The state of affairs in the South Asian part of the planet is in general influenced by the evil heritage of the past, the differences in the historical development of its various states and territorial disputes. But much more dangerous to the region is the factor, very much of the present, i.e., the increasing threat of nuclear weapons. No element of the Indo-Pakistan arms race is as dangerous or controversial as each country's parallel development of nuclear capabilities. Although there is no real basis for affirming that either Pakistan is close to developing and testing a bomb or India is well on its way to nuclear weapons acquisition, many high-priests

of non-proliferation have already convicted both of them for endangering the world. Neither government has ever admitted any plans to tread on the forbidden path, yet both accuse each other for advancing towards the eventual weapons acquisition. Unless the efforts to develop nuclear capabilities are kept limited to technical development, there is a real risk to the safety of the region. Proliferation of nuclear weapons puts ominous danger to the very existence of human civilisation. The over-kill potential of the nuclear stock-piles is capable of destroying our civilisation many a times. If the proliferation of nuclear weapons exists a 'realistic problem' in the absence of any consensual agreement to stop the dissemination and then elimination of nuclear weapons. In view of the nuclear competition between India and Pakistan, the security system of smaller nations like Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives is bound to take a new dimension. The economic interest of the entire area would be jeopardised for the lack of trust and confidence. CIA Chief James Woolsey described South Asia as a region, "where mutual Indian and Pakistani suspicions have fuelled a nuclear arms competition. The sub-continental countries have nuclear weapon development programmes and could on


short notice, assemble nuclear weapons". Alvin Toffler says on non-proliferation issue, "if we look at the perimeter of Asia, we find a giants arc comprising North Korea, Russia, China, India, Pakistan and just a bit further Kazakhstan ... Nowhere else in the post cold war is nuclear encirclement so pronounced."

A. THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY: AN ASSESSMENT

The term 'non-proliferation of weapons' came into general use around 1965. Initially it was used to cover the concept of dissemination (spread of nuclear weapons by the nuclear powers) and acquisition (manufacture or otherwise obtaining of nuclear weapons by non-nuclear powers). However, in course of time it also came to include further development, accumulation and development of nuclear weapons by the nuclear powers. The dictionary meaning of the word 'proliferation' is given as to 'grow by multiplication of elementary parts, produce cells etc.

In June, 1965, the Disarmament Commission of the United Nations adopted a resolution and called upon the Eighteen Nations Disarmament Conference (ENDC) to meet and accord special priority to the consideration of the question of a treaty or convention to

7. Ibid.
prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Subsequently on 11th March 1968, a joint draft treaty, proposed by the United States and Soviet Union was submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration. After detailed debate on the merits and shortcomings of the proposed treaty, the treaty was ultimately adopted by the General Assembly on 12th June, 1968. Ultimately, the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was signed at London, Moscow and Washington on 1st July 1968 and came into force on 5th March 1970. Basically entrenched in it, were the fears of the nuclear weapon powers regarding the further spread of lethal nuclear weapons in other parts of the world.

THE TREATY: The Treaty consists of a preamble and eleven articles. The treaty was valid for an initial period of twenty five years (i.e. till 1995). It is a subject to five yearly review conferences held in Geneva. The review conferences were held in 1975, 1980 and 1990.

The preamble of the treaty deals with the dangers of nuclear warfare recognising the necessity of full cooperation in the application and the improvement of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system. The first six articles deal with policy aspects. Article I imposes obligation on the part of nuclear weapon states (NWS) not to transfer nor in any way assist, encourage or

include any non-nuclear weapon state (NNWS) to acquire nuclear weapons, and other nuclear explosive devices. However, it is silent about such relationship between the nuclear weapon states. The subsection as envisaged in this article is applicable not only to nuclear weapons but also to other devices developed for peaceful purposes are interpreted as nuclear weapons. The plea taken by the nuclear weapons states is that such devices have military implications.

**Article II** stipulates main obligations on non-nuclear weapon states to refrain from acquiring or manufacturing the nuclear weapons. It expressly forbids to accept the transfer of nuclear weapons. The provisions contained in Articles I and II uphold the nuclear monopoly of nuclear weapon states. The prohibitions of the development of peaceful nuclear devices by the non-nuclear weapon states have rendered these states to the status of dependents, even for deriving economic benefits from the peaceful use of nuclear devices.

**Article III** is the most important NPT Article in operational terms. Article III - 1 established IAEA safeguards on all peaceful nuclear activities as the verification system to which all NNWS must subject themselves. Article III - 2 obliges all nuclear exporters to require safeguards on nuclear materials equipment and technology sold.

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abroad.

**Article IV** affirms the right of NNWS to launch research, production and harnessing of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

**Article V** provides for peaceful nuclear explosion (PNE) services by the NWS to NNWS under international supervision.

In **Article VI**, all parties, nuclear as well as non-nuclear weapon states, commit themselves to faithful negotiation towards nuclear and complete and comprehensive disarmament.

