Abstract
USA and South Asia: 
The Issue of Nuclear Proliferation

ABSTRACT

One of the greatest evil of scientific discoveries in the mid-twentieth century is the success of American scientists, engaged in the Manhattam project. Infact it was a German initiative. But the German talent was transferred to America due to Hitler’s anti Jewish policies and succeeded America in manufacturing the first ever nuclear device. Other European countries and Russia and China also joined the armament race. USSR got the second position in the race as she had detonated its first nuclear device in 1949. After that, Britain had tested its nuclear device in 1952, France in 1960, and China in 1964 test fired their first nuclear devices and became party to the nuclear weapons states.

Its immense devastating capability was realized by almost all the countries of the world. Therefore, efforts for controlling and eliminating these weapons were started immediately after the Second World War. Throughout the Cold War period, a number of treaties and agreements were signed among the independent nations to reduce, control, restrict and abolish these weapons. But the whole Cold War period witnessed a mad arms race between the two superpowers.

The treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons signed on July 1, 1968 remains the bedrock of the post-second World War global non-proliferation regime. With 187 states parties, this Treaty is the most widely adhered to and the most successful multilateral arms control agreement in history. The successful conclusion, in 1968, of negotiations on the NPT was a landmark in the history of non-proliferation.
The NPTs main objectives are to stop the further spread of nuclear weapons, to provide security for non-nuclear weapons states which have given up the nuclear option, to encourage international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to pursue negotiations in good faith towards nuclear disarmament leading to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

The NPT is fundamental, but the broader regime is a complex system of multilateral and bilateral agreements, arrangements and mechanisms intended to promote and achieve a world without nuclear weapons, sooner rather than later. This was valid during the Cold War and remains valid today. At the same time, the regime is intended to provide a framework to enable the world to make effective use of nuclear capability for peaceful purposes.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was set up by unanimous resolution of the United Nations in 1957 to help nation develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Allied to this role is the administration safeguards arrangements. This provide assurance to the international community that individual countries are honoring their treaty commitments to use nuclear materials and facilities exclusively for peaceful purposes.

The IAEA therefore undertakes regular inspections of civil nuclear facilities to verify the accuracy of documentation supplied to it. The agency checks inventories and undertakes sampling and analysis of materials. Safeguards are designed to deter diversion of nuclear materials by increasing the risk of early detection. They are complemented by controls on the export of sensitive technology from countries such as UK and USA through voluntary bodies such as the Nuclear Suppliers’ Group.

Traditional safeguards are arrangements to account for and control the use of nuclear materials. This verification is a key element is the international system which ensures that uranium in particular in used only for peaceful purposes.
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The aim of traditional IAEA safeguards is to deter the diversion of nuclear material from peaceful use by maximizing the risk of early detection.

IAEA safeguards together with bilateral safeguards applied under the NPT can, and do, ensure that uranium supplied by countries such as Australia and Canada does not contribute to nuclear weapons proliferation. In fact the worldwide application of those safeguards and the substantial world trade in uranium for nuclear electricity make the proliferation of nuclear weapons much less likely.

There are also several other treaties and arrangements designed to reduce the risk of civil nuclear power’s contributing to weapons proliferation.

Shortly after entry into force of the NPT, multilateral consultations on nuclear export controls led to the establishment of two separate mechanisms for dealing with nuclear exports: the Zangger Committee in 1971 and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in 1975.

Though the official policy goal of the United Nations is general and complete disarmament, it has never been seriously pursued because such an idea runs into tremendous problems of definition. From its inception commentators have tended to use “arms control” as a synonym for “disarmament” and then judged arms control by the degree of disarmament occurring at any particular time, there are crucial differences in the meaning and approach to the two terms.

Arms control came into being partly in response to the advent of the nuclear “balance of terror” and partly as a response to a perceived failure of the disarmament approach in the years immediately before and after World War II. In 1945,
While disarmament was seen as an alternative to military strength, arms control was seen as a complement to it, since both enhance national and international security in different ways. While proponents of disarmament saw the existence of weapons as a cause of arms races and war, arms control was felt to represent a recognition of the continuing utility of military power in the modern world and the new arms controllers believed that there was no simple cause and effect relationship between the possession of weapons and the outbreak of war as armaments were ever present features in the landscape of international politics and they were as much a part of the peace-time as well as the war-time environment.

