CHAPTER–IV
INDIA’S DEFENCE POLICY IN THE POST-POKHRAN-II PHASE:
CHALLENGES AND ISSUES
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INDIA’S DEFENCE POLICY IN THE POST-POKHHRAN-II PHASE: CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

India’s defence policy assumed a new significance since the late 1990s. It was during this period that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) became the ruling dispensation in New Delhi. It was also during this period that India’s nuclear policy underwent major changes. Globally, the nation-states experienced new shifts and turns following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre (WTC) in New York and other places, which had its implications for South Asia too. However, three major events during the post-cold war period - nuclear tests of India and Pakistan, the Kargil war and 9/11 attacks - tended to influence the strategies and perceptions of India’s defence. More significantly, the NDA government’s security perceptions and defence strategies exhibited major shifts from the traditional concepts of defence and foreign policy of India. This chapter tries to examine the contours of the policy trajectory in India’s security and defence for a decade since Pokhran-II.

The BJP-led NDA government came to power in the late 1990s at a critical juncture in Indian politics. It was seen as a successful culmination of its mobilization of masses based on sensitive issues of communalism, security (both internal and external), Article 370, Uniform Civil Code, construction of Ram mandir etc (Joshy and Seethi 2010). One of the most sensitive issues was the decision to break India’s traditional policy of nuclear ambiguity (See Ramana & Reddi (eds.) 2003; Perkovich 2000; Bidwai and Vanaik 1999; Abraham 1998). Between 11 and 13 May 1998, India conducted a series of nuclear tests, including a thermonuclear one (for details see BARC News Letter, 172, May 1998: 1-4; and FAR May 1998). The BJP-led coalition government obviously created an ideal domestic ambience to conduct the nuclear tests. Significantly, the BJP in its election manifesto had expressed its commitment to turn the nation ‘nuclear’ in the face of irrefutable evidences of Pakistan’s clandestine but, decidedly anti-Indian, nuclear programmes and as a counter to the Pakistan-China collusion over nuclear programme and
missile technology transfer. Defence analysts argued that the Ghauri missile test by Pakistan, the missile technology cooperation underway between China and Pakistan, and the inability of the international regimes to enforce the non-proliferation obligations on the nuclear weapon powers made it ‘inevitable’, for India to join the nuclear weapons club (Subrahmanyam 1999). Diplomats shared the view that the tests were an affirmation of India's long sought after identity, and a global confirmation of India’s full-fledged nuclear weapon power status (Chatterjee 1999:86).

In 1998 the BJP and the RSS were not the only champions of nuclearisation. There seemed to be a consensus across the mainstream parties for this brand of nuclear nationalism – a consensus that came to be articulated as the official position in India after Pokhran-II (Seethi 2005a: 102-120). A few hours after the tests on 11 May 1998, Prime Minister Vajpayee congratulated the scientists and engineers who carried out these successful tests (FAR May 1998). In President K.R. Narayanan's words this event was a major breakthrough in the realm of national security and he extended his felicitations to all who had made this possible. The former Prime Minister I.K. Gujral also joined the chorus and felicitated the scientists in charge of nuclear facility on this “historic occasion.” He said that it was a matter of national pride that India scientists proved that they were second to none in the area of high technology. The senior leaders of the Congress party (like Manmohan Singh) told the press that the tests “were an assertion of India’s independence and its nuclear capability” (Ananth 2003: 327-28).

In a detailed statement made in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, Vajpayee expressed his views on the test as follows:

The decade of the eighties and nineties had meanwhile witnessed the gradual deterioration of our Security environment as a result of nuclear and missile proliferation. In our neighbourhood, nuclear weapons had increased and more sophisticated delivery systems inducted. In addition, India has also been the victim of externally aided and abetted terrorism, militancy and clandestine war. At a global level, we see no evidence on the part of the nuclear weapon states to take
decisive and irreversible steps in moving towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. Instead, we have seen that the NPT has been extended indefinitely and unconditionally, perpetuating the existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the five countries. Under such circumstances, the government was faced with a difficult decision. The touchstone that has guided us in making the correct choice clear was national security. These tests are a continuation of the policies set into motion that put this country on the path of self-reliance and independence of thought and action.... India is now a nuclear weapon state. This is a reality that cannot be denied. It is not a conferment that we seek; nor is it a status for others to grant. It is an endowment to the nation by our scientists and engineers. It is India’s due, the right of one-sixth of humankind. Our strengthened capability adds to our sense of responsibility. We do not intend to use the weapons for aggression or for mounting threats against any country. These are weapons of self-defence, to ensure that India is not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion. We do not intend to engage in an arms race (FAR May 1998; also see Ghatate (ed.) 1999:119).

The nuclear explosions had an adverse impact on Sino-Indian relations, disrupting a careful process of forging close ties that was started in the late 1980s. Defence Minister George Fernandes in several public statements and Prime Minister Vajpayee in his 11 May 1998 letter to President Clinton, signalled a hostile attitude towards China. China was referred to as the nuclear weapon state on India’s borders, a state which “committed armed aggression” against India in 1962. The letter also said: “That country has materially helped another neighbour of ours to become a covert nuclear weapons state. At the hands of this bitter neighbour, we have suffered three aggressions in the last 50 years”(The New York Times 13 May 1998). It was clear that the nuclear explosions tended to worsen regional tensions. Home Minister L.K. Advani’s statement linking nuclear weaponisation to the Kashmir issue had become a convenient argument for Pakistan to pursue its strategic
objective. Pakistan’s reply to Pokhran-II at Chagai signalled a new and dangerous nuclear arms race in South Asia (Koshy: 2005:79-80).

In May 1998, India finally ended its long standing nuclear ambiguity. By conducting nuclear tests the NDA government led by the BJP resolved nearly five decades’ of nuclear debate in India in favour of an overt nuclear posture. For good or bad, India decided “to cross the nuclear Rubicon” (Mohan 2003:7). Fifty years after independence, India sought to place considerations of realpolitik and national security above its long-standing “liberal internationalism, morality and normative approaches to international politics.” The test was expected to have an impact on the domestic politics of India, the regional equation in the subcontinent, the balance of power in Asia and the global nuclear order for a long time to come (Ibid).

The United States reacted with extraordinary anger to the Indian nuclear tests. Washington felt betrayed by the new BJP-led government. The failure to detect the preparations for the test added to the Clinton administration’s sense of shock. Washington held that it was misled by senior officials of the Vajpayee government into believing that India would not rock the boat and that controversial decisions on nuclear policy would be made only after a comprehensive review of the nuclear policy was undertaken. With President Clinton announcing his intent to travel to India later in 1998 as part of new intensive engagement of the subcontinent by the United States, India’s decision was seen as a political setback. Washington also showed more understanding of Pakistan’s decision to test after India, while it held New Delhi responsible for the overt nuclearization of the subcontinent and threatening the international non-proliferation regime (Talbott 2004:96-97).

Obviously, the nuclear tests conducted in accordance with militant nationalism of the BJP, was regarded as a major departure in India’s foreign policy. What, however, really marked the policy shift was India declaring itself as a state with nuclear weapons. However, It was the Congress, which had initiated India’s nuclear programme with Jawaharlal Nehru laying the foundation for the nuclear option. Indira Gandhi conducted the first nuclear tests, and Rajiv Gandhi initiated the
missile programme and ordered the weaponization of the nuclear programme. The Kargil Review Committee Report admitted that the nuclear programme of India was “weapons-oriented at least since 1983” (The Kargil Review Committee 2000:193). In fact, the Narasimha Rao government had come close to conducting nuclear tests in the mid–1990s. Hence, Pokhran-II merely represented the continuity and growth of the capability over the years (Jha 2002: 242).

Supporters of nuclear weapons and the 11 May test argued that India’s decision to cross the nuclear threshold was in continuity with New Delhi’s past policies: to the extent there was any change, it happened only in response to the altered situation on the ground, especially in India’s neighbourhood. However, at the doctrinal level, Pokhran-II marked a significant break with India’s past postures and policies. The decision to acquire, and plan to deploy nuclear weapons was a departure from India’s past commitments to nuclear disarmament and its repeated promises never to use nuclear energy for military purposes. This did not, however, mean that India’s nuclear weapons policy was consistent more than 50 years after independence. It went through four distinct phases, culminating in the “disastrous decision” to test and acquire these weapons of mass destruction (Bidwai and Vanaik 2001: 63 also see Seethi 2005a). As Amartya Sen observed, the nuclearisation set has eventually escalated “the penalty of war in a dramatic way” rather than reducing the risk of war (Sen 2003: 181).

Just seventeen days after Pokhran-II, Pakistan retaliated by conducting a series of nuclear tests at the Chagai Hills, the nuclear test site in the province of Baluchistan. Although, by scientific yardstick, the Pakistani tests apparently did not match the explosive yield of the Indian blasts, nevertheless, the tests provided Pakistan a long sought deterrence vis-a-vis India (Arnett 1999: 377). Gohar Ayub Khan, the then Foreign Minister of Pakistan, commented on the occasion: “We have an advanced programme.... We have nuclear weapons, we are a nuclear power.... We have an advanced missile programme.” Referring to Pakistan’s decision to arm its long range Ghouri missiles with nuclear warheads, the Foreign Minister said that these missiles were capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads. But with a range of
1,500 km no military man would launch it with a conventional warhead.... So that restricts the option to nuclear” (Chatterjee 1999:93).

