CHAPTER - III

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India maintained its position in favor of abjuring nuclear weapons until Jawaharlal Nehru was at the helm of affairs, though one can quote remarks and observations by him which indicated that he had not entirely ruled out the option of India acquiring nuclear weapon. After the death of Jawaharlal Nehru, India decided to depart from the idealistic path and prepared itself for acquiring nuclear weapons in case it became necessary. Instructions to this effect seem to have been given during the Prime Ministership of Lal Bahadur Shastri. In 1968, India decided not to accede to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), and thus, kept open its option of acquiring nuclear weapons. In 1974, Pokhran-I test was carried out which demonstrated that India had not only kept its option open but also was capable of fabricating nuclear weapons. Information made available recently indicate that several times in the recent past in 1982 during Mrs. Indira Gandhi’s regime, in 1995 when Mr. Narasimha Rao was in power, and in 1997 when Mr. I. K. Gujral was the Prime Minister, the Government of India had made all the preparations for carrying out nuclear weapons tests, but ultimately resiled from it under a variety of pressures. In 1996, India did not sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) because it wanted to keep open not only its option to acquire nuclear weapon – a purpose which could have been
served by our non-accession to the NPT – but also the manner in which the option would be exercised.¹

In the history of Indian Nuclear Policy Oct.16,1964, was one of the defining and critical moments. Up to that date India only thought of developing a capability which could be converted into a nuclear weapon option, if it become necessary. When China became a nuclear weapon power, detonated its first nuclear device on Oct 1969, India felt threatened by this turn of event. China which was involved in an armed conflict with India in 1962, became a nuclear weapon power. Thus it became imperative for Indian Policy-makers to give serious consideration for the country acquiring nuclear weapons. A few days after Dr. Bhabha talked of India being in a position to go nuclear in about 18 months following a decision and that it would cost only Rs.18 Lakhs per weapon. He was immediately rebuked by V. K. Krishna Menon who was a fervent anti-nuclear campaigner.²

In 1955, Homi Bhabha, presided over the first U.N. conference on the peaceful uses of atomic energy in Geneva, argued that India needed to develop nuclear power to augment its energy base. The reasons were the growing demand for the electricity of a large population, coal resources were localized to only some parts of India and transport over long distances added significantly to the real cost at the consuming end, and finally India depended excessively on burning wood and agricultural waste (including cow dung) which was wasteful of resources having important alternative uses.³
Continuing his argument in the second U.N. conference on the peaceful uses of atomic energy held in Geneva, in 1958. Homi Bhabha held forth that developing countries like India needed nuclear power ever more than the industrialized ones which had already invested heavily in fossil fuel power generation.

In 1959, India took a decision to set up its first nuclear power station in western India, in the vicinity of Bombay. The site (of Tarapur) was chosen in 1961 and global bids were invited for building the power station. The contract for construction of India’s first nuclear power station (with two boiling water reactors) was given to the General Electrics, a U.S. company, in mid 1964. Both the units became fully operational in the autumn of 1969. During 1960 to 1970 India concentrated on completing the Indo-US Project at Tarapur and Indo-Canadian Project in Rajasthan (near Kota). Techniques of quality control and non-destructive testing were areas requiring special training. It was an exhilarating period as the young engineers and scientists of the Indian Atomic Energy Program were simultaneously engaged in learning and training others in the many facets of nuclear technology. Indian industry was being inducted to the extent possible through development contracts and extensive shop floor training. In the latter half of the Sixties, a decision was taken that the third atomic project would be taken up as a total Indian effort with full responsibility for design, engineering, manufacture, erection and commissioning resting with Indians. At that time there were no embargoes or technology denials— they would come, but much later. It was an act of faith that as
early as possible India should acquire comprehensive capabilities to build and operate nuclear power plants.⁴

During the period 1970-1980, the Indian atomic energy program took on the task of producing the nuclear materials, namely uranium and heavy water, in quantities required by the reactor construction program. Process technologies were developed at the Bhabha Atomic Research Center, Trombay and engineering and fabrication activities were embarked upon to put up industrial scale plants. Production of nuclear fuel and heavy water certainly posed many challenges and there were disappointments and delays along the way. Eventually they were solved and Indian industry began to supply equipments and components required for these construction facilities. Other technological enterprises that were set up during this period included an electronics industry for producing reactor control and instrumentation. High vacuumed techniques, metal deposition and coating process and similar specialized activities were taken up. One of the biggest challenges encountered in all these activities related to quality up gradation of various section of Indian Industry. This has been one of the biggest spin-off benefits of the atomic energy program.⁵

