CHAPTER - V

INDIA'S NUCLEAR TESTS, DOCTRINE AND CONSTRAINTS
Introduction

The year 1998-99 marked a watershed for Indian diplomacy in disarmament and international security affairs. After a unique voluntary restraint of 24 years. India conducted a limited series of underground nuclear tests on May 11 and 13, 1998, demonstrating an up-to-date knowledge on the latest developments in weaponisation of nuclear technology including an ability to conduct sub-critical tests or tests by computer simulation in the laboratory. The demonstration of the nuclear capabilities was certified as necessary owing to security compulsions tough it resulted in criticism along with imposition of wide range of sanctions by US against India under the Glenn Amendment; conducting of a series of nuclear tests by Pakistan. Our tests however, did not violate any legal obligation and were undertaken in response to pressing security needs and a technological imperative.

Security Threats

According to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) it constantly evaluates the factors relevant to India's security so as to enable the taking of timely and effective steps for the maintenance of appropriate levels of defence preparedness. The threat or potential threat that the MOD sees is tabulated in its Annual Report of 1997. This includes:

- The continued threat to international stability posed by existing nuclear weapon stockpiles.
• Collusion between China and Pakistan in the latter's missile development and nuclear weapons programmes.

Four regions having a bearing on India's national security. These are:

• The Gulf and West Asia - where Israel's nuclear arsenal and the alleged aspirations of Iraq and Iran could be of concern

• The oil-rich Central Asia - surrounded by four Nuclear Weapon States/Threshold states - within human and technological assets to reconstruct their arsenal if required at a later date

• The Asia-Pacific and SE Asia - where Japan, Taiwan, North Korea and South Korea have developed advanced nuclear weapons technologies in dispute-ridden environment

• The Indian Ocean - where nuclear maritime assets of the US and SSBNs from France (with appropriate facilities at Reunion Islands) could unsettle the evolving regional balance of power

The emerging regional power, China has:

• Substantially augmented its nuclear arsenal and missile capabilities, which continue to have relevance to India’s security concerns

• Upgraded logistic capabilities all along the Sino-Indian border to enhance the employment of air power

• Its posture in the South China Sea is seen to have implications for the region
• The strengthening of relations with Myanmar is being watched carefully

In the nuclear context the Ministry of Defence went to state:

"India stands for total elimination of all nuclear weapons and ushering in a nuclear weapon free world. However, till such time as this is achieved, India will be constrained to keep open her nuclear option."  

**Constraints**

The presence of nuclear weapons in their Indian Ocean base in Diego Gracia has always been a serious security concern for India. The establishment of a permanently deployed independent fleet for operation in Indian Ocean indicates increased American commitment to the region and represents a crucial aspect of American naval doctrine in terms of influencing events in the littoral regions and escalation of tensions in India's vital strategic vicinity. Even the visits by US, Russia and China to the ports in the littoral region implicitly impinge on the security of India.

China has been considered as a potential security threat ever since the Sino-Indian war of 1962. The threat perception has further sharpened with the development of Chinese Blue Water Navy, seeking naval and submarine bases and facilities for electronic surveillance in Coco Island of Burma making the entire eastern region of India vulnerable. This needs to be seen that India has returned its nuclear powered submarine.
China is the world's largest nuclear weapon power and is the only NWS that has given greater importance to the development of nuclear weapons over that of conventional weapons. The rapidly expanding Chinense economy has provided the requisite resources that have lead to a shift in its nuclear strategy. There is sufficient evidence that the resource allocation for securing a reliable 'second strike' capability in terms of ICBMs, and survivable sub-surface nuclear forces, has been substantially enhanced and a shift from a 'minimum' to a 'moderate' deterrence of about 600 warheads and MIRV systems is being created.2

China has a full-fledged nuclear triad with global capabilities. It also has developed and deployed a wide range of tactical nuclear weapons to support its conventional forces in combat. In the context of arms control, China had initially proposed that it would join the arms control talks when the superpowers reduced their respective arsenals by fifty percent. However, this requirement has since been revised a ninety percent. It is thus obvious, that China will continue to expand its nuclear arsenal in the coming years. these are issues that must, perforce, form the core of India's analysis of her current and future security environment.3

Pakistan has also proved to be a perennial threat to Indian security against the backdrop of the three major wars of 1947, 1965 and 1971, apart from the recent Kargil misadventure and the case of sponsored terrorism in Kashmir to face disastrous consequences. Moreover, in response to Indian nuclear testing in 1974, Pakistan moved in the direction of a search for nuclear weapon status in terms
of building an 'Islamic Bomb' and finally acquired nuclear weapons capability, which has always been India specific. The evolution of the Pakistani nuclear strategy indicates an inexorable thrust towards changing the perceived power balance with India. Having created a nuclear weapons capability, Pakistan has met the basic imperatives for a deployment policy and is now in the process of articulating a declaratory policy which unabashedly links the nuclear weapons programme to its ongoing hostility with India.

