CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

India and Pakistan are the two South Asian states which due to their nuclear ambitions because of their hostility against each others have been responsible for nuclearisation of this region of the earth. The foundations of the Indo-Pak nuclear programmes were laid down by the US ‘Atoms for Peace Programme.’ Both India and Pakistan, initially attempted to acquire only civilian nuclear capabilities as they also manifested this point several times in their nuclear policies. Both the countries started and managed research reactors and also took the assistance from foreign countries in this regard.

While India pursued solely peaceful nuclear programme in the 1950s, but by the mid 1960s it reconsidered its aversion to nuclear weapons in the face of escalating regional instability. In fact, the 1964 nuclear test of China provided a spark to slowly and tacitly initiating India’s nuclear weapons programme. A special debate in parliament was held to decide whether India should go nuclear or not. In the 1970s India’s nuclear programme made significant development and the notable event of that decade was the 1974 nuclear test which India continued to claim to be a peaceful nuclear explosion. Consequently, this nuclear test of India strengthened Pakistan’s determination to acquire its own nuclear arsenal. But the latter’s nuclear weapons programme in comparison to that of former was the clandestine means through which it pursued it. China, as well as North Korea, particularly had assisted Pakistan to acquire a nuclear weapons capability.

By 1980s missile arms race started between India and Pakistan and in the 1990s this reached its climax. A study in this context is made in Chapter-II which
reveals that India’s missile programme to a large extent was indigenous while Pakistan was being assisted by a few foreign countries – China and North Korea.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir has been a major issue for the rivalry between India and Pakistan, so much so that the two sides have fought two major wars and in 1999, it pushed both the countries on the brink of a catastrophic nuclear war when Kargil conflict erupted between the two sides, however, it was resolved and of course, the US role was praise-worthy in this regard – as it prevented a nuclear conflict in South Asia. In fact, Kashmir, in a way, has been a major cause for the nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan. However, it is equally true, as India had maintained, that China had been the main reason behind its nuclear weapons programme, on the other hand, for Pakistan, India has been the main reason for nuclearisation of the region. Thus, it reveals a triangular shaped – China-India-Pakistan – nuclear proliferation in South Asia. Further, the security competition in South Asia is dominated by India and Pakistan, and India and China. All the three states form the nuclear triangle in the region.

The nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan reached its highest peak in 1998 when India astonished the world by conducting nuclear tests which resulted in a tit-for-tat from the side of Pakistan. These Indo-Pakistan nuclear tests raised serious concerns for the global disarmament and arms control regime and put a question mark on nuclear disarmament and arms control efforts.

Several efforts towards nuclear disarmament and arms control have been tried in South Asia. India and Pakistan, particularly, have been engaged in certain measures for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Significantly, Pakistan proposed for a NWFZ in South Asia but India rejected it. The Indian refusal indicated its intentions of pursuing a nuclear weapons programme which was necessary for it to counter the
Chinese nuclear threat. However, both India and Pakistan have made certain significant progress towards disarmament. As the 1988 Indo-Pak Agreement on Non-Attack on Each Others Nuclear Installations and Facilities is a unique agreement that has never been signed between any other hostile countries. The Joint Declaration by India and Pakistan on Complete Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is also a remarkable step. After the 1998 tests, the foreign secretary level talks were held in Islamabad and in 1999 Lahore Declaration was signed between the two countries. Further, India also issued a Draft Nuclear Doctrine. All these efforts involved certain CBMs to slowdown nuclear proliferation in the region. Moreover, several efforts for nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia have also been made by the super powers as discussed in Chapter-V. Nevertheless, all these efforts have not totally or even partially freed the sub-continent from the menace of nuclear weapons.

The problem of our research work is that, on the one hand, several efforts towards nuclear disarmament and arms control have been made; on the other hand, nuclear proliferation has also been going on in South Asia. In the 1990s, while these efforts were speeded up, simultaneously, India and Pakistan also exploded nuclear weapons. Hence, these efforts failed to produce any desired results in South Asia towards curbing the arms race.

The super powers, on the one hand, also held talks about disarmament and arms control in general, and nuclear non-proliferation in particular, towards South Asia and on the other hand, they have been active in supplying arms to South Asia and assisting nuclear programme of India and Pakistan as several evidences prove it which are especially mentioned in Chapter-V. China, specifically, has been involved in Pakistan’s nuclear and missile programme, however, both China and Pakistan have denied these allegations. It reveals a Sino-Pak-North Korean axis towards nuclear
proliferation in South Asia. Russia has provided arms and other military aid to India and assisted the latter in her missile development programme. There has also existed an Indo-Russian axis in this regard after the 1998 tests as it is evident from the events following the tests.

Further, both the US and the USSR played the game of cold war politics in this region and even nuclearised the Indian Ocean during the cold war period. There existed a US-Pakistan-China axis to deter the Indo-Soviet alliance during this period. These factors had prevented the super powers to halt nuclear proliferation in South Asia. Moreover, the US policy of ‘Containment of Communism’ during the cold war had prevented it to check nuclear proliferation in South Asia. The US nuclear policy towards South Asia, hence, revolved around its Containment of Communism Policy during the cold war era. Even after the end of the cold war, the efforts of the super powers towards disarmament could not check India and Pakistan from conducting nuclear tests.

Although the US has pressed through some non-proliferation efforts as Presslor and Symington Amendments yet even these did not actually succeeded in checking nuclear proliferation in South Asia. Notably, after the 1998 tests, the US lifted up the sanctions imposed on India and Pakistan. In fact, the US has been moving closer to India due to its several strategic, economic and regional interests.