When the first unit of Madras Atomic Power Station was started in 1983, it was indeed a proud moment for the country and the atomic energy establishment. The countries which had the capability to design and build nuclear power units on their own technology at that time were the U.S, the U.S.S.R, France, Germany, Japan, Canada, the U.K and Sweden. India had
managed to join this select club in spite of limited industrial and technological base. The second unit of Madras Atomic Power Station was commissioned in 1985. Earlier on, work had commenced on an atomic power station with two units at Narora, on the banks of river Ganga, some distance away from Delhi. This site is located in a seismic zone and so extensive analyses of the design and validation with testing preceded the finalization of designs. For this reason, the gestation period was longer than initially foreseen. The first unit of this station was commissioned in 1989.6

From the early eighties, serious consideration was given to a 15 year plan for a development of nuclear power. In the earlier phase, projects were taken up with rather large time gaps and the project execution times were rather long, mainly due to learning curve problems. It was recognized that designs and major equipment had to be standardized for a number of units. Long time cycle equipments was best ordered well ahead of civil construction at site. Also this equipment was to be ordered in batch mode rather than one or two at a time if manufacturing cycle times were to be minimized. It was also recognized that much greater mechanization of construction was a must. The 15 year plan was not only looked at the nuclear power units but also at matching capacities for production of fuel and heavy water. In 1985, a program of constructing ten reactors of 235 MW (the size that were standardized for the units at Madras and Narora) and ten of 500 MW - a larger version - was approved by the government of India. In addition to the units in operation and
those under construction, the target was 10,000MW of nuclear power by the year 2000 AD

Although the nuclear power program described above meant a large scale expansion of activities, there was a need to target for an even higher nuclear power capacity because of the rise in demand for electricity. The Soviet Union had been assisting India in the field of thermal and hydro-electric power for several decades. For 1978 onwards, the Soviet Union had been hinting that they could cooperate with India in the field of nuclear power also. They offered to build in India light water reactors of Soviet design (referred to as VVER) with a capacity of 440 MW. But after the breakup of the Soviet Union, virtually no progress was made on the Indian Soviet project. The development in the nuclear field was halted during 1990’s. Initially in 1990-91, India had two short lived Governments which were mainly concerned with the existential problems. The Congress Government under P. V Narsimha Rao was in minority initially and during this period India was facing a severe financial crisis. Thus the new economic policy of P. V Narsimha Rao and his Finance Minister Manmohan Singh was to let the private sector into power generation and reduce direct investments from the government of India in this activity and no new starts were made on any nuclear power units during 1990-1996. Of the program of 15 years, only four reactors of 235MW had been started. The second unit at Narora and two units at Kakarapara (in Gujarat), started in 1980’s were completed and put into service.
When China exploded its first nuclear weapon in October 1964, the then Government of India sent an emissary to the United States to explore the possibility of latter providing a nuclear umbrella to India. The United States expressed its inability to oblige. Then India tried its best to seek security from nuclear weapons within the framework of global measures for nuclear disarmament. It took a series of initiatives for this purpose. Apart from taking the lead in 1954 for seeking a ban on nuclear weapons tests, India was one of the leading countries which moved the resolution in the General Assembly in the early 1960s for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. What India had in mind while taking this initiative was to prevent both vertical and horizontal proliferation. Unfortunately, the outcome was far removed from the original purpose conceived by India. The NPT provided for the prevention of only horizontal proliferation. In 1982, India took the initiative for setting in motion negotiations for the adoption of a convention on the non-use of nuclear weapons; and for a freeze on the production of weapons-grade fissile material. Finally in 1988 India submitted to the 3rd Special Session of the UN General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSODIII) s comprehensive plan for the elimination of nuclear weapons. This plan, which came to be known as the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan, suggested the eliminated of nuclear weapons in three stages by the year 2012. It also suggested a freeze of collateral measures to facilitate the process of moving towards elimination as well as long-term measures for luring in and sustaining a nuclear weapons free world. Three initiatives did not elicit any positive response from
the nuclear weapon powers. Through all the initiatives that India succeed, the primary purpose was to rid the world of nuclear weapons. For, India believed that this was the only framework in which it could avert threat to its security emanating from countries armed with nuclear weapons. However, the nuclear weapons states remained adamant on their opposition to the elimination of nuclear weapons and on their insistence on the right to possess and was nuclear weapons. The last occasion when their categories and unambiguous position on this issue was reiterated was the hearing before the International Court of Justice on the issue of the legality of the possession and use of nuclear weapons.

