CONCLUSION

This thesis has focused on the role of domestic factors and U.S. non-proliferation policy towards South Asia. I have used the domestic structure framework, as defined and conceptualised by Peter Katzenstein and Jack Snyder, to analyse U.S. non-proliferation strategies towards South Asia in the period 1990-1995 and beyond. The non-proliferation literature has revealed that explanations of nuclear decision-making lack a "second image" or a domestic focus of analysis. In this thesis I have used domestic structure as the critical intervening variable in the shaping of U.S. non-proliferation strategies towards South Asia.

As documented in this thesis, South Asia has been singled out as the area of major proliferation "concern" to U.S. policy by the Clinton administration and the intelligence community. The U.S. Congress also predicated its non-proliferation strategies and approaches towards South Asia on pessimistic assumptions about the prospects of future use of WMDs in the subcontinent. The South Asian proliferation problem remains outstanding in the U.S. view, when compared to the situation in some other countries of nuclear "concern" who have apparently been dealt with. For instance, South Africa has "rolled back" its nuclear programme.
Brazil and Argentina have shifted towards “nuclear transparency” in 1990-1991. Iraq's nuclear facilities were placed under nuclear inspection (UNSCOM). And the U.S. has bought off the North Korean nuclear programme. India and Pakistan present a challenge because they have thumbed their noses at the various U.S. non-proliferation proposals and the global non-proliferation regime. Thus from the early 1990s on, a key issue before the U.S. was to discipline South Asia’s proliferation behaviour.

The thesis begins by developing a framework of analysis to be used to understand U.S. non-proliferation strategies. U.S. non-proliferation policy towards South Asia is comprehensible in terms of the theoretical concepts of the domestic structure approach as a supplementary theory to realism. The domestic structure approach gives us a richer insight into the dominant belief systems, ideas, and political structures as it affects non-proliferation choices. Additionally, it helps explain what kind of state response is chosen from among a variety of responses available to a state. Empirical evidence has revealed, and I have cited some examples, that non-proliferation strategies and approaches or denuclearization can also be explained from the perspective of the domestic politics of states.

The basic argument, as conceptualised by Peter Katzenstein and Jack Snyder, is that domestic structure can be described in terms of ruling
coalitions and policy networks who define policy objectives and instruments at any given time. It is the nature of the coalitions and networks that influences policy objectives and policy instruments, that is, ends and means. The key to the approach is the distinction between instruments and objectives.

The thesis began by an overview of U.S. non-proliferation policies in the period before 1990. It then turned to an assessment of the growing political and economic salience of South Asia in the aftermath of the Cold War. Greater references to non-proliferation in Congressional hearings and reports, documents and speeches and official testimonies all pointed to South Asia as the most dangerous “flashpoint”. Research foundations in the U.S. also helped raise the salience of South Asia through their research on U.S.-South Asia nuclear interaction. The inability of the U.S. to influence South Asian nuclear behaviour in the way that Washington wanted, led to an increase in research activity by institutions such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Brookings Institution, the Council on Foreign Relations and the Asia Society.

The thesis went on to its major task thereafter, namely, to categorise U.S. non-proliferation objectives as articulated by its competing government agencies and civil society groups namely, think tanks. Three alternative sets of U.S. non-proliferation objectives were analysed. The
first of these was prevention or renunciation of nuclearisation. This is the NPT centred approach, aiming for the prevention of a nuclear breakout by India and Pakistan and is chiefly advocated within the Congress, the orthodox non-proliferation community and some think tanks. Second, there was the objective of cap, rollback and eliminating nuclear weapons that was advocated primarily by the U.S. Administration. Finally, there are those who advocated a limited, though managed, overt capability for South Asia. Proponents of this approach were to be found among the defence and politico/military establishments and a limited group of non-proliferation experts. This part of the thesis dealt with the divergences in the non-proliferation views of Congress, the Administration and the policy analysts in the 1990-1995 phase. It also examined how the executive and administration related to each other and whether there was institutional friction or cohesion between competing government agencies. It summarised the view of various think tanks and public interest groups.

U.S. domestic structure consists of shifting combinations and permutations of coalitions and interest groups, constantly influencing policy-making. In the 1990-1995 phase, the dominant coalition was that of the Congress, Department of Defence, and the executive. This coalition was conservative in orientation and continued to harbour a Cold War mind-set. The Cold War had just ended, and the conservative
constituencies sought to cash in on the political dividends of the unipolar world. However, a mindset which had influenced the American national psyche for over fifty years could not be transformed overnight. In addition, the end of the Cold War was marked by tremendous political euphoria. It saw American victory in the Gulf War. Simultaneously, it demonstrated the technological power and military superiority of the U.S. over all competitors. The information revolution and revolution in military affairs transformed the U.S. military response to a pre-emptive and a unilateralist one. The Gulf War demonstrated the use of high-tech, sophisticated precision-guided munitions (PGMs). With a combination of "hard" and "soft" power American superiority appeared to be total. Nevertheless, the Department of Defence was suddenly faced with the prospect of shrinking budgets and the absence of a rationale for seeking increased defence funding. In the tussle during budget debates, the DOD's counter-proliferation efforts seemed a handy device to legitimise calls for high defence spending. The Defence Planning Guidance for Fiscal year 1991-1994, a document prepared annually by senior officials in the DOD, called for a military capacity virtually identical to that maintained during the Cold War era. The nuclear posture review and the bottom-up review, two vital State Department reports, also were reflective of the Cold War mind-set of the military establishments.
In fact, this was a manifestation of the dominant influence of the conservative constituencies, the Congress, DOD, and the Executive. The post Cold War also saw a burgeoning literature advocating U.S. primacy. The military responses in the Gulf and the missile attacks on Afghanistan and Sudan are mindful of unilateral tendencies. The conservative constituency was informed by international primacy which propagated American preponderance in international relations. This saw their adoption of U.S. preponderance as a vision of U.S. grand strategy. It was reflected in its choice of unilateralism as the preferred instrument of foreign policy in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. The conservative constituency supported the NPT approach because the U.S. had led the global non-proliferation regime and South Asia’s defiance was seen as a challenge to its leadership.