Preparations for Pakistan nuclear tests did not start after Pokhran-II, as claimed by official spokesman (see Ahmed and Cortright (ed.) 1999). A member of the Pakistani Atomic Energy Commission revealed that work on digging tunnels at the Chagai Hills for testing purposes was actually started as early as 1978 and was completed in 1982. According to Qadeer Khan, Pakistan had attained the capability to explode nuclear device in 1984 and he had told Gen. Zia that “whenever you order, it will not take more than a week or two to do it.” Moreover, a ‘cold test’ was apparently conducted at the site in 1986. An airbase was also constructed in the area for strong nuclear materials in order to protect them against a possible Indian/Indo-Israeli air strike. In February 1992 the then Foreign Secretary Shaharyar Khan declared in Washington that Pakistan had acquired the capability to fabricate at least one nuclear weapon. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced that by conducting six nuclear tests Pakistan had “settled score” with India. Qadeer Khan noted that they were all boosted fission devices using U-235 (Chandra 1999: 190-191).

In a later address to Pakistani and foreign reporters, Sharif said: “Our security, and the peace and stability of the entire region were gravely threatened. As any self-respecting nation, we had no choice left for us. Our hand was forced by the present Indian leadership's reckless actions. We could not ignore the magnitude of the threat.... Under no circumstances would the Pakistani nation compromise on matters pertaining to its life and existence. Our decision to exercise the nuclear option has been taken in the interest of national self-defence. These weapons are to deter aggression, whether nuclear or conventional” (Bhushan and Katyal 2002: 214-215).

Prime Minister Vajpayee declared in the Indian Parliament a day after the Pakistani tests that the Indian nuclear weapon programme was “not country-specific.” In a more detailed statement to Parliament in mid-December 1998, he established several more distinct parameters for a nuclear doctrine to get evolved. He declared that the concept of
“minimum credible deterrent” needed to be fleshed out. What also required defining, he stated in Parliament, was the policy of “No-First-Use and non-use against non-Nuclear Weapon States” and derived from the NFU principle, an appropriate policy of “deployment of assets in a manner that ensures survivability and capacity of an adequate response,” as well as a policy to ensure that “there is no arms race,” which was impossible to ensure. Whether ten, a hundred, or a thousand nuclear-weapons strong deterrent force would spark an arms race depended entirely on the ‘adversary’ state. A deterrent should be fashioned according to the country’s security needs rather than on what the enemy considered appropriate (FAR December 1998; also see Karnad 2002: 438).

It was in this background that the government sought to strengthen its security policy-making apparatus. The first National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) was set up as a ‘subsidiary body’ to assist the NSC (National Security Council). It began functioning in December 1998 and was tasked by the Government to produce a nuclear draft doctrine on a priority basis. The drafting group worked within the parameters spelled out by the Prime Minister. The draft doctrine had to be organised around a central deterrence idea and ‘minimum deterrence’ was the obvious choice because it had wide acceptance inside the Government and the military. ‘Minimum Deterrence’ was apparently easy to sell to the Indian intelligentsia and opinion makers, according to defence expert, Subrahmanyam. And, because this concept implied limited expenditure of scarce resources, it was especially “reassuring to a whole new generation of Indian politicians and bureaucrats weaned on socialistic austerity and peace-mongering rhetoric.” It was, for many of the same reasons, also “useful in legitimating India’s crypto nuclear weapons status” in world politics during 1974-1998 (Ibid: 438-39).

Issued on 17 August 1999, the document called for “a doctrine of credible minimum nuclear deterrence,” under which nuclear weapons would be used for “retaliation only.” A “triad of aircraft, mobile land-based missiles and sea-based assets: would be built and deployed to carry the deterrent force that was to be “fully employable in the shortest possible time.” A “robust command and control system” and
“effective intelligence and early warming capabilities,” including space-based assets, were envisioned to manage the force. Emphasising the Indian tradition of civilian control over nuclear policy, the document stated that “the authority to release nuclear weapons for use resides in the person of the Prime Minister of India, or the designated successor (s)” (NSAB 1999). The latter clause implied the need to revise the Indian Constitution or otherwise formalize a chain of command that had been specified in existing Indian law (Perkovich 2000: 480). The draft nuclear doctrine did not designate states that were deemed targets of India’s deterrent – eg. Pakistan and China – but it did say that “the system” would contain “an integrated operational plan.” This language was similar to that of operational planning practised by the US and the Soviet Union. These plan “choreographed launches of air-based, land-based and sea-based nuclear forces to arrive sequentially on thousands of previously determined targets.” For instance, missile delivered warheads were to clear paths through air defence, enabling bombers to proceed to targets unimpended by such defences and free from the blast effects of the earlier arriving weapons. Integrated operational plans would increase the certainty of destroying adversary targets but they would accomplish this through overkill and limiting the range of options available to political leaders who might wish for flexibility in a crisis. None of this comported with Indian capabilities or the political leadership’s traditional philosophy of deterrence. But it would fit great power aspirations (Ibid: 481; also see Seethi 2005a:116-17).

The international reactions to the Indian nuclear tests had a number of characteristics. First, despite the public condemnation by the P-5 and G-8 countries, there was a deep division among the P-5/G-8 governments about ways to deal with the new situation. Some countries (for example the US, Canada, Japan) imposed economic sanctions against India. A few (Canada and Australia) imposed a ban on ministerial-level talks with India as a sign of their displeasure. Others (especially the US, France, Russia and the UK) sought diplomatic engagement with India based on two parameters: non-proliferation and Indian security. The Jaswant Singh-Strobe Talbot talks were an indication of this approach that sought to avoid the US commitment to non-proliferation from
other issues, viz., seeking Indian nuclear restraint as a defacto nuclear weapon country in return for recognition of Indian security imperatives vis-a-vis China and Pakistan and an appreciation of India’s role as a constructive force in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean area (Kapur 2001:220-221). Secondly, the world reactions revealed the emergence of a queer democratic-authoritarian combination in Asian international relations. Canada and China combined in expressing the most extreme position against India. Both sought to ban India's quest for a seat at the UN Security Council. Both sought unconditional Indian acceptance of the NPT and the CTBT and Indian roll-back of its nuclear and missile programmes. In effect, both sought to contain India and leave it exposed in the nuclear and missile spheres. Thirdly, the international reactions showed a split between, on the one hand, non-governmental organizations who adopted a proactive, action-oriented, and forward-looking stance and, on the other hand, those who were preoccupied in over-analysing Indian motives and were more interested in blaming India’s rather than in taking a balanced overall perspective. Harold Muller (Peace Research Institute, Frankfurt) for example, pointed out that their nuclear weapons were not for security, status for prestige in the first place, as was all too often assumed. They were instruments for political power, for dominating the subcontinent and achieving equality with China. They were instruments for increasing tensions with Pakistan, so that the more radical elements within the BJP could enhance their influence within their party and in India at large (Ibid: 222).

According to Ashok Kapur, Nehru and his successors up to 1998 did not change many minds in India’s favour – either among India’s immediate neighbours or on the world stage - because the leadership lacked strategies that effectively engaged the outside world in terms of specific Indian interests rather than the mantras. The change began with the BJP-led government in 1998. Then the Indian strategic agenda began to crystallise and the world started to see India and take Indian interests seriously. The approach of the BJP coalition since 1998 was to stress on military and economic security and to discard the traditional emphasis on issues of other global concerns (Ibid:227-28).
The emergence of two declared nuclear powers in the subcontinent gave credence to the theory that Pakistan’s nuclear and missile development was an equalizer to India’s edge in conventional armament. According to this view, India lost its advantage in conventional armament vis-a-vis Pakistan because the latter showed nuclear and missile capability degraded the perception of India’s advantage in conventional armament. Asymmetry in conventional arms favoured India before the Indo-Pakistani nuclear tests, but this was negated after the tests. The new situation after May 1998 became a positive for Pakistan and a negative for India according to this argument. The Indo-Pakistani tests also reinforced the notion of “no prospects of a peace settlement, and the perpetually troubled ceasefire” situation between India and Pakistan and between China and India. The argument was that a ‘no war no peace’ situation was inherently unstable; it lacked equilibrium (Ibid: 228-29).

Following the tests, the Western nations imposed sanctions on India and Pakistan. Economic repercussions had always been feared but never assessed, partly because of fear that doing such a study would appear to indicate preparations for a test. The effects of the sanctions were different on India and Pakistan. In the former case, direct aid was not quite substantial, but the US government withdrew underwriting of private investments in India. In Pakistan’s case, where multilateral loans amounted to 1-4 per cent of the GDP, the cessation of all direct aid had a very strong effect on its financial system. This happened, with the government freezing all foreign accounts and destroying the confidence of non-resident Pakistanis. But the size of Pakistan’s non-formal economy was so large that there were as yet no visible signs of economic deterioration. In India’s case, the effects of the sanctions were lost in the economic downturn arising from the Southeast Asian crash. Specifically, the LCA project was the only one reported to have been affected by the technology denial regimes imposed (Menon 2000: 114-115).

