\footnote{113}{International Atomic Energy Agency, *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*, Information Circular, INFCIRC/140, 22 April, 1970.}

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty mainly is, “an international, multilateral treaty, the main purpose of which is to restrict the ownership of nuclear weapons to the five powers — China, France, the United Kingdom, the USSR and the United States of America - which had exploded a nuclear device before 1 January 1967; in other words, to prevent the spread of the ownership of nuclear weapons to other States.”\footnote{114}{Ilkka Pastinen, *Nuclear Proliferation and the NPT* (accessed December 14, 2013); available at: http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Magazines/Bulletin/Bull194/19403502039.pdf}

But a number of nations who earlier favoured the cause of non-proliferation and disarmament did not sign it and some did not ratify it. India was among the one which neither signed nor ratified. India always stood against the discriminatory provisions of the treaty even in its draft form and continued to do so even under worst of the circumstances, when India was forced to sign it. The first three articles of the treaty are considered the most discriminatory ones which deny any kind of development of...
nuclear energy even for civilian purposes by the non-nuclear countries. As per the Article I of the treaty the nuclear weapon States party to the treaty were prohibited to transfer

...to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly; and not in any way to assist, encourage, or induce any non-nuclear-weapon State to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or control over such weapons or explosive devices.\textsuperscript{115}

Such provisions discard any kind of development by the non-nuclear countries and were considered highly discriminatory as it did not prohibit the nuclear weapon possessing nation. Further the Article II of the treaty necessitate the non-nuclear weapon countries

Not to receive the transfer from any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly; not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and not to seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.\textsuperscript{116}

Such obligations were highly criticised and were seen as not only unfair but also immoral. As by such provision the development dreams of the Third World nations which saw nuclear energy as the biggest boon to their problems (particularly relating to electricity) were shattered to ground. The most biased clause of the whole treaty was the Article III dealing with the control. It obligated only the non-nuclear weapon nations to accept the safeguards and inspection. It was silent on any kind of obligation on the nuclear weapons possessing countries. Also no verification system was made in order to verify the nuclear installations of the nuclear-weapon countries. The group of eight members who proposed the Resolution 2028 (XX) were unhappy with the final draft and realized, “that their views had not been adequately represented in the final draft.”\textsuperscript{117}

According to Poulose,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{117} As cited in Bimal Patel, 118.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
The NPT has not only legalised the military inequality between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon powers, but also formalized the technological inequality. This is evident from Articles III, IV and V of the NPT, dealing with safeguards and peaceful nuclear technology.\(^\text{118}\)

The exceptions which India made in the NPT were mainly on the following grounds:

1. The balance of obligations between nuclear and non-nuclear states;
2. The nature of the security assurances from the nuclear states to the non-nuclear states;
3. The prohibition of certain peaceful uses of nuclear techniques; and
4. The inspection provisions.\(^\text{119}\)

S.S. Sisiodia has also given in detail the critical points of the NPT with regard to India:

1. The treaty was inconsistent with the General Assembly Resolution 2028 (XX). It was discriminatory and it ignored equal and mutual obligations between the nuclear and non-nuclear states;
2. The treaty ran contrary to the General Assembly Resolution 2028 (XX) as there was no linkage between the treaty and other measures of disarmament;
3. All the nuclear weapons powers were not associated with the framing of the treaty. The Peoples’ Republic of China was absent. The obligations of the treaty would be in no way binding on her;
4. The security clauses in the treaty proposed by the three nuclear powers ran contrary to the spirit of the UN Charter because in respect of the maintenance of international peace and security the Charter did not discriminate between those states which had subscribed to any treaty and those states which had not; and
5. On the questions of control and safeguards, the treaty was not very clear and its scope was not defined. Safeguards should be universal in nature and not discriminatory. The safeguards were only for non-nuclear powers.\(^\text{120}\)

\(^{118}\) T.T. Poulose, “India’s Nuclear Policy,” in *Perspectives of India’s Nuclear Policy*, ed. T.T. Poulose, (New Delhi: Young Asia Publications, 1978), 120.

