CHAPTER-IV

NUCLEAR REGIMES AND NUCLEAR POLICY UNDER EARLY COALITION GOVERNMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The nuclear policy of India in the late 20th century and at the dawn of second decade of the 21st century was in continuity with the past policies of the Congress Government, but with a difference. However, coalition governments formed at the Centre had been weak and they lacked the wherewithal to take bold decisions with regard to nuclear policy. The 1977 Janata Party government led by Prime Minister Morarji Desai fell within a span of two and half years and during his tenure, the US Administration led by Jimmy Carter took the decision of stopping the supply of uranium for Tarapur nuclear plant posing serious hurdle in country’s nuclear programme.1 The “military and technological hegemony” of America as well as Soviet Union became the reality of the international system during that time period. Even the successor governments of the Congress in India continued to revolt against the undue sanctions which these countries imposed on India. “India’s nuclear option…be viewed as a protest if not defiance against the unjust international system and the ruthless manipulation of norms and standards by which the few nuclear weapon powers will decide the fate of all other nations and people both technologically and militarily.”2

Under the Prime Ministership of Morarji Desai there was much confusion with regard to the nuclear policy of the country, as on the one hand he favoured the civilian use of nuclear energy but on the other hand he discarded the use of the same in weapons. But the basic negation against any discriminatory treaty (esp. Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT)) or safeguards continued.

Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh’s Government also could not take any important decision in this regard. Things on nuclear front started improving only after Indira Gandhi came back to power. During her tenure the nuclear power regained pace

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2 T.T. Poulose, “India’s Nuclear Policy,” in Perspectives of India’s Nuclear Policy, ed. T.T. Poulose (New Delhi: Young Asia Publications, 1978), 156.
when in a meeting with the US President Ronald Reagan during Cancun Summit in 1982 the supply of uranium got resumed by France on behalf of the US. It became the major contribution which came from Indira Gandhi till this time after the Peaceful Nuclear Explosion (PNE). Her nuclear contribution in its peaceful application lies in harnessing the atomic energy for development activities and relating science and technology to the improvement in living standards of the people. With a sound nuclear infrastructure backed up by necessary inputs, India attained the stage of designing, building and operating nuclear reactors indigenously.\(^3\)

Rajiv Gandhi, a fresh entrant to politics, soon became a young leader of India and he had a penchant for fast scientific and economic modernization of India. His spirit of accommodation and co-operation with both the super powers, without tilting this way or that way, won him admiration both in the United States and the then Soviet Union. Rajiv Gandhi was in favor of a World free from nuclear arms and related armaments. He once mentioned, “There is only one answer to the menace of nuclear weapons and that is to dismantle all nuclear weapons, terminating the nuclear arms race on earth and preventing a nuclear arms race in space.”\(^4\) Though India’s nuclear policy during the Rajiv Gandhi’s era did not depart from the “dual track” policy adopted by Indira Gandhi, the major contribution of Rajiv Gandhi lays in the successful conclusion of agreement in December 1988 between India and Pakistan pledging not to attack each other’s nuclear facilities.\(^5\) After the fall of Rajiv Gandhi’s Government in 1989 over Bofors scandal, another Coalition Government led by Prime Minister V.P. Singh and Chandrashekhar came to power at Centre after the precipitation of ‘Brasstack crisis’ on India-Pakistan borders. The records of both coalition governments in sphere of nuclear policy have not been very satisfactory because of instability within the country particularly in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, and North-East and on account of communal violence after the BJP’s RathYatra and decision of implementing Mandal Commission’s report for 27 percent reservation to Other Backward Castes (OBCs)

\(^3\) Jain.
\(^5\) Jain, 69.
backfired and the government fell. The Government led by Prime Minister P.V. Narsimha Rao, a Congress Party led minority government remained preoccupied with extracting India from serious foreign debt crisis. It unleashed a series of economic reforms in the country possibly under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The dependence on the US for the IMF and World Bank loan in order to overcome foreign exchange crisis, did not let Rao’s government to take major decisions regarding its nuclear policy. Many a time it came under pressure of signing the NPT; later in 1993 it was forced to co-sponsor the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) resolutions inside the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) along with the US thus, making compromise on its nuclear policy.  

However, the formation of Coalition Governments on continuous basis after 1995 under different ideologies and strategies has left a deep imprint upon the country’s nuclear policy-making in the 21st century. The decision of United Front (UF) Government led by Prime Minister Deve Gowda took the historical decision of boycotting the CTBT discussion and sensing the opinion of people in the country decided not to sign the CTBT in 1996. It was for the first time that a Coalition Government could take such a historical decision of openly declaring that it is not signing the CTBT which had the potential of jeopardizing India’s nuclear policy in a very big manner. The governments of Deve Gowda as well as I.K. Gujral withstood the international pressure and made no compromises with country’s nuclear policy. 

**FORMATION OF THE JANATA GOVERNMENT**

The party system in India saw a biggest change with the coming up of coalition party government at the centre in 1970s. Till 2013, there have been ten coalition governments so far at the Central level. This change was brought for the first time by the Janata party Government, when it formed government in 1977 defeating the Congress party vehemently. But, the Janata party was the second in number to counter the Congress and its policies, before Janata, the Swatantra Party which was established

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in 1959 was successful in winning some seats in the Lok Sabha but got restricted to only few of them. The main agenda of the Swatantra Party was against socialism as it had the support of big businessmen.\(^8\) Whereas having a deep insight in the history of the Janata Party it is revealed that:

The Janata party was the offspring of the continuous struggles made by the opposition parties to pull down the Congress from power. Frustrated by the authoritarianism of the Congress during the emergency (1975-77), certain opposition parties and groups decided to fight the next general elections under a common banner and thus provide an alternative to the Congress. On the initiative given by Jayaparkash Narayan who provided moral leadership to Indian politics at the time, the Congress (O), the Jan Sangh, the Socialist Party and the Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD) came together to undertake the challenge by forming new political outfit ‘Janata Party’.\(^9\)

The Janata Phase marked the end of “Nehru-Indira Congress regime” by establishing the first non-Congress Government under the leadership of Morarji Desai. But since the Janata alliance was amalgamation of groups with different ideologies so there was “intense power struggle” among its top leaders, i.e. Morarji Desai, Chaudhari Charan Singh and Jagjivan Ram.\(^10\) In a short period of 28 months the government could not take any strong decisions with regard to policy making as it got indulged in its own issues of “factional infighting and mutual smearing”.\(^11\) This happened mainly because of the difference in ideologies and programmes of the factions which joined together to form the Janata Party. This difference was very clear in the speeches which appeared from time to time on different policies of the Government.

The previous governments under the leadership of Nehru and Indira had very close and warm relation with the Soviet Union but during this period the new government tried to create a distance from the same and started bending more towards

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the US, this got apparent in its pursuance of foreign policy. The Janata Party came up with a new form of non-alignment called the “genuine” or “proper” non-alignment.\(^\text{12}\) It was nothing but the continuation of the policy of non-alignment with maintaining distance from the Soviet Union in order to be equally friendly with the US. Even the manifesto of the Janata Party envisaged that:

> The Janata Party’s foreign policy will reflect the nation’s enlightened interest and its aspirations and priorities at home. It will oppose all forms of colonialism, neo-colonialism and racialism. It stands for friendship for all. It is committed to genuine non-alignment free from attachment to any power bloc. It will strive for the peaceful settlement of all international disputes and will work with other Third World nations to establish a new and just international economic order.\(^\text{13}\)

Non-alignment was the core of the foreign policy of the Janata Party as it was the binding bond for the party.\(^\text{14}\) “Consisting of the erstwhile Jana Sangh and the BLD wings on the one hand and Socialists and Young Turks group of the Congress on the other, non-alignment offered to the Janata Party a middle-of-the-line policy.”\(^\text{15}\) Morarji Desai in his first Press Conference after election clarified that “there would be no special relations with any country.”\(^\text{16}\)

**NUCLEAR POLICY OF THE JANATA GOVERNMENT**

**Morarji Desai Phase**

As far as the nuclear policy is concerned none of the competing parties in the 6\(^{th}\) Lok Sabha Election mentioned nuclear policy in their election manifesto. Only Jagjivan

\(^{12}\) Ibid, 166.


\(^{14}\) For details of foreign policy pronouncements of the Janata party see: (Rajesh Kumar Paliwal, *Janata Phase in Indian Politics*, (New Delhi: Raaj Prakashan, 1986), 153.

i. Prime Minister Desai’s Press Conference in New Delhi on 24 March 1977, Indian and Foreign Review, (New Delhi: 1 April, 1977), 3;

ii. Vajpayee’s address at Consultative Committee of the Parliament attached to his ministry, Indian and Foreign Review, (New Delhi: 1 June, 1977), 6;

iii. Vajpayee’s speech at Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries, New Delhi on 7 April 1977, Foreign Affair Record, Vol. XXIII, No. 7, (New Delhi: July 1977);


\(^{16}\) Ibid, 152.
Ram’s Congress for Democracy made a passing reference to it by saying, “India shall continue to maintain its independence in respect of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We shall always safeguard our national dignity and national honour—not in words but in deeds.” After formation of the government the Janata Party pursued peaceful use of nuclear power and remained against manufacturing of the nuclear weapons. Headed by Morarji Desai, who was the staunch opponent of nuclear weapons since the time when China conducted nuclear test in 1965, the nuclear policy under the Janata Party government was expected to be peaceful and stagnant. Desai being a Gandhian followed anti-nuclear stand when he was even a part of the Congress party. Giving a moral and emotional speech to the Congress after the Chinese nuclear test, when India got insecure of the increasing Chinese influence, he said:

Even from the practical point of view...possession of an atom bomb would not immediately add to the country’s strength or give courage to every person in the country. ‘Courage and fearlessness come from the minds within and not from the atom bomb.’

Though Morarji Desai government was against the nuclear weapons, however, he took certain steps that were of immense advantage for future nuclear weapons programme of the country. In the Janata Phase the nuclear policy of India was overshadowed with confusions and uncertainty. The Janata Party never had a complete policy on the nuclear issue and Prime Minister Morarji Desai gave divergent views contradicting himself many times on different platforms. Prime Minister Desai followed a deviating approach from his predecessors regarding the nuclear policy, as till then India independently followed an open option towards the nuclear issue, but Desai openly criticized it. Even during the days of Pokhran-I Desai was the foremost critic of the nuclear explosion in India and continued to remain so even after assuming Premiership. His was a moralistic approach which was based on idealistic moral values against the usage of big and dire bombs. His moralistic approach was “more akin to Nehru’s views on world

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20 Paliwal, 148.
disarmament.”\textsuperscript{[21]} In spite of varied differences Morarji Desai always claimed on the national front that he would maintain continuity in the nuclear policy of India. But this continuity was taken over by the vagueness and unrealism, as on the very day of assuming power at the Centre, Morarji Desai claimed that India would “not conduct any further nuclear explosion.”\textsuperscript{[22]} This diversion was seen as an attempt to “win back nuclear energy assistance from the United States and Canada.”\textsuperscript{[23]}

The Janata Government lacked clarity on the nuclear issue because there was no uniformity in the ideology of the different groups and particularly between Morarji Desai and his Cabinet members. Due to this the statements of Prime Minister Desai and the Foreign Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee (who belonged to the Bharatiya Jan Sangh) varied and in fact contradicted most of the times. Whereas, Prime Minister Desai completely negated the nuclear explosion, A.B. Vajpayee on different occasions maintained the stand that if required we could go for the same. This difference arose because Desai inherited his legacy from the Congress party and the faction against the nuclear tests, whereas, Vajpayee came from the Jan Sangh group which always favoured the use of nuclear explosion in order to enhance the position and power of India at the international level.\textsuperscript{[24]} These differences reflected a sharp gap in the perspective of the Janata Government especially on the part of decision and policy making, and commenting on this situation K. K. Pathak remarked that they ‘lacked world view.’\textsuperscript{[25]} In the initial days of Government, Prime Minister was very strict towards his policy of disarmament and proliferation. This approach was outlined when he addressed the first UNGA Special session on Disarmament on 9 June 1978. In that address he clearly mentioned, “We are the only country pledged not to manufacture or

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{22} Paliwal.
\textsuperscript{24} This position of A.B. Vajpayee later worked as an important factor in the culmination of the Pokhran-II.
\end{footnotesize}
acquire nuclear weapons even if the rest of the world did so.”

Advocating his urge towards international peace and security he put forward four urgent steps:

These included outlawing utilization of nuclear technology for military purposes, qualitative and quantitative limitations on nuclear armament, a reduction of stockpiles within a time-bound programme and a comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory test ban treaty under international inspections.

Questioning the need and usage of the PNE, Morarji Desai “regarded the results of the PNE as inadequate compensation for the jolt to international public opinion and the consequences it had on India’s peaceful pursuit of nuclear knowledge.” So he declared that India would not conduct any PNE in future. He denied any pressure from outside powers in the decision taken of not conducting any further PNE. But very soon the situation changed and the firm and stringent stand of Desai was transformed into a moderate one. This change was replicated in his speech in Lok Sabha on 26 July 1978. In his speech he differentiated between “explosions” and “blasts” and barred ‘explosions’ favoring ‘blasts’. He justified his differentiation explaining that

Explosions were needed only for “political purposes” and did not enhance any further knowledge. He went on to add that underground engineering projects like digging of canal and dams, exploration of oil, extraction of low grade metal ores, required blasts and not explosions.

Technically there is no such difference in explosion and blast but Desai used such terminology only to retreat from his earlier stand of his complete ban on all types of nuclear explosions. This deviation in Prime Minister’s stance was the result of a number of factors international as well as domestic. Internationally, China and Pakistan played a very important role, as China was continuously modernizing its nuclear arsenal whereas Pakistan with the help of China was enhancing its nuclear potential. Prime Minister

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26 Paliwal.
27 Speeches of Prime Minister Morarji Desai at the First Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament, 9 June 1978, Documents on India’s Nuclear Disarmament Policy, Vol. II, 945. Also see: Reetika Sharma, Ramvir Goria and Vivek Mishra, India and the Dynamics of World Politics: A Book on Indian Foreign Policy (Noida: Dorling Kindersley, 2011), 1.76.
29 Subramanian, 44.
Desai realized the gravity of the situation that in such a scenario where security of India was concerned, maintaining an indifferent attitude towards nuclear policy could be suicidal for India.\(^{30}\) Domestically also this situation had repercussions for Desai’s Government. After having open differences on nuclear policy with External Affairs Minister Vajpayee, the growing threat to India’s security and Desai’s apathetic attitude towards the same led to a rift in the cabinet particularly with Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram.

Another factor which played a very important role in India’s nuclear policy during Janata regime was the bilateral fuel accords which shaped the course of nuclear policy followed by the Janata Regime and marked a remarkable shift in Government’s stand. The first was the bilateral agreement between India-US of 1963 for the Tarapur Atomic Power Station (TAPS) and second was the Indo-Soviet Heavy Water Deal of 1977. Tarapur Atomic Power Station was India’s first nuclear power station. It was built with American assistance and had two boiling-water reactors (BWR), with the capacity of 200 MWe each. This station got operationalised in 1969. On the basis of international tender the project was awarded to American multinational company General Electric.\(^{31}\) Three inter-governmental agreements were signed between India and the US for cooperation in the nuclear field. Out of these three, “one signed on 8 August 1963 included a U.S. commitment to supply fuel throughout the life of the station and to exchange unclassified information in the fields of research and development including Boiling Water Reactor technology and the use of plutonium as fuel”.\(^{32}\) The Fuel Sales Agreement and the US AID Loan Agreement were the other two accords.