Throughout the cold war period, the armament race between the Soviet Union and the United States was controlled by a number of bilateral agreements. The US-Soviet/Russian agreements are: the treaty on the limitation of anti-ballistic missile systems or ABM Treaty (signed 1972); the treaty on the limitation of underground nuclear weapon tests or Threshold Test Ban Treaty/ TTBT (signed 1974); the treaty on underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes or the Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty/PNET (signed 1976); the treaty on the elimination of intermediate range and shorter-range missiles or INF Treaty (signed 1987); the treaty on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms or START I Treaty (signed 1991); and the treaty on further reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms or START II Treaty (signed 1993).

John Kennedy tried to revive efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. On September 25, 1961, he presented to the UN a "Program for General and Complete Disarmament", "The weapons of war must be abolished", he said, "before they abolish us". His ambitious plan included all the elements that negotiators still pursue today: a comprehensive nuclear test ban; a ban on the production of fissionable materials for use in weapons (plutonium and highly enriched uranium); the placement of all weapons materials under international safeguards; a ban on the transfer of nuclear weapons, their materials or their technology; and deep reductions in existing nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles, with the goal of eventually eliminating them.
During the 1980s and early 1990s the Regan administration developed the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) which was an Anti Ballistic Missile System. The concept was to form a defensive shield against the nuclear attack from the Soviet Union. The popular press designated the program as “Star Wars” and was often critical of its extreme cost. The initial focus of the SDI was a nuclear explosion powered X-Ray laser designed at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory by a young scientist named Peter Haglestein who worked with a team called O Group, doing much of the work in the late seventies and early eighties. O Group was headed by physicist Lowell Wood, a friend of Edward Teller, the “father of the Hydrogen bomb”. In 1983 President Reagan was told of Hagelstein’s breakthrough by Teller, which prompted Reagan’s ‘Star War’ speech on March 8, 1983.

Though the program initially focused on large scale systems designed to defeat a Soviet offensive strike. However, as the threat diminished, the program shifted towards smaller systems designed to defeat limited or accidental launches. By 1987 the SDIO developed a national missile defense concept called the Strategic Defense System Phase-1 Architecture. This concept consisted of ground and space based sensors and weapons, as well as central battle management system. The ground based systems operational today trace their roots back to this concept. In his 1991 State of the Union address George H. W Bush shifted the focus of SDI from defence of North America against large scale strikes to a system focusing on theatre missile defense called Global Protection Against Limited Strike (GPALS).

Reagan’s vision of missile defense turned this address into one of the most controversial and influential presidential speeches of the 1980s. Some political analysts argue that by dramatically raising the stakes in the military competition between the US and the Soviet Union, Reagan’s missile defense program paved the way for the success of later arms reduction talks.

In subsequent decades, the notion of effective missile defence was gradually displaced by the principle of nuclear deterrence (appropriately known as MAD, for Mutually Assured Destruction). However, in the late 1970s, interest in strategic
defence systems re-emerged in certain scientific, military and political circles which exerted a strong influence on Reagan, who was already opposed to the concept of offence-based nuclear deterrence and genuinely concerned about the vulnerability of the US in the event of a nuclear attack.

Since the end of the Cold War, a number of arms control advocates, politicians, and military officers have argued that the United States should substantially reduce its reliance upon nuclear weapons. Taking that argument to an extreme, a loosely knit group of retired military officers, scientists, and defense intellectuals maintains that the elimination of nuclear weapons should be an explicit goal of the United States. The abolitionists contend that the only plausible use of nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attack and that getting rid of nuclear weapons would eliminate this rationale. Although those holding more moderate views find this argument impractical, they too are ambivalent about nuclear deterrence, claiming that the risk of accidental or unauthorized launch of nuclear weapons outweighs any conceivable benefit. Some abolitionists and many military officers maintain that conventional precision-guided munitions (PGMs) offer an effective alternative to nuclear weapons.