\(^{119}\) Sampooran Singh, 86.

\(^{120}\) Sisodia, 110. Also see: Pathak, 117-120.
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In the cabinet meeting to decide upon India’s stand on the NPT, none of the senior leaders of Indian government were in favour of signing the treaty. Especially the then Home Minister Y.B. Chavan and Finance Minister Morarji Desai were highly critical of it, rest of the ministers if not criticised, did not favour it as well.\textsuperscript{121} Mrs. Indira Gandhi finally decided not to sign the treaty and summed up her situation in the Parliament while saying:

India’s refusal to sign the NPT was based on enlightened self-interest and the considerations of national security… nuclear weapon powers insist on their right to continue to manufacture more nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{122}

Citing it apartheid and inequitable against its interests, India has not signed the NPT till date. Even the NPT Review Conferences have not been able to address the concerns of non-nuclear countries which could dilute India’s position of not signing it. India has been maintaining its firm stand that it will not enter into any international treaty or agreement that can jeopardise its national and security interests and its quest for pursuance of autonomous and independent nuclear programme.

Other than the PTBT and the NPT, SALT- I and the ABM Treaty were the other two agreements mainly of the US and the U.S.S.R. which took some strategic decisions with regard to disarmament and non-proliferation.\textsuperscript{123} SALT I, the first series of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, extended from November 1969 to May 1972. During that period the United States and the Soviet Union negotiated the first agreements to place limits and restraints on some of their central and most important armaments. In a Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, they moved to end an emerging competition in defensive systems that threatened to spur offensive competition to still greater heights.\textsuperscript{123} All of such agreements and talks were mainly between the two super powers, i.e., the US and the USSR. Though on paper these counties took a number of steps towards disarmament and non-proliferation, but in practice they reduced only the

\textsuperscript{121} Perkovich, 143.


\textsuperscript{123} Bureau of Arms Control, \textit{Treaty Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (SALT-I) (narrative)}, U.S. Department of State, (accessed September 28, 2013); available from \url{http://www.state.gov/t/isn/5191.htm}.
number of conventional weapons while developing more powerful and more critical missiles and weapons. Hence, India always condemned their overt move of reducing weapons but covertly developing hi-technology next generation weapons.

**POST POKHRAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT**

To check plummeting image of her government at domestic front in the wake of mounting anti-government agitations and to show to international community India’s technological prowess, Mrs. Indira Gandhi ordered Pokhran explosion on May 18, 1974. Without caring about international criticism and sanctions that would follow, she decided to conduct nuclear explosion. Though opposed to arms race and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, she did not subscribe to the theory of nuclear monopoly enjoyed by a few privileged nuclear weapon states.\(^\text{124}\)

The nuclear explosion proved to be a great image-booster for Indira Gandhi and the Congress. India etched her name on world map by joining coveted international nuclear community. Indians felt proud and felt that it had raised India’s stature internationally. The nuclear explosion set the pace for further advancement in nuclear energy technology and building India’s military strength to thwart any challenge on security front as also harnessing nuclear power for development. However at home, Indira Gandhi could not enjoy the success of the PNE and imposition of National Emergency in 1975 brought her electoral debacle. She lost elections in 1977 and Janata Government led by Morarji Desai took the reins of the country.

Initially, after the Peaceful nuclear experiment the western Press completely criticized India for breaching the trust and commitment towards non-proliferation. In order to overcome from such suspicious environment Indian government held a Press Conference in New Delhi on 18 May. Addressing the Press Conference Prime Minister Indira Gandhi convinced the nations of the world that India has not negated her stance of disarmament and non-proliferation and is completely committed to the peaceful usage of the nuclear energy. Mr. Kewal Singh, the then Foreign Secretary, and Mr. V.C. Trivedi, the then Secretary in the External Affairs Ministry, met the envoys of the US, USSR, Britain, France, and Canada-countries with which India had agreements for

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\(^{124}\) Jain, 59-60.
bilateral cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. “They assured the envoys that in conducting the underground test for peaceful purposes, India had been consistent with its international obligations, and that it had no intention of going in for nuclear weapons. The envoys of Yugoslavia, Egypt, Iran, Iraq and Sri Lanka were briefed along similar lines.”