When the super powers brought the NPT, both India and Pakistan refused to sign it. India held that the NPT is discriminatory as it includes imbalance of obligations between NWS and NNWS, restricts horizontal proliferation but does not control vertical proliferation and involves discrimination in the application of international safeguards. Further India made it clear that NPT allowed super powers to possess the nuclear weapons whereas others were not allowed any such concession.
Pakistan also denied the signing of the NPT and put forth more or less similar type of stand as that of India. She stressed that NPT should be ratified by both India and Pakistan together. Similarly, both India and Pakistan also refused to sign the CTBT. India even went to the extent of blocking the CTBT negotiations in Geneva. It opposed CTBT mainly on the ground that it is discriminative and that it did not stipulate a plan of time-bound global disarmament. In fact, India’s stand on CTBT is linked with its traditional political stance on disarmament and non-proliferation, as she preferred a system of equality in this regard.

Indo-Pak refusal to sign NPT and CTBT indicates their nuclear ambitions. Even after the 1998 tests they have not followed the path of nuclear non-proliferation. In fact, both India and Pakistan are defying the global trend towards reduction in nuclear arsenals. Both countries are expanding their arsenals. Reversal is unlikely; nuclear disarmament seems impractical and unrealistic under the present circumstances in the region.

Since the testing of nuclear weapons in 1998, both the countries have built up modest arsenals. While estimates vary greatly, Pakistan now is believed to have 70-90 warheads compared to India’s 60-80. Moreover, both possess a variety of nuclear capable missile batteries. Further, while both are members of the United Nations Conference on Disarmament, their role has not always been constructive. Pakistan, for instance, is blamed for stalling the ongoing negotiations on a global Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty while India maintains that it will only join if the treaty is universal.

India’s and Pakistan’s official stances on nuclear arms control and disarmament hardly provides any hope. Pakistan has persisted with its India-specific argument, contending that New Delhi will have to take the lead on all major global arms control and disarmament measures. India’s position has simply been to deflect
the onus of responsibility on the five major nuclear powers. Moreover, New Delhi maintains that its forces’ modernization is targeted towards China, not as much towards Pakistan. The implication is that India can expand its conventional and nuclear capabilities far beyond its requirements to deter or challenge Pakistan simply by changing its objective of reference. However, for Pakistan, India’s capabilities matter regardless of its stated intentions, and thus it feels obliged to respond to India’s upgrades by its own expansion or through more aggressive force postures and doctrines.

The international community, especially the recognized nuclear weapon states, has also contributed to the intensification of India’s and Pakistan’s nuclear rivalry. The persistence of a discriminatory global nuclear regime and the lack of sincerity towards disarmament among the major powers have allowed the two sides to deflect international pressures with ease. Moreover, more than 10 years have elapsed since these two countries first tested nuclear weapons but the world has yet to pay any serious attention to the need to formally integrate them into the global non-proliferation regime. They enjoy the military and diplomatic benefits of being nuclear armed states, and yet they are not constrained by non-proliferation obligations like the rest of the NPT members.

Policies that have discriminated between these two countries have also proved counterproductive. The most recent example is the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal whose India-specific exceptions have antagonized Pakistan and prompted it to actively seek similar arrangements for itself. It has also reinforced Pakistan’s desire to enhance its fissile material stockpile to counter the expanded guarantees for fissile material production.
After discussing all the above, in order to search a remedy for nuclear disarmament and arms control in South Asia, the following proposals are put forth that contain arms control and disarmament as well as crisis prevention and management measures which may be taken into consideration:

1. The global drive towards nuclear disarmament must progress substantially before serious pressure can be brought to bear on India and Pakistan. Otherwise, given their active conflicts, South Asian states can make a much better case for holding on to nuclear weapons than any of the other nuclear states. The fates of the US, Chinese, Indian and Pakistani programmes are linked by a vertical chain. A top-down movement towards disarmament is the most probable way to realize a nuclear free South Asia.

2. In the meantime, there is an urgent need to pull India and Pakistan formally into the legal non-proliferation ambit through a multilateral arrangement. The NPT+2 (or +3 if Israel, the other non-NPT state, is included) formula has been floating around for some time and seems to be the most plausible option. It would essentially create an exception for India and Pakistan to be officially recognized as nuclear weapons states while bringing them under the legal regime – even though NPT in its present form does not allow this.

3. The US ratification is critical for positive movement on the CTBT. If the US ratifies, India will be under tremendous pressure to do so as well. Pakistan’s stance remains tied to India’s and thus Islamabad can be expected to follow suit. As far as the FMCT is concerned, Pakistan’s reservations about the fissile material cut-off ought to be addressed so that negotiations can move forward.
4. There should be an equivalent, if not greater, emphasis on crisis prevention and management in South Asia. This approach will keep the disarmament debate alive within the region while reducing the chances for crisis to spiral out of control.

5. Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan is implicitly responsible for nuclear arms race between the two countries apart from the other factors. It might add fuel to the nuclear fire and lead to a catastrophic nuclear war in the region. Hence, resolution of this dispute is the only silver bullet among the various recipes available to ensure nuclear détente.

6. India and Pakistan must not play into the hands of non-state militant actors looking to disrupt peace. Both sides need to realize that no matter how difficult it may be for governments to show restraint in the wake of a crisis-trIGGERING event, both sides must prove that the Indo-Pak reconciliation process is uninterrupted and insulated from such provocations.

7. The presence of a limited war doctrine and the belief that space for a limited confrontation exists under the nuclear umbrella is highly destabilizing as it may carry high risk of swift escalation. Therefore, the plans for a limited aggression must be abandoned and any crisis ought to be resolved through mutual cooperation and dialogue.

8. In terms of posturing, South Asian crisis would become much less threatening if India and Pakistan were to agree not to mate nuclear warhead with their delivery systems. This would greatly reduce the chances of an accidental or hasty launch.