Such agreements on one hand showed American interests to capitalize India’s nuclear energy market and on the other hand it was also believed that it was a diplomatic move on the part of the U.S. to halt India’s nuclear progress as and when

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\(^{30}\) During this time Pakistan was venturing to acquire nuclear weapons in a clandestine manner. China supported this endeavour whereas U.S opposed it. U.S.A suspended aid to Pakistan under the Symington Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Under this amendment U.S Congress debarred financial and military aid to any country who was alleged in nuclear trade particularly receiving or delivering nuclear equipment, material or technology not safeguarded under the IAEA.


\(^{32}\) Pathak, 1979, 35.
required. Soon after India’s PNE the latter became reality when U.S. stopped fuel supply to the TAPS in spite of the 1963 fuel accord of supplying fuel for the lifetime of the station.

Similarly, the first Indian Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) was constructed in a series of two reactors RAPS-1 and RAPS-2 in Rajasthan as a joint venture project with Canada. “The import content of RAPS-1 was 45% and half of its first core fuel charge was imported. Commercial operation of RAPS-1 commenced in December, 1973.”33 As a repercussion to the PNE in May 1974, Canadian support was withdrawn while RAPS-2 was still under construction. Hence, the overall development in the nuclear field got affected due to unavailability of fuel. The Janata Government started feeling the pressure from inside as well as outside the country. The inside pressure was due to the stagnation in the nuclear projects due to unavailability of the fuel and the outside pressure was due to the demands of the U.S. and Soviet Union in order to sign the NPT. Under such circumstances the Indo-Soviet Heavy Water Deal was on papers, to be finalized soon in 1977. Taking benefit of the situation Soviet Union also came up with certain terms and conditions which were against the interests of India. The deal was kept highly secretive and hidden.34

The deal codified the prevalent notion in Western countries that under appropriate circumstances India’s verbal position can be modified if select Indians are confronted with negotiating realities and if there are other inducements to dilute the policy without altering the principal verbal rhetoric which is fed to the Indian public.35

Prime Minister Desai’s Government was under pressure and it was evident from the changes in his stance which came in the later period. In fact Morarji Desai on 31 July 1978 gave a statement in Rajya Sabha explaining his helplessness as:

34 The USSR insisted on multi-point control by IAEA of all the power plants in India where the Soviet heavy water, its products or by-products were to be used.
Also see: “Nuclear Policy: Moment of Untruth,” Economic and Political Weekly 13, no. 17 (29 April, 1978): 710.
The Pokhran explosion had been taken by the world as a departure from the earlier policy, the consequence of which we experience every time we enter into any cooperation and collaboration arrangement for the fulfilment of our need of fuel and equipment for the conduct of research and development.\footnote{Morarji Desai, \textit{Statement on Peaceful Nuclear Explosion}, Rajya Sabha, Official Text (New Delhi: Press Information Bureau, Government of India, July 31, 1978).}

In spite of increasing pressure Desai’s Government was trying hard not to submit to any of the demands of these countries and was successful in doing so. It was this time when Morarji Desai changed his moralistic policy of not using nuclear weapons as an instrument of foreign policy. Taking a comparatively strict stand and doing away with the policy of appeasement towards the US, Morarji Desai condemned the U.S. on moral grounds for breaching the 1963 fuel accord and delaying the fuel supply to the TAPS. He openly declared that, “India would rather shut down TAPS or ‘improvise’ using mixed oxide (MOX) fuel of plutonium and uranium, manufactured indigenously, than accept full scope safeguards.”\footnote{As cited in Subramanian, 48.} This statement proved the commitment of the Indian government towards the nuclear policy of the nation irrespective of the party ruling the country, the major issues and policies were never changed or diverted, especially which were based on India’s national interests.

\textbf{Janata Governments’ Stand on the NPT}

The Janata Party Government had been alleged to have divergent viewpoints as far as foreign policy and nuclear policy of the nation is concerned. But the issue of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty became a joining bond for the government. There was unanimity on not signing the NPT in any case. The Government was very clear on the issue of the NPT that even in the worst cases it would not sign on such discriminatory treaty. “The reasons for not signing a treaty may be different for different leaders of the factions that constituted the Janata government. The net result is that India’s nuclear weapons option remains unaffected.”\footnote{Ibid, 47.} The big powers tried to pressurize India on various fronts for signing the treaty, but Indian government managed not to succumb to the discriminatory provisions of the treaty. Even the creation of the ‘London Club’ which later formed the ‘Nuclear Supplier Group’ (NSG) was a step towards this process.
by the nuclear haves to pressurize India to agree upon the provisions of the NPT. Even the unstable government like Janata Party Government which came to power for the first time never consented to the same. “The Janata Government stood its ground on the NPT and refused to be drawn into blackmail of the nuclear club for full scope ‘safeguards’ under international inspection.”  

Even though Morarji Desai was a moderate leader and his anti-nuclear agenda was well known to everyone, still he was not ready to compromise on any terms and conditions put forward by the nuclear haves to make India sign the NPT.

Later in an interview given in 1987 Morarji Desai clarified that he was very apparent with regard to the NPT issue, as there was unanimity in the party regarding the non-signing of the treaty. He explained

> We refused to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty…because…those who asked us to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty were themselves keeping atomic weapons. And they asked us not to do it. How can we sign it? I told them in these very words, that if two robbers come to me and said, “Don’t do robbery,” what effect it will have on me? Unless you give up these weapons, I can’t sign with you. I can’t be with…sit in your company…if they give up nuclear weapons, and sign the treaty. I can understand it, I can sign with them.

Even in such dubious environment very propitious preparations were made for US President Carter’s visit, who visited India in January 1978. Though Indian side was very overwhelmed with the visit, the US was very clear on their terms and conditions. “President Carter was quite obsessed with the so-called nuclear safeguards and the non-proliferation treaty….He was not willing to make any commitment on the long-term supply of uranium for Tarapur.”

This strict and anti-nuclear proliferation attitude was continued by the American side when Prime Minister Desai visited the U.S. in a reciprocal visit in June 1978. Though, President Carter openly favoured India but he was very obdurate on his non-proliferation agenda and was keen to make India to accept

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39 Puri, 172
the discriminatory guidelines. He tried Carrot and Stick policy by alluring Indian diplomacy with aid, by putting restrictions and delaying fuel for the Tarapur plant, but India did not drift from her strict stand on the NPT. On the issue of the nuclear fuel supply to India, President Carter spoke in Indian Parliament on January 2, 1978. He stated that:

> We have notified Prime Minister Desai that shipments of nuclear fuel will be made for the Tarapur reactor. And because of an accident that did occur in your heavy water production plant, we will make available to India also supplies from our reserves of heavy water.  

Stephen Cohen describes the situation by stating that, “Carter was seen by some Indians as a friend turned hypocrite: he promised aid and praised India, but was really pushing a non-proliferation agenda that threatened vital Indian interests.” The reason that Indians highly criticized of the American attitude (of pushing hard for the NPT) was that the U.S. had not subjected any such pressure on Israel and South Africa. Both of these countries were actively involved in developing nuclear potential and the world was aware of their undemonstrated nuclear capability. This discrimination of putting restrictions especially on India was done as a result of India’s refusal to agree on the bigotry terms of the NPT.

From America’s perspective, these nuclear-related economic sanctions were not aimed at India’s status as a great power, nor was the objective one of preventing its emergence as a major power. They were deemed necessary to maintain a common front against the worldwide menace of proliferation. India seemed to be clear violators; while the Iraqis could be dealt with by force, the North Koreans by offers of economic aid, and the Israelis ignored, India was ripe for sanctions and other forms of denial and punishment. These were believed to be a deterrent to India, a “lesson” to other possible nuclear violators, and as a part of the pledge that Washington had made to its allies and to non-nuclear states who had signed up to the constraints embedded in the NPT. Sanctions had earlier been used to cajole India into economic reform (they largely failed), and

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when they were applied to what many Indians regarded as a vital national interest—the maintenance of the nuclear option—they proved to be ineffective, and even counter-productive.  

After the visit of President Carter reacting to the external pressures to sign the NPT Morarji Desai proposed three principles as the pre-conditions for India’s acceptance of the NPT:

1. ‘They’ must give up all nuclear testing;
2. Stop adding to the stockpiles and decide to progressively dismantle their nuclear weapons; and
3. ‘They’ themselves must accept the safeguards they are suggesting to others.

N.A. Palkhiwala, the then ambassador of India to Washington also tried hard to normalize and strengthen relations of India vis-à-vis the US as per the new foreign policy of the Janata Party Government, but nothing paid much. In fact Palkhiwala made sure that the statement of Indian government of not conducting any nuclear explosions in future even for peaceful purposes was well highlighted on the U.S. front, but his attempt went in vain. In an interview to John J. Fialka from Washington Star, Palkhiwala stated:

India is the only country with the requisite sensitive technology that has made the unequivocal declarations that it will not have an explosion hereafter even for peaceful purposes, and it will not produce or acquire a nuclear weapon under any circumstance. The sincerity of our prime minister is beyond question, of Gandhian vision.

The Janata Government tried to bring some changes in the foreign policy of their predecessors by maintaining differences with the Soviet bloc and moving a step forward towards US. They had to face criticism for having soft corner for the US; in spite of these efforts the relation between India and the US remained cold. Though on papers the Janata Government boasted of having attained, “a new rapport and understanding

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44 Ibid, 10.
45 Kapur, 178.4
46 The term ‘They’ was never clarified by the Prime Minister, but it was supposed to be used for the Permanent five (P5s) who were time and again alleged by India for having biased and discriminatory attitude.
47 He also suggested the Indian government to follow a neutral stand on major issues in Africa.
48 As cited in Roberta Wohlstetter, 19.
with US”, 49 but in reality the stalemate was evident on almost all platforms. According to Harish K. Puri, “New Delhi refused to become an object of Washington’s ‘grand design’ but continued to bend herself backwards to establish her bonafides for US friendship.” 50 The scientific intelligentsia in India was not very happy about the importance which Morarji Desai gave to the American government. Also a maximum number of scientists working in this area were in favour of keeping the nuclear option open. United News of India (UNI) conducted a sample survey in January 1989. This survey was done on the scientists who participated in the Indian Science Congress held in Hyderabad. According to the survey, “An overwhelming majority of scientists favored continuation of India’s underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes.” 51

In 1978, the US Government came up with Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act (NNPA). This Act was a domestic legislation of the US in order to impose ban and restrictions on the non-nuclear nations who were against the Act. This Act came up with the “full scope safeguards” option. The full scope safeguards or the “comprehensive safeguards” calls for the “multiple point inspection of all the present and future nuclear facilities (thereby extending safeguards from material, facilities and technologies supplied by the nuclear exporting nation to the indigenous facilities) form part of the norms and rules of the existing non-proliferation regime.” 52 Prime Minister Desai was very critical of these safeguards, and after participating in an international committee on full scope safeguards when the Atomic Energy Commission representatives made him aware of the situation, he openly clarified that India would not put its sovereignty at stake in any case. He stated:

India will not permit any nuclear power to examine its installations unless it gets reciprocal rights to make similar inspections….India is going on the principle that it will not open its installations to inspection and that principle is not affected by participation on the safeguards

50 Puri, 168.
51 As cited in Pathak, 1979, 41.
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panel...if this panel does not come to any proper safeguards at all, then India is not bound to act on those recommendations.\(^{53}\)

In 1979, Morarji Desai while giving precedence to India’s national interest rejected Pakistani President Zia-ul Haq’s proposal to work together in order to make South-Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. Indian Foreign Minister Vajpayee in a reply to that stated:

If the nuclear weapon states [had] deployed nuclear weapons [in the region], what is the use of having a nuclear weapon-free zone in South Asia?\(^{54}\)

This issue was raised previously by President Carter as well during Morarji Desai’s visit to America in June 1978.

Carter then inquired whether it would be “possible to have a nuclear weapons free zone in South Asia?” Desai demurred, arguing, “We have declared that we will not develop weapons. If the Pakistanis are concerned, let them declare that they will not have any weapons.”\(^{55}\)

Prime Minister Desai has always been one of the major supporters of the nuclear weapon-free zones at various international fronts but his opposition to the Pakistani President’s proposal showed inconsistency in his practice. This inconsistency can be the result of his global concern or his understanding of such shrewd move by a hostile neighbour. However, Indian Prime Minister justified his argument by stating the security concerns of the nation and the region as well.

By pointing out that a nuclear weapon-free zone did not provide security to non-nuclear weapon states as long as the nuclear weapon states continued to have nuclear weapons, Desai not only resolved the anomaly of the Indian position, but also may have been pointing out some of the nuances ingrained within India’s nuclear weapons programme but often overlooked by observers. By identifying South Asia as different from other regions of the world, Desai was drawing attention to the fact that the security concerns of South Asia must include the Chinese and Western nuclear arsenals.\(^{56}\)

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53 Nucleonics Week, (January 4, 1979), 14.
54 As cited in Bhumika Chakma, Strategic Dynamics and Nuclear Weapons Proliferation in South Asia: A Historical Analysis (Bern, Germany: Peter Lang AG, European Academic Publishers, 2004), 251.
55 As cited in George Perkovich, India’s Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 211.
India witnessed the fate of Brazil and Argentina after the ‘Treaty of Tlatlalco’ and was assured that such regional and sub-regional free zones adversely affect the nations. According to Former Foreign Secretary of India J.N. Dixit:

India was convinced that regional and sub-regional free-zones being established was irrelevant in terms of the objectives of non-proliferation especially when the nuclear weapons had a global reach and more so where most of the regions had at least one nuclear weapons power within the region itself.  

Morarji Desai’s changed stance was also justified due to the events which took place in Pakistan. On August 8, 1978, Henry Kissinger (former Foreign Secretary of US) went to Pakistan in order to warn Pakistan about its increasing steps towards nuclear enhancement (Pakistan was in the process to buy plutonium reprocessing plant from France), as American were afraid that it could lead to nuclear war in the South Asia. Though openly US threatened Pakistan that it would stop all the economic and military aid but according to Jack Anderson, “Kissinger secretly promised Pakistan one billion dollars worth fighter planes, in accordance with Bhutto’s demand for 80 to 100 A-7 bombers, as an inducement to keep away from developing nuclear weapons. He made this deal without notifying the Congress.” In spite of this deal Prime Minister Bhutto did not agree to scrap the nuclear agreement. With an obvious reason of disturbing balance of power in South Asia, India criticized the undue American support to the Pakistan. Since, there was change in the Government of India with the coming up of the Janata Government so, the US tried to persuade Pakistan to accept some alternative deal which was more acceptable to India, and the deal proposed by Kissinger was left out. But, later, France cancelled the nuclear deal with Pakistan and America agreed to give five squadrons of F-5E deep strike aircrafts. Since, the range of these aircrafts was 400 nautical Kms, so India reacted strongly to this sale deed. The then External Affairs Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee “warned US that any attempt to rearm Pakistan on the pretext that something had happened in Afghanistan and Iran would be counter-

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58 As cited in Leela Yadava, “India’s Reaction to US Military Aid to Pakistan,” in Studies in India’s Foreign Policy, ed. Surendra Chopra (Amritsar: Department of Political Science, Guru Nanak Dev University, 1980), 311.
productive, increase instability and create new tensions.”

While answering to a question in Lok Sabha Vajpayee explained that:

The Government of India has normalized relations with Pakistan and seeks to explore the possibilities of increasing beneficial co-operation between the countries of this region. We have brought to the notice of the US Government our concern at the danger of arms sale which could upset this process.

Even the Indian Foreign Secretary Jagat Mehta was reported saying that the problem was not about the “quantum of arms but of principle” and it could harm Indo-US relationship. In spite of opposition from Indian side and false assurances from the US side for providing only the small arms and not the sophisticated weapons, Americans continued their support to Pakistan with technologically upgraded conventional weapons against Afghanistan. In such a situation it was natural for Indian Prime Minister to refuse to any kind of agreement with Pakistan.