**Article VII** confirms the right of parties to set up nuclear weapon free zones in their regions.

**Article VIII** contains the rules for changing the Treaty.

**Article IX** deals with the question of accession and membership. It also defines a nuclear weapon state as one which has manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon prior to January 1st, 1967.

**Article X** permits parties to withdraw on three month's advance notice.

**Article XI** talks about the translation of the treaty.

The Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) produced a mixed reaction. While some countries considered it as a great landmark which could prove to be a turning point in human history, the others looked in the

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treaty, an attempt on the part of nuclear weapon states to establish their nuclear hegemony over the entire world.

B. INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY:

India has been the greatest supporter of non-proliferation and abolition of nuclear weapons. Not many people know that it was India which had taken the lead in urging nuclear non-proliferation in the world councils. India under Jawaharlal Nehru had passionately called for the stoppage of the production and spread of nuclear weapons. He on more than one occasion stated that India had nothing to do with the atom bomb and she would like to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes only. While inaugurating India's first Nuclear Reactor 'Apsara' at Trombay in January 1957, he said, "No man can prophesy the future, But I would like to say on behalf of my Government and I think I can say with some assurance on behalf on any future Government of India that whatever might happen, whatever the circumstances, we shall never use this atomic energy for evil purposes."

In the wake of Sino-Indian conflict and the news of the possibility of China acquiring an atom bomb, there was a strong demand from certain quarters, that India should undertake production of nuclear

weapons as a part of country's long term defence effort against China. This demand grew louder after the Chinese exploded a bomb in 1964. The then Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri reiterated the decision of his Government not to produce the atom bomb for moral as well as practical considerations. He said that making of nuclear weapons would neither be in the interest of the country, nor would it benefit mankind in any way.

STAND ON NPT:

India is committed to the ideals and objectives of nuclear non-proliferation as distinguished from the issue of signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In short, it is not for signing the NPT but for non-proliferation. It has always denounced the use of nuclear technology for destructive purposes and has worked for comprehensive global nuclear disarmament. India justifiably feels that the present NPT is discriminatory and its effect is to legitimise the nuclear arsenals of five nuclear power. India found the treaty unsatisfactory and riddled with many loopholes. Consequently, India refused to sign the NPT. Explaining India's attitude towards the NPT as not being rigid, Mrs. Indira Gandhi said, "If the Treaty were to be changed and we feel that it was in our interests, we shall sign it and we have made it clear in no uncertain terms that the present draft treaty does not give us any satisfaction." While not formally

27. Ibid., p. 654.
signing the treaty, India took care to clarify its stand. Mrs. Gandhi said on 14th March 1968, "India has repeatedly announced that it is not making an atom bomb and that it is developing her atomic energy programme exclusively for peaceful purposes."

India regarded the pattern of obligations between NWS and NNWS in the Treaty as unbalanced. The NPT was inconsistent with the General Assembly Resolution 2028 (xx) and was replete with all ingredients of discrimination. Despite the well known fact that the NWS were in possession of an over-kill capacity, the Treaty failed to prohibit proliferation of nuclear weapons within the NWS. The controls applied to the NNWS could be applied to the NWS with a view to facilitate a balance of obligations and responsibilities between the former and latter. But the treaty did not concern itself with the existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons, their augmentation or their further sophistication.

Apprehending the sinister designs of nuclear weapon powers, particularly USA, India has all these years pleaded with the world community against the discriminatory character of NPT. India has called attention to the need for a 'global views of the nuclear non-proliferation problem, which means that South Asian regional

33. Upadhyay, Rajesh Kumar, 'Nuclear Non Proliferation in South Asia' in Link, 29 March 1992, p. 34.
situation could not be considered in 'isolation'. A moment's reflection of the global nuclear situation will make one to realise the significance of the Indian position. Several countries, not geographically far from the subcontinent, have nuclear weapons or various degrees of capabilities or aspirations in that direction. China is a full-fledged nuclear power, and Tibet, where it has reportedly stationed missile launching pads, is very much part of South Asia. Iraq's nuclear capability, according to US, remains undestroyed. Iran is an aspirant, North Korea is perhaps a nuclear capable power while Israel has a significant armoury of weapons. At least one of the Central Asian power, Kazakhstan has a stock of nuclear weapons. Thus, the nuclear threat hangs over the security of the South Asian region. And, hence, any commitment to non-proliferation in the sub-continent must precede the dismantling of these existing threats. The greatest threat is from China and unless something is done about their threat, accession to the NPT can not be considered 'by India.

India's objections to the NPT reflect many of the foreign policy and security dilemmas that India faces. These can be seen by analysing the four major categories of the NPT to which Indian Government has taken exceptions. These are:

35. Upadhyay, Rajesh Kumar