The overriding interest of the United States in South Asia lies in the establishment of positive and constructive relations with India, a rising power with one sixth of the world's population. India is growing economically at an average annual rate of 7%, and is developing significant military power projection capabilities that will make it an increasingly important factor in the Asia balance of power and in global councils.

The most sensitive issue in American relations with the South Asian countries especially India and Pakistan is the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear arms control. Since the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union, American self image as the “only super power” has reinforced the American assumption that the nuclear club should be restricted to its five present members and that the United States is entitled to have the biggest—and best—nuclear arsenal in order to preserve international stability. In pressing India and Pakistan to sign the NPT, the United States has presented its position in
benign, altruistic terms, emphasizing its desire to help prevent a nuclear war in South Asia. The implication is that South Asian are irrational fanatics who cannot be trusted with the bomb and that deterrence, which was the basis of the United States strategic doctrine during the cold war, will not work in the non-Western world. Since the United States is the only country that has ever used nuclear weapons, this American emphasis on the nuclear danger in South Asia is viewed in India and Pakistan as at best patronizing and at worst racist.

Despite a number of pronouncement, the United States has failed to give India and Pakistan concrete incentives to cap their nuclear weapons potential at present levels. Yet the Perry declaration has opened up the possibility of a pragmatic bargain between India and the United States that could achieve the capping objective and, more broadly, reduce tensions over nonproliferation that could threaten the stability of the Indo-American relationship.

The United States for its part, would have to make clear that it is reconciled to India’s acquisition of the nuclear weapons option and avoid policies suggesting that it still harbors the “rollback” objective. In particular, the United States would have to end its ban on the sale of nuclear reactors to India and other restrictions on United States cooperation with India’s civilian nuclear power program, starting with restrictions on United States cooperation on nuclear safety. This would require amendment of the 1978 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act to allow exports of Nuclear technology under specified conditions.

India tested five tests on may 11, 13, 1998 and almost a year later, declared herself to be a state of nuclear weapon. Rather than a nuclear weapon state, by disclosing to the public its draft nuclear Doctrine. Even before the development of an operational Indian nuclear force, however, a doctrinal framework for it has been proposed. The document proposing a Nuclear Doctrine for India is designed to stimulate informed discussion on the “credible minimum deterrent”. India has decided to put in place to safeguard its strategic autonomy. The Nuclear Doctrine Group of the National Security Advisory Board prepared a draft after detailed discussions spread over several months. This consensus draft a consensus document of the entire National
Security Advisory Board. It is now for the Strategic Policy Group, the National Security Council and then the Cabinet to approve, or reject the document.

The Draft Nuclear Doctrine (DND) formulated by the National Security Advisory Board and released for public debate by the departing Vajpayee government in August 1999, is a remarkable documents (National Security Advisory Board 1999). Not only has it in simple, clear language brought together very divergent views on the controversial issue of nuclear policy, it has shifted the intellectual level of debate, so heated in the aftermath of Pokhran-II, from the polemical to the thoughtful.

The DND envisages a triad of air, land and sea-based delivery systems whose “survivability will be enhanced by a combination of multiple redundant systems, mobility, dispersion and deception”. It distinguished between an unspecified “peacetime deployment” and a shift to “fully employable forces” in the event of a conflict arising. There is an emphasis on credibility – “any adversary must know that Indian can and will retaliate” – and on effectiveness based on “reliability, timeliness, accuracy and weight of attack”. The DND goes on to outline the requirements for command and control, security and safety, and research and development, and concludes by focusing on disarmament and arms control.

Assuming that states such as India make decision according to realist models and are driven primarily by national security imperatives, Western theorists and policymakers expect that India should build and deploy a nuclear arsenal of sufficient quantity and operational quality to ensure that it could withstand an adversary’s first strike and retaliate with enough nuclear force to end a war on India’s terms. Indeed, according to these theories India should have built, deployed, and operationally fine-tuned such a survivable second strike arsenal long ago.