Overall, the Janata Government phase was not a stagnant phase with regard to the nuclear development as in spite of being a big critic of nuclear weapons Morarji Desai took some important decisions for the development of nuclear program in India. Immediately after becoming Prime Minister, Desai verbally authorized the scientific intelligentsia to work on improving the 1974 device design. Also work on the “Dhruva” reactor technically known as R-5 was started during his regime. Though the planning for this 100 MW reactor had started in 1973 itself, but the actual initiation was done in 1977.

Another important fact that proves that Desai never completely stagnated the nuclear plans of India was that although he knew that Mr. Sethna Director of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was the man behind 1974 test, he did not dismiss him. But, in order to end the dispute between Sethna and BARC’s Director Ramanna, he removed Ramanna as director and transferred him to the Defence

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59 Ibid, 312-313. Also see: Government of India, Lok Sabha Debates, vol. XXII, no.4, 22 February 1979, Col. 25.
It was felt that the dispute between both of them was directly affecting the nuclear programme of India. However, being an important part of the 1974 nuclear test team Ramanna enjoyed great respect and prestige in India, hence his transfer was condemned all over India by press and media. Also in order to restructure the AEC and to be aware of the internal dynamics, Prime Minister Desai appointed Dr. Atma Ram, a former Director General of CSIR, and Chairman of the National Committee on Science and Technology. The need to restructure the AEC arose because of the internal fights between the top officials. “Mr. Desai although did not open the AEC for public scrutiny, he entrusted Atma Ram to work out a concrete proposal to split the monolithic nuclear set-up into separate working bodies and to institute a Regulatory Commission to oversee the performance of DAE.”

The interest in these establishments and nuclear programme was so high that even after being out of power and government, Mrs. Indira Gandhi was reported to be in touch with the people in these establishments and they secretly kept her aware of all the developments that took place.

In 1977 the heavy water plant of Baroda also got operationalised but in December due to an explosion, it had to be shut down. In 1978 under Morarji Desai Government for the first time India acquired aircrafts that were capable of carrying nuclear weapons. “The 1978 IAF contract was bagged by British Aerospace Jaguar. The US refused to clear the Viggen sale to India. The Jaguar trumped the French built mirage and the deal was signed by the Morarji Desai-led Janata Party Government…” Four squadrons of Jaguar were approved for purchase, and this deal accelerated the progress in India’s nuclear field.

In spite of the above mentioned steps taken by the Desai government the general situation was not very bright, as under the Morarji phase of the Janata Party government the nuclear programme of India had to face a number of obstacles and its progress got slowed down and almost became moribund. The moderate personality of the Prime Minister became an important reason behind the decelerated nuclear programme. In fact

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64 He was also made the scientific advisor to the Defense Ministry and later was made Director General of DRDO. Ramanna’s influence never decreased in spite of his transfer as after the return of Indira Gandhi to power he was again appointed as Director of BARC, in addition to his existing positions.


the Americans also believed that if pursued properly it was possible to vow the Morarji Government to accept full scope safeguards. Americans were quite acceptable of the moderate attitude followed by the Janata Government. An American report (released under the Freedom of Information Act) cited the Economist stating:

Mr. Desai, as a Gandhian pacifist of long standing…may carry more conviction with foreign governments than Mrs. Gandhi did when he also follows her in declaring that he will not use nuclear weapons.67

This description shows the changed American attitude towards the Indian Government. The U.S. government was aware of the moderate attitude of the Prime Minister Desai and they wanted to reap gains out of the situation. In fact, it was believed that at some point of time Desai Government was under pressure and if the US and the Soviet Union had fully agreed to end the nuclear arms race they might have accepted the full scope safeguards. As cited by Perkovich:

The scholar Paul Power reported that Desai told American officials during his June 1978 visit to Washington that he would accept full scope safeguards when SALT II and a test ban treaty had been signed and military reactors were converted into civilian reactors and opened for inspection…Then Ambassador Robert Gohen stated in an interview that Desai had intimated similarly to the British high commissioner in New Delhi.68

This condition of accepting full scope safeguards under the NPT, if both superpowers agree on arms control was a clear dilution from the then existing nuclear policy. Time and again Prime Minister Desai was criticised by the supporters of Indira Gandhi for being under American pressure but he managed to sustain the existing policy on nuclear programme. Hence, the influence of Morarji Desai started attenuating. Even though officially Prime Minister Desai was hell-bent on not producing nuclear weapons, but he clarified the major powers that:

We cannot give up the option, but it won’t lead to proliferation as long as I am at the helm. If you really wish to prevent proliferation, go ahead to stitch a few convincing agreements. If you can create the right kind of ambience I may even be able to persuade my countrymen to give up the

67 Roberta Wohlstetter, 20.
68 Perkovich, 215.
option. But if you fail, there will be proliferation, by India or another power. And then the dam will burst. If you try to hurt the Indian option without bringing your own nuclear might under control, you will only make India more intransigent.69

The political scene of the country changed in just three years after the Janata Party Government came to power. The internal conflict in the party got highlighted in 1979 and the Desai government collapsed70 and he along with his Council of Ministers tended his resignation to the President on July 15, 1979.71

Chaudhari Charan Singh Phase

After the fall of Desai’s government, 77 years old Charan Singh from the Lok Dal Party became Prime Minister. He had the support of the well off peasantry and to some extent of Indira Gandhi as well.72 The act of Charan Singh to move out of the Janata Party was criticised by the then media as it gave instability to the government. Paul Brass also commented on the situation as, “Charan Singh was accused of rank opportunism and lust for power with no regard for the interests of the country.”73 Charan Singh had a very brief tenure as a Prime Minister; in fact he was the only Prime


70 A number of reasons lead to the collapse of the Janata Party government. Out of all the foremost were (a) Strains which had already emerged during the selection of leader of the Janata Parliamentary Party, when they came to power. The name of Morarji Desai was finalized only after the interference of J.B. Kripalani and J.P. Narayan. (b) Ideological differences among all the constituting members were quite evident in all most all the decisions taken by the government. (c) The split loyalty (for RSS and Janata party) issue, which was raised time and again by the BJS. (d) After Chandra Shekhar was made President of the party, the differences between Charan Singh and Chandra Shekhar amplified esp. on the issue of allocating Assembly seats in June 1977. (e) After the death of J.P. Narayan intra-party bickering and infighting within the party got heightened. Later Raj Narain resigned from the Janata Party on the issue of Jan Sangh’s role in RSS and made a new party named Janata (Secular) with the help of 46 Lok Sabha members who quit along with him leading to denial of majority for Janata Party government and by a no confidence motion raised by 11 opposition and Y B Chavan, Janta party had to resign in the Lok Sabha.


72 The basic reason due to which Indira Gandhi supported Chowdhary Charan Singh to form the government (even when she did not intended to support him whole heartedly) was that she never wanted the Janta (S) people to return to the Janata Party even when the dual loyalty issue was settled in the party. She was of the view that if Charan Singh is raised to the Prime Minister position only then the Janata (S) can be prevented from joining the Janata Party again. Also see: Madhu Limaye, Janata Party Experiment-An Insider’s Account of Opposition Politics 1977-80, Vol. II (New Delhi, B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1994), 497-540. For details on Dual Loyalty issue and RSS see: M.H.J, “Jana Sangh Rides Strong,” Economic and Political Weekly 14, no.20 (May 19, 1979), 871.

Minister who could not participate in the Lok Sabha sessions. As far as the nuclear policy of India is concerned, even during his concise tenure he strongly pursued the nuclear programme. So much so that during his speech on 15 August he openly mentioned that, ‘India will keep its option open.’ Charan Singh also became the first Prime Minister to openly talk about Pakistan’s nuclear option. He officially stated his apprehension about Pakistan’s nuclear weapon programme. In his speech on Independence Day on 15 August, 1979, Prime Minister Singh affirmed that, ‘if Pakistan had gone nuclear, India would ‘review’ its nuclear policy.’ Prime Minister’s statement was an open challenge to the World that India would never succumb to any kind of pressure exerted on her and would never be pressurized by any kind of nuclear blackmail, and if required it would certainly develop nuclear weapons without any fear. On this Sumit Ganguly opined that, “The caretaker regime of Prime Minister Charan Singh altered Desai’s ironclad commitment not to acquire nuclear weapons, stating that the decision was a sovereign Indian prerogative.” Prime Minister Singh’s statement was welcomed in India, as it was believed that the increasing security threat from Pakistan required a strict warning from India as her soft nation attitude (of pursuing peaceful nuclear policy) would not work. According to Pathak, “the attempts to sandwich India between two nuclear weapon powers—China and Pakistan—in the neighbourhood of nuclear Russia, amount not only to compelling India to lose her nuclear equanimity to which she has held steadfastly since the commencement of her nuclear programme but also to adversely affect the morale of her armed forces.” But after Prime Minister’s strong stand, confidence and belief was seen among the armed forces and they were assured that increasing Pakistani developments in the nuclear field would not be taken casually.

A similar expression to that of Prime Minister was seen in the defence policy speech by (October 1979) the then Defence Minister C. Subramanian. He, while, discussing the defence policy and national defence agenda conferred that, “India might

75 The Indian Express, August 16, 1979, as cited in Chakma, 220.
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face a decision to go nuclear before long and identified Pakistan as the most likely stimulus.” He furthered his concern by stating that if Israel, South Africa, and Pakistan acquire nuclear weapons potential then India ‘would have to take some difficult decisions in regard to nuclear weapons.’ He also mentioned seven factors which could shape India’s decision regarding the pursuance of nuclear weapons programme, these were:

1. Whether Pakistan goes nuclear;
2. Whether the two superpowers continue with their unbridled proliferation of nuclear weapons;
3. Whether the other three nuclear weapons power continue with their own programmes;
4. Whether Israel is deprived of its nuclear weapons and whether further clandestine proliferation takes place in countries like South Africa and Taiwan;
5. Whether the arsenals of crypto nuclear weapons nation increase or become more lethal;
6. Whether the interventionist tendencies of nuclear weapons powers get strengthened further; and
7. Whether nuclear weapons get increasingly legitimised or delegitimised.

Hence, during the Charan Singh Government the foreign and nuclear policies were articulated in a straight and clear manner. The Singh government brought the Pakistan factor to the forefront and openly showed its concern regarding security in South Asian region. He not only kept the nuclear option open but also clarified that if required India would reassess its peaceful nuclear policy due to its national interest consideration.

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The main point of concern is that even though the Charan Singh government was weak and it remained in office for a short span of time, still it managed to openly assert India’s policy regarding the nuclear issue. It did a smart act by clubbing Pakistan’s nuclear weapon programme with security perspective of the region and by doing so India tried to project security concerns of the other countries of the South Asia. India wanted to restrict Pakistan from taking any advantage of the prevailing situation.

**INDIRA GANDHI RETURNS TO POWER**

The Charan Singh government could also not do much as it appeared to be just an interim government and soon elections were declared on 22 August, 1979 and Indira Gandhi came to power again. The coming back of Indira Gandhi had implications on India’s nuclear programme as, it was believed that she might change the recourse of the existing programme due to her Nehruvian legacy. On the other hand, it was also deemed that she might continue the aggressive and strong stand followed by Charan Singh government. The situation was blurred and unexpected. But, the performance of the national parties during this Lok Sabha Elections as discussed in the following table, shows that Mrs. Gandhi returned to power with clean sweep of rest of the parties, that too when the country was undergoing a number of domestic challenges.  

The table 4.1 reveals that with 71.45 percent votes Indian National Congress (I) came back to power. Janata Party (JNP) could secure only 7.16 percent of votes which was less than even the Janata Party (Secular) of Charan Singh. Indira Gandhi’s insightfulness had played a very important role during these elections.

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81 This period witnessed politico-economic turmoil, as the economy was at its worse. It was because of increase in the rate of inflation, which in itself was the result of the 1977 oil crisis in the world. Further there was crop failure in the country. Unemployment rates had raised, overall there was a dilapidated economy. As far as the political scene was concerned there were high expectations from Mrs. Gandhi as the increasing Pakistani security threat and aid from U.S. to Pakistan was chief issue at the foreign policy level. Keeping in mind the instability of the previous government many secessionist powers also raised their heads. After just 5 months of return to power Indira Gandhi had to face a setback, as Sanjay Gandhi died in a plane crash, in June 1980.
Table No. 4.1. Performance of the National Parties in 1980 Lok Sabha Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>National Parties</th>
<th>Candidates Contested</th>
<th>Won</th>
<th>FD</th>
<th>Percentage Won</th>
<th>FD</th>
<th>Valid Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21.28%</td>
<td>36.17%</td>
<td>4927342 2.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>CPM</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>57.81%</td>
<td>14.06%</td>
<td>12352331 6.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>INC (I)</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>71.75%</td>
<td>1.42%</td>
<td>84455313 42.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>INC (U)</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>6.13%</td>
<td>67.45%</td>
<td>10449859 5.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>JNP</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>7.16%</td>
<td>26.79%</td>
<td>37530228 18.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>JNP (S)</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>13.99%</td>
<td>51.88%</td>
<td>18574696 9.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1541</strong></td>
<td><strong>485</strong></td>
<td><strong>444</strong></td>
<td><strong>31.47%</strong></td>
<td><strong>28.81%</strong></td>
<td><strong>168289769 85.07%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Before the elections Mrs. Gandhi met the then Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid, Syed Abdhullah Bukhari. In this meeting Indira Gandhi convinced Bhukhari to induce the Muslims to support her party, both of them agreed on a 10 point agenda. This tactful step favoured Mrs. Gandhi and she returned to power. But her government was formed during a period of International turbulence. A number of changes were taking place during this time. Amongst all the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the developments in Pakistan were the foremost. The Soviet invasion in Afghanistan changed the whole security situation in South Asia or South East Asia particularly. In December 1979 Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, and due to this the U.S.-Pakistan equation changed radically. In order to create a balance of power in the region the U.S. supported Pakistan to counter Soviet Union in Afghanistan as Pakistan shared adjacent borders with Afghanistan.

Even before Soviet invasion in the Afghanistan, the US intelligence declared that the Pakistani uranium enrichment plant in the Kahuta had been commissioned. Hence, Pakistan was aggressively moving towards enhancement of its nuclear power potential. In such scenario when American started giving full military and financial
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support\textsuperscript{82} to Pakistan to counter Afghan crisis, it had direct implications for India. The prevalent belief in India was that the sale of the F-16 as part of the military aid to Pakistan would result in altering the traditional ‘balance of power’ between the two countries. In order to overcome India’s concern the US stated that this aid was “not aimed at India or for fuelling the arms race.” Rather they pointed that the supply of conventional weapons to Pakistan would reduce their enticement towards nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{83} But it was a wrong calculation according to India, as the relaxation of American attitude towards Pakistan, resulted in acceleration of the activities towards enhancement of Pakistan’s Nuclear Programme. Later, it was revealed in a book by General Atif, \textit{Working with Zia}, that, “…in 1981, US Secretary of State, Haig, had assured Pakistan that US would not interfere with Pakistan’s nuclear programme.”\textsuperscript{84} Pakistan clandestinely was preparing for its nuclear explosion, P.R. Chari, an Indian defence analyst explains this situation as:

Apparently, a coordinated operation was launched to get the equipment required by dispersed purchases through dummy organisations established in various West European cities. It has come to light that in this fashion, Pakistan obtained “frequency investors” from U.K., martensitic steel from Holland, gas handling units and vacuum proof valves from Switzerland....Dr. A. Q. Khan\textsuperscript{85}—a Pakistani metallurgist— is believed to have gained access to the designs of a gas centrifuge uranium enrichment plant, whilst working for a similar facility in Holland. Presently, he is reported to have returned to Pakistan, and to be setting up an uranium enrichment facility at Kahuta near Islamabad.\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{82} After the Afghan crisis there was change in the U.S. policy towards Pakistan. It was because Pakistan was geographically at a strategic position which suited America. Soon the Carter Administration, “…suspended the application of the Symington Amendment that had previously stopped assistance to Pakistan. It offered Islamabad a $300 million economic aid package. Subsequently, the Regan Administration provide $ 3.2 billion economic and military assistance to Pakistan as a reward for helping the US to fight against perceived Soviet expansion in Southwest Asia. This aid package included, ominously from India’s viewpoint, a sale of forty F-16 advanced fighting aircraft.” As cited in Chakma, 221.