On the other hand, at the domestic front there emerged several problems not only for the nation in general but for Congress party in particular. Since independence, the Congress enjoyed the status of dominant single party under India’s democratic polity, and as illustrated by Rajni Kothari, “Congress for the first time gave to the country a coherent and unified leadership which could speak for the nation as a whole, acquired a powerful identity of its own, and came to possess authority and legitimacy over the subcontinent.” However, during 1952-1967 the one dimensional support for Congress party deteriorated (with the only exception of 1957). Until 1967 the Congress party, somehow, managed to maintain control at the national and regional level to certain extent, but in the 1967 elections it lost its majority seats in eight states. This situation provided impetus to many all India parties to form governments at the regional level and setting their eyes on the national arena.

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh (the Indian People’s Party), also known as Akhil Bharatiya Jana Sangh (in the initial years) emerged as the major opponent of the Congress party at the national level. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) was formulated by Dr. Shyama Parsad Mookerjee in New Delhi at a convention attended by 500 delegates on October 21, 1951. During the 1967 election the BJS contested on 249 seats and managed to win 35 of them. The table below shows the detail of the number of seats contested and won by the BJS over a period of time. An analysis of the Table 3.1 reveals that the BJS improved its electoral performance during the successive years of

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125 Satish. Kumar, Documents on India’s foreign policy (New Delhi: The Macmillan Company of India, 1977), x.
126 Rajni Kothari, Politics in India (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2005), 156.
the Lok Sabha elections. Similar improvement was seen in the scorecard of the BJS in the state assembly elections from 1952 to 1972.

**Table 3.1: Performance of the BJS during Lok Sabha Elections from 1951-1971**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Election</th>
<th>Seats Contested</th>
<th>Seats Won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The politics of defection and counter-defection changed the game for the Congress government and it got defeated by opposition party and the CPI in a number of by-elections. This led to the dive in the popularity of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her party. In the next three years i.e. 1973-1975, a number of issues including “rise, shortage of essential commodities, rampant corruption” along with the efforts of opposition against the Congress party started showing results in the form of changing public opinion in the country for the Congress party. “In 1974, the non-communist opposition parties had started hectic negotiations for forging a national alternative to the ruling Congress. Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD) headed by Charan Singh succeeded in establishing Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD)-an alliance of seven regional parties. However, the BJS, the Congress (Organizational or opposition) – Congress (O) and the Praja Socialist Party (PSP) opted out of the BLD. During the same time the resentment among the people of the country grew and there occurred a number of protests and demonstrations against the ruling Congress government. An unstable polity and unstable cabinet and the Centre’s distrust of the States resulted in weak and ineffective State governments. This situation worsened mainly in case of Gujarat and Bihar.

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Congress always had a strong hold in the State of Gujarat, but since 1970s the conditions were completely opposite. “Gujarat experienced considerable political confusion as a result of Mrs. Gandhi's Congress (Regular or Ruling) – Congress (R) ascendancy in the 1971 parliamentary elections while a Congress (O) majority government ruled in Ahmedabad. Eventually, pressure from the centre as well as defections away from the Congress (O) brought the resignation of the Hitendra Desai in May 1971.” This led to the imposition of President's Rule in Gujarat for the rest of that year. Later Congress (R) had a sweeping victory in the 1972 assembly election, but the conditions never came under control in case of Gujarat. Protests, strikes, curfews, looting, rioting the public as well as private property and confrontation among the local people and police became a regular scene. Hence, President Rule was imposed on Gujarat again in 1974. It had direct and serious effects on the circumstances existing in Bihar as it added fuel to the fire in student agitations against the rising prices, shortage of food and day-to-day commodities, unemployment etc.