Sino-Pakistani collaboration in terms of the latter's development of nuclear weapons and missile production, is perceived as being aimed against India. The Chinese aided Plutonium production reactor at Khushah, which was inaugurated in November, 1998 provides an example to this. China is continuing to violate its non-proliferation commitments and helped Pakistan gain nuclear weapons capability. Sino-Pak collusion in the development of nuclear weapons and delivery systems exacerbates the security environment in which India must operate.

There has been no proper action on part of the U.S. to ensure Pakistan and China's adherence to NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) and MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime). In a way, U.S. has always been accommodative to Pakistan and China. Instead of enforcing NPT provisions and MTCR, US has, of late, cooperated with China in the field by providing China with satellite and missile technology. In this context, the indefinite extension of NPT legitimizing the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons by Five Nuclear Weapon States has only added to India's security compulsions.
Besides the manner in which the CTBT was imposed on the world - without either removing the danger of nuclear holocaust (which the Japanese know about more than the Americans) or preventing subcritical nuclear tests that the USA has conducted after the signing of the CTBT - was undemocratic. That was a challenge to India's recess from testing - a recess of twenty four long years\(^5\).

**Sanctions as Constraints**

Following the test, sanctions were imposed by President Clinton on May 1988 under Section 102 of the Arms Export Control Act, also known as the Glenn Amendment. They are of course, much more severe than sanctions of the past. They include:

- termination of assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, except for humanitarian assistance or food or other agricultural commodities

- termination of sales of defence articles, defence services, or design and construction services under the Arms Export Control Act, and revocation of licenses for the commercial sale of any items on the US Munitions List

- termination of all foreign military financing under the Arms Export Control Act

- denial of any credit, credit guarantees or any other financial assistance by any department agency, or instrumentality of the United States Government
• opposition to the extension of any loan for financial or technical assistance by intentional financial institution

• prohibiting US banks from making any loan or providing any credit to the Government of India, except for the purpose of purchasing food or other agricultural commodities

• pursuant to the US Secretary of State's determination under 2(b)(4) of the Export-Import Act of 1945, the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank may not give approval to guarantee, insure, or extend credit, or participate in the extension of credit in support of US exports to India.

The United States is India's largest trading and investment partner. So, the sustained economic sanctions may hurt India's economy, but as is evident from the past - they will do little to further the US non-proliferation agenda in the region.

Thus, the post nuclear test period has been marked by a number of constraints for India that try to destabilize the country as a whole. The US has mounted an intensive push to roll back India's nuclear weapons capability, create a groundswell of the US non-proliferation regime, and put into place all the mechanisms possible to obstruct India's sovereign right to look after her own security interests. Pakistan has mounted bizarre schemes to draw the international community into the Indo-Pak dispute. It has gone to the extent of simulating nuclear capabilities beyond what it has and generating a near war hysteria. China has come out in the open and acknowledged its aspirations to acquire 90000 square miles of Indian territory,
ordered its military commanders along the line of actual control to step up military activities and has overtly announced its aspirations to project its maritime forces into the Indian Ocean to challenge India's domination.

**The Nuclear Doctrine**

In such a situation, India fairly demonstrated its sovereign right to go in for nuclear weapon testing and then spelt out the principal elements of India's Nuclear Policy such as:

- India will maintain a minimum and credible nuclear deterrent;
- India has no intention of engaging in an open-ended programme or an arms race;
- India subscribes to policy of no-first use of nuclear weapons and by implication, non-use with regard to non-nuclear weapons states;
- A moratorium on nuclear testing was announced on May 13, 1998. India is now engaged in discussions with key interlocutors on a range of issues, including the CTBT. It is prepared to bring these discussions to a successful conclusion so that the entry into force of the CTBT is not delayed beyond September 1999. India expects that other countries, as specified in Article XIV of the CTBT will adhere to the treaty without conditions;
• India is engaged in negotiation in the CD on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in good faith;

• India shall not transfer nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons material and technology and will maintain a stringent system of export controls to demonstrate her commitment to non-proliferation;

• India's nuclear arsenal is under civilian command and control;

• A national security council has been established and tasked to undertake a strategic defence review.