\textsuperscript{84} V.N. Khanna, \textit{India’s Nuclear Doctrine} (New Delhi: Sanskriti, 2000), 57.

\textsuperscript{85} Dr. A. Q. Khan was among the most prominent scientists who were the founder of Pakistan’s atomic programme. Later he was alleged for having revealed the secrets of nuclear technology to other nations secretly, and also for being involved in some suspicious activities. It was believed that this involvement was in knowledge of Pakistani Government, but they always negated such connections. After U.S. provided Pakistan with evidences against Mr. Khan, he was given house arrest in Pakistan.

\textsuperscript{86} P. R. Chari, “Pakistan’s Nuclear Option,” \textit{Strategic Analysis} III, no. 6 (1979): 212.
On the whole, India was in a wearisome situation, and everything depended on what path Mrs. Indira Gandhi took, continuing the policy of Singh government or moving back to her policy of peaceful nuclear programme. Opting for a very diplomatic stand, on 17 February 1980, she declared that, “India did not believe in making nuclear weapons, but should be free to carry out experiments if it was deemed necessary.”\(^7\) Though she reverted from Charan Singh’s strong pro-bomb position but she continued to keep the option open. She was further asked to elucidate on her statement in the Rajya Sabha and there expounding on her nuclear policy she said, “there would be no hesitation in conducting nuclear explosions in the national interests.”\(^8\) Her statement again made India to go back to her earlier policy stance of being against the nuclear weapons but for the nuclear energy. Speaking on her concern on growing security threat from Pakistan’s nuclear potential she affirmed that, ‘New Delhi should not be caught napping’ and her words were justified by the developments that took place in the later part of the year 1981-1982.

The period of 1980s was very crucial for India from the security point of view. Time and again reports were coming from the World press that Pakistan was on the verge of having attained nuclear potential. Such speculation got heated up in Indian press when Homi Sethna, Chairman of the AEC reciprocated with similar arguments in his Article, “Pak N-Blast Any Time after June.”\(^9\) The pro-bomb lobby in India triggered the debate on acquiring nuclear weapons and eminent people like K. Subrahmanya, supported it openly. For the first time in Indian history the military officials also openly and publicly spoke on India’s Nuclear weapon option.\(^10\) “In 1981 the Army College of Combat, Mhow, published a number of papers written by military officers calling for Indian nuclear weapons.”\(^11\) This change in attitude of the army personnel was surprising for the Indian political leaders, but it was welcomed all over India and it also acted as domestic pressure on the Government to take certain steps towards the same.

\(^7\) As cited in, Chakma, 2005, 221.
\(^8\) Ibid.
\(^9\) The Hindustan Times, May 6, 1981.
\(^10\) Earlier the army officials had opposed the use and development of nuclear weapons, since it was believed that it is more costly and time taking weapon programme, which can rarely be used. Marshal Manekshaw was amongst the chief opponent of the nuclear weapons in the past. But by that time the situation and opinions changed.
\(^11\) Gupta, 1983, 16.
At the same time in 1981, Mrs. Gandhi had brought Raja Ramanna back to his earlier position as Director of BARC. Ramanna was among the trustworthy people in Mrs. Gandhi’s list. Since, Ramanna always favored the development of nuclear weapons; hence, capitalizing the situation and environment, he put forward two weapon designs to her which were developed in the last few years. These were the fusion boosted device and the compact pure fission device. Once Prime Minister agreed to the proposal, work was started at great pace on the two test shafts at Pokhran. It showed that:

India appeared to be following a two-track strategy. To strengthen its capabilities, it was preparing the test site in case Pakistan detonated a nuclear explosive, which India would then counter with a blast of its own….India’s test preparations paralleled growing elite and public concerns that the nation must counter Pakistan’s looming nuclear capability. Indian commentators’, like many in America, assumed that Pakistan would detonate a nuclear device once it was able to do so and that India would have to respond.92

But, soon such explicit developments were caught by the American satellite and Sen Alan Cranston also revealed this secret. An Unclassified Report from the Director of Central Intelligence (US) reveals that the US was aware of India’s stepping ahead towards a nuclear weapon programme, and almost all preparations were complete for India’s conduct of nuclear explosion, except for the test site. It also reported that India was waiting for Pakistan’s Nuclear Explosion and once Pakistan goes for nuclear explosion, within a week’s time India will also move forward towards her Second Nuclear Explosion. The unclassified document also disclosed that India was working on its thermonuclear device, and if Pakistan happens to conduct its nuclear explosion, in turn India will reply with a thermonuclear test. This step was seen by the American as, “….to show to the rest of the world that India’s regional pre-eminence remained secure.”93 In order to prevent such events, the Americans started developing pressure on India to counter and discontinue its developments in this area. According to another Unclassified Document of US Department of State (Bureau of Intelligence and Research)

Indian Ministry of External Affairs Secretary Eric Gonsalves in April 1981 privately admitted to U.S. officials during his US visit that the Thar Desert site in Rajasthan is being prepared for a “peaceful nuclear explosion,” though he added that Indira Gandhi had not yet made a decision on the timing.\textsuperscript{94}

Even after the American pressure India continued her nuclear weapon programme. But in this scenario the scientific intelligentsia was feeling the need to develop a full-fledged doctrine for India’s nuclear weapon programme. A number of times there were discussions on this aspect in various seminars and conferences and also by people who minutely pursued nuclear policy. General K. Sundarji, India’s retired Chief of Army Staff, argued that:

\begin{quote}
Lack of doctrine is a very dangerous thing. The Indian High Command must think through that they should not go past a certain threshold, but they cannot be sure what Pakistan thinks the threshold is. One must go with impressions and guesses.\textsuperscript{95}
\end{quote}

The main reason for the need for the nuclear doctrine was to respond to such security threats which emerged after the Pakistani nuclear developments, the American hegemonic behaviour in Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf and China’s continued efforts to advance her nuclear capability technologically. Hence, nuclear factor became an important part of the security policy issues and defence planning of 1980s. But India did not come up with any such doctrine during this period, in fact for the next decade India followed its nuclear policy without its nuclear doctrine.

The year 1982 witnessed many important events and amongst them the foremost was Indira Gandhi’s decision to go for another peaceful nuclear explosion\textsuperscript{96} after


\textsuperscript{96} By the time Mrs. Gandhi resumed power the pilot plant in this direction was already operational. With the help and advice of Ramanna she rejuvenated the weapon programme. Out of various designs in the programme one “boosted fission” weapon using tritium stood above as commercial scale tritium manufacturing plants were also made part of the whole design. For details see: T.S. Gopi Rethniraj, “Breakthrough Brings India Closer to an Hydrogen-Bomb Arsenal,” \textit{Jane Intelligence Review}, (January 1998).
Pokhran-I. According to Raj Chengappa,\textsuperscript{97} it was in May 1982\textsuperscript{98} that a meeting of prominent nuclear scientists and policy makers\textsuperscript{99} was held and the decision to go ahead with the nuclear test was agreed upon. But very soon after the decision, Mrs. Gandhi reverted her opinion due to some unknown reasons. It was speculated that Mrs. Gandhi was under the American pressure\textsuperscript{100} and was aware of the consequences of such test. Probably she changed her mind due to political and economic compulsions.\textsuperscript{101}

Although Prime Minister Gandhi did not pursued her decision to conduct nuclear test but keeping in mind the importance and decisive nature of the present nuclear policy, she took a very significant decision to disassociate the portfolio of Defence Ministry from her and transferred it to Ramaswami Venkataraman (later became the President of India). Along with taking such decisions she also continued to advance India’s Nuclear Infrastructure. In 1983 on the advice of Prime Minister’s new scientific advisor Arunachalam, President Venkataraman launched an ambitious\textsuperscript{102} Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP). The short range \textit{Prithvi} missile and long range \textit{Agni} missile series which are most significant and powerful part of India’s Nuclear Arsenal in today’s period were developed under this programme. Along with these missiles which were capable of being used as a nuclear device vehicle,

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\textsuperscript{97} Chengappa, 286-287.

\textsuperscript{98} According to Perkovich, such decision was taken later in the end of 1982, though he also agrees with Chengappa that after Pokhran-I Mrs. Gandhi was aware that any such decisions should not be taken without consultation of the scientists and other policy makers. As per the \textit{Kargil Review Committee Report}, tabled to Parliament on 23 February 2000, the time for the decision was 1983.

\textsuperscript{99} The main people who attended this meeting were Raja Ramanna, President Venkataraman, Mrs. Gandhi’s Science Advisor V.S. Arunachalam, Principal Secretary P.C. Alexander and Cabinet Secretary K. Rao Sahib.

\textsuperscript{100} From the description given by Chengappa it appears that Americans tried to build pressure on Indira Gandhi through India’s Foreign Secretary M. K. Rasgotra who visited U.S. to solve the problem of non-supply of fuel at Tarapur Atomic Power Station.

\textsuperscript{101} The economic analysts were always against the nuclear potential, as they argued that for a developing country like India using so much money and resources for the expansion and advancement of nuclear weapon technology can sideline her development goals. Even the Rajadiyaksha Report of 1980 of the Committee on Power, Ministry of Energy, opined that ‘taking into account the economic cost nuclear energy is costlier than conventional thermal power.’

\textsuperscript{102} The reason for the ambitious nature of the programme was that in 1983 discussions started at the international level to control and tighten the export of missile technology. In order to control proliferation of missiles France, Germany, United States of America, United Kingdom and Italy held formal discussions, and later Canada and Japan also joined them. These discussions resulted in the formation of Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 1987. India minutely observed these discussions and launched its Missile Programme beforehand so that like other Proliferation treaties, she doesn’t have to face any discrimination in the name of proliferation or technology control regimes.
anti-tank missile- *Nag*, two surface-to-air missiles- *Akash* and *Trishul* were also developed. It was during this time (1982) that Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was transferred to the DRDO and together Kalam and Ramanna worked on developing five missiles which were based on related technologies. Other than this, a number of developments in the nuclear technology field were made, for example, launch of Indian uranium enrichment programme, import of heavy water from various nations in a very diplomatic and covert manner with the help of a German middleman, and Mrs. Gandhi’s clear consent to weaponise India’s nuclear programme so that it can support the military\textsuperscript{103} in hour of need.

**Disarmament Policy of Indira Gandhi during her Second Term (1980-84)**

Mrs. Gandhi in a realistic manner acted to the situation of security risk emerging from the nuclear developments taking place in Pakistan, by improving India’s defence and nuclear preparations. But, all the preparations were done in a clandestine manner and any overt development was avoided. On the other hand, she along with her government continued to follow the goals of Disarmament at the international level. A very active role was played by India in various Disarmament Summits, and UN General Assembly Sessions:

At the 1981 and 1982 sessions of the UN General Assembly, India took some initiative to co-sponsor, along with several other nonaligned countries, resolutions calling for a halt to the nuclear arms race and resumption of talks for the limitation and reduction of nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{104}

Prime Minister Gandhi and heads of other nations like Sweden, Greece, Mexico, Argentina and Tanzania were approached after the Second UN Special Session on Disarmament in 1982, in order to launch a six-nation, five continent initiatives to ban all

\textsuperscript{103} In order to make India completely ready for the nuclear security threat a number of preparations were done and for this Dr. Venkatesan, (who previously was Director of the laboratory which developed high explosive implosion system for nuclear bomb) was transferred to the Armament Research Development Establishment (ARDE) to enhance the ballistic case for nuclear weapons. Similarly aircrafts were also prepared to carry nuclear weapons and in this series Jaguar combat aircrafts were tasked the responsibility. Chengappa also cited a 30 page letter to the Defence Minister drafted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in June 1983 to acquire nuclear weapons. Hence military was also actively responding to overcome the security threat from Nuclear Pakistan. For details see: Chengappa, 284-287.

\textsuperscript{104} Gupta, 1983, 82.
nuclear weapons. India and Sweden were among the nations which “offered their technology and cooperation in monitoring nuclear tests.” The disarmament issue was raised even in the Congressional elections of the US in November 1982, where a proposition for ‘nuclear freeze’ was put for electorate’s decision. Rejecting Regan Administration’s nuclear policy people voted for the nuclear freeze. Later in the month of May 1983 House of Representatives called for a resolution for a ‘mutual and verifiable’ nuclear weapons freeze. Disarmament became one of the most discussed and debated issues of that time. Although India was participating and vocally supporting all the issues of disarmament and proliferation at the international platforms, still she never moved away from her stand on the Non-proliferation Treaty. P. V. Narasimha Rao, who was the then Minister of External Affairs, openly criticised the NPT at the Second Special Session of the UNGA, which was devoted to the disarmament solely. He stated:

…it is a bizarre game which world is witnessing today in the name of disarmament. The effort is, in fact, to move towards more armaments rather than less…one wonders, then, whether the game powers to control smaller countries—shall we say one of the modern versions of colonialism and imperialism? In the same manner, all too often focus has been on horizontal proliferation, as if to suggest that nuclear weapons in the possession of certain chosen States are somehow permissible or safe, but that they should not be allowed to fall into the hands of others….Unfortunately, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, as it emerged, was based on the faulty notion of checking horizontal proliferation alone without placing simultaneous and equal curbs on the existing nuclear-weapon States.

It showed that India had not diverted from its usual path of disarmament but at the same time any treaty in the name of disarmament and proliferation was not acceptable to India, as in that context India never compromised on its security and issues of national interests. In 1983 the issue of disarmament was also raised by India at the summit

105 Khanna, 57.
106 Gupta, 77.
meeting of the Non-Allied Movement (NAM). At the Seventh Session of the NAM, held in New Delhi, peace, disarmament and development were the central goals of the agenda and a declaration was made which highlighted the issues of nuclear-free-zones and anti-nuclear war movement. It stated:

The greatest peril facing the World today is the threat to the survival of mankind from a nuclear war. Disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, is no longer a moral issue—it is an issue of human survival….The heads of non-aligned nations reject outright the doctrine of nuclear deterrence and other theories being advanced by superpowers to justify the possession of nuclear weapons.108

Eventually, Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi was also able to resolve the issue of non-supply of Uranium to India by the US. It was agreed that America would not interfere if France provide nuclear fuel to India. Reacting to the increasing Pakistani nuclear potential she clarified in the Lok Sabha in March 1984 that:

My Government is aware of Pakistan’s effort to acquire uranium enrichment capability to assemble a nuclear weapon. This does not, however, mean that Pakistan is ahead of India in atomic energy development. Indian scientists are keeping abreast of all aspects of research and development connected with enrichment technology.109

But, the situation at home got worse for Mrs. Gandhi. Secessionist forces had raised their heads in various parts of the country. The situation in Punjab and North-East was very vulnerable and difficult for her to resolve. The demand for a separate state of Khalistan from Punjab became the most serious issue for the internal stability of the nation. In order to curb these separatist forces Indira Gandhi launched “Operation Blue Star”. Many Sikhs along with the leader of the secessionists Jarnial Singh Bhindrawala was killed. The saddest part of the story was that Indira Gandhi allowed the army forces to enter into the religious place of Sikhs, Shri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple), under the command of Gen K. Sundarji. It was taken as an assault on the Golden Temple by the Sikhs all over the World, as it hurt their religious sentiments. It resulted in the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards on 31 October

109 As cited in Chakma, 224.
1984. Riots broke out in New Delhi and within nine hours Rajiv Gandhi, son of Mrs.
Indira Gandhi was made Prime Minister of India.