The CTBT debate was also revived during the post-Pokhran- II phase with a different dimension. It was seen that the most ardent opponents of CTBT during 1993-1997 all of a sudden became the defenders of the
treaty. The arguments made earlier had now became ‘outdated’ in the background of the changing role of India as a “nuclear weapon power” (Seethi 2005a: 117).

However, it may be noted that way back in 1993, India and the US had co-sponsored a resolution in the UN calling for the early completion of the CTBT in the Conference on Disarmament. But as the negotiations for a CTBT reached their final phase, New Delhi began to oppose it. In 1995, it made its signature of the CTBT conditional upon a commitment to disarmament within a ‘time-bound’ framework by the P-5. It tried to hedge the treaty in with clauses that appeared radical, but were meant to delay negotiations and prepared the ground for non-accession and opposition to a test ban agreement whenever one matured. In late 1995, before the CTBT ‘rolling text’ acquired its near final form, the Narasimha Rao government began preparations for a test at Pokhran. The Cabinet was apparently divided, and the US military satellites detected preparations for a test. Publicity, as well as fear of economic sanctions, deterred India from testing, but a big shift had occurred at the ground level in India’s nuclear preparations and upgradation of its nuclear weapons option. On 20 June 1996, New Delhi formally announced that it would not sign the CTBT. Soon thereafter, Arundhati Ghose, India’s ambassador at the CD, announced that New Delhi would not sign the CTBT ‘not now, not ever.’ India blocked the CTBT’s passage at the CD, but in an unprecedented (and legally questionable) move, the text was taken to the UN General Assembly and signed (Bidwai and Achin Vanaik 2001: 70-72; also see Seethi 2005a).

Between 1974 and 1998, India maintained a position that while it did not consider it necessary to acquire nuclear weapons, it had the capability to do so at very short notice and, what was more, would do so should the situation so demanded. The viability of this position, however, eroded steadily. While the internal support for retaining the ‘nuclear option’ had remained strong, the external environment had made the option increasingly difficult to exercise. Pakistan’s reported acquisition of nuclear weapon capability in the early 1980s was the first major setback. The acquiescence of the hitherto reluctant China and France to stop all testing, followed by the coming into force of CTBT was another
factor. India’s increasingly stepped up quest for foreign markets and foreign investment, beginning in 1991, had exposed an additional pressure point. The indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 sought to freeze a divided world of nuclear haves and have-nots, with the overwhelming number of the latter acquiescing to their permanently subordinate position. The 1997 signing of CTBT, with its coercive ‘entry into force’ clause that required India to accede forced India to rethink its stance. India’s switch from the anti-discrimination principle to that of national security to justify its opposition to NPT and CTBT was a defining change (Koithara 1999:393).

However, India continued to argue that in the promotion of achievement of a nuclear test ban, the interest of the nuclear weapon states must be taken into account on the basis of complete equality with the interest of the non-nuclear weapon states (Pande 1996:187-188). In the May-June 1996 session of the Conference on Disarmament, India rejected the draft CTBT. The decision of rejection was announced at the CD by its Ambassador Arundhati Ghose and in New Delhi by the Foreign Secretary Salman Haider. They said that India could not subscribe to the Treaty in “its present form.” Ghose said that the preambular references to disarmament in the draft treaty were “weak and woefully inadequate.” India added that despite India’s efforts to place CTBT in a disarmament context through various proposals, “the scope only bans nuclear weapon test explosions …. it is very narrow and does not fulfil the mandated requirement of the comprehensive ban.” Indirect references were also made to China and Pakistan in both Ghose’s and Salman Hyder’s statements. It was stated that India’s capability demonstrated but as a matter of policy it had exercised restraint. “Countries around us continue their weapon programmes either openly or in a clandestine manner (Indirect reference to China and Pakistan respectively). In such an environment India cannot accept any restraint on its capability if other countries remain unwilling to accept obligations to eliminate their nuclear weapons” (Ibid: 204-05).

Landmark event in the field of nuclear disarmament took place at the United Nations in New York on 24 September 1996. India, however, categorically refused to sign the treaty as in its view backed an
uncertain time-frame for abolishing nuclear weapons. Indian representatives therefore pressed for evolving CTBT to be placed in the context of total nuclear disarmament within a well-defined time frame. India upheld that without such a linkage steps such as the CTBT or the proposed fissile material cut-off (FMCT) convention were narrow and futile exercises aimed only at controlling non-nuclear weapons states (and thereby) further strengthening the discrimination inherent in the non-proliferation regimes. India’s strategy seemed to have worked till the Pokhran-II tests which, in fact, exposed India’s moral commitments and pragmatic realism in dealing with its nuclear policy (Seethi 2005a; also see Bidwai and Vanaik 2001).

The Kargil War

The Pakistani intrusion across the Line of Control (LoC) in Kargil dominated India’s security scenario during the year 1999-2000. Taking advantage of unheld gaps in the mountainous and glaciated terrain in the Kargil sector of the LoC, Pakistan committed armed aggression against India which led to the occupation of strategic territory on the Indian side of the LoC (for details see The Kargil Review Committee 2000). The successful eviction of Pakistan’s Armed Forces by the concerted action of the Indian Armed Forces clearly demonstrated that while India remained a votary of peace, it had the capability to fight and win a war, if thrust upon it. Viewed against the background of the initiative taken by the Prime Minister to visit Lahore in February 1999 and the signing of the Lahore Declaration, which reflected India’s willingness and determination to resolve its differences with Pakistan through a process of dialogue and confidence building, the Pakistani intrusion in Kargil was seen as a betrayal of trust. Even while accepting India’s extended hand of friendship in Lahore, Pakistan was planning its clandestine full scale intrusion across the LoC in Kargil. The regional security environment already vitiated by Pakistan’s continued low intensity conflict in both Jammu and Kashmir and the North Eastern States had deteriorated further after the military coup d’état in Pakistan (India, MoD 2000:2).

Just one year after the nuclear tests, Pakistan triggered the crisis by intruding into the heights of Kargil in the spring of 1999, conducting a
medium-intensity operation. Islamabad hoped to capture the heights without a fight. In the Kargil war, Pakistan's professional military acted as mujahidin, moving into Indian territory. This intrusion and seizure of the Kargil heights caused the most serious fighting between Indian and Pakistani armed forces since the last war in 1971. Pakistan carried out nuclear tests before provoking this serious crisis in the India-Pakistan conflict theatre. For Pakistan, the crisis began when, against its expectations, India responded with full military vigour. For two months intense fighting continued between the two armed forces. The Indian armed units attacked the Pakistani forces and Indian air force jets bombed their bases high in the Himalayan peaks. However, the Indian forces stayed on their side of the Line of Control (Khan 2009:107).

The army action, termed as “Operation Vijay,” was carried out within the Indian territory to vacate the intrusion, with no intention to cross the LoC. The Pakistan authorities initially disowned any responsibility for the intrusion, refusing the involvement of the Pakistan army in the act. They also claimed that the LoC in this area was ill defined. After the Indian army started its “Operation Vijay,” it was confident of evicting Indian territory but was not very sure of the time the entire operation would take. The army respected the LoC and limited its operation to eviction only (Atal 2000:96).

Consequent to “Operation Vijay,” the Army focussed on a strong counter infiltration posture along the LoC and synergised anti-militant operations in the hinterland. In the aftermath of the operation, Pakistan had attempted to escalate the proxy war against India. The militants, especially mercenaries had in the last few months launched a number of desperate attacks against isolated army posts. Indian security forces remained vigilant in countering these efforts. Despite threats to carry out acts of terrorism to avenge the Kargil debacle, the militancy was effectively checked by the increased tempo of operations by the armed forces. The key characteristic of the militancy was the overwhelming dependence on alien mercenaries, who now formed well over 70% of those engaged in militancy in Jammu and Kashmir (India, MoD 2000:2).

In the event, Pakistan’s offensive in Kargil did not yield the results its strategic establishment had anticipated. While initial Indian military
responses were often confused and disorganised, the consequence of senior and mid-level commanders seeking to cover up the failures that had allowed Pakistan to capture ground in the first place, the tide began to turn by June 1999. Aided by air strikes and massive artillery support, Indian soldiers were able to slowly overwhelm the multiple complexes of high-attitude bunkers Pakistani troops had succeeded in erecting through the winter and spring of 1999. Nor did the international situation evolve as Pakistan’s military had hoped. In late June 1999, the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Central Command categorically told Prime Minister Sharif that Pakistan would have to withdraw its troops from the Indian side of the LoC. More important, General Zinni made it clear that Pakistan ought not to expect any political concessions on Jammu and Kashmir in return for restoring the status quo. Under intense pressure, Prime Minister Sharif made a visit to Washington, DC on 4 July hoping to secure at least some face-saving formula. However, he was bluntly told to ensure that Pakistani troops withdraw immediately. On 12 July Prime Minister Sharif formally called on the force to pull back. Two days later, the first set of Pakistani troops began pulling back from their positions, ceding them to advancing Indian troops (Swami 2007: 187).