The situation was further aggravated by the emergence of Jaya Prakash Narayan commonly known as J.P., he in a short span of time became one of the leading critics of the government and the people easily got influenced by his words and ideas. J.P. was the President of the largest trade unions in Asia, namely All India Railway men’s Federation, All India Postal Employees and IV Grade Staff Union, All India Ordinance Factories Union and Defence Employees Union. “His Presidentship made him most powerful and influential labor leaders in the world, potentially able ‘to paralyze the oppressive machinery of British Raj’ (his habitual call to unionist) with a general strike.” At the age of 72 he gave the call for *Sampurna Kranti* (Total Revolution), popularly known as JP’s Movement. He was a strong believer in the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi and his agenda included major reforms in the social sector especially with regard to education, participatory democracy, grass-root organizations at the village and panchayats levels, land reforms, corruption etc. The personality of J.P. and his movement against the ruling government was so strong that Indira Gandhi considered

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134 Frankel, 526-532.
J.P. to be the “most dangerous to the security of the state” as she saw him as the “mouth-piece of the reactionary forces.”

The political situation at the central government level deteriorated day by day, as it was further confronted with another difficulty in the form of a mass strike by approximately 1.7 million railway workers of India. “In May 1974, the All India Railway Men's Union called for an indefinite strike of the Indian Railways all over the country under the leadership of F. Gomes.” Later George Fernandes the president of the All-India Railway’s Federation managed to secure support even from the Communist and Marxist fronts along with Jan Sangh. Francine Frankel viewed it as “a deliberate attempt by the left opposition parties, to create economic and political chaos.”

In November 1974, the National Coordination Committee (NCC), was formed by mainly the opposition parties and it endorsed the issues and ways highlighted by Narayan in his call for “Total Revolution.” J.P. began to organize mass rallies and campaigns for throwing out Indira Government on the charges of corruption. “She turned on JP, calling him a ‘believer in violence’ and a traitor to the Gandhian movement.”

On the other hand Mrs. Gandhi charged J.P. Movement being financed by “wealthy friends” under the influence of “American capitalists.” Here it becomes important to note that simultaneously, “In January 1975, leaders of Mrs. Gandhi’s own Congress party faction and cabinet began to split, with some of them urging negotiations with Narayaan on means to redress unemployment and corruption.” Within no time JP’s movement gained huge support all over the country. Keeping this in mind the Bharatiya Jan Sangh (BJS) expressed its desire and willingness to form a combined or united bloc against the Congress. “On 23 January 1975, A.B. Vajpayee said that his party was prepared to accept Morarji Desai as the leader of the United

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137 Frankel, 528-29.
138 David Hardiman, Gandhi: In his Times and Ours (New Delhi: Permanent Black., 2003), 211.
139 Frankel, 528.
140 Perkovich, 191.
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Front. The BJS President, L.K. Advani, on 3 May 1975, said that there were good prospects of a federal party of the non-CPI opposition being formed against the Congress.”

The political crisis in the country further deepened with the coming up of Judgment of Allahabad High Court on June 12, 1975 making Mrs. Gandhi guilty of violating the Representation of the People Act in her 1971 election campaign. This judgment came in the background of the charges submitted in 1971 by Raj Narain, who was defeated by Indira Gandhi in general elections from Rae Bareily. He levelled charges against Mrs. Gandhi for doing corruption in the elections. Though, the High Court giving relaxation to the Prime Minister stayed its orders for the next 20 days giving time to Congress Party to elect their new successor. Against the charges incurred upon Indira Gandhi, Justice Jagmohanlal Sinha of the Allahabad High Court, held the Prime Minister guilty “of corrupt practices” and for misusing her power and government machinery in the election campaign and “debarred her from contesting any election for six years.” The court found her guilty not of serious charges like bribing voters and election malpractices but for the lesser ones. “It ruled that she had authorized Yashpal Kapoor to carry out election work on her behalf in Rae Bareli, before his resignation from government services to act as an election agent could became effective” and also found her guilty for using “the services of local officials” for her election campaign. This judgment turned Indian political system topsy-turvy. Being a decisive or dictatorial leader (as her critics called her) Indira Gandhi could never take such decision so easily and refused to resign, rather she insisted that such decision could not undermine her position. B N Tandon, Joint Secretary in the Prime Minister Office, writes in his diary, “By lunch the PM had also decided that, since the High Court had itself stayed the operation of its order for 20 days and that she would appeal to the Supreme Court against it, she would not resign immediately.” The state of affairs of the country were moving from bad to worse, there was complete political crisis as all

141 Paliwal, 54.
144 Frankel, 539.
145 B. N. Tandon, PMO Diary- I: Prelude to the Emergency (New Delhi: Konark Publisher, 2003), 384.
the opposition parties and media particularly newspapers in a single voice were demanding her resignation.