The contribution which Indira Gandhi made to India and her nuclear policy was
commendable, although Indira Gandhi was always criticized for her undemocratic and
dictatorial way of working. But, it was only due to her that India’s image was changed
from a nation of snake charmers to the nation with atomic power. She stressed the use
of nuclear energy for development purposes and advancing science and technology to
improve the standard of living of one of the highly populated countries in the world.
She also took very strict stand on the discriminatory treaties with regard to proliferation
and stood firmly on not signing any of such agreement or treaty under international
pressure. On the other hand, continuing the legacy of Nehru and Gandhian values she
persistently supported the disarmament and proliferation issues, and time and again
argued against the use of nuclear weapons at various international platforms. A host of
factors such as geo- strategic location of India, being encircled by nuclear nations like
China, and threshold nuclear power like Pakistan, and India’s security and national
interest related issues, might have accounted for the decision of Indira Gandhi to keep
the nuclear option open for India. It was under her regime that the Tarapur Atomic
Station, and the Rajasthan Atomic Power Station gained criticality and started
operating. Hence, on the whole Indira Gandhi’s contributions in both of her terms were
very imperative and significant, she used both power and diplomacy to deal with all the
issues that emerged as far as the nuclear policy of India was concerned. Assassination
of Mrs. Gandhi shook the whole country and people came out in large numbers to be
part of her funeral. Even though she was highly condemned for her autocratic way of
working but she was called ‘Durga’ of India. Her death in such a manner gained
emotional support and sympathy for her successor.

RAJIV GANDHI ERA

After the death of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, elections were held all over India except
Assam and Punjab, in both of these states elections were delayed till 1985 due to the
ongoing violent movements. Rajiv Gandhi, as an heir of Indira made history in the Lok
Sabha by winning 415 seats out of 542. The following table 4.2 discusses the vote and
their percentages in the 8th Lok Sabha Elections. The table reveals that Indian National
Congress (INC) performed magnificently and later formed the government at the centre under Rajiv Gandhi. Assassination of his mother played a very emotional but significant role in the Lok Sabha Elections of 1984. The performance of all other parties got decimated and particularly the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) which managed to win only two seats out of 224.

As far as the foreign policy and nuclear policy of the new government was concerned, it was somehow similar to that of the previous governments under the Congress Party. Rajiv Gandhi also maintained a diplomatic stand on the nuclear policy issues. Inheriting the values from the Gandhi family he was a supporter of non-violence and disarmament, but national interests particularly related to the security of India were always on his key agenda.

**Table 4.2: Performance of the National Parties in 1984 Lok Sabha Elections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>National Parties</th>
<th>Contested</th>
<th>Won</th>
<th>FD</th>
<th>Won</th>
<th>FD</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.89%</td>
<td>48.21%</td>
<td>18202853</td>
<td>7.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.84%</td>
<td>49.18%</td>
<td>6363430</td>
<td>2.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>CPM</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>37.29%</td>
<td>10.17%</td>
<td>13809950</td>
<td>5.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>INC</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>82.28%</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>115478267</td>
<td>49.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>ICS</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.90%</td>
<td>38.71%</td>
<td>3577377</td>
<td>1.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>JNP</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>122</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.83%</td>
<td>58.94%</td>
<td>16210514</td>
<td>6.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>LKD</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.75%</td>
<td>43.86%</td>
<td>14040064</td>
<td>5.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1244</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>355</td>
<td></td>
<td>36.25%</td>
<td>28.54%</td>
<td>187682455</td>
<td>79.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


During, this time in 1984 India acquired 100 kg of high purity beryllium from West Germany. This beryllium was enough to support 12 or more nuclear weapons. Hence, when Rajiv Gandhi held the command of the nation by that time India was moving forward in order to boost her existing nuclear power. The current situation of

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110 After this import of beryllium India built her own beryllium production plant in Mumbai, and this plant was supported by indigenous ores from Kerala. This beryllium was to be used for advancing India’s missile and nuclear technologies. For details see: Michael Knapik and Mark Hibbs, “German Firm’s Beryllium Export to India May Have Violated U.S. Law,” Nucleonics Week, no. 30, Special Report, (January 30, 1989).
India-Pak relations in 1984-85 also played a very important role in shaping the mindset of the new Prime Minister. On 14 March 1985 one of the co-founder of Pakistani Nuclear programme A.Q. Khan gave an interview where he openly and clearly mentioned that Pakistan has acquired the capacity to conduct nuclear explosion. This interview changed the world outlook towards Pakistan and after only two months i.e., on 11 July the American ABC Television network further highlighted that Pakistan has already “conducted its non-nuclear triggering package for a nuclear weapon.” This telecast raised number of questions all over the world and particularly in Indian Parliament. Rajiv Gandhi assured the Indian Parliament and the whole country that he was working on the details of this issue and soon some steps would be taken. Even before this telecast Indian leaders were emphasizing on pursuing “India’s Nuclear Option.” Reacting to the situation officials of the Rajiv Gandhi government bluntly stated that, “Raja Ramanna told the Madras Press Club that India now had the capability to develop a nuclear delivery system and that if anyone tries to twist our arm we could flex our muscles too.” Similar statements were addressed in the Rajya Sabha by the Minister of State for External Affairs. The Prime Minister also created an informal study group in November 1985 to advise him on defense planning. This group included Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. K. Sunderji, Navy Chief of Staff Adm. Tahliani, Deputy Chief of Air Staff John Greene, Raja Ramnna from the BARC, Dr. Abdul Kalam from the DRDO, Dr. R. Chidambaram from the AEC, and strategic analyst K. Subrahmanyam.

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115 It was this group which suggested the policy of ‘no-first use’, Rajiv Gandhi denied this policy at first instance, but later it became part of India’s nuclear doctrine. Also the group in its report suggested that India can pursue a balanced deterrent programme in 10 years with a cost of Rs. 7000 crs. But Rajiv Gandhi did not worked on its implementation, though under the influence of the report he instructed Arunachlam to advance bomb system and it was code named as “New Armament Breaking Ammunition and Projectile” (NABAP). This project was headed by M. Balakrishnan at the Terminal Ballistic Research Laboratory (TBRL) in Chandigarh.
The involvement of defence personnel from all the spheres helped India to frame a uniform and comprehensive defence policy. Later, when the DRDO and the ARDE developed nuclear bombs for India their weight was much more than expected hence, it became unfit to be carried on Jaguars but later with the help of Air Force, India was able to convert Mirage-2000 into nuclear weapon delivery system.

An analysis of the situation depicts that a very tensed and heated circumstances had developed during the 1984-85 period. Both India and Pakistan indulged in giving counter threats to each other and it resulted in instability in the region. Due to security threat emerging from Pakistani nuclear preparedness India had to leave her diplomatic stance on the nuclear issue and move away from opacity. The open and clear statements which came from all corners of India be it political leaders, scientists, analysts or media Parliament itself justified India’s stand on nuclear policy. But Rajiv Gandhi keeping in mind the unsteadiness in the South-Asian region and the deteriorating image of the nation as a non-violent country started taking some steps to control and strengthen the weakening relations with Pakistan. By the end of 1985 i.e., in December both India and Pakistan under Rajiv Gandhi and Zia ul-Haq, respectively, agreed on a treaty which bound both the nations not to attack each other’s nuclear installations. But, it was only in 1993 that this agreement got fully implemented. Although Rajiv Gandhi was working to enhance India’s position of a peace loving and soft nation, on the other hand on his approval, Indian scientists were vigorously working on India’s thermonuclear weapon. Domestic factors forced Rajiv Gandhi to take some actions on the threat situation in the region; hence to revive her stronghold in the region India conducted the Brasstacks military exercise close to Pakistani border in Rajasthan. It was the biggest exercise ever conducted by Indian military. To respond to this exercise Pakistan came up with the operation Sledgehammer. Responding further India countered Pakistan by conducting operation Trident. Later the crisis was resolved but in between the

116 Since the inception of Pakistan’s nuclear programme, the world was under constant threat that India might attack Pakistani nuclear installation in Kahuta. Some American reports reported such predictions even during Indira Gandhi’s regime, and the heated situation of 1985 gave more wind to Western media’s rumours. In order to put an end to such stories this agreement was done.

117 Sidhu, 8.
exercise A.Q. Khan in an interview to prominent Indian journalist Kuldeep Nayar mentioned that:

...what the CIA has been saying about our possessing the bomb is correct and so is the speculation of some foreign newspapers....Nobody can undo Pakistan or take us for granted. We are there to stay and let it be clear that we shall use the bomb if our existence is threatened.\textsuperscript{118}

This interview as expected had serious repercussions for India. Rajiv Gandhi had to give clarification on this interview and raising the confidence of Indian public and army he stated that, “We Intend meeting President Zia’s threat. We will give an adequate response.”\textsuperscript{119} Indian Defence Minister, K.C. Pant, also reacted in a similar manner and opined that, “…the emerging nuclear threat to us from Pakistan is forcing us to review our options...I assure the House that our response will be adequate to our perception of the threat.”\textsuperscript{120} Indian leaders used this sharp attitude only in the country and at the international platforms they used more diplomatic and soft approach. It was clarified from Rajiv Gandhi’s Delhi Declaration when Soviet President Gorbachev visited Delhi in November 1986, he mentioned, “There is only one answer to the menace of nuclear weapons and that is to dismantle all nuclear weapons, terminating the nuclear arms race on earth and preventing a nuclear arms race in space.”\textsuperscript{121} Similarly during his visit to America in October 1987, Prime Minister Gandhi assured American President Ronald Regan that India continues to be perpetrated to her commitment towards disarmament and non-proliferation. He also clarified to the US that India following the moral path of non-violence condemns the nuclear weapons in her country as well as in the neighbours. Although he also cited that, “...we have no intention of producing nuclear weapons unless constrained to do so.”\textsuperscript{122}

Rajiv Gandhi somehow under international pressures in 1987 took a decision of halting the Indian military nuclear programme for the time being and enduring civilian

\begin{footnotes}
\item[122] Ibid, 50.
\end{footnotes}
nuclear programme, which had been put backward in the wake of security threat from Pakistan. In order to accelerate Indian civilian nuclear programme, nuclear reactors were required but in the aftermath of 1974 nuclear explosion of India, it was not easy to import it from other nations, as it required the scrutiny of the IAEA safeguards. Indian scientific intelligentsia especially the Ramanna group was against any of such inspections, as they related it to the question of national prestige and importance. Rajiv Gandhi while disagreeing with such opposition and in order to control the situation he appointed M.R. Srinivasan to succeed Ramanna as the Chairman of the AEC, against the wishes of Raja Ramanna.\textsuperscript{123} By this act Prime Minister Gandhi wanted to send positive signals to the world and wanted to revive his commitment towards disarmament and against nuclear weapons.

\textbf{Rajiv Gandhi’s Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Policy}

Taking account of the disarmament talks all over the world, Prime Minister Gandhi also actively participated in various disarmament summits and conferences and put forward his obligation towards the same. Considering the momentous role India had played so far at various international disarmament and non-proliferation events, country was unanimously elected as the Chairman of the United Nation Conference on Disarmament and Development held in New York in August-September 1987. In this conference India displayed her strong dedication towards the cause and maintained that, “...the search for unilateral security through nuclear deterrence must be replaced by a search for global security through nuclear disarmament.”\textsuperscript{124} At the third summit of the six nation’s initiative in January 1988, held at Stockholm, Indian Prime Minister supported the cause of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. But he also continued to reject the nuclear free-zone in south Asian region and remained persistent towards his dissatisfaction for the discriminatory Non-Proliferation Treaty. It clearly depicted that

\textsuperscript{123} Ramanna wanted to bring P.K. Iyengar, head of BARC. But Rajiv Gandhi wanted to keep the civilian program on his priority list, so he promoted Srinivasan. Because Gandhi was aware that Iyengar was deeply attached to the development of military nuclear programme and hence he would like Ramanna divert the attention and resources towards the same neglecting the civilian programme. He concluded that such an attempt would give an opportunity to the world to question India’s responsibility and moral values and commitment towards disarmament. He wanted to polish India’s position of being a committed nation towards proliferation and disarmament. So he promised Iyengar to succeed Srinivasan, when he threatened to resign on passing him over.

\textsuperscript{124} Ministry of External Affairs, 1987, 52.
Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi also continued the “dual-track” nuclear policy like his predecessors and maintained a strict stand as far the national interests of the nation were related but diplomatically pursued the goals of disarmament at the international level, showcasing his non-violent and anti-nuclear stand. In June 1988 on the 15th Session of the United Nation and the Third Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament, Rajiv Gandhi came up with the “Action Plan” for a Nuclear Weapon-Free and Non-Violent World Order. The main provisions of the Action Plan were:

1. There should be a binding commitment by all nations to eliminating nuclear weapons, in stages, by the year 2010 at the latest;

2. All nuclear-weapon States must participate in the process of nuclear disarmament. All other countries must also be part of the process;

3. To demonstrate good faith and build the required confidence, there must be tangible progress at each stage towards the common goal; and

4. Changes are required in doctrines, policies and institutions to sustain a world free of nuclear weapons. Negotiations should be undertaken to establish a comprehensive global security system under the aegis of the United Nations.125

This speech or plan revealed idealistic zeal of Rajiv Gandhi for disarmament. But, the same year of 1988 also witnessed a great shift in the nuclear policy of India. This shift was mainly in the form of open- nuclear weaponisation, brought by Rajiv Gandhi with two contradicting tendencies in his policy making. Whereas, he wholeheartedly spoke for the disarmament cause but on the other hand he took massive steps for the modernization of Indian military and nuclear advancement. During his tenure there was immense spending on the military and nuclear developments.

The key policy shift apparently came in 1988. In fact, it was Rajiv Gandhi, according to the famous Indian defence analyst, K. Subrahmanyam, who finally authorized weaponization in 1988.126

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The shift from opacity to weaponization came as a result of a number of reasons which happened at the international level and in the South-Asian region as well. Firstly, in January 1988 Soviet Union decided to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan. This step had direct implications for the U.S.-Pakistan relations. It became important from Indian point of view as India was under the impression that the aid and military equipments acquired by Pakistan from the U.S. could be diverted against India. So in order to overcome that India needed strong weaponization. Secondly, on 17 August 1988, President Zia Ul-Haq, was killed in a suspicious plane crash. He was succeeded by Benazir Bhutto daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Thirdly, India also wanted to augment her preparedness against the Pakistan-China nuclear collaboration. Hence, in spite of his anti-nuclear orientation Rajiv Gandhi authorized weaponization option. Gaurav Kampani has cited certain steps which clarifies the weaponization, these are:

1. Nuclear Devices were miniaturized to facilitate delivery from aircraft;
2. Weapon designs were made rugged enough for field deployment and transport;
3. Arming and safety systems were installed in weapon systems to prevent unauthorized or accidental detonations; and
4. By 1989, the Indian Air Force had modified combat aircraft and perfected techniques for the aerial delivery of nuclear munitions.

Rajiv Gandhi also changed his agenda regarding India’s military doctrine, which got shifted from “purely conventional deterrent” to one with the “nuclear weapons.” According to Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, “While the conventional deterrent was based on a doctrine of offensive-defence, which implied a strategy of preventive war, nuclear deterrence was based on a doctrine of no-first-use and second-strike retaliation. Conventional deterrence was not abandoned...this policy emerged from a consensus among political, technical and military actors.” These decisions at the longer head led

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128 Kampani, 14.
129 Sidhu, 9.
to the formation of India’s complete nuclear doctrine in the 1990s. Sidhu entitled this phase of India’s nuclear development as “Non-weaponised deterrence”.\textsuperscript{130} The term “deterrence” was officially used by Defence Minister K.C. Pant for the first time in 1988.