For India, the biggest pay off from Kargil was that the world community did not allow any military attempt to change the territorial status quo in Jammu and Kashmir. When India found the Pakistani occupation of the Kargil heights and began to mobilize for its military operations, it had little expectation of international support. When the first indications of the US backing to India came, they had to be conveyed through the unusual channels, to both signal a sceptical security establishment in New Delhi and convince the public of America’s changed attitude towards the Kashmir conflict. Through a series of public formulations and direct diplomatic pressure throughout June 1999, the United States forced Pakistan to stop its aggression unconditionally. The final act of Kargil was conducted in the July 1999 meeting between President Clinton and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in which they came up with a statement that announced the Pakistani intent to withdraw and respect the sanctity of the Line of Control (Mohan 2003:190).
Political parties in India raised the Kargil issue in their respective election manifestos. NDA gave credit to the army in the following words:

We salute the heroism, dedication and selflessness of our armed forces. We dedicate ourselves anew to preserving the honour and territorial integrity of our motherland. We reiterate our commitment to look after the welfare of the armed forces, and of the dependents of all those that laid down their lives in service of our motherland.... The security of the nation is our paramount duty. In fulfilment of this sacred duty we will ensure that the neglect of defence preparedness by the previous governments during the last decades shall be corrected. The defence of India and the needs of our armed forces is our commitment (Atal 2000: 100-101).

The Congress castigated the BJP for exploding the nuclear bomb, indirectly hinting that Kargil was one of the consequences of this action:

Instead of keeping a vigil on the border, it let down its guard. It said it would give us a review of our security environment. All we have got are Pakistan intruders. In the name of peace and bus rides, over 400 parents have lost their sons, wives their husbands, children their fathers, and sisters their brothers. Kargil was a tragedy ... brought about by the cavalier functioning of the BJP government and its criminal negligence (Ibid).

Following Pakistan’s debacle in the Kargil war the differences between the civilian government and the army reached a point of no return. Nawaz Sharif wanted to assert his position. But General Musharraf eventually took over the reigns of power from Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup on 12 October 1999. Nawaz Sharif was dismissed and placed under house arrest. In his very first message addressed to India, General Pervez Musharraf stated, without any provocation from India, that hostility would be met with hostility. Both he and his newly appointed foreign minister tried to denigrate the Lahore peace process by unnecessarily characterising it as only one of the several agreements reached with India. It was clear from Musharraf’s various statements
that he was not interested in overall improvement and expansion of relations with India (Pillai 2005:239).

The military coup in October 1999 was a direct fallout of Pakistan’s Kargil misadventure, which dealt a major blow to the peace process. General Musharraf was known to be the author of Kargil conflict and had even kept Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif ill-informed about its implications (for his view on the subject see Musharraf 2006). Despite India’s initial scepticism General Musharraf who had denounced the Shimla and Lahore agreements and was the architect of the Kargil conflict and mentor of the militants and terrorists in Kashmir was invited to India for a summit on 23 May 2001. The Agra Summit also failed because General Musharraf came with the one-point agenda of pushing India to acknowledge that Kashmir was the core issue in India-Pakistan relations. He made this a prerequisite for discussing any other issue. India, on its part, focussed on discussing cross border terrorism. The Agra Summit was a failure in all respects except that it broke the deadlock created by the Kargil war (Singh 2005: 67-68).

The Annual Report 1999-2000 of the Indian Defence Ministry noted that Pakistan had actively encouraged terrorism against India. There was evidence that destabilizing India through sponsored terrorism was a matter of state policy for Pakistan. Pakistan was consciously and noticeably emerging as “an epicentre of Islamic fundamentalism” inducting Islamic Mujahideen into Afghanistan in the north and into Kashmir in the east. This had drawn India into “a protracted low-intensity conflict” in Kashmir. Kashmir, however, was not the root cause for India-Pakistan tensions, but a manifestation of a deeper insecurity in that country. Embroiled as it was with internal turmoil and economic instability, these insecurities translated into a strong anti-India bias in Pakistan’s perceptions. However, India’s policy of restraint and resolve during the Kargil crisis was appreciated by the international community. The misadventure of the Pakistani military establishment in Kargil failed on the politico-diplomatic and military fronts. Further, the military coup in Pakistan, which was largely a manifestation of the power struggle between the elected civilian government and the Army, with the Kargil episode as the background, had far reaching...
implications for the security environment in the region. Its impact was already visible in the number of suicide squads of militants operating in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal was in the military hands and it continued to modernise its armed forces well beyond its legitimate requirements (India, MoD 2000:5).

During 2001-2002, Pakistan kept up its calls for resuming a dialogue with India, making it clear that the focus of any dialogue must be the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, while simultaneously continuing with its policy of sponsoring terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and in other parts of India. The ‘duality’ of Pakistan’s approach was most evident in the period just after the Agra Summit, when Pakistan sent formal invitations to Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister to visit Pakistan as a follow up to the Agra Summit, even while Pakistan based terrorist groups continued their daily attacks on innocent men, women, children, and on India’s security forces, in Jammu & Kashmir. The continued terrorist violence underscored the fact that Pakistan remained unwilling to give up its strategy of confrontation, violence and deception towards India. Prominent terrorist attacks during the initial period after the Agra Summit included the massacre of Hindu pilgrims (August 3) and the attack against the Jammu Railway Station (August 7). The terrorist attacks of 9/11 in the United States dramatically changed international perceptions and tolerance of a state sponsored terrorism. Pakistan was made to join the international campaign against terrorism in Afghanistan. But its policy of sponsoring terrorism in India remained unchanged. In an address to the nation, the President of Pakistan sought to justify his decision to join the international coalition against terrorism in Afghanistan, on the grounds that this was the only way Pakistan would be able to protect its so called “Kashmir Cause.” Prominent attacks during this period included the terrorist attack against the Jammu and Kashmir state Assembly. Later in the month a similar attempt was made against the Awantipura Air Force Station. Both the attacks were successfully foiled by the Indian army. On 13 December elements of the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), two Pakistan-based terrorist groups attempted what was the most alarming act of terrorism against India in the nearly
two decades of history of Pak-sponsored terrorism in India. This time the Pakistan-based terrorists and their supporters across the border had plans to inflict attack on the political establishment in India (India, MoD 2002:4).

Pakistan’s military seemed to have a vested interest in tension with India as it would strengthen its pre-eminence in Pakistan’s power structure. The period 2002-03 witnessed a progressive consolidation of the role of the military, and in particular that of General Musharraf, in the Pakistani polity through the ‘referendum’ of April 2002, the Legal Framework Order (LFO) of August, the enhanced and institutionalized role of the army in the strengthened National Security Council of Pakistan, and the patently manipulated elections of October. Together with the rise of fundamentalist outfits, those developments did not augur well for India’s security. Pakistani provocation reached a dangerous point with the 13 December 2001 attack on the India Parliament. A more forceful response from India became necessary. Additional troops were moved along the Line of Control (LoC) and the International Boundary in a state of readiness, inter alia, to prevent further infiltration of terrorists into India. In response to these measures and international pressure, General Pervez Musharraf announced in a speech on 12 January 2002 that “no organization will be allowed to indulge in terrorism in the name of Kashmir” and that “anyone found involved in any terrorist act would be dealt with sternly.” There was a temporary crackdown on extremists in Pakistan. However, cross border infiltration and terrorist violence continued as the measures were relaxed with time. On 14 May 2002, terrorists attacked an army camp in Kaluchak, Jammu district, killing 32 civilians including 11 women and 11 children. On 18 May 2002, India asked the government of Pakistan to recall its High Commissioner in New Delhi in view of Pakistan’s continued support to cross border terrorism. Once again, under pressure, General Musharraf responded in his speech on 27 May 2002 with a commitment to stop cross border infiltration and terrorism on a permanent basis. Despite General Musharraf’s commitments cross border infiltration and related terrorist violence increased from July 2002 onwards. On 13 July 2002 Pak-based terrorists
launched attacks in Qasimnagar. Attacks on soft targets calculated to inflame sentiments continued. These included the attacks on temples at Akshardham and in Jammu and on women in Jammu and Kashmir. On 20 March 2003 Kashmiri Hindus living in Nadimarg, Jammu were targeted in which 24 Pundits, including 11 women and 2 children were massacred in cold blood. These incidents underscored that there was no respite in encouraging terrorism from Pakistan. They also underlined the need for Pakistan to take decisive steps to end infiltration on a permanent basis and wind down the infrastructure of support to terrorism (India, MoD 2003: 3-4).

On 16 October 2002, the Government decided to re-deploy the troops from positions on the international border as the Armed Forces were deemed to have achieved the immediate objectives assigned to them. It was also decided that there would be no lowering of the vigil in Jammu and Kashmir. India remained firmly committed to the path of dialogue and reconciliation in keeping with the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration and repeatedly called upon Pakistan to end its sponsorship of terrorism in India so that a conducive environment could be created for the resumption of bilateral dialogue (Ibid).