In the meanwhile, on May 18, 1974 India had exploded its first nuclear device at Pokhran (Rajasthan) to which it named as peaceful nuclear explosion (PNE). India is the only country whose first nuclear device was conducted underground. All the five nuclear weapons states had conducted their first nuclear test in the atmosphere.

Militarily, India’s nuclear option is primarily a response to the Chinese nuclear weapons posture, and politically it reflects a determination to achieve greater recognition in global forums. Besides, it is India’s goal to escape from second-class status in world affairs and receive recognition commensurate with its position as one of the world’s oldest and largest civilizations. Since nuclear weapons still constitute the principal coin of power, this quest for equitable status has prompted India to perfect its ability to assemble and deliver nuclear weapons.
unless and until the existing nuclear weapons states make credible progress toward a nuclear free world.9

India exploded its first nuclear rest in 1974, to which it named as P.N.E. (peaceful Nuclear Explosion). After almost a gap of 24 years, on May 11, 1998, Indian P.M. Atal Bihari Vajpayee announced that New Delhi had conducted three nuclear tests, one which involved the detonation of thermo nuclear device. Two days later India announced that it had conducted two more detonators that purportedly “completed the planned series of underground tests”. The nuclear test that India conducted was code named as “BUDDHA IS SMILING” which espoused the case of non-violence in its long history of over five thousand years chose to shun its oft-stated goals of global disarmament in favor of the going nuclear in the summer of 1998.10

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Under these circumstances 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.¹²

The preamble to the DND asserts the primacy of economic and social development, for which the prerequisites are a stable, peaceful world and autonomy of national decision-making. These, however, are threatened by the continuing existence of nuclear weapons, which are legitimized by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Enumerating its objectives, the DND calls for “credible minimum deterrence” based on a capacity for “punitive retaliation with nuclear weapons to inflict damage unacceptable to the (nuclear) aggressor”. For this, the
requirements are “sufficient, survivable and operationally prepared nuclear forces”, organization, and the will to employ nuclear weapons should deterrence fail. The document proclaims no-first-use of nuclear weapons as a central tenet, as well as non-use against countries which are not nuclear and are not allied with nuclear powers. Robust conventional forces are considered necessary in order to raise the nuclear threshold.

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.13

The answer to question that why India adopted this nuclear policy at the time it was adopted are many. Among the multiple factors that causes every states decisions to acquire or forge nuclear weapons, the three most important considerations involve national security, international status and domestic politics.

In terms of national security, India’s development of nuclear weapons has been driven primarily by concerns about China.
India and China have been natural competitors in Asia since they emerged as modern Post-colonial states in the late 1940’s. Both are ancient civilizations with extraordinarily rich cultures. Both were re-born in the first half of the 20th century via nationalist moments that inspired millions of people around the world. After regaining their independence, India and China pursuit starkly different Political-economic development paths, which in turn provided competing models for scores of newly independent Third world states. When assessing their countries status in the hierarchy of nations, post-independence Indian decision-makers have reflexibly cast their gaze at China for purposes of comparison. What they see often displeases them. Despite early expressions of neighborly solidarity Sino Indian relations soured in the late 1950’s. In 1962, China trounced India in a border war, whose underlying territorial disputes remain unresolved today. It is nearly impossible to over estimate the impact of the China war on a people who drive enormous pride from their Gandhian legacy of non-violence. The national security roots of India’s nuclear weapon program lie in 1962 defeat and in China’s 1964 nuclear explosive test. The program’s fundamental raison d’etre is to deter another attack by China, which while considered highly unlikely, cannot be entirely ruled out by any Indian leader.