However, as a logical corollary to this nuclear policy, the 27-member NSAB (National Security Advisory Board) has released the first draft of Indian Nuclear Doctrine (IND) on the 17th August 1999. This publicly available, quasi-official document is a milestone in the national security field and a first step towards emergence of a distinct Indian nuclear architectural style. This unveiled the autonomy of decision making in strategic matters as an inalienable democratic right of Indian people. This right needs to be strenuously guarded in a world where on the one hard, nuclear weapons for a select few are sought to be legitimised for an indefinite future and on the other, two nuclear armed neighbours are adding up tension in the region. So crafting a nuclear doctrine is a realistic and momentous step forward in the direction of Indian security. The need for such a doctrine or manual to aid a country in making the right decision on a subject of such enormous importance as nuclear war has also been justified by Henry
Kissinger in his classic "Nuclear Weapon and Foreign Policy". In this sense, a doctrine in different from strategy or a policy that a country has on the employment of these weapons. Strategic doctrine however, was a relatively new exercise in the United States after the end of the Second World War. The post war strategic doctrines of massive retaliation, multiple response, limited nuclear war are a mix of the various strategic ideas of the past with the difference that these doctrines contain the central focus of nuclear weapons. The over all policy goal of these doctrines was reminiscent of the strategic thought that Soviet Union was the main adversary. In pursuit of this, US strategic doctrines demanded for preparation for war on two fronts in Europe and the Persian Gulf was reminiscent of thinking (during the inter war period) of having an offensive and a defensive front in Europe and the Far East. Its doctrine of hitting industrial and military targets during the days of multiple response was reminiscent of bombings to obliterate Japanese cities. Its policy of limited nuclear war was a novel doctrine of actually fighting a nuclear war over a length of time at different levels of escalation. It is novel not in the context of a limited war. It is novel in the context of thinking of a possibility of fighting and winning a nuclear war in a manner that the US remained survivable power of that and not allowing the USSR a similar capacity.

The limited nuclear war doctrine is aligned to a refusal to declare a no-first use of nuclear weapons and strategy of launch on warning. Limited nuclear war then is possible both in a bilateral exchange involving the USA and Russia or in Europe with the use of strategic nuclear weapons and theatre nuclear weapons. Limited nuclear war
strategy also retains the idea of general nuclear war. However, by the 1980s, limited nuclear war theory took a full circle and cut itself away from the considerations of deterrence through MAD to first use of nuclear weapons for victory and survival of the US as a 20th century power. In the present context therefore, Americans have both Limited Nuclear War strategy and Discriminate Deterrence strategy to meet the security challenges. Discriminate Deterrence aimed at surgical strikes against Third World States through the medium of PGMS (Precision Guided Munition). These days one doesn't hear of it any more. Its not clear whether there have been given up.

India has had a nuclear strategy ever since it began making nuclear weapons. Having declared its possession of nuclear weapon, some guidance on how we will employ them are important to guide our forces, worn off potential aversion and aid in avoiding nuclear war. Thus, by spelling out its doctrine in black and white, India has rather demonstrated its maturity as a nuclear power and there is nothing immoral about our doctrine.

The six page draft Indian Nuclear doctrine (IND) presented as a "censuses" document has elaborated that India will maintain a credible minimum nuclear deterrence which may change according to the changing security environment in the region, India will neither be the first to use nuclear weapons nor will it attack which do not possess nuclear capability. However, in case attack by another nuclear weapon state, India reserves the right to strike back. There should be enough weapons in its arsenal to be able to "retaliate"....to inflict destruction" on the aggressor. "Nuclear weapon shall be tightly
controlled..... The authority to release nuclear weapon for use resides in the person of the Prime Minister or the designated successor". The broad draft paper lists five specific nuclear deterrence requirements—sufficient survivable and operationally prepared nuclear forces, a robust command & control system and effective intelligence & early warning capabilities. It also states inter-alia that India's nuclear forces will be based on a "triad of aircraft, mobile land-based missile and sea-based assets". Thus, it appears from the discussion paper that much in the draft nuclear doctrine is contentious & it's essential that there be a balanced & focussed debate.

There have been both positive & negative reaction in domestic as well as international circles to this neither flawless nor comprehensive draft nuclear doctrine. At the domestic level, it has mainly been criticized for the following reasons:

- Financial border that it might yield
- Possibility of arms race in the region.
- Timing & manner of its release .
- Superficiality in dealing with the aspect of Command & Control
- Vagueness in defining "effective credible minimum nuclear deterrence"
- insensitivity to Issues of developmental & human security .

As the same line, it has been well applauded by many for its following positive aspects.
Greater transparencies in decision making.

Not country specific.

No first use.

Consensus document

Firm step necessitated by the security environment.