A big dramatic turn in the political affairs of the country came when in order to curtail the situation Mrs. Gandhi on the advice of Chief Minister of West Bengal, Siddhartha Shankar Ray, took a decision to “promulgate Emergency laws under Article 352 of the Constitution.” Nothing was going right for Mrs. Gandhi as she got another setback when the Supreme Court on June 24, refused to give her an absolute stay but granted her a ‘conditional stay’ on the judgment till her plea is heard by the full court. In the court of Justice Krishna Iyer it was made clear that Mrs. Gandhi can withhold the position of Prime Minister but due to her pending appeal she will not have the right to vote in the Lower House of the Parliament. During the same time the Congress Party lost in the Gujarat State Assembly elections. The opposition parties, tried to capitalise this opportunity and launched a country-wide campaign to make Mrs. Gandhi resign. The five leading national newspapers also expressed the same sentiments.

Prime Minister Gandhi finally decided to use the last option and in the evening of June 25, 1975, she requested President Fakruddin Ali Ahmed to issue proclamation of emergency. Before midnight President issued the proclamation and some of the provisions of the Constitution were suspended. Within few hours most of the leaders of the opposition were arrested and put behind the bar. Acute censorship was imposed on print and visual media and power of the Judiciary was curtailed. Unlimited authority came in the hands of the Government at the centre.

Mrs. Gandhi justified her act in the name of economic reforms and immediately after proclamation of emergency she came up with the “Twenty-Point Economic Programme” and laying foundation for new social order. But nothing changed the image of the Congress and particularly Mrs. Gandhi. In fact emergency period to a greater extent transformed the public opinion against the ruling Congress. The basic
reason for this changed opinion was the hardships forced by the government on the people during the emergency period. Power of the judiciary was taken away. Many organisations were banned like Rastriya Sawayam Sevak Sangh (RSS). Press was put under severe censorship; both print and electronic media was acutely censored. Only Doordarshan and All India Radio were allowed to telecast news which were again under the surveillance of the government, hence only pro-government news was broadcasted. Print media had to show all the news clips to the Censor office before printing. Hence, public was not getting the right information. Some newspapers like Indian Express showed courage against the dictatorship of the government and published ‘blank editorial’. Such acts enhanced the resentment that was prevailing among the common people. “Through the ‘blank editorial’, they conveyed a powerful message to their readers, more than what could have been communicated through a well written editorial.”

A number of legislative and constitutional changes were made during this time. On 21 July 1975 both the houses of the Parliament convened. This dark phase continued till several months and on January 23, 1977 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced elections in the Lok Sabha. And later the Janata Party government came to power.

CONCLUSION

India has travelled a long way in her quest to nuclear energy and nuclear programme on the whole. In this journey India had to face a number of problems and issues due to her policy of defiance against the discriminatory international nuclear regime. However, India along with moving ahead in her pursuit of nuclear energy for the social development of the country always presented before the world her plans for disarmament and non-proliferation. India was a staunch supporter of peaceful use of nuclear energy and condemned its military utilization. Indian policy makers in the initial years after the independence were aware of the developmental use of the nuclear energy and hence in order to make the most out of it, Indian nuclear programme was designed on the three stage bases. In the course of time the nuclear option of the country was kept open so that in the time of need it can be capitalized for weapon use as well, it

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shows that India always gave priority to its security issues along with the development goals.