As for as the issue of India’s (New Dehli’s) international status is concerned, the China factors still dominates the scene. Between the first Chinese nuclear test of 1964 and the first Indian test of 1974, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) entered into force in 1970. The NPT affectively created a club of legitimate’
NWS whose membership was frozen at five, with China being the last one, on the basis of the country's conducting nuclear test before the enforcement of the NPT when the door to the nuclear club slammed shut in 1970, India found itself on the outside, consigned to being either a nuclear 'have not' or an 'illegitimate' NWS. Soon there after, several events enhanced China's international stature. In July 1971 U S. President Richard Nixon announced to travel to Biejing to began the process of normalizing U.S. relations with China. In Oct. 1971, China's seat at the U.N. and its permanent seat on the Security Council were given to Beijing. Indian leaders noted both the symbolic bestowal of great power status on China and the fact that the membership lists of the Security Council and the nuclear club were now identical. India's 1974 nuclear blast followed soon after.

The India Government's policy papers that was submitted Parliament two weeks after the 1998 nuclear tests, reads, "India is a NWS. This is a reality that can not 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 human-kind". This shows that India wants to be treated as an important country, at least as important as China. For that purpose, Indian leaders and strategists believe that nuclear weapons remain a key indicator of state power. Therefore, the only choice left with India was to update and validate the capability that had demonstrated 24 years ago in the nuclear test of 1974.
The third important consideration that relates to the factor of domestic politics is the time frame i.e. 1998. After 24 years of restraint, it was the BJP leader who during the 1998 election campaign said, ‘The BJP rejects the notion of nuclear apartheid’ and will actively opposed attempts to impose a huge monistic nuclear regime. We will not be dedicated to by anybody in matters of security and in the exercise of the nuclear option. Therefore, in order to fulfill its election promises, and to the extent of the BJP government took this decision, also, to convey the Indian voters that this government is much more than the earlier governments.14

Prime Minister Mr. P. V. Narsimha Rao’s candour is particularly significant in the aftermath of the indefinite extension of the N.P.T. with his interview, India has asserted that it is a nuclear weapon capable power, unencumbered by the NPT.

India’s resumption of nuclear testing and its admiration of French Government’s announcement of the latter’s Intention to conduct nuclear test because France regards nuclear weapons as being necessary for its security even though it has no adversary, nuclear or non-nuclear.

By contrast India is in the unenviable position of having two nuclear-armed neighbors with both of whom it had fought wars in the past. We find that Prime Minister Rao’s statement has an element of extraordinary restraint. He has spoken of India’s disinclination to make a bomb even though it could do so readily. This is in sharp contrast to the policies adopted by other seven nuclear weapon and nuclear weapon–capable nations. Having
came this far, India should unilaterally declare a no-first use of its nuclear capability. India had proposed a mutual renunciation of first use in the past only to have Pakistan rejected it. A unilateral declaration on no-first-use will not only be a diplomatic coup for India but will also help it to gain in moral stature.\textsuperscript{15}

One of the immediate causes for the release of a Draft Nuclear Doctrine in August, 1999 in the aftermath of the nuclear blasts May 1998) is to derive maximum electoral advantage. The Vajpayee Government was in a caretaker capacity having lost its majority in the lower house of Indian parliament and a new election had already been called for Oct. 1999. Another view might suggest that the nuclear doctrine was formulated only to formalize BJP’s nuclear policy declared after the nuclear tests were conducted in May 1998. Yet another view might be to legitimize India’s nuclear weapons through the formulation of DND arising out of “the reciprocal fear of surprise attack”.\textsuperscript{16}