The May 11 and 13 tests do not give India the minimum nuclear deterrence it intends to acquire. In order to acquire such a deterrence it would be necessary for India to fabricate more
nuclear weapons, and to test and produce the Agni missile, both of its proven range as well as of the improved range. In addition, it will also become necessary for India to deploy its nuclear weapons and put in place the command, control and intelligence system, and define its new security strategy. All these may take a minimum of two to five years or may be even longer. It is, therefore, premature to declare ourselves as a nuclear weapon state now.

All this must be weighed against the situation India had confronted in May-June 1998. An angry and shaken United States imposed wide-ranging sanctions against India. Japan, India's largest donor, cut off all new assistance and put a freeze on high level contacts. The G-8 industrialized nations joined the United States in blocking multilateral lending to India. China reacted with venom against India's identification of Beijing as the principal factor in its decision to test. The diplomatically active Anglo-Saxon nations, Australia and Canada led the charge against "a deviant India" in various multilateral forums.

Yet in the wake of its nuclear tests, India understood that it has to work hard to limit the political damage from Pokhran-II and find a basis to revive relations with the major powers. After it completed the series of five tests, India announced that it was ready to consider signing the CTBT, join the negotiations on the Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty that limits the production of material for nuclear weapons, and reasserted its commitment to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Given the fact that Indian had opposed with such vehemence these very same ideas in the recent past, the turn around in New Delhi's policy was nothing less than dramatic. The focus of India's diplomacy since then has been a willingness to negotiate adherence to internationally binding obligations such as the CTBT in return for other political and technological gains. From being a "perpetual dissident" against the global nuclear order, India, now having converted herself into a nuclear weapons power, was now eager to deal. Having shed its nuclear ideological virginity, India will never again be the same.

Pakistan's nuclear policy has been develop in reaction of India's Pokhran 1 explosion Bhutto reacted strongly to this test and said Pakistan must develop its own "nuclear capability". Regarding
the program he said; “We will defend our country using any means necessary and build a nuclear capability second to none. We will eat grass for 1000 years, if we have to, but we will get there.”

In fact, Pakistan’s emphasis on opacity and its rejection of a no-first use doctrine reflects its concerns about conventional inferiority vis-à-vis India. Nuclear opacity and nuclear weapons capability are regarded as means of deterring conventional war. Senior officials have implied that Pakistan could resort to nuclear use in the event of an Indian attack, conventional or nuclear, on its territory. However, Pakistan refuses to officially define its nuclear threshold even as it rejects nuclear first use. While a nuclear no first use policy was a luxury for Pakistan, a participant pointed out India would likely reverse its no-first use posture during a military conflict. In any case India has already revised that policy to cover other unconventional attacks by weapons of mass destruction on Indian troops within or outside Indian territory.

Pakistan’s nuclear program is based primarily on highly enriched uranium (HEU), which is produced at the A.Q. Khan Research Laboratory at Kahuta, a gas centrifuge uranium enrichment facility. The Kahuta facility has been in use since the early 1980s. By the early 1990s, Kahuta had an estimated 3,000 centrifuges in operation, and Pakistan continued its pursuit expanded uranium enrichment capabilities.

Bhutto had been concerned with India’s pursuit of the “nuclear option” for several years, and this was the first opportunity he had to put his declaration of 1965 into effect. A key motivation for this program was concern over India’s well known progress toward having its own nuclear option, and the public declarations by key leaders in India that they must acquire nuclear arms. Years later, after India’s 1974 nuclear test, when Pakistan’s nuclear program became public knowledge persistent attempts were made to paint the weapons program as a response to the test. It was a response to India’s developing nuclear challenge, but not to the Pokhran test per se. To the extent that it was a response to a specific event, it was a response to India’s conventional arms superiority as manifested in its victory during the Bangladesh War.
The Bangladesh War also helped create a relationship between Pakistan and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) or “North Korea” which would later help Pakistan considerably in acquiring delivery systems for its nuclear arsenal in the 90s.