Towards the end of the 1990-95 period, there was a shift in the U.S. stance from prevention to arms control. This was because the constituency of arms control gained importance and its members began to be inducted into the ranks of the policy making community in greater numbers. A more inward looking American public questioned the necessity of American “over commitment” abroad. The theorists of cooperative security were inducted into the government policy-making
centres. Besides, the Clinton administration had developed a strong constituency that advocated arms control.

Apart from the theorists of the co-operative security who were part of the government like William Perry and Ashton Carter, the ACDA director John D. Holum and the Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, were strong advocates of arms control. They advocated multilateral instruments and arms control agreements to restrain the spread of WMDs in South Asia. The coalition of administration and liberal think tanks also advocated multilateral approaches and international institutions to get universal compliance to the global non-proliferation regime.

The post 1998 phase saw the dominance of “managers” of proliferation mainly because of the access of influential business groups and lobbies who were close to the government. The business and farmers lobbies were able to modify the Congressional position on non-proliferation strategies for South Asia. Prominent think tanks also influenced the establishment thinking in various ways.

A shifting coalition of conservatives and liberals articulated different policies, in different phases. Whereas the dominant conservative constituency advocated the NPT centric approach, the growing prominence of the arms control community in the ranks of the Clinton Administration led to its embrace of international institutions and
multilateral instruments to deal with South Asia. Their objective was to rein in India and Pakistan into the international non-proliferation regime. A combination of liberals and conservatives advocated “management” of the proliferation problem in South Asia. This coalition consisted of the Congress, the Administration and prominent think tanks. Business groups and farm lobbies were instrumental in modifying policies in the post 1998 phase. The powerful influence of business lobbies led to an internal debate on whether foreign policy should be commercially driven or merely informed by it.

The second major task of the thesis was to develop an inventory of U.S. non-proliferation instruments towards South Asia. First, the U.S. has resorted to unilateral instruments. These instruments were, sanctions (domestic legislation such as the Pressler and Symington amendments), counter-proliferation and missile defence. Secondly, the U.S. has favoured the use and extension of international control regimes to limit if not reverse proliferation activities. These include the MTCR, the Zangger Committee, and the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Finally, it has turned to international institutions to help contain proliferation or the treaties agreed upon through international institutions like the United Nations, the NPT, CTBT, and FMCT. These “options” are related to the preferences of the various government agencies like the Congress, the executive, and the
Department of Defence. The Congress and the DOD were conservatively inclined and preferred unilateralism instruments. The more internationalist looking executive and bureaucracy preferred multilateralist instruments as the way to achieve global non-proliferation. Civil society groups varied in their responses. Some preferred multilateral approaches, others advocated international control regimes, yet others recommended bilateral and regional instruments.

The thesis finally proceeded to an analysis of the non-proliferation approaches of U.S. domestic agencies and groups in the post 1998 phase. This period saw a shift in U.S. policy from the prevention of proliferation to its “management”. The shift was brought about the tests of May 1998, to be sure, but in terms of domestic structure, it was caused in part by the influence of business groups and farm lobbies and led to a more flexible U.S. response on the nuclear question.

One of the primary research questions I raise is the gap in non-proliferation scholarship in respect of “second-image” research or a domestic focus of analysis. The criticism against a third image systemic interpretation as popularised by structural realism, the predominant paradigm in international relations in the past decade, is that it is limited in its ability to explain the foreign policy choices of states. I argued that structural realism cannot be a sufficient tool of analysis for explaining state
choices. The realist paradigm, although parsimonious and geared towards the analysis of great power relations, is a good starting point of analysis. However, parsimony is not everything in social analysis. I argue that the realist interpretation, both from the perspective of proliferation optimists and proliferation pessimists, does not explain why the U.S. chose a particular line of policy from amongst a number of options. Confronted by such options as a regional approach or a policy of “carrots and sticks” or a rigid policy of non-proliferation based on the norms of the NPT, realism does not tell us why the U.S. chose one or other option. It is not, as its critics have charged, a theory of foreign policy choice.

Using the domestic structure model, it was evident that a broad range of non-proliferation objectives exist including the NPT-centric approach, the cap, rollback and eliminate option, and managed proliferation. The domestic structure approach also showed that a broad range of non-proliferation instruments, like domestically-legislated sanctions, counter-proliferation, supplier constraints, and others were preferred by different actors.

The domestic structure approach showed that there was a policy shift in the post 1998 phase. The nuclear tests in May 1998 led to a shift in the US stance from a NPT-centric to a “cap” in South Asian capabilities. This change amounted to a recognition, if not acceptance, of
South Asian capabilities. The shift in policy is explained through the surfacing of influential business and commercial interests that modified the US non-proliferation position towards South Asia and permitted a more flexible interpretation of U.S. laws. In effect, it meant the adoption of a pragmatic approach of incentives and disincentives. Even members of Congress have recommended the lifting of generic sanctions in the interest of long-term US South Asian engagement. The pressure by business and farm lobbies led to the adoption of a flexible non-proliferation approach by the United States. The instruments advocated for the fulfilment of this new objective include diplomacy and negotiations to reduce nuclear threats and stabilise the nuclear competition between the two adversarial neighbours. The key domestic constituencies have seemingly converged on this view. As we have seen, domestic networks and coalitions can shift fairly suddenly. It remains to be seen if this convergence on U.S. nuclear non-proliferation policy will last.