A Critical assessment of India’s D.N.D by Pakistan Foreign Minister is that it is the latest manifestation of India’s ambition of regional hegemony and global major power: the same pursuit. The Indian nuclear doctrine outlines New Delhi’s goal of acquiring massive nuclear war fighting capabilities. Such a massive program for developing nuclear arsenal coupled with plans for acquiring a massive conventional capability will surely have near and long term strategic implications for the region and beyond as well as for regional and global non-proliferation concerns. The scale of the nuclear weapons capability envisaged by the doctrine is clearly not designed to maintain
"credible deterrence" against Pakistan which has made proposals for nuclear and missile restraint in the region. Nor can this capability be meant for nuclear deterrence against China. According to authoritative sources India is planning up to 400 operationally deployed warheads. For a minimum credible deterrence India does not need to deploy such a large nuclear arsenal. These can be justified only by larger ambitions for military hegemony and control sea lanes from the oil rich Gulf in the West to the Straits of Malacca in the East. Accordingly, the world needs to comprehend the near and long term implications of India’s nuclear capability. India’s plans for the development of a vast conventional force coupled with a large nuclear arsenal are aimed at building an offensive rather than a defensive military capability. The objective is assertion and consolidation of influence, based on the premise that nuclear weapons are, in the words of Jasawant Singh, the currency of power and force. There are near term implications for initiatives aimed at nuclear restraints and avoidance of a nuclear arms race in South Asia. Pakistan had believed that nuclear deterrence could be exercised by Pakistan and India at the lowest possible level.17

Nonetheless, in the 1990s, Indian strategists and a few politicians began seriously to question the adequacy of the “option” strategy and non weaponized deterrence. The nuclear non-proliferation Treaty was extended indefinitely in 1995, perpetuating the possession of nuclear weapons by the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China for the indefinite future, while denying the rest of the world these weapons. This outraged Indian specialists and the attentive public, prompting
rethinking of India’s own nuclear policy. Some Indian military and non governmental strategists had long ago decided that the country should deploy nuclear weapons. For them, the developments in the mid 1990s offered another political opportunity to make their case. True believers in nuclear disarmament had been driven from effective power by 1998 or had been disillusioned by the failure of the major powers to pursue nuclear disarmament even after the cold war’s end. Cynics who had used complaints about inadequate progress in nuclear disarmament to cover India’s ongoing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles program wanted to lift the veil. The strategic enclave had run out of patience. After twenty-four years of self restraint, the May 1998 nuclear test reflected all of these changes.¹⁸

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.

Domestic factors, including moral and political norms, have been more significant in determining India’s nuclear policy. Often, tensions between domestic interests have made this policy appear ambivalent and ambiguous. India has been torn between
a moral antagonism towards the production of weapons of mass destruction, on one hand, and on the other an ambition to be regarded as major power in the world where the recognized great powers rely on nuclear weapons for security and prestige. India’s domestic imperative to foster socio-economic development has clashed with an interest in building up military strength. India’s policy making processes and institutions also have affected its nuclear history: Indian political leaders and the leading scientists have consciously excluded the military from nuclear decision making, again for internal reasons.\textsuperscript{19}

Indian officials stated that security compulsions from China compelled the nuclear tests of May 1998. However, Indian diplomacy in 1999 and 2000 suggested that brandishing nuclear strength was meant to serve more protean purposes. Nuclear prowess gave the Vajpayee Government confidence and domestic political credit to invest in diplomacy to establish the Pakistan front as was attempted at Lahore. Nuclear assertiveness created new found respect for India in Washington, as Indians, saw it. India’s growing importance also drew the heads of state from France, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom to meet with Vajpayee. China was a more delicate challenge; India approached it with less-self assurance than it displayed toward its other interlocutors.\textsuperscript{20}

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.  

Credible minimum deterrence is a dynamic concept which will have to be related to the evolving capabilities of possible adversaries. Some commentators have assumed that this could entail an open-ended arms race. But it is not necessary for the operation of nuclear deterrence that warheads should be matched with warheads and missiles with missiles. A credible retaliatory nuclear force can be maintained without entering into a competitive spiral of arms. In order, however, to raise the threshold of outbreak of conventional military conflict as well as threat or use of nuclear weapons by an adversary, highly effective conventional military capabilities will have to be maintained.  