It was during Rajiv Gandhi’s period that the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) had been fully established at the international level. It was on 16 April 1987, when Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, and United States formally created the regime. Since India was already aware of such development taking place, so beforehand she launched her Integrated Guided Missile Technology Programme (IGMTP). Headed by Prof. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (who later became the president of India as well), Indian Missile Programme was accelerating at a great pace. Under this programme India successfully tested her first indigenously developed ballistic missile \textit{Prithvi}, with a range up to 150 to 300 km it is also capable of carrying nuclear weapons. It was first test-fired on 25 February 1988. Next year India also tested her \textit{Agni} missile in 1989 at Chandipur, with a range of 700-800 km this missile is also credited to carry nuclear warheads. Irrespective of the guidelines of the MTCR India proceeded with her regular missile tests, without any external pressure. During the Rajiv Gandhi phase the MTCR could not affect India’s missile programme and she openly continued towards developing more advanced and strategic missiles. The reason for continuity in her missile programme was that most of India’s guided missiles were developed indigenously.\textsuperscript{131}

In spite of all his efforts Rajiv Gandhi’s term in the Prime Minister office was not easy especially with regard to the internal politics of the nation. Since 1983 an anti-Congress agenda was highlighted again and again by the opposition parties, but the

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid. He uses this term to explain the period where India was capable of making deliverable nuclear weapons but by choice did not opted for it. During this phase India’s was preparing for its capability for ready-to-assemble devices, increasing its numbers, and dispersing these weapon component all over the nation when required.

\textsuperscript{131} India’s missile system is very old and dates back to the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, especially during the period of Tipu Sultan. He used rockets and missiles to fight against British Colonial Power and his rockets are said to be the most advanced during his time. He had set up separate special rocket brigade called Kushoons. For details on India’s Missile programme and the MTCR see: Maj. Gen. Raj Mehta ed., \textit{Encyclopaedia of Missile Defense and Non-Proliferation}, Vol. I (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2008).
Congress party managed to win the elections due to the emotional attachment of Indian people with Indira Gandhi which was depicted after her assassination in 1984. In 1987, on the charges of Corruption, V.P. Singh who was Defence Minister during that time resigned from his post and left the Congress party. Rajiv Gandhi announced the elections before time, in order to have some benefit of it, but all his tactics failed and the Congress Party lost elections very badly in 1989.

During his term Rajiv Gandhi made commendable efforts as far as the nuclear policy and nuclear programme is concerned. He managed to build a muscular and strong image of India at the world level especially in the South-Asian region. He modernised Indian nuclear infrastructure and the defence programme by various means. In fact during his term the defence budget was raised much higher as compared to the previous governments. Drifting a bit from his predecessor’s policy he openly reacted to the Pakistani nuclear expansion and as a result counter-threatened the neighbour by massive military exercises. But Rajiv Gandhi continued to follow India’s “dual-track” policy on the nuclear issue, and actively participating in the disarmament and non-proliferation summits and conferences he gave the Action Plan from the Indian side to control and end the nuclear arms race. He also straight forwardly supported the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. He vigorously raised the cause at the NAM platform as well. On the other hand, he along with his government continued to criticise the discriminatory NPT. Ignoring the other developments at the international level to counter the developing powers by formation of various regimes, Rajiv Gandhi continued on the path of making India a strong and self dependent nation as far as the defence and security issues were concerned.

NATIONAL FRONT GOVERNMENT AND INDIA’S NUCLEAR POLICY

An anti-incumbency factor was working against the Rajiv Gandhi government, but the opposition parties realised that it would be difficult for them to defeat the Congress Party alone. To deal with this issue the opposition parties allied together to form a single front namely the National Front. This front was made by the alliance between the Janata Dal and the three regional parties, Telugu Desam (from Andhra Pradesh), Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and Assam People’s Party. Although
Communist Party and the BJP did not join the alliance formally but after the elections they gave their support to the National Front. This alliance was based on three points\textsuperscript{132} that,

1. Rajiv Gandhi must go;
2. Realization that without closing its ranks the opposition cannot ask for votes from the people; and
3. Agreement on sharing of votes

Along with these factors the Bofors Scandal along with the religious factors like the Ram Janam Bhoomi issue and the demolition of the Babri Mosque also played an important role during these elections and worked against the Rajiv Gandhi regime. Although Rajiv Gandhi has been credited to deal with the foreign policy matter in a very appropriate way, and managed to win a rapport with Mikhail Gorbachev and George Bush, still these foreign policy issues never became important to the general public in the wake of elections. The following table discusses in brief the performance of various national parties in the 1989 Elections.

The table 4.3 reveals that the Congress party had got comparatively sufficient seats but rather than running to form a coalition government, Rajiv Gandhi opted to sit in the opposition and gave the others parties a chance to form government. Under the headship of V.P. Singh the National Front government was formed at the centre led by Janata Dal. Even though the BJP contributed in the government formation still it was not offered any ministerial position. This period was hijacked by the 1990 crisis with Pakistan. The roots of this crisis can be traced back to 1987 State elections of Jammu & Kashmir. During these elections to attract the Muslim votes of Jammu and Kashmir, Rajiv Gandhi contrived with the National Conference. They have been alleged for using unfair means of ballot and booth capturing they managed to win 80 percent of the total seats. But it led to extensive revolts and to counter that troops were sent and harsh measures were taken, which further worsened the situation.

The whole situation turned into ‘ethno-religious insurgency’. Taking advantage of the circumstances Pakistani militants started crossing borders and these infiltrators started joining hands against the Indian forces and heated the insurgency. Pakistan was openly supporting the issue and on 13 March Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto visited the Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) and announced her support for the Kashmiri people in India, and pledged “thousand year war” for them and meanwhile Indian military also came to know about the Pakistani training camps run by Pakistani intelligence agency ISI, these camps were set up in Indian Kashmir. Responding to both the situations on 10 April V.P. Singh stated that India is “psychologically prepared for the war with Pakistan.” He officially stated that, “If Pakistan deployed nuclear weapons, India will have to take a second look at our policy. I think we have no option but to match. Our scientists have the capability to match it.”

Table 4.3 Performance of the National Parties in 1989 Lok Sabha Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Valid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sr. No.</td>
<td>National Parties</td>
<td>Contested</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>CPM</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>INC</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>ICS(SCS)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>JD</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>JNP (JP)</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>LKD (B)</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1378</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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134 As cited in Perkovich, 309.
By May 1990, the crisis rose to its peak and was going out of the hands of both Indian and Pakistani governments. Keeping track of the state of affairs in this region America tried to intervene and the U.S. President George W. Bush sent Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gates along with a high level team to settle the issue between the both countries. After meeting decision makers of both the countries Gates made President Khan aware of the nuclear preparedness by their Pakistani military, he was surprised to hear about the scene. Robert Gates also clarified to Pakistani officials that their active involvement and provocation of India was not in their interest and hence they must restrain themselves or else they must be ready to face the consequences. Even, India did not know about any such nuclear activity that was going in Pakistan. Gradually with the help of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) the crisis was controlled and negotiations were made.

Later Peter Galbraith, an expert on South Asian Relations in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told Benazir Bhutto about the nuclear activities of Pakistan during the crisis and she was shocked to learn about it. He also revealed that Pakistan had converted 125 kg of weapon grade enriched uranium fuel and fabricated the cores of seven nuclear weapons. American President Bush after such revelations was unable to convince the U.S. Congress that Pakistan did not possess nuclear weapons and hence the American government invoked the “Pressler amendment” to the Foreign Assistance Act. Under this Amendment the military and financial aid given to Pakistan was discontinued. Even in the aftermath of the financial and military aid cut off;
Pakistan with the help of China continued to progress in building its nuclear setup and Indian government as a reaction to it accelerated her nuclear programme.

Immediately after the crisis in September 1990 Indian Prime Minister convened a secret study group under the leadership of V.S. Arunachalam. This group was composed of many other prominent people and scientists involved in the nuclear programme and decision making. The main area of study for the group was to formulate a pattern with which an effective control could be made on the nuclear arsenal of the country and to utilize it in the time of emergency or war. The V.P. Singh government collapsed before the research got finalized. On the whole, this National Front coalition government was a weak government and during its short tenure it (was involved mainly in the Pakistan crisis) could not take any effective step as far as the nuclear policy of the country was concerned. Even during the crisis Singh’s government could not keep a note on the nuclear activities which were going in Pakistan. But after this crisis New Delhi government became more active and cautious about Pakistani nuclear developments. In spite of all this V.P. Singh government also showed its concern towards an active nuclear programme, as soon after the formation of his government Singh made Raja Ramanna Minister of State for Defence and supplementing it further with the appointment of P.K. Iyengar as chairman of the AEC. Bringing the active pro-bomb people to the forefront displayed that the National Front Government wanted to pursue the nuclear option, but due to its pre-occupation in the Pakistan crisis and short term, much could not be done. In spite of this, V.P. Singh’s Government is credited for developing first “Indian nuclear deterrent i.e., the ability to quickly assemble nuclear weapons that could be delivered by air- during this time.”

Devin Hagerty elaborated on this situation stating that:

A strong case can be made that India and Pakistan were deterred from war in 1990 by the existence of mutual nuclear weapon capabilities and the chance that, no matter what Indian and Pakistani decision-makers said or did, any military clash could escalate to the nuclear level....Prior to 1990, Indian commentary on the regional nuclear balance was more

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restrained: few Indian analysts publicly accepted the Pakistani thesis that nuclear weapon capabilities deter war between India and Pakistan. The Kashmir crisis brought about a decisive shift in the Indian nuclear discourse….For the most part, India's nuclear-strategic thinkers now embrace the idea that nuclear deterrence dampens tendencies toward war between India and Pakistan, and that this phenomenon was especially apparent in 1990.\(^\text{141}\)

As far ‘deterrence’ is concerned, if it is seen as a concept to prevent war, then it is said to be successful in this region and especially during the 1990 crisis, and American mediation to stop the ongoing crisis was also part of this. But viewed in a broader perspective if it is expected that due to deterrence any non-nuclear nation would not progress in this area, then after the 1990 crisis it can be proved as a failure. In spite of India’s 1974 nuclear explosion and her active involvement in the nuclear development, Pakistan managed to attain a status of threshold nuclear power and it was proved to the world after the 1990 crisis. An overt status of Pakistani nuclear developments was evident.

**NARASIMHA RAO PHASE**

In 1990 V.P. Singh resigned from the post of Prime Minister and was succeeded by Chander Shekhar. Chander Shekhar headed the Samajwadi Janata Party which was a breakaway faction of the Janata Dal. The Samajwadi Janata Party was constituted with 64 Members of Parliament and formed government at the centre with the outside support of the Congress. The detailed performance of the national parties during the election of 1991 is below. This government was formed in order to avoid mid-term elections in the country. But gradually many MPs from his own party started shedding support and ultimately within just seven months he resigned from the post of Prime Minister on 6 March 1991.\(^\text{142}\) Until the next elections Chander Shekhar remained in office.


\(^\text{142}\) Scharada Dubey, *Movers and Shakers Prime Minister of India* (New Delhi: Westland, 2009).
In his short period of just seven months, no important decision was taken especially regarding the nuclear policy of the nation. In the meantime during the elections on May 21, 1991 the whole country was shock ridden when Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated while campaigning in Tamil Nadu. In this phase, name of Narasimha Rao was chosen to be the Prime Ministerial candidate. The Congress party performed quite well in these elections. The table reveals that although the Congress party performed well, but the significant change is also seen in the votes of the BJP. With the passing elections the BJP managed to win a considerable number of seats with 25.64 percent of winning percentage.

During the tenure of Narasimha Rao, a number of factors had taken precedence, disintegration of Soviet Union and economic crisis of 1991 were the foremost. Narasimha Rao was premier leader in the Congress Party and had supported Gandhi family even during their bad days. He had also served as President of IDSA from 1980 to 1987; hence he was fully aware of India’s nuclear programme and defence policy. By the time Rao took over as Prime Minister his government was faced with severe economic crisis going in the country. Foreign exchange reserves were depleting at a

<table>
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<th>Percentage</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contested</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>FD</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>BJP</td>
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<td>120</td>
<td>185</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>CPM</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>INC</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>ICS(SCS)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>JD</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>JD (S)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>JP</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>LKD</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1822</strong></td>
<td><strong>466</strong></td>
<td><strong>828</strong></td>
<td><strong>25.58%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

very fast rate, inflation rates were very high (in double digit) and there was huge deficit in the budget, all these factors were pointing towards an economic collapse for the nation. Taking crucial steps under Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister Rao instituted economic reforms. He “overturned the Nehruvian consensus on central planning and Fabian socialism.”

The socialistic pattern of society, which the Congress had long set as the goal as well as the means for India's development, had required-or acquired-policies that built up the public sector domestically while insulating India from international market forces. The approach has had it critics at home as well as (vociferously) abroad, but it had served India well enough even if the nation could have been better served by some other approach. In any case, it had become the accepted gospel across the whole political spectrum. To abandon it suddenly was to deprive not only vested interests but large numbers of India's intellectual classes of their whole world. Inevitably, the government was accused not only of abandoning the national consensus and the great legacy of Nehru and the founding fathers, but of “selling” the country.

Even though Prime Minister Rao had to face severe criticism for opting economic reforms still he went ahead with the reforms and laid strong emphasis on the economic development. Narasimha Rao was very optimistic of the results of the economic programme based on the policy of liberalization, privatization and globalization, though he knew that it would take two-three years to stabilize the economy. Another important reason due to which Indian government took this decision to open up India’s economy and market was the disintegration of Soviet Union. In the aftermath of Soviet Union’s collapse India’s focus shifted towards the Western nations, as Soviet collapse had deep implications for India’s defence and foreign policies. According to Sumit Ganguly:

> It meant the loss of the support of a veto-wielding power in the UN on the critical question of Kashmir. It also brought to an end a highly favourable arms-transfer relationship. But most important from the standpoint of Indian security, it resulted in the loss of a critical counterweight to the Chinese threat: the security guarantee implied in the 1971 treaty with the Soviet Union disintegrated with the Soviet collapse.

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Russia had become now too deliberated to provide much reassurance to India.\textsuperscript{145} These factors lead India to reframe its domestic as well as foreign policy and the linkage between both policies was much strong as it seemed to be. The domestic factors during that time like issues between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu government for sharing of Kaveri River water, Violence in Kashmir, Assam, Punjab, communal tension on the Ayodhya Ram mandir issue, the deteriorating economy and rising inflation, all made the internal situation of the nation vulnerable.\textsuperscript{146} These concerns made the foreign policy issues secondary for the Central government. Bringing a change in the way of governance and policy making, Narasimha Rao Government decided to frame foreign policy on the basis of economic and security requirements. Hence, a shift towards the U.S. was evident in most of the policy matters during this time.

Further, after the US had invoked Pressler Amendment on Pakistan a very comfortable zone of relations was seen between India and US. India’s step towards the economic reforms also shifted the American interests to Indian market and economy, as a result of that, the American pressure on Indian nuclear developments started diminishing. In the meanwhile, very cooperative and conciliatory arrangements were provided by the US and no open efforts to restrain and halt India’s nuclear programme was seen. In response to this even the Narasimha Rao government decided to avoid any explicit declaration of India’s nuclear potential.