The Annual Report 2004-2005 of Indian Defence Ministry noted that building on the November 2003 cease-fire along the International Border (IB), Line of Control (LoC) and the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) between India and Pakistan in J&K and the unconditional commitment given by President Musharraf on 6 January 2004 not to permit any territory under Pakistan’s control to be used to support terrorism in any manner, a number of initiatives were taken during the year to ease tensions, normalize and improve relations between the two countries. At the level of the government, the composite dialogue was initiated with the resumption of Foreign Secretary level talks in June 2004. The first round concluded in September 2004 included the Armed Forces in the talks in Delhi between the two countries on the Sir Creek issue followed by a joint survey of the boundary pillars in the horizontal segment of the international boundary in the area in February 2005; and talks between Defence Secretaries of India and Pakistan, on the Siachen issue. The second round of the Dialogue
commenced in December 2004. High-level contacts provided the momentum. Prime Minister met President Musharraf on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2004 where Prime Minister reiterated the importance of the fulfilment of President Musharraf’s reassurance on terrorism. The Pakistan Prime Minister also visited India as Chairperson of the SAARC in November 2004 (India, MoD 2005:9).

During 2004-2005, major steps were taken to step up people-to-people contacts. An Agreement was reached in February 2005 to start bus services between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad and between Amritsar and Lahore, including to religious places such as Nankana Sahib. Pakistan also agreed to work on the early restoration of the Khokrapar-Munaban rail link. The visa regime for Pakistani nationals was unilaterally liberalized. While the year ended on a hopeful note on India-Pakistan relations, there was no end to cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. While there was some decline in the level of infiltration, this was more on account of measures on the part of the Indian Armed Forces than any discernible change of heart, or action, by the Pakistani authorities. There was no evidence of any significant Pakistani effort to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism, such as communications launching pads, and training camps on its eastern borders with India comparable to Pakistan’s operations for the war against terrorism on its western borders with Afghanistan. The acquisition of sophisticated weapons and platforms like the F-16s, P 3C Orion maritime surveillance aircraft etc. that had nothing to do with the war against terrorism on the other hand, cast doubts on Pakistan’s intention in joining the war against terrorism and could complicate prospects for lasting peace in the region. The Defence Minister’s Report indicated that India would have to guard against its implications on the balance of military power in the region (Ibdi: 10).

The composite dialogue on eight major subjects viz., Peace and Security, including Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), Jammu and Kashmir, terrorism and drug trafficking, friendly exchanges, economic and commercial cooperation, Tulbul Navigation Project, Sir Creek and Siachen, gave a structural basis to deepen and expand the bilateral
relations since 2004. The third round of the Composite Dialogue Commenced with the meeting of the Foreign Secretaries in January 2006 and concluded in November 2006 when the Foreign Secretaries met again in New Delhi. The third round helped further the engagement between the two countries and resulted in initiating of an agreement on ‘Reducing the Risk from Accidents relating to Nuclear Weapons’ (India, MEA 2007:15).

9/11 and Its Implications

The terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, employing hijacked civilian aircraft as missiles to destroy the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York and a wing of the Pentagon in Washington DC, impacted on the security and foreign policies of major and minor actors in international relations (for details see The 9/11 Commission Report, n.d.). Causing more than 3,000 deaths, the attack left the US deeply wounded, and its mainland, for the first time in some two centuries, was shown to be vulnerable to attack. The event led to the widespread belief that in the wake of the terrorist attacks, the world had “changed irreversibly” and that it would never be the same again. As the US rose to the challenge, it was able, through the use of massive air power and the help of local disaffected elements, to defeat the Al-Qaeda terrorists in their home base and to overthrow the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which had harboured them. In the process, the US foreign-policy posture also underwent a significant change in focus (Nayar and Paul 2003:243 also see The 9/11 Commission Report).

9/11 terrorist attacks by Al-Qaeda terrorists, no doubt, brought the problem of terrorism to the heart of the American power centres. Besides causing excessive loss of life and property, the incident highlighted that any civilised nation could become a target of terrorism (The 9/11 Commission Report). All nations of the West, China, Russia and India denounced the attacks and agreed to unite against terrorism, everywhere in the world. Isolated, Pakistan had to decide between an Islamic fundamentalist Taliban (mostly Pashtuns having ethnic affinity across the Durand Line) and the economic and political benefits of supporting America. America once again asked Pakistan to use its influence over the Taliban to hand over Bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda
followers, failing which to join the American coalition. Though at that time the Pakistani Army and its intelligence wing ISI had a number of persons operating in Afghanistan, Pakistan could not meet the request. There were differences within the Army over isolating the Taliban, but Pakistan was internationally isolated and left with no choice but to support the US. After rallying world opinion and positioning adequate forces, in October 2001 the US-led coalition launched “Operation Enduring Freedom” to wipe out the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, capture bin Laden and eradicate terrorism worldwide. Under American pressure, Pakistan had to close down militant training camps and offices (Bammi 2003:290-91).

The international outrage at the multiple suicide attacks of 9/11 forced the Musharraf regime to reassess its policy towards the Taliban and such Pakistan-based jihadi groups as Lashkar-e-Toiba and Harakat-ul-Mujahideen much more rapidly than it had ever imagined. The option of gradual disengagement no longer existed. The contradictions inherent in Pakistan’s strategic policy and diplomatic obligations were starkly revealed. Ironically, the architects of the Taliban government were now to provide the Americans with the intelligence information required to dismantle the Al-Qaeda-influenced regime. No civilian government would have dared such a dramatic strategic U-turn. No one could have conceived such a scenario before 9/11 (Talbot 2005:391).

The events of 9/11 caused shock waves in the US. Nine days after 9/11, President George W. Bush delivered a terse message to the world: “Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.” The Bush doctrine was loud and clear. Even as the US had singled out the war on terrorism as its top foreign policy priority, this unambiguous message to the world was about choosing between pro-and anti-US camps, without any demands whatsoever. The US had declared war on the Al-Qaeda and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan which harboured Osama. Geography, demography and closeness with the Taliban dictated that Pakistan should become the first-country to make its choice regarding the war on terrorism. Instead it was India that offered unsolicited, unqualified assistance to the US. There was hope in India that the US would soon declare Pakistan as a state-sponsoring terrorism. India and
US had identical views on terrorism. Pakistan was already under a cloud for having trampled on democracy, something clearly held by both India and the US; and it was not known to many that the Taliban was the brain child of Pakistan (Sood and Sawhney 2003:21-22).

Musharraf’s calculations were quick and shrewd. As Pakistan’s army chief, he supported the US-led operation “Enduring Freedom” commensurated with Washington’s support to Pakistan. So overwhelmed was President Bush by Musharraf’s open-armed response to fight alongside the US that he told Powell: “President Musharraf is taking a tremendous risk. We need to make it worth his while. We should help him with a number of things, including nuclear security. Put together a package of support for Pakistan” (Ibid). Slowly Musharraf won the trust of the US, his wish list also started unfolding: he wanted international legitimacy for himself and his brand of military democracy; he wanted massive doses of aid and writing off of huge debts to tide over Pakistan's financial crisis; he wanted that the US safeguard Pakistan’s interests in post-Taliban Afghanistan; he wanted that the US understand his distinction between terrorism, which he condemned, and the so-called indigenous freedom struggle in Jammu and Kashmir, which he supported whole-heartedly. The US apparently agreed to Musharraf’s piecemeal demands. Consequently, General Musharraf became a hero in the US (Ibid:24).

During 2001-2002, progress in India-US relations was sustained despite a democratic transition in the US Administration in January 2001. President George W. Bush repeatedly conveyed his commitment to accelerating the process of transforming the relationship. The level of engagement in the first year of Bush Administration was both broad-based and intensive. This included a visit by Prime Minister to Washington D.C. in November 2001 at the invitation of President Bush, besides several ministerial level dialogues. The two countries further broadened their agenda of bilateral relations and agreed to resume and expand the wide-ranging bilateral Dialogue Architecture, established during the visit of President Clinton in March 2000. Security and strategic dialogue also developed beyond non-proliferation issues to cover a wide range of international concerns and developments,
including the common security and strategic goals in Asia-Pacific. In this context, the two sides initiated an institutionalized dialogue on the ‘New Strategic Framework’ of the United States, unveiled by President Bush on 1 May 2001. There was considerable progress in defence cooperation, after a three-year period of limited contacts. Resumption of the existing institutional framework of defence cooperation – the Defence Policy Groups and the Joint Technical Group was supplemented by addition of new elements to this structure, such as the Security Cooperation Group to manage the defence supplies relationship between the two countries.

The meeting of the Defence Policy Group in December 2001, co-chaired by the Defence Secretary of India Yogendra Narain and Under Secretary of Defence, US Douglas Feith laid down the road map for intensive defence co-operation between the two countries. The United States lifted the unilateral restrictions that it had imposed in response to India’s nuclear tests in May 1998, which passed the way for fuller development of economic, military and technology relations between the two countries. Although the terrorist attacks in the United States on 9/11 made the US respond to it, including the military campaign in Afghanistan, the immediate and overwhelming focus of its foreign and security policy, the two sides maintained the pace of bilateral engagement, both in response to the challenges arising out of the events of 9/11 and to pursue the long-term development of India-US relations. The terrorist attack on Indian Parliament on 13 December further strengthened India-US cooperation against terrorism. The United States proscribed under its domestic law a number of Pakistan-based organisations, including Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Toiba, and asked Pakistan to curb terrorism and take action against terrorist organizations operating out of Pakistan. India and United States also took a number of new initiatives in the area of counter-terrorism, capacity building, including through military-military cooperation (India, MoD 2002: 11-12; also see India, MEA 2002).