The credibility and effectiveness of the Indian nuclear deterrent will be based on the manifest capability to inflict unacceptable punishment on an adversary if it uses nuclear weapons against India and its forces. Some commentators have assumed that unacceptable punishment is similar to “assured destruction” quantified by former U.S. Defence Secretary Robert McNamara. According to his definition, it meant ability to destroy approximately half of the former Soviet Union’s industrial
capacity and one-fifth to one-fourth of its population. All this appeared scientific and precise; but basically assured destruction was a budgetary device for rejecting the excessive demands of the American armed forces.\textsuperscript{23}

Minister for External Affairs Jaswant Singh has written “that the country’s national security, in a world of nuclear proliferation, lies either in global disarmament or in exercise of the principle of equal and legitimate security.” The question arises: how does signing the CTBT – which, incidentally, is opaque about what exactly it is supposed to be banning – help either the cause of disarmament or that of equal and legitimate security? And, considering the realities of power, why does anybody in government think that it would? The fact is it would be foolish for India not to utilize the hiatus between now and when CTBT is finally sealed and ratified by all parties, to resume nuclear testing and to proceed apace with designing a variety of nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{24}

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.\textsuperscript{25}
Following the Pakistani tests at the end of May 1998, the five Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council (the P-5) issued a statement in early June condemning the nuclear tests and linking them to the Kashmir dispute. They followed through with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1172, that called on India and Pakistan to desist from nuclear and missile programs, called on the two countries to join the NPT and referred to the Kashmir dispute as the under-lying cause of insecurity in the Subcontinent. This was followed by a Sino-U.S. joint statement on non-proliferation in South Asia, during President Clinton’s visit to China in June 1998. In short, India was confronted with a terrible scenario of international economic sanctions, a basis for UN activism to coerce India into joining the NPT, the internationalization of the Kashmir dispute, and a Sino-U.S. collusion against India. New Delhi has successfully fended off these dangers that appeared so imminent in mid-1998. India’s gains since then are a consequence of fundamental changes in both the substance of India’s nuclear policy as well as the style of India’s diplomacy. The following is an examination of the key principles that have helped India cope with the post-Pokhran diplomatic challenges.

The greatest transformation in Indian diplomacy has been the shift from a radical posturing on the nuclear issue to a readiness to bargain. Never before has India the kind of deal-making it has over the last year and a half with the United States on the nuclear issue. For the Americans, bargaining comes naturally; they have no problem in splitting the difference between two divergent positions. Making deals and accommodation of
divergent principles is part of American political life. Liberals and conservatives, internationalists and isolationists, the religious right and social radicals have no problem coexisting in the same political party. Externally the focus of American diplomacy is on "problem solving" on a pragmatic basis.

In diplomacy, a great power often strives hard to prevent a particular event from happening. Once the event takes place, and there is no way of undoing it, the wisest course is to limit the damage, adapt to the new reality, and move on. For many years, the United States has worked overtime to stop India from becoming an overt nuclear weapon power. But within a month of India declaring itself a nuclear state, the United States began a process of engaging India, with the implied sense that the outcome would be less than "pure" from the American non-proliferation point of view.

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.\(^{26}\)

Even as the United States makes its adjustments, India too has begun to concede that it had tended to demonise the NPT system in the past. There is a recognition in New Delhi, that India too has a stake in the preservation of the rules to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction. India is now replacing its old rhetoric against the NPT, with a more sophisticated position that calls for accommodation of India’s own nuclear security interests in return for supporting the global non-proliferation rules. Unlike in the past India is now willing to see that the NPT, CTBT and other non-proliferation regimes have strong international support and declare that it has no desire to overturn them.

Thus it has been anticipated by the Indian policy makers that in the future India should brace for a very difficult period. During this period, the pursuit of many of Indian foreign policy goals, including that of trying to become a permanent member of the Security Council, will have to be suspended. India can expect to remain outside the mainstream of the disarmament dialogue and international affairs in general. Its relations with countries whose nuclear hegemony India have challenged, will continue to remain strained. This is particularly true of China because, like all other nuclear weapon powers, it not only sees a challenge to
the status quo which suits it ideally, but also it sees a direct challenge to its dominance in Asia. Much of the deterioration that has taken place in India’s relations with China should have been anticipated when we decided to move towards acquiring a nuclear deterrence. These are the inevitable consequences of India upsetting the world nuclear order of which China is a part. This would have happened even if there would have been no reference to the Chinese threat in the letter the Prime Minister of India addressed to President Clinton and some other Heads of Governments. This, however, does not exonerate India from the fundamental diplomatic responsibility of weighing her words carefully and not having said things which unnecessarily annoyed China.27