In January 1992 a Special Session of the UN Security Council took a decision and passed a resolution relating to the ‘international peace and security’. This Resolution S/23500:

…underlined the need for all member states to fulfil their obligations in relations to arms control and disarmament, to prevent the proliferation of WMD; to avoid excessive accumulation and transfer of arms; emphasised the importance of ratification and implementation by states of international and regional arms control arrangements; and recognised

\textsuperscript{145} Ganguly, 52-53.
\textsuperscript{146} Even after the liberalization inflation in the food prices was highest ever; there was very low growth in the employment; agriculture and industry sectors were having a very low pace; services in health and education declined and poverty remained stagnant. For details see: Ministry of Finance, \textit{Economic Survey} (New Delhi: Government of India, 2002), 10.
that the proliferation of WMD constitutes a threat to international peace and security.\textsuperscript{147}

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao was also present at this session and he understood well that after this resolution the UNSC will take a collective action against any country which violates any provision under this. Hence, taking a very diplomatic position at the same platform Rao stated:

Mr. President, the statement you will be reading out on behalf of the members of the Council at the end of today’s meeting has been subject of intensive, productive discussions. We were happy to be part of the exercise and to have made our contribution to it. We consider it an important statement. However, I find that the statement does not reflect one or two of India’s crucial concerns…This, of course, does not detract from the significance of the statement you are about to make or from India’s cooperation.\textsuperscript{148}

Narasimha Rao took an evasive posture on this issue because he was aware of India’s weak situation during that time, so he was not in a position to preach to the world high moral grounds and ideology regarding nuclear weapons. Economic crisis at home, weak Russian presence (unable to support Indian cause) and emergence of America as a sole power had undermined Indian situation as well. On the other hand after confronting dangers in Gulf War (in context of Saddam Hussein regime) the U.S. had decided to deal with the nuclear proliferation in a very strict manner. Hence as C. Raja Mohan comments that, “The real political challenge for New Delhi was to engage with Washington intensively on the nuclear question-as it turned out for the entire decade that followed.”\textsuperscript{149}

Later, India for the first time collaborated with the US in a joint naval exercise in May 1992. India also conducted second test of Agni Missile under this exercise, rather than criticising fully America just gave a mild critical note on it, although it was a failure still it demonstrated to the world that India was still in the capacity to take


\textsuperscript{148} “Speech of Narasimha Rao,” reproduced as Appendix 2 in My South Block Years: Memories of Foreign Secretary, J.N. Dixit (New Delhi: UBSPD, 1996), 459.

\textsuperscript{149} C. Raja Mohan, Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India’s New Foreign Policy (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2003), 3.
decisions based on her security interests irrespective of being in weak situations. On August 18, 1992 India also conducted another successful test of Prithvi missile. Therefore, it was evident that Narasimha Rao had slowed the progress of India’s nuclear programme but that was only to protect it from the international sanctions and to maintain cordial relations with other nations taking into account the changing scenario at the international level.

Meanwhile, the American attitude changed and the US started pressurising India to stop its nuclear and space programme and to sign the NPT and to pursue the cause of nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament.

Rao government was relentlessly subjected to American pressures demanding India to cap its nuclear, missile and space programmes. Concomitantly the first signal became crystal clear when America sought to blacklist Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Russian’s Glascomos Space agency and asking the latter to terminate the supply of cryogenic rocket motors for the former’s space programme. Both the ISRO and Glavkosmos were under a dilemma to react to the situation and it gave birth to a controversy between the both. Even during these circumstances Narasimha Rao maintained his strict stand on the NPT and India’s nuclear programme and continued to pursue his predecessor governments stand on the Nuclear Free Zones. Meanwhile the death of P.K. Iyengar on 31 January 1993 gave a shock to the nuclear programme but he was succeeded by Rajagopala Chidambram. The core nuclear system during that time composed of Chidambram, and A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. All of them were from the pro-bomb lobby and consequently the Indian nuclear programme was made to progress at a genuine speed.

During the same time American President Bush insisted India to join a conference of five nations along with Pakistan. This conference was convened for discussing the nuclear non proliferation issue of India and Pakistan under the supervision of Russia, America and China. India considered it as an offensive step towards her sovereignty and standing. Hence, before going ahead to the conference

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150 Jain, 71.
151 For details on the controversy see: “Conclusion,” The Adelphi Papers 38, no.317, 69-72, (accessed December 29, 2013); available from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/05679329808449495
India put forward her wish to bilaterally discuss the issue with America. This secret talk invited criticism from the opposition parties, and they blamed Narasimha Rao’s government for being under the American pressure. But, C. Raja Mohan gives a positive response to the situation and favours Narasimha Rao’s stance of having a bilateral meet with the U.S. He states that,

Narasimha Rao launched India on a two-track policy—engage the Americans in a nuclear dialogue and prepare for conducting nuclear tests. The first was visible track and the second invisible. Narasimha Rao gave orders to the atomic energy establishment in Bombay to get ready for another round of nuclear tests, but the scientists wanted time—at least two years.\(^{152}\)

In this crucial time India displayed brilliant diplomacy and managed to buy time from the state of affairs. Indian Foreign Secretary J.N. Dixit played a very significant role during the whole situation. None of the pressures were working on India to stop her nuclear and space programmes. Another important reason which Narasimha Rao got for aggressively progressing nuclear weapon programme of India was the leaked American intelligence report in 1993 which clearly mentioned China’s supply of M-11 missiles or components of the delivery system to Pakistan.\(^{153}\) Prime Minister Rao during his visit to the US in May 1994, argued with America regarding India’s policy of denuclearization at the global and international level rather than local or regional level. “The Clinton Administration reassured India that despite persisting divergences between the two countries on the issues like the NPT and nuclear weapon free zones, both the countries can contribute to mutually beneficial relationship based on equality and sovereignty.”\(^{154}\)

The Americans wanted to capitalize Indian market in terms of goods and investments, as the economic reforms under the Rao government had opened greater opportunities and venues for them. After two months on 23 August 1994 Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced in a public meeting that Pakistan possesses an atom bomb.\(^{155}\)

This lead to an open nuclear competition in the South-Asian region and changed the politics of international relations.

\(^{152}\) Mohan, 5.
\(^{154}\) Jain.
\(^{155}\) Ibid.
Narasimha Rao Government’s interaction with the Nuclear Regimes

After Bill Clinton became the President of the US, nuclear policy of the US also underwent a change. The new government in the US tried to normalize the issues of non-proliferation and disarmament vis-à-vis other nations. Under these developments America decided to rethink on the Comprehensive Test Ban (CTB), which it had been opposing ever since. The deepening Indo-US ties were depicted during this time when, they co-sponsored a resolution to negotiate on the CTB in the UN General Assembly at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva. India co-sponsored the resolution in 1993-1994 and was supported by both America and Russia, and China to a certain extent.

The idea of Indian government behind sponsoring a resolution for the CTB was to avoid any discriminatory practices in the regimes; as it always favoured the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation, but with impartial means and processes. Another important reason why India vehemently proposed the resolution was, that the year 1994 marked the 20th anniversary for India’s peaceful nuclear explosion and Indian scientists have been working on advancing the design of the previous nuclear test, the test ban at this stage would had been of great concern to India. Hence, India tried to avoid any kind of negative implications for her nuclear advancements on the verge of bigoted disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. The Indian media was full of support, writing in favour of conducting new tests, and similar voice was coming from the scientific intelligentsia. During this time the talks on opening and review of the NPT started. Initially Prime Minister Rao took a comparatively soft stand on it as compared to his predecessors and he also made significant changes in the officials of the Ministry of External Affairs who were selected to negotiate nuclear issue with the US. This raised eyebrow of the opposition parties, primarily the BJP reacted very strongly to it and wrote a letter to the premier criticizing robustly his stand on the issue. Later Prime Minister clarified his situation:
We are not saying that we have set our face against [the NPT] under all circumstances…Our stand is to bring [the NPT] in line with what India can accept.156

In 1994 after Indian PM’s visit to America the situation was thought to be under control, as India had clarified her opinion (regarding the NPT) to the US, and had agreed to work on the CTBT and Fissile Material Cut off Treaty (FMCT). Again the domestic factors started laying pressure on the Rao government for his decision to support the FMCT.157 In 1995 the NPT was opened for review and extension. The years of 1995-1996 were amongst the most crucial for the Rao government as it opened the Pandora’s Box of non-proliferation issues. With the support of 170 countries it was extended for indefinite period. But more than that most of the big nations of the world started endorsing the cause of the NPT, and it put India into an uncomfortable situation. Since its inception India has been supporting the issues and concerns of non-proliferation but was strictly against the discriminatory provisions of the treaty. Maintaining its existent stand India did not participate in the conference and stated its view by mentioning that, “indefinite extension of the NPT perpetuates the discriminatory aspects and provides legitimacy to the nuclear arsenals of the nuclear weapons States.”158 Although, previously in May 1994 Prime Minister Rao showed his willingness in Indian Parliament to participate in the NPT conference as an observer (if allowed), but later he decided to boycott the conference. To support the Government’s stand even the scientists like the Chairman of the AEC Chidambram and the DRDO chief Abdul Kalam, “started a media campaign to counter American non-proliferation initiatives.”159 After the indefinite extension to the NPT only India, Pakistan and Israel were left out of its purview. Americans were speculating that India would come under pressures after this. To enhance this pressure the Clinton Administration invoked the

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156 As cited in Eric Arnett, ed., Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control in South Asia after the Test Ban (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 25
157 Indian opposition to the FMCT was based on the fact that India had small stock of missiles as compared to the nuclear powers and binding itself in any such treaty would put India into a comparatively disadvantageous position. Hence, Indian scientists and strategists were highly pursuing against the FMCT.
158 “India on NPT,” Foreign Affairs Record XLI, no. 6 (June 1995): 148.
159 Ramanna, 2003, 234.
Brown Amendment in 1995.\textsuperscript{160} Invoking of the Brown amendment for Pakistan not only provoked Indian leadership but they were also under fear that such military and financial aid to Pakistan could have drastic consequences for India. At the same time the finalization of the CTBT and the FMCT put the Rao government into a quagmire. Time was moving out of the hands of the Indian government and it had realized that in case the CTBT and the FMCT got finalized, it would obstruct all nuclear tests so; Prime Minister permitted preparation for another nuclear explosion.\textsuperscript{161} By December 1995 India was ready for Pokhran-II. But before India could have gone for the test, the \textit{New York Times} reporter disclosed about it. “This led to immediate, high-level meetings between U.S. officials and the Indian government, with the US urging restraint. It also led to an open and public debate around the issue of nuclear weapons, joined by media sources, strategic analysts, and government officials.”\textsuperscript{162} Lately in 2013, with the publication of the declassified documents, the fact that Indian nuke test build-up of 1995 was detected by the American government, was further proved. The documents released by the National Security Archive (NSA) and the Nuclear Proliferation History Project also highlighted Washington’s warning to Prime Minister’s Office in India to be prepared to face the consequences in case of tests.\textsuperscript{163} Ultimately Prime Minister had to call off the nuclear tests, as he was well aware of the economic sanctions waiting for India if he went out for the explosion. Jaswant Singh, former Foreign Minister during the NDA regime, in his book also commented on the situation stating that:

…it is reasonable to conclude that Narasimha Rao, when he was Prime Minister, had also ordered nuclear test in 1995. Satellite imagery, and some even suggest human intelligence from India, revealed the plans to

\textsuperscript{160} The Brown Amendment allowed the economic and military assistance to Pakistan without any attached conditions. Under the Brown amendment a renewal of $368 million military aid was given to Pakistan. For details see: Aziz Haniffa, “Arms for Pakistan Near Passage; India Hurt,” \textit{India Abroad}, November 3, 1995.

\textsuperscript{161} In October 1995, 20 pre-production models of the initial Prithvi SS-150 were secretly delivered to the Army to form the 333\textsuperscript{rd} Missile Regiment based in Secunderabad. Prime Minister conducted extensive discussions with the strategists of nuclear programme with regard to conduct of the test. Although all of them were highly enthusiastic about it, but the ultimate results of the reviews seemed to be negative. Keeping the economic sanctions in mind Rao decided not to go for the nuclear tests. But at the same time he wanted the Indian scientists to be ready with the preparations as the decision was not yet final.

\textsuperscript{162} Lorber, 61.

Nuclear Regimes and Nuclear Policy Under Early Coalition Governments

the US government, which then was made public, and the Premier backed off.¹⁶⁴

Narasimha Rao calculated well that although India was in the process of moving on the trajectory of higher growth, but it was not ready to absorb the economic sanction. However K. Subrahmanyam, gives a different account for this and explains that the main reason due to which Rao Government had refrained from conducting the nuclear test was “the lack of domestic consensus on the issue, as both economists and scientists were divided in their views. Time was needed to finalize the thermonuclear design.”¹⁶⁵

In spite of all these preparation and groundwork India continued to proclaim her allegiance towards disarmament and in March 1996 Indian foreign Secretary, Salman Haider asserted, “We do not believe that the acquisition of nuclear weapons is essential for our national security and we have followed a conscious decision in this regard.”¹⁶⁶

On the whole India was trying to put forward her traditional view of disarmament to convince the world about her moral and ethical values regarding the non-use of nuclear weapons. In the meantime elections were held in 1996 and due to a number of issues in the domestic politics like the Harshad Mehta scam, procurement of sugar stocks scam, and split in the Congress party led to a dip in the popularity of the Congress party. The loss of state elections in 1995 also shattered the image of the Congress and hence it lost the General Elections in 1996. The situation of the Congress party during these elections was devastating; it was in the worst of its phase since the history of the Indian National Congress. But the overall situation was also not clear for the new government formation. The President of India Shankar Dayal Sharma, invited the BJP to form government and under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee government was formed but it could not maintain majority and after 13 days the Prime Minister resigned and situation worsened for the nation.

¹⁶⁵ K. Subrahmanyam, as cited in Mika Kerttunen, *A Responsible nuclear weapons Power: Nuclear Weapons and Indian Foreign Policy*, (Helsinki: Department of Strategic and Defence Studies National Defence University, 2009), 163.
UNITED FRONT GOVERNMENT AND NUCLEAR POLICY OF INDIA

After the fall of the BJP government, the Janata Dal with the support of the Indian National Congress and 14 other parties formed the United Front Government. The chaotic situation of the 1996 is displayed in the table showing the performance of the major parties in the 1996 elections. The table 4.5 reveals that most of the parties failed to gain majority and hence some of the small parties allied together to form government.

Table 4.5 Performance of the National Parties in 1996 Lok Sabha Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>321</td>
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<td>471</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>1817</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>897</td>
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In 1996 discussion on the CTBT was at its peak and India was the pioneer country which criticised and opposed the treaty. T.V. Paul has stated Indian objections for not agreeing on the terms of the CTBT, these were⁶⁶⁷:

1. The proposed treaty was not linked to a time-bound framework for elimination of nuclear weapons; and

⁶⁶⁷ Paul, 6.
2. It allowed laboratory-type or sub-critical tests, which meant that the five nuclear powers would be free to continue building their arsenals.

To simplify, India with the futuristic viewpoint opposed the treaty, as by signing the treaty it would not be able to keep its nuclear option open. India was ready to face coercive sanctions. In the backdrop of this:

India’s stance on the CTBT changed decisively almost overnight. It seems that a coalition of laboratory scientists, hard-liners in the foreign and defence ministries and hawks from the think-tanks in New Delhi quickly consolidated itself and presented the Prime Minister’s office with a unified view that India needed to stop dithering and reject the CTBT outright despite all pressures. The weak new government, unlike its predecessor, was unable to side-step this bureaucratic-cum-strategic intellectual phalanx.\footnote{168}

On 20 June 1996, India’s chief delegate to the UN Conference on Disarmament (CD) Arundhati Ghosh gave a speech on the Plenary Meeting of the CD at Geneva. She made clear India’s stand on the draft of the CTBT and mentioned the importance of nuclear weapons for India.\footnote{169} Stephen P. Cohen comments on this situation:

This was a rare moment of candour, but it came too late to affect the treaty’s end game. The major nuclear weapon states had worked out a number of compromises among themselves, and there was no interest in accommodating India.\footnote{170}

Such a bold step by a weak coalition government was not only surprising but also effective; it changed the course of discussion on the disarmament and non-proliferation aspect. By following such a strict and overt nuclear (weapon) policy, the UF government also altered the previous non-indulgent attitude of the government. By


\footnote{169} She criticized it on the account that such a treaty would only ban the non-nuclear nations like India and allowed the existing nuclear nations to refine their arsenals through computerized simulations. She argued that the draft treaty perpetuated nuclear status to the existing five nuclear nations and by doing so in reality the universal and complete nuclear disarmament is not achievable. Hence, the draft treaty was completely discriminatory in nature and against the cause of non-proliferation and disarmament.