During mid-1971 Bhutto approached North Korea in an effort to obtain critically needed weapons.

There was a widespread recognition that nuclear were Pakistan’s only viable deterrence against an Indian conventional onslaught. Some strategists even urged the recapture of Kashmir under a nuclear umbrella. Zia became committed to the nuclear option as a last resort instrument to save Pakistan “with whole world against him,” an argument made by Agha Shahi, then the Foreign Minister.

Moreover, Zia saw in the acquisition of nuclear weapons a key instrument to break Pakistan’s isolation and transform it into the leader of the rejuvenating Muslim World. In July 1978 he outlined his perception: “China, India, the USSR, and Israel in the Middle East posses the atomic arm. No Muslim country has any. If Pakistan had such a weapons, it would reinforce the power of the Muslim World.”

Pakistan had nuclear weapons potential in 1987, and operational nuclear weapons since 1988. At first, Pakistan stuck with Zia’s doctrine of relying on nuclear weapons as the last resort key to Pakistan’s survival against India and the USSR. However, at the same time, Zia-ul-Haq’s pan-Islamic world view was expressed in the willingness to facilitate and expedite other Islamic, primarily Iran’s, nuclear weapons program, but not at the expense of, or as part of, Pakistan’s own strategic weapons programs. It was through its close cooperation with Iran, that Pakistan also assisted other radical states including Libya and North Korea.

Despite their best efforts the supporters of the concept of nuclear deterrence cannot prove that nuclear weapons preserved the peace in Europe or elsewhere in the world. What can be claimed though is that they played a supporting role in
preserving the peace. Nor can supporters of deterrence prove that the many crises during the Cold War were resolved or contained primarily by the threat of nuclear war. The history of the Cold War is replete with compelling evidence of the pernicious effects of the open-ended quest for nuclear deterrence, as shown by Professors Janice Stein and Richard Ned Lebow in a study entitled We All Lost the Cold War.

In today's post-Cold War World, defining national security merely, or primarily, in military terms conveys a false sense of reality. Nearly half a century of Cold War fashioned the issue of security into powerful conventional simplifications that are no longer valid. Unfortunately, many of these traditional and outmoded concepts retain great currency amongst certain security analysts and defense planners, and the dominance of military and strategic considerations in the conduct of international relations endures as a legacy of the Cold War. While stability was and continues correctly to be of prime strategic importance in a transforming world its pursuit by some influential countries places exaggerated emphasis upon nuclear weapons and military concepts that are presumed still to lie at its core.

In a post-Cold War world, the political value of nuclear weapons has declined markedly rendering them, more a liability than an asset. Despite the changed political climate and the window of opportunity to restructure international relations away from reliance on nuclear weapons, many influential thinkers and military planners in the United States, NATO, the Russian Federation and in some other countries still believe in the integrity of nuclear deterrence- i.e. that stability and security would necessarily be jeopardized in the absence of nuclear deterrence. Such deeply embedded beliefs are extraordinary resistant to new thinking or to change. They also reflect the reluctance of national security planners in the NWS to conceive of a security architecture that does not rely on nuclear arms.

Nuclear weapons are held by a handful of states which insist that these weapons provide unique security benefits, and yet reserve uniquely to themselves the right to own them. This situation is highly discriminatory and thus unstable, it cannot be sustained. The possession of nuclear weapons by some states
is a constant stimulus to other states to acquire them... a central reality is that nuclear weapons diminish the security of all states.

The WMD proliferation problem will not be solved by short-term solutions. What is obvious is the need for a re-orientation of the technological determinants of our industrialized global culture. The civil-military ambivalence of many advanced research and development program needs to be addressed, and proposals for radically new research policies outlined which will safeguard against the commercial exploitation of weapons relevant technologies.

It seems this would only be workable if the current security paradigm of the western hemisphere was changed and deterrence replaced by cooperation. Only then is a long-term solution imaginable. Bearing in mind the political arena, with its many different players, their various ambitions, and the ongoing struggle for western domination.