It is not necessary that India’s attempt to acquire a minimum nuclear deterrence will lead to a nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan or between India and China. There has, in fact, been no nuclear arm race in the post-Word War period except that between the United States and the then Soviet Union. Other countries like UK, France, China and Israel also built their nuclear deterrence in the meantime. The size of their deterrence was not determined by any arms race which they had with their rivals but by their respective notions of what was adequate for their security in the circumstances in which they were placed and what would give them a really effective voice in the world affairs. Herald Macmillan, the former British Prime Minister had said that Britain acquired nuclear weapons to “eat at the high table”. President de Gaulle’s ambition was to have an adequate forc-ed-frappe (in short a deterrence) for the glory and
prestige to France. China has only about 600 warheads as opposed to thousands in the arsenals of Russia and USA. This country has less than 20 long-range missiles (ICBM) which can strike at targets in the United States. Given these facts, there is no reason why India cannot have a nuclear deterrence of the size determined by the threat to its security and by other circumstances, including the economic burden that has to be borne.

It is also not necessary for a country to have a second strike capability against its superior rival. China has in its arsenal a few missiles that can hit targets in the United States but they do not constitute a second strike capability against the United States, nor against the Soviet Union. Similarly, it is not necessary for India to have a second strike capability against China. Therefore, it is not necessary for India to enter into a nuclear arms race against China. And Pakistan has the same compulsion as India for not getting involved in a nuclear arms race.28

India decided not to be a party to the CTBT in 1996 because it thought that it might have to carry out a few nuclear weapon tests in the interest of its security. This principal purpose seems to have been served with the recent tests and the determination by Indian scientists that this is all that is needed to develop a minimum nuclear deterrence. India’s second objection was that the CTBTs “Entry into Force” clause was an infringement of her sovereignty in that it obliged India to sign a treaty which she had publicly declared to be repugnant to our security interests. But once India decide to sign the treaty, this objection will no longer
remain valid. India’s third objection was the CTBT was discriminatory because it permitted certain tests – laboratory and subcritical—which only a few nuclear weapons states were capable of carrying out. But now that India’s ability to conduct laboratory tests has been convincingly demonstrated and Indian scientists have claimed that they can carry out subcritical tests if needed, the treaty is no longer discriminatory against us.29

One of the reasons the US and other nuclear powers are wary of India on the nuclear front, however, is that it was not party to any aspect of the international non-proliferation regime until 1997, when it signed the Chemical Weapons Convention. Among the significant treaties it has not signed are the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Thus India has a very limited safeguards agreement with the IAEA, which does not cover any of its nuclear research facilities. That is why after its test in 1998 the US was hard put to find any multilateral mechanism through which to sanction India.30

India’s biggest regret, in the present controversy, however, is the awkward timing of the accusation, which virtually seeks to put Indian scientists at par with Pakistan’s rogue scientists. India is going all out to ensure that the NSSP initiative is invested with some real substance and at least the US department of Commerce has claimed that things are going very well in bilateral relations. When an Indian journalist wrote in editorial, claiming that the NSSP was devoid of any real substance. Matthew S. Borman, deputy assistant secretary for export
administration, US Department of Commerce, wrote a lengthy rejoinder to counter the claim. On its part, India is determined to persuade the US that its project of spreading democracy requires that it develop special ties with democratic countries and shuns dictatorships such as Pakistan, even if it needs to use them for a while in some project. The US, in according “major non-NATO ally” status to Pakistan recently, has drawn criticism in India.

The recent and the first meeting between Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Bush had also appeared to have gone well. The new United Progressive Alliance government is in any case keen to demonstrate that it has been able to maintain the forward momentum created by the previous government in developing close strategic ties with the US despite the sanctions imposed after the 1998 Pokhran II nuclear tests. New Delhi is hoping that the present controversy will soon blow away and the countries will be able to get down to business as usual in the shortest possible time. But there is also apprehension that the inexplicable and totally unfounded accusation may be a precursor to reimposition or further tightening of the sanctions regime promulgated after the nuclear tests of 1998. These sanctions had been removed primarily because they had to be removed in the case of Pakistan, which became a close US ally after September 11, and the US could not be seen to be treating the two newly proclaimed nuclear weapons states differently. In any case, the US has persisted with treating India and Pakistan at per with each other, a hyphen that Indian has long resented.31
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