During 2002-2003, there was a significant progress in defence and security relationship between India and United States. As part of the enhanced bilateral engagement on these matters, there were several
important bilateral visits and meetings in the context of cross-border terrorism by Pakistan, and in pursuit of a shared objective of building a strategic relationship. With a view to accelerating the pace of Indo-US defence cooperation, the apex level Defence Policy Group (DPG) met for a second time in May 2002 after its resumption in December 2001. Apart from the DPG, bilateral Executive Steering groups of the Army, Navy and Air Force, the Security Co-operation Group (to advance a defence supply relationship) and the Joint Technical Group (to advance R&D collaboration in defence) were also meeting or were scheduled to meet. The two countries conducted mutually beneficial combined exercises in India and United States besides stepping up training exchanges. Thus, the terrorist attacks in the United States on 9/11 and on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001 led to a deepening of Indo-US cooperation in combating international terrorism (India, MoD 2003:9).

According to the Defence Minister’s the Annual Report 2003-2004, global events continued to have a profound impact on the strategic environment of India. The US-led wars in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrated US military power and willingness to use it unilaterally or in association with allies or coalition partners; and heralded a worldwide change in military affairs using new technologies, notably information and communication technologies, sensors and satellites, and precision-guided munitions. Russia continued with its structural reforms and deepening of ties with the US, Europe, China and Central Asia for its security and economic revival. Frictions, characterizing an earlier phase of US-China relations, eased. China was modernizing rapidly, building up its ‘Comprehensive National Power.’ Terrorism and the prospect of the use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) for terrorism emerged as the new and most immediate issues of global security concerns. In response to these and other perceived challenges, the US was redeploying its posture, forces, defences and operational philosophy worldwide. As the pre-eminent world power with global influence and ability to project power, US policies and actions helped shape the international security environment in many ways, directly or indirectly. There was a stepped up US presence in varying degrees in the Gulf,
Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central-Asia and South East Asia and reductions elsewhere (India, MoD 2004: 6-7).

Since 9/11, Indo-US relations have been on a major upswing. The US recognized India as a ‘national ally,’ for several reasons. First, the common terrorist threat. Secondly, shared concern regarding a possible collapse of the Chinese authoritarian regime, which would hurt both India and American economies. Thirdly, India’s geostrategic advantage: located in volatile South Asia, India has for next-door neighbours, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. At the same time, India is also in the neighbourhood of Afghanistan, as also a nearer to Iran and Iraq (Rai 2005: 70-71). Obviously issues and concerns brought India and the United States on a common strategic agenda.

**Changing Security Environments under the UPA**

The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government led by the Congress Party under the leadership of Manmohan Singh came to power in May 2004. The UPA Government accorded high priority to strengthen India’s relations with its neighbours – Pakistan and China-and with the US and other major powers. The year 2004-05 witnessed the commencement of a serious, sustained and comprehensive dialogue with Pakistan. Building upon the goodwill that was demonstrated by the people in both countries, the Government pursued a proactive policy of constructive engagement with Pakistan with the objective of cementing a durable structure of peace and stability in South Asia.

During the February 2004 meeting between the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan, India suggested an expert level dialogue on Nuclear Confidence Building Measures (CBMs). These talks, held on 19-20 June 2004 in New Delhi, resulted in agreements on establishing a ‘hotline’ between the Foreign Secretaries, upgrading, dedicating and securing the communication link between the DGMOs, and working towards an agreement on the pre-notification of the flight-testing of missiles (India, MEA 2005: 15-16).

India-US relations continued to witness intensive engagement towards a qualitative transformation in the year 2004-05. Both Governments reiterated their resolve to continue the process of developing a
strategic partnership between India and the US. There was a strong commitment on both sides to further widen, deepen and strengthen those ties. This was reflected in the Common Minimum Programme of the Government and the Address of President to the Parliament in June 2004. With the re-election of President Bush in November 2004, the US Government also expressed its commitment to make the strategic partnership between India and US even more solid. Prime Minister met President Bush on 21 September 2004 on the sidelines of UNGA in New York. In the joint statement on “US-India partnership: Co-operation and Trust,” it was noted that “bilateral relations had never been as close as they were at present” and set the direction of further development of India-US strategic partnership. During the meeting, President Bush emphasised that US relations with India were vital and had great potential. Prime Minister underscored that mutual resolve to strengthen bilateral relations would create the environment of peace, prosperity and safety from terrorism. They welcomed the implementation of Phase - I of the next steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) to include the removal of ISRO Headquarters from the Commerce Departments Entity List, as the beginning of a new era of co-operation and trust (Ibid: 95).

The special relationship between New Delhi and Washington being elevated to an even higher level by the Indian government became amply clear with the singing of the Framework Defence Agreement. The 10-year agreement was signed during the visit of Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee to Washington on 28 June 2005. “The United States and India have entered a new era,” said a statement issued after the signing of the agreement, which came three months after Washington announced its intention to help India become a “major world power.” The agreement, a detailed and comprehensive document, talks about transforming the relationship between the two countries on the basis of “shared national interests.” It laid great emphasis on the two countries being among the largest democracies in the world. The Bush administration wanted India to play a key role in its mission to spread democracy. The more substantive part of the agreement deals with defence cooperation. The agreement goes on to state that the new
defence relationship “will be an element of the broader US-India strategic partnership.” It’s other key point pertains to the goal of “defeating terrorism and violent religious extremism.” More controversially, the agreement states that the defence establishments of the two countries will “collaborate in multinational operations when it is in their common interests.” The agreement further states that the defence establishments of the two countries “will expand collaboration relating to missile defence.” Pranab Mukherjee insisted that the agreement was designed merely to fill up “critical gaps” in technology. In an interaction with the media he said that the UPA government continued to follow an independent foreign policy and that the agreement “to widen Indo-US friendship in the important sector of defence” was also part of this policy. “Through this framework agreement, we have expanded and widened the relationship. Nobody is forcing us to do something” (India, MEA 2006; India, MoD 2006).

The 28 June 2005 agreement states that “The United States and India will work to conclude defence transactions, not solely as ends in and of themselves, but as a means to strengthen our country’s security, reinforce our strategic partnership, achieve greater interaction between our armed forces, and build greater understanding between our defence establishments.” It talks of increasing “opportunities for technology transfer, collaboration, co-production, and research and development,” establishes a joint Defence Procurement and Production group to “oversee defence trade as well as prospects for co-production and technology collaboration,” and promises to “expand collaboration relating to missile defence” (Ibid). The key idea here is that each defence transaction is to be looked at not only from the angle of its intrinsic worth, but also from the angle of its contribution to strengthening the strategic partnership between the two countries. The US wanted military sales to promote inter-operability and garner commercial benefits. US firms were very keen to gain as big a share of India’s defence market as possible, elbowing at the Russians and the French particularly. What they wanted to sell most were complete systems like F-16, F-18, C-130 and P-3C aircraft (Koithara 2005: 3587)
At the invitation of US President George W. Bush, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited United States during 18-20 July 2005. In the joint statements the two leaders declared their resolve to transform India-US relationship and establish a global partner. Discussions were held on various aspects of the multifaceted cooperative relationship and a number of new initiatives were launched. Recognizing the significance of civilian nuclear energy, the two leaders discussed India’s plans to develop its civilian nuclear energy programme. Expressing his appreciation over India’s strong commitment to preventing WMD proliferation, President Bush stated that as a responsible state with advanced nuclear technology, India should acquire the same benefits and advantages as other such states. The President assured the Prime Minister that he would seek agreement from Congress to adjust US laws and policies, and US would work with its friends and allies to adjust international regimes to enable full civil nuclear energy cooperation and trade with India (India, MEA 2006: 89).

As a result of these mutual visits and agreements, a series of strategic initiatives have been underway. Malabar 2005, the annual bilateral naval exercise between the Indian and the US Navies, was held on 25 September- 4 October 2005 off the west coast of India. Indian and US Air Force held their joint training exercise, Cope India 05, in West Bengal from 7-19 November 2005. The seventh meeting of the India-US Defence Policy Group (DPG) was held in Washington, DC during 21-23 November 2005. The DPG reviewed the reports of the four sub-group-Military Cooperation Group, Joint Technology Group, Senior Security Technology Group and Senior Technology Security Group. The newly constituted Defence Procurement and Production Group also held its first meeting in Washington, DC on 21 November 2005 (Ibid: 90).

US President George W. Bush came to India on a state visit during 1-3 March 2006. President Bush and the Manmohan Singh issued a joint statement outlining the main elements of understandings reached during the visit, including the initiatives in space and maritime cooperation. The visit also saw an agreement on India’s nuclear separation plan under the bilateral civil nuclear understanding. The Hyde Act, that legally enabled resumption of full civil nuclear energy
cooperation between India and US, was passed by the US Congress on 8-9 December 2006 and signed into law by President Bush on 18 December 2006. Both sides were working on a bilateral civil nuclear agreement to determine the parameters of such cooperation. US also initiated discussions with the Nuclear Supplier’s Group (NSG) to adjust its guidelines. In addition, India was engaged directly with various NSG countries. India would also be engaging the IAEA to negotiate an India–specific IAEA safeguard agreement (India, MEA 2007-97).