Indian nuclear programme was a result of the foresightedness of Jawaharlal Nehru with a deep vision of Homi Bhabha. During the Nehruvian period, India was guided by her traditional values of non-violence, peace and international cooperation kept her nuclear policy in a completely civilian mode, although initial progress for the weaponisation of the nuclear programme cannot be negated. India actively and prominently participated at various disarmament and non-proliferation fronts along with non-alignment platform and tried to create an image of a responsible developing nation. With the passage of time and changing circumstances in the South-Asian region as well as at the international level led to change in the nuclear policy of Nehru. This change became prominent after the defeat of India in the 1962 war with China. Preparations were made for enhancement of nuclear programme and especially in the defence field.

After the death of Jawaharlal Nehru, the nuclear programme was halted for some time as the next Prime Minister in row Lal Bhadur Shastri was not very much in favour of the weaponisation of the nuclear programme. However, after the Chinese nuclear explosion, a debate started in the Indian Parliament for weaponisation of Indian programme, the nationalist groups like the Jana Sangh also enunciated the cause. Although on the basis of economic costs and weakening of the democratic values of the country the option was done away with. But the growing Chinese threat forced the Prime Minister to rejuvenate the nuclear programme and direct it towards developing nuclear weapons, and in line with this Lal Bahdur Shastri gave green signals to the SNEP.

After the death of Lal Bahdur Shastri and Homi Bhabha the nuclear programme of India again lost its pace. As Shastri was succeeded by Nehru’s daughter Indira Gandhi therefore, it was believed that she would continue the legacy of the Gandhian and Nehruvian principles and would not make progress in this field. Contradicting the expectations of the Indian leaders Indira Gandhi maintained the dual-track policy of India. She augmented the disarmament plans of the country but also asked the scientists to weaponise the nuclear programme clandestinely. However, Gandhi had realized the
prestige value that the nuclear explosion carried along with it. So, in order to boost up her image and the deteriorating representation of the Congress Party, she decided to go ahead with nuclear explosion. On May 18, 1974 India astonished the World by conducting nuclear explosion. Although, the nuclear test was named as Peaceful Nuclear Explosion by India, still very negative repercussions emerged as a result of this nuclear explosion. It had to face sanctions for conducting this explosion and creation of the Nuclear Suppliers Group was also its end result. Hence, India’s nuclear test had varied consequences at the global level. Nevertheless, at home the nuclear explosion was welcomed with great enthusiasm and zeal and it delivered result according to the expectations of Mrs. Gandhi. Her image got improved and public opinion shifted back towards the Congress Party.

At the same time the World was witnessing a wave for the non-proliferation and in this line consensus was building for enacting the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Though India always propelled for the non-proliferation but due to the discriminatory clauses in the treaty she did not agreed to sign it. India also tried to build opinion of the developing nations against the treaty and also for raising the non-compliance against it. Giving its security and development needs India denied to sign this treaty and justified her argument by stating her acceptance of the PTBT. The international nuclear regimes pressurized India to sign the NPT but keeping a strict and clear policy on the treaty, Indian government did not succumb to any of such pressures. Even the termination of the Indo-US Nuclear fuel Accord for the Tarapur power plant could not alter India’s position.

It is noteworthy that India continued to follow the same nuclear policy under different Prime Ministers. Although due to the single party dominance of the Congress the policy was not expected to be changed but even though the strong and firm stand of conducting nuclear tests and absorbing the pressure rose after the nuclear explosion depicted the strength of the Indian government particularly under Indira Gandhi. Another important aspect to be noted is that India pursued an indigenous three stage nuclear programme and it was due to this feature that India was able to follow a dual-track policy of overt civilian and covert military nuclear programme. Though domestic factors played a very significant role in pushing Mrs. Gandhi to conduct the nuclear
tests still the developments made by the Nehru and Shastri cannot be negated. It was due to the continuous efforts of these leaders that India was able to go ahead with nuclear tests in 1974. The PNE of 1974 also displayed India’s courage and scientific velour to overcome all the barriers and follow her independent and sovereign policy in all the spheres. It made India not only a big player at the international level but also a leader in the South-Asian region.