April 1996 Anil Kakodkar had joined as the new Director of the BARC. There was a whole wave of discussions and debates going all over the country for conducting the nuclear tests. The new government under the leadership of H.D. Deve Gowda also faced the situation. The nuclear device was already present in the nuclear shaft and the nuclear intelligentsia was pressurising the government to conduct the nuclear tests. Later Deve Gowda stated that:

...scientists had approached two previous governments to continue the tests, once in 1995 and then in 1997. I was requested to make a decision to conduct fresh nuclear tests. I convinced the scientists that the time was not ripe.  

The new Indian government was itself facing mounted internal weakness of sustaining as a government, hence the UF government found it an imprecise step to go ahead with nuclear explosion. Achin Vanaik gave another reason for the backing off the UF government, he clarified that:

...UF governments speculated about the possibility of testing but eventually resiled from taking such a decision at least in large part because it would (unlike for the BJP) have been such a sharp break from their own declared party positions without their making any public or even private preparations for such a dramatic turnaround.

On 19 September, 1996 the draft on the CTB treaty was presented before the UN General Assembly and was passed with 158 votes. Only nations which voted against the treaty were India, Bhutan and Libya, and five nations chose to abstain the voting. Although, India’s such move damaged her relations at the international level, but it was commended and applauded at home. Later with the help of I.K. Gujral, Minister of External Affairs in the U.F. government, a new vision of improving relations with the neighbouring nations was started under the Gujral Doctrine.

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173 The Gujral Doctrine named after the Foreign Minister I.K. Gujral, seeks to improve India’s relation with her neighbouring nations. Under this an attempt was made to settle a number of disputes namely the Sir Creek, the Siachen Glacier and the Wular Barrage issues. The doctrine followed and emphasized the policy of non-reciprocity and a unilateral refusal to participate in polemical exchanges, a unilateral announcement that its territory will not be used against the interests of its neighbours, tireless dialogue etc.
I.K. Gujral played a very significant role in reframing India’s foreign policy and managed to improve relations with China, Pakistan, small bordering states and also with the United States of America. In the initial years of the U.F. government, an attempt was made to undermine the progress on the nuclear front since it cast a direct threat to the new foreign policy pursued by the Indian government. But by 1997 against the consent of the Foreign Minister Gujral, Prime Minister Gowda approved the deploying of the Prithvi missiles at Jalandhar (which was just 200 km away from the Pakistani border), and also consented for the construction of two shafts 50m deep at the Pokhran site. By April 1997, the shafts were almost ready and it appeared that Prime Minister was ready for the nuclear explosion. According to Sanjay Badri-Maharaj, Gowda government had given clearance for the nuclear explosion so that India “began work on making nuclear warheads to missiles.” The UF government could not pursue the nuclear explosion because the US detected some suspicious activity around the Pokhran site and warned India for conducting nuclear tests. The device was removed from the site and once again India was seen to be under the pressures of the US sanctions.

**INDER KUMAR GUJRAL PHASE**

In April 1997 Prime Minister Gowda had to resign from the office and was succeeded by his Foreign Minister I.K. Gujral. The coalition government under the headship of Prime Minister Gujral was an extremely shaky and weak. The government was formed of the 14 coalition allies and their compulsion of alignment threatened Gujral to accommodate them at any cost in order to sustain in the office. After becoming the premier Gujral followed a peaceful nuclear policy, since he was not in favour of any nuclear explosion or nuclear weapons. He was considered to be a nuclear dove, also his policy of making peace and cooperation with the other nation would not have been possible if any nuclear activism was to be done by India. In order to create a cordial environment in the South-Asian region Gujral actively and successfully took a number of steps. He met the leaders of the neighbouring countries and offered a helping hand. India-Pakistan relations were in a much better position during his tenure and he

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met Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and tried to solve a number of trade related issues and some other issues in order to create friendly relations. “The two Prime Ministers agreed to instruct officials to be addressed in the next round of talks, beginning with a meeting to establish topics for negotiation and devise a mechanism for resolving disputes.”

Similar situation was developing in case of other neighbouring nations as well as the US. After India had refused to sign and accept the CTBT, Indo-US ties were getting tense. But with efforts of Gujral a change was visible even in these constrained relations. Prime Minister Gujral wanted to capitalise the Indo-US trade relations for the benefit of the country and he immensely worked on drafting a solution acceptable to both the nations. Also his non-aggressive attitude towards the nuclear issues was well known to the world. He had openly criticised the Gowda government, when they placed Prithvi missile at Jalandhar and even the building of two new shafts, hence his efforts were greeted by the American counterparts. The trade was improved to 18.7 percent in 1997 and Indian imports grew to 9.1 percent in 1997 from 0.7 percent in 1996. This improvement was so well accepted by the U.S. that the CTBT lost its prominence as an issue between the Indo-US ties.

The nuclear issue is said to have died during the Gujral period as the lack of enthusiasm from the government, the improving dialogue with Pakistan and enhancing ties with the US obstructed the path of development of the nuclear aspect during this phase. On the other hand, the US again started pressurising the Indian government to sign and accept the guidelines under the CTBT. Since the American government was aware of the weak situation of the Gujral led coalition government hence, it gave them an opportunity to intimidate it by the CTBT. At the domestic front the situation was equally coercive. “Although India has vehemently opposed the CTBT and did not sign it, the perception was that after 1999 the door to enhancing India’s nuclear capability would be closed, a highly unpopular situation as far as domestic politics is

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178 M.R. Biju, India’s Foreign Policy Towards a New Millennium (Jaipur: National Publishing House, 2000).
concerned.” Later in an interview with Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, former Prime Minister I.K. Gujral accepted that, had he continued in the office until September 1999, “…the pressure [to test] would have been difficult to resist.” Writing in a daily newspaper Raj Chengappa mentioned about his interaction with the Prime Minister Gujral on nuclear issue. Chengappa categorically mentions Gujral’s comment when he stated that, “Why play Pahalwan when you are not a Pahalwan?” Chengappa also mentioned that, “The Indian economy needed to be resilient and that it would be difficult for a weak coalition government to weather the international storm that would result from tests.” Overall the Gujral Doctrine was successful but the repercussion of the international pressure on various fronts was a problematic issue for this weak coalition government.

The Gujral doctrine cosmetically improved the regional political atmosphere and India’s relations with all its neighbours in general terms but the optimism embodied in the Gujral doctrine about unilateral goodwill and generosity did not bring about the desired results in the management of the security problems which remained. Under the premiership of I.K. Gujral India had made very comfortable situation at the international level, with the help of various bilateral meets and visits. Taking account of the changes occurring at the international level, Gujral supported the focus on the international organisations and the enhanced role of the UN. He in his address at the UNGA in September 1997 outlined the Indian perspective and supported the effective changes in bringing the UN reforms. He also played a very active role at the Non-Alignment Movement platform, promoted the cause of South-South cooperation at G-77 and G-15 summits as well.

Whereas, at the domestic front the Prime Minister was facing a great instability in the government immediately after he joined the office and after the passage of a few months, in spite of his efforts, the alliance was in danger. This disturbance and volatility

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180 Ibid.
182 Subhash Shukla, Foreign Policy of India (New Delhi: Anamika Publishers, 2007), 240.
was mainly due to the excessive intervention by the Congress party on the working of the government. Hence, it became very difficult for the Gujral government to work with full sovereignty and independence. In spite of the internal pressures he did not take any step which could have cast a wrong effect on the security or greater interest of the nation. He was forced to some extent to go ahead with the nuclear explosion but keeping in mind the sensitivity of the situation and his weak position at home, he managed to bear the pressures. On 28 November 1997, he resigned from the government, leaving behind again a weak and incomplete government.

**CONCLUSION**

The decade of 1970s was a watershed period in the Indian politics, as it witnessed the emergence of coalition parties in the Indian politics. The first coalition government formed by the Janata Party in 1977 changed the political history of the country. However, the initial coalition governments formed were not very strong and could not complete their full term in office. As far as the foreign and nuclear policy of the country was concerned, an overall continuity was maintained in the policy and no major departure was noticed. The Janata Party’s stand on the nuclear policy varied in itself, as Prime Minister Moraraji Desai being a nuclear dove never followed an aggressive nuclear policy. Whereas his ministers’, particularly Atal Bihari Vajpayee, always took a firm and strict stand on the same highlighting the security interests and India’s need to become a nuclear power in the wake of the same. Due to the disarray in the statements and the ideological difference, “The Janata Government failed to project an alternate world view....These internal differences manifested themselves in various foreign policy statements. The nuclear powers took this opportunity to impose controls and safeguards on India’s nuclear installations.”

Taking a strict note of actions of the international nuclear regimes the Janata Party government continued to pursue the traditional stand of defiance of the non-proliferation treaty. Further even, the Desai government never succumbed to any kind of external pressures, and continued to develop the nuclear energy in the civilian area. As Morarji Desai was against its use for the weapons, still his statement regarding the indigenous production of the metal oxide...
Nuclear Regimes and Nuclear Policy Under Early Coalition Governments

fuel showed his commitment towards the cause. Although the developed nations tried to blackmail and capitalise the personal belief of the Morarji Desai, but keeping his personal choice (of being anti-nuclear) aside, Desai refused to compromise on this issue. Rejection for creation of nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region again confirmed the continuity which was maintained by the Janata Party under Moraraji Desai.

After the Desai period Chaudhari Charan Singh became the Prime Minister of India. The most significant step which was taken by his regime was the open declaration against the Pakistani nuclear developments. He overtly not only warned the Pakistani government but also declared a strict Indian stand against any unwanted or illegitimate activities pursued along the borders of India. Bringing the Pakistani nuclear developments to the forefront, he started a new era of security issues and debates. Since his term was very short so he could not take any significant decisions regarding India’s nuclear policy.

Due to the weak coalition governments at the centre secessionist movements, weak economy, mounting unemployment and growing nuclear threat from the neighbours were the major issues which the Indira Gandhi had to deal with, when she returned to power in 1979. After coming back she continued her ‘dual track’ nuclear policy but in a covert manner. As she was aware of the security threat from the neighbours, and the growing proximity between China and Pakistan, she made sure that the weaponisation of the nuclear programme was on track. Whereas, overtly pursuing a peaceful nuclear programme she prolonged India’s participation and vocal support at various disarmament and non-proliferation platforms, and reaffirmed India’s anti-nuclear weapon stand, but still she never moved away from her stand on the Non-proliferation Treaty. For the first time during this period Indian army also campaigned for the nuclear potential development, due to growing security threat from Pakistan. Hence, Mrs. Gandhi considering all these advancements gave a green signal for another nuclear explosion, but because these activities were caught by the American satellites so it could not work out. In spite of the increasing pressure from America to halt India’s nuclear programme Mrs. Gandhi determinedly pursued the nuclear programme and its weaponisation. It is to be noted here that Mrs. Gandhi’s furious reaction to the situation shows that, it is easier to conclude over any decision in a single party whereas in a
coalition government due to the pressure exerted by the allies, decision making becomes comparatively difficult. But taking a very diplomatic step Indira Gandhi managed to resolve the fuel supply issue with the US.

After the assassination of Indira Gandhi, she was succeeded by her son Rajiv Gandhi. As a Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi is well remembered for his disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. His time bound Action Plan for the disarmament and non-proliferation is workable till date. But Mr. Rajiv Gandhi did not alter India’s opposition to the “...international system which is status-quo oriented, hierarchical, discriminatory, hegemonial and even monopolistic.” With the growing Pakistani potential Mr. Gandhi took strict steps to make peace in the region. It was during his time that India and Pakistan signed the treaty of not attacking each others’ nuclear installations. But responding to the security threats India under the premiership of Rajiv Gandhi conducted the military operations like Brasstacks and Trident. Although Rajiv Gandhi is also criticised for decelerating the nuclear programme under the external pressure of the regimes, but it seems to be a diplomatic step by the Indian government to justify her position as a responsible peace loving, anti-nuclear weapon state favouring the disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Therefore, it would be wrong to say that under the international pressure alone Rajiv Gandhi had slowed the nuclear programme, however, their effects could not be negated.

After the term of Rajiv Gandhi, Indian polity once again saw the re-emergence of the coalition era. This time a pure coalition government under the name of National Front was formed. This period of the coalition government was usurped by the 1990 crisis with Pakistan over the Kashmir issue. The whole world was threatened by this crisis as it was expected to turn into a nuclear war between both the nations, and due to only this reason the American government intervened in between to put a full stop over the situation which was going out of control. This government under the leadership of V.P. Singh could not last long, and was criticized for being a weak government which could not keep track of the Pakistani nuclear activities and did not take any step to strengthen India’s nuclear programme. Had the American government not intervened

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184 Poulose, 155.
the world would have stood on the verge of a nuclear war. Again the National front government proved the weakness of a coalition government and its inability to take decisions. However, the National Front government showcasing permanence in the nuclear policy did not make any changes in it, but it is also to be noted that the government failed to make required modification in India’s position in lieu of international happenings. The only credible step taken was the creation of a study group to formulate patterns to control the nuclear arsenal and use it effectively during a war like situation.

Like previously the V.P. Singh again gave a very brief and unstable coalition government in the centre. With a caretaker government of seven months Chander Shekhar succeeded him. But it was under the premiership of Narasimha Rao that a stable government was formed in India. The most noteworthy change of the 1990s was the demise of the Soviet Union. After the breakup of the Soviet Union India had to engage with the post cold war world and reassess its foreign policy priorities. Keeping in mind this important change which had taken place at the international level, Indian Prime Minister decided to open up the economy to international players. It meant that foreign relations had an economic dimension and trade became a foreign policy tool. The traditional values of swadeshi, and attainment of economic self-sufficiency was left far behind. Engaging in international economic trade and indulging in the positive foreign relations was India’s new way forward. The economic reforms initiated by the Rao government had direct implications for the nuclear programme of the country as well. Since, the reformation of ties with other nations created more acceptability of India’s nuclear potential and its emergence as an economic power was seen with great endurance. Although, the Rao government focused more on developing economic relations, but he like his predecessors, never compromised on India’s security and national interest issues. This was validated from his decision taken at the UNSC during the passage of a resolution on proliferation of WMD. The economic tie-ups with world benefited India’s progress in its nuclear programme as well. It was during this term that India successfully tested the Agni and the Prithvi missiles. Narasimha Rao had slowed down the progress of India’s nuclear programme but that was only to protect it from the international sanctions and to maintain cordial relations with other nations. However,
during some point of time the Rao government was carped for coming under American pressure, but it seems that those steps were necessarily taken as diplomatic moves to avoid any undue pressure from the international nuclear regimes to agree on the non-proliferation and disarmament treaties which India had been alleging for being discriminatory all these years. This is substantiated by the fact that at one time in the year 1995 Rao government had started the preparation of Pokhran-II, but due to the disclosure of information in the international media the tests were cancelled.

After the Congress lost power, the United Front governments under Deve Gowda and I.K. Gujral started to focus more on foreign policy and foreign relations. With the basic agenda of keeping peace with the neighbouring nations and pursuing economic interest in South East Asia the ‘Look East’ policy was kicked off. This step was also necessary in order to have stable, peaceful and supportive relations in the region for the fulfilment of a larger goal at the international platforms. The most crucial step taken by this government was to reject the CTBT out rightly. It was for the first time that a weak coalition government had taken such a bold step at any international stage, displaying immense courage, the UF government clarified her security needs and her requirement of not doing away with the nuclear weapons, when her neighbours possessed them openly. Although due to internal weakness as a coalition government they rejected the option of going ahead with the nuclear test, but the overall pursuance of the nuclear policy of the UF government was very commendable.