India-US interactions, encompassed strategic and security issues, defence, counter-terrorism, science and technology, health, trade, space energy maritime cooperation, and environment. Frequent contacts at political as well as at official levels and the regular bilateral dialogue on a wide range of issues contributed to the qualitative transformation in bilateral cooperation in areas of common interest. On 20 July 2007 after five rounds of negotiations, India and the US agreed on the text of a bilateral cooperation Agreement to implement the understandings of July 2005 and March 2006 on the civil nuclear question. The 123 Agreement was expected to meet the basic objectives of safeguarding autonomy of India’s strategic nuclear programme and indigenous three stage nuclear power programmes and indigenous nuclear research and development. It would meet all the assurances to parliament given by prime Minister on 17 August 2006. It provided for full civilian nuclear cooperation between India and the US covering nuclear reactors and aspects of the associated nuclear fuel cycle including enrichment and reprocessing (India, MEA 2008:82).

Under the India-US Defence Policy Group which was the apex institutional dialogue mechanism for defence cooperation, the Joint Technology Group (JTG) held its ninth meeting on 10 April 2007 in Washington, the Defence Procurement and Production Group (DPGP) held its fourth meeting on 30-31 May 2007 in Hawaii, the Senior Technology Security Group held its fourth meeting in New Delhi on 26 November 2007 and the eighth meeting of Military Cooperation Group (MCG) met in Hawaii on 11-13 December 2007. India-US Defence Joint Working Group (DJWG) held two meeting – first in April 2007 in New Delhi and second in November 2007 in Washington. The defence forces
of the two countries engaged in bilateral exercises and participated in multilateral exercises. US companies participated at the Aero India show held in Bangalore from 9-13 February 2007. India-US joint military exercises were held in Alaska from 8-26 September 2007 (Ibid:82).

The year 2008 was marked by an intensification of the bilateral engagement between India and US. The signing of the Indo-US civil nuclear Agreement in Washington on 10 October 2008 was the culmination of the civil nuclear energy initiative announced during the visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to the US in July 2005. It was seen as a “symbol of the transformed nature of the bilateral dialogue” and had added “strategic content to the relationship” between the two countries. It also opened up vast opportunities for bilateral economic and high technology engagement. High level visits continued during the year 2008. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Washington on 25 September 2008 and met with President George W. Bush. India expressed its gratitude to the US for the support rendered in getting the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) to make exemptions in its guidelines for India. Condoleezza Rice, US secretary of state, visited New Delhi from 4-5 October 2008. Pranab Mukherjee conveyed India’s appreciation of the US Government’s support in bringing the Indo-US civil nuclear cooperation Agreement to a conclusion and in transforming the Indo-US relations (India, MEA 2009:93).

India also successfully concluded an India-specific Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on 1 August 2008 which paved the way for the US to approach the 45-nation Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) for an adjustment of the NSG guidelines to enable its members to enter into civil nuclear cooperation and trade with India. On 6 September 2008, the NSG agreed by consensus to such an adjustment which ended 34 years of international technology denial and isolation imposed by the Group on India. With this step completed, as per the India-US understandings of July 2005 and March 2006, the US government took the India-US civil nuclear agreement to the US Congress for approval. The US House of representatives approved the relevant Bill on the Agreement on 28 September 2008 and the US Senate passed on 10 October 2008. On 8 October 2008, the US
President Bush, signed the legislation on the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Agreement approved by the US Congress into law. The formal signing of the Agreement by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and his US counterpart Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice took place on 10 October 2008 in Washington (Ibid: 94). Though years have passed since the signing of the Agreement, the implementation has been embroiled in issues of liability and responsibility in case an accident occurs in a nuclear plant set up with the help of foreign suppliers. However, the Indo-US civil nuclear agreement kept open India’s negotiation possibilities with other countries insofar as the hitherto hurdles for that under the NPT regime have been removed.

**Mumbai Attack and Coastal Security**

A group of terrorists from Pakistan, apparently trained by intelligence apparatus as reported by the Government of India, attacked Mumbai on November 26, 2008. The attacks and the counter–terrorist action lasted more than two days, leaving over 180 people, many of them foreign nationals, killed. The Mumbai attack was the most serious terrorist onslaught given its wide ramifications for the coastal security as well as inland security of the country (see India, MoH 2009; and India MoD 2009). The attack challenged multiple layers of security and defence put in place with substantial investment to protect the country. The Mumbai attack also resulted in a new round of India-Pakistan tussle given the nature of issues involved such as the origin of the terrorists as well as the training they would have received from official and non official agencies. Even since 26/11, Indian security establishment has been extremely careful about the potential challenges to national security emerging from multiple sources, including from seas and oceans. This called for coordination of agencies such as Navy, Coast Guard, Customs, and all stakeholders of the coastal belts (for an elaboration of the subject see Singh and Seethi 2010).

**Trends in Defence Production and Procurement**

It was not until after India’s defeat in the Sino-Indian war of 1962 that the government started to make serious efforts to develop an indigenous capability to produce a range of arms and munitions. The
government had established the Department of Defence Production, and overtime the extent of India’s domestic defence sector has become increasingly wide. Thus, whereas in 1965 a total of 17 per cent of arms acquisitions were indigenously produced, by 1995 that figure increased to 30 per cent of arms acquisitions. Moreover, in 1995 the Ministry of Defence set an explicit aim of seeking to indigenously produce 70 per cent of all arms acquisitions by the year 2015 (India, MoD 1996).

In addition to the indigenous production of arms and munitions systems, the defence sector consisted of the assembly of imported items acquired from foreign sources and licenced production, in which design and, at times, strategic components may be imported but where the bulk of inputs into locally used arms and munitions systems were indigenously sourced. In 1965, 8 per cent of arms acquisitions were produced under licence. By 1995 that figure had increased to 17 per cent. The expansion of the Indian defence sector has had some notable successes too. The ordnance factories and defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs) have a current combined ‘target’ value of production to defence customers of some Rs. 42.3 billion; indeed, the Ministry of Defence felt confident enough about the defence production sector to call it the “backbone of defence preparedness and operational efficiency.” The indigenous production of missile systems, vehicles, small arms and munitions is an established fact. A direct consequence of the establishment of such a large defence sector is that whereas the direct import of complete arms and munitions systems accounted for 75 per cent of all arms and munitions acquisitions in 1965, in 1993 it accounted for only 53 per cent of arms and munitions purchases. The attempt by the Indian state to develop an indigenous arms and munitions sector was a questionable success, according to analysts. The industry was costly to develop, placing limits upon the disposal of scarce government resources. The industry which was developed remained heavily dependent upon imports. As a result, it used scarce foreign exchange, weakened the balance of payments position, and failed to give the independence that the policy was explicitly designed to promote. At the same time, over years, India remained the largest arms importer in the world. During 2009-14, India
topped the list of importers having the global share of 14% (SIPRI Year Book 2014).

India entered the 1990s with one of the Third World’s largest military-industrial-research complexes, consisting of 33 ordnance factories, public sector undertakings, and 34 major R&D organizations – all owned and run by the Defence Ministry, manufacturing nearly 15% of India’s industrial output and producing military goods worth 25% of the entire defence budget. Besides being self-sufficient in the production of a variety of small arms, medium artillery, and ammunition, this complex has designed and built aircraft, helicopters, sophisticated jet fighters, frigates, tanks, armoured personnel carriers, missiles, and advanced electronic, equipment. Significant achievement in the production line have been anti-aircraft and mountain guns, mortars, rockets, grenades, mines, self-propelled guns, infantry combat vehicles, assault boats, avionics, battlefield surveillance radar and parachutes. Others involve new generations of missiles, gas-turbine engines for indigenously designed military aircraft, sonar buoys, missile-equipped destroyers, main battle tanks, and remotely piloted vehicles. India’s planned and gradual investment in science and technology is aimed at making the country self-sufficient in this vital field. DRDO is the result of a process of integration of scientific and technical establishments (Majeed 1990:1087-88).

Indian technique in the acquisition of technology has been eclectic; Soviet, German, French and Dutch methods have been incorporated into indigenous production. As a result, India was able to develop a German designed HDW type-1500 submarine, a Soviet-designed, nuclear-propelled submarine and MIG fighter planes, British-designed Leander class frigates, French designed Dornier, German-designed Dossier coast guard air patrol, and GE-LM 2500 marine-adapted gas turbine engines.

The major Indian arms production projects underway involved the Main Battle Tank, the Light Combat Aircraft, and the Advanced Light Helicopter. These all started as indigenous projects, but soon the dependence on imported components became so prominent that it was not economically feasible to manufacture their weapons
indigenously. Thus, Indian licensed production arrangements have not led to self-sufficiency. The import of sophisticated materials continued, and there were delays in indigenous equipment development through to the productive stage. Political factors also impede the progress of indigenous production. For instance, government approval was given to the design team for the Light Combat Aircraft to use an RB-199 engine. But, subsequently, political considerations made the government change its mind, and the decision was taken to use a General Electric F-404 engine. Since 1988, India has been involved in a political controversy over bribes by foreign arms producers trying to sell weapons to India (such as Bofors deal), and there would seem to be a vested interest in India in purchasing weapons from other countries instead of producing them indigenously. Another important reason behind the slow growth of indigenous production was the Soviet factor. Since the Soviets were willing to accept deferred payments in Indian currency charging low interest rates, India had opted for purchases in the Soviet market from the very beginning. But this dependence meant that the indigenous arms industry had not developed to the extent that it could substitute the Soviet option (Ibd:1090).