Element of strategic autonomy

Release of draft for public debate

Defensive nuclear doctrine.

The major reaction of the international community have been as follows:

Pakistan announced that she was giving 'final touches' to her nuclear doctrine.

Accusation of Pakistan that India is about to embark on further & even more dangerous scalat in the nuclear & conventional arms builder.

Besides characterizing Indian step as unwise, the U.S has stated that "security is not enhanced by nuclear weapons and it would raise the possibility of an arms race in the sub-continent against everybody's interest." She has dismissed India's contention that it needs the nuclear deterrent to avert a possible nuclear blackmail by China and urged India to show restraint.
U.S & other Group of eight (G-8)'s decision to continue to defer founding by International Financial Institution of India's non-basic human needs.

China has urged India not to induct nuclear missile into the arsenal & to renounce its nuclear weapons program by implementing U. N Security council Resolution-1172.

Japan has said it was deeply concerned at India's proposed nuclear doctrine that could mean" undertaking of weaponisation and deployment of nuclear weapons in India & weakening of Non-Proliferation Regime" and wants to discuss the issue with India.

It is only Russia which has categorically ruled out any shift in Moscow's stand vis-a -vis India under foreign pressure & said "we will take out own time to react to to India Nuclear Doctrine(IND) which needs a detailed study & analysis.

Though there has been enormous pressure on India both domestically & internationally, the fact remains that the draft doctrine is a mere discussion paper & not a final one. India is neither in the arms race nor does it intend to start one in the region as the doctrine speaks of no-first use and non use against non-nuclear weapon states & by going nuclear, only complies with the U. N Charter which up holds each counties right to self defence. That indicates her firm intention for stable not global disarmament and her maturity to move towards a responsible position in a nuclear field to protect herself in a nuclearised environment around her.
The Challenge

However, after the recent tests, we are faced with a fresh set of question in terms of rediscovery of CTBT & FMCT. These treaties have been on the global arms control and disarmament agenda for quite some time. The Indian stand on the CTBT and the FMCT during negotiations derives from its traditional nuclear diplomacy. Ever since independence, India has tried to harmonise its security with disarmament. It has viewed nuclear weapons as instruments of power and coercion and argued that their presence anywhere in effect, threatens others security. India therefore, has been demanding their complete elimination. India, during the CTBT negotiations, was more concerned that the treaty that would emerge would effectively prevent proliferation and would ensure the process of disarmament. Finally, India rejected the Treaty on three grounds:

First, the nuclear weapons states failed to give a commitment to eliminate their nuclear weapons in a reasonable and negotiated finite span of time. India felt that in the absence of such a commitment, the Treaty would become an unequal treaty retaining the present discriminatory nuclear regime and sanctioning, in effect, the possession of nuclear weapons by some countries for their security, while ignoring the security concerns of other States.  

Second, the CTBT failed to effectively contribute to nuclear non-proliferation in all aspects. It banned only explosive testing. As the Treaty text does not ban qualitative development, it cannot be considered an integral first step of a nuclear disarmament process.
Third, the Treaty included the EIF clause: Article XIV. This made the Indian ratification of the treaty essential for its implementation. This provision contradicted the fundamental norms of international law and was thus unacceptable to India.12.

The proposed Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) is yet to be negotiated in the CD. It focuses on a cut-off for military purposes. It might be discriminatory as 'unsafeguarded material' may remain beyond the treaty scope. This treaty may therefore, freeze the huge disparities between existing stockpiles. This again appears to be inconsistent with Indian disarmament objectives. India, early on during the negotiations demanded that the FMCT be linked to parallel talks on nuclear disarmament.

**Future Role and Conclusion**

In the present changed environment, our response to both these treaties continues to be what it was earlier - not to sign on the dotted lines of CTBT and succumb to nuclear apartheid. Therefore, India needs to retain her vision of a nuclear weapons free world, even if currently it is in the realm of metaphysics of peace. She, perforce, must have a hard look at nuclear apartheid that she has been resisting throughout. She must consider the nuclear encirclement around her, even if the nukes are not either directly or permanently pointing towards her. She must keep in view the nuclear diplomacy of coercion, in times of crisis, that the USA has been prone to practice. She needs to keep in view that the Chinese have never been averse to the use of force whenever they deem it fit. The current unipolar moment did not deter China from using force13.
END NOTES


3 Ibid, p. 70.


5 Gupta, Rakesh, "India has had Enough, She will Swallow No More - I", Mainstream, New Delhi, 16th May, 1998, p. 3.


7 Nair, V.K., op.cit., p. 106.


9 Ibid.


11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.