India’s main battle tank (MBT) Project Arjun was conceived in 1974. It was then planned that by 1995 about 10 armoured regiments of the Indian Army would be re-equipped with Arjun. Depending excessively on research and development, advanced industrial and defence production base, project Arjun was planned entirely to be undertaken by the scientists and the engineers indigenously. Almost six different agencies have been at work on this project, besides a number of subsidiary organisations. Published reports revealed that after a number of prototype and pre-production models spread over several years, own Defence Research and Development Organisation has managed to produce an over 60 tonnes tank (Popli 1991:13-14).

Since the 1980s, India became one of the largest military industrial countries in the developing world. The Indian Navy acquired the capability to project power from the Persian Gulf to the straits of Malacca. India’s army and air force have become the largest and best
trained in the region. Similarly, India’s nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes were already in an advanced stage of research and development, as well as deployment. India successfully test-fired the Agni ballistic missiles, the Prithvi, (a surface-to-air missile), the Akash (a surface to air missile) and the Nag (an anti-tank missile). While Agni provides India the capability to place all of Pakistan, much of the Indian Ocean, and many cities in Southern China with the range of its missiles, Trishul and Akash – if deployed as anti-tactical ballistic missiles (ATBM) – could provide India the capability of protecting itself from incoming missiles (India, DRDO 2015; SIPRI Year Book 2014:277).

Stressing the need for development and upgradation of missile systems, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence appreciated the remarkable progress achieved by the scientists and engineers in the IGMDP and expected them “to achieve pinnacle of success in the missile programme area.” In so far as China emerged as a major nuclear and missile power, and it continued to be the main source of major weapons including missiles and allied technology to Pakistan, causing disquiet to India, it was likely to remain “the primary security challenge to India in the medium and long terms.” Its “enhancement of missile capabilities and its immense help to Pakistan” in the missile programme were seen as serious security concerns to India. The Committee felt that India had no option but “to continue to develop and upgrade its missile capabilities for deterrence and not for aggression on national security consideration” (India, MoD, Standing Committee on Defence 1996a:3) (1996b:3).

In reply, the Ministry stated, inter-alia, as follows: “Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme comprising development of 4 missiles namely PRITHVI, AKASH, THRISHUL, and NAG have been progressing as planned. The Committee, therefore, desired that India should go ahead with the completion of the development of their missile systems. The Committee in this connection reiterated its earlier recommendation made in their Fourth Report that the Government should take quick decision on the induction and deployment of indigenously developed surface-to-surface “Prithvi” missile. The Committee also felt that the time had come when the Government should review their technology
demonstrator – Agni project - and that a decision was expeditiously taken to go in for serial production of this strategic missile for induction into the Armed Forces (Ibid:3-4).

Despite possessing a considerable defence production base, India was not involved in defence export for long, for three reasons: (a) India had experienced too many problems with the production of indigenous equipment to consider defence exports. If a system was not totally indigenous, as it often the case in India, exports could only proceed with the permission of the licensor; (b) domestic demand was been relatively high; and (c) as a leading member of the non-aligned community, India would be forced to conduct a considerable internal debate over the rights and wrongs of selling arms for commercial ends, if only for the sake of its credibility in the South. The position adopted by India in the late 1980s over the question whether or not the country should enter the arms market as an exporter belied the fact that it was no stranger to the export market (Smith 1994:140).

Through the early 1980s, reports on Indian defence sales were infrequent. A Defence Export Promotion Council was set up in 1984 but had little impact. Towards the end of the decade, however, the government policy changed dramatically, in direct response to the growing anticipation of a debilitating resource gap. In October 1988, Defence Minister K.C. Pant, the architect of the new Policy, stated that the Government was receiving an increasing number of requests from foreign sources for spare parts and other types of equipment, such as clothing. In January 1989, the Defence Secretary explained the policy: “We are reviewing how we can export Indian defence items, without compromising on certain basic principles. We don’t want to add to local conflicts and so on. At the same time, industry, public and private sector, can benefit from exports. But I don’t think we’ll ever achieve the kind of aggressive marketing practices which some other countries have achieved.” To add to this, K.C. Pant announced the creation of a task force to be headed by a senior officer and mooted several potential defence markets, such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, Malaysia and Vietnam. In late 1989 Zambia was poised to become the first serious customer (for details see India, MoD 1989). A military adviser’s post had
been set up in the Indian High Commission in Lusaka and on the agenda were transfers of armoured personnel carriers (APCs), artillery, rifles, semi-automatic weapons and MiG-21 aircraft. There were similar export opportunities in the 1990s (Smith 1994:140).

Over the past decades, spending on the Indian military industrial base put tremendous strain on government revenue without commensurate benefits to the armed forces or the domestic economy. An increasingly large portion of the government budget funneled to defence contractors who were expected to develop state-of-the-art weaponry—such as the Light Combat Aircraft to be built by Hindustan Aeronautic—that would provide fully indigenous sources of material to supply India’s armed forces. This resulted in some notable successes, including the Agni intermediate range (1500 miles) ballistic missile and the Nag anti-tank missile. Yet, unlike the US, India did not make an effort to mount an export drive that would have provided it with critical foreign exchange, nor were the advances in military research and development spun off to private sector industries. Moreover, India’s arms manufactures found themselves unable to achieve the government’s optimistic goals and was increasingly forced to purchase the necessary high technology—at high prices—from abroad (The Research Institute for Peace and Security 1990:193). Meanwhile, the Department of Defence Research & Development has been engaged in the design and development, leading to production of indigenous state-of-the-art sensors, platforms, weapons and equipment in accordance with the requirements of the services. According to the Ministry of Defence, the Government had approved the 10 years’ plan for enhancing self-reliance in defence systems for the period 1995 to 2005. The objective of the plan was to raise the self-reliance index (ratio of yearly defence acquisitions from indigenous sources to total defence acquisitions) from estimated 0.3 values (1993 level) to a possible 0.7 value by the year 2005 (See India, MoD, Standing Committee on Defence 1997: 8-9, 16-17).

After the Pokhran-II and Kargil war, military expenditure increased both in India and Pakistan. Missile development programme, indigenisation programme, and arms import caused this increase in the defence budget. Pakistan indigenously developed short range missiles HATF-I
(80 Kms) and Hatf-2 (300 Kms), capable of carrying payloads of 500 Kilograms each; enough to carry a relatively unsophisticated nuclear warhead. Further, Pakistan equipped itself with short-range tactical missiles, M-10s from China, that had the power to deliver nuclear warheads upto a distance of 300 Kms. Pakistan successfully test fired its most sophisticated and deadly missile Ghauri in 1998 (Chatterjee 1999: 49). Pakistan continued the missile development programme after its nuclear tests in Chagai and developed a series of missiles with different ranges and pay load capacities. Ghazhavi missile and Shaheen-I (Half-4) missiles were developed in 2008. The missile development programme in Pakistan has been pursued with vigorous zeal (SIPRI Year Book 2009).

India also developed a series of missiles after Pokhran-II and the Kargil war. India started its integrated guided Missile Development Programmes (IGMDP) way back in 1983. Till then, Indian scientists developed a wide range of Missiles for Indian defence forces. Till 2009-2010, India developed the following missiles with varying ranges and payload capacities.

(a) Prithvi Missile – Three versions of 150 km, 250 km and 350 km with 1 tonne and 500 km payloads; Agni series of Missiles – (b) Agni-I Missile – 700 km. with 1 tonne warhead; (c) Agni-II Missile – 2000 km; (d) Agni – III Missile – 1500 warhead; (e) Agni – IV Missile (f) Agni V Missile – 5000 km. (ICBM); (g) Akash Missile – Surface to air Missile; (h) Nag Missile ; (i) Astra Missile ; (j) Long Range Surface to Air Missile; (k) Brah Mos Cruise Missile; (l) Surface-to-surface Tactical Missile – Prahaar; (m) Helina – Ants Tank Missile ; (n) Shourya (India, MoD 2009-2015). As a result of speedy and costly militarisation programmes, the defence budget of India showed a tremendous increase after Pokhran-II and Kargil War. The following table reveals the fact.
Thus, India’s defence and security options in the post-Pokhran-II phase have been much more complicated than before given the nature of challenges emerging from multiple sources, besides the traditional factors discussed in previous chapters. In fact, the most notable event during the period was India’s decision to go nuclear from defence and national security point of view. This had triggered a dangerous nuclear arms race in South Asia with Pakistan assuming the role as the rival force with nukes to challenge India. The Kargil war indicated the dangerous dimension of this arms spiral having its implications for both nuclear and missile proliferation in the region. However, India realised, over years, that this scenario can only be met with strategies of establishing enduring ties with countries like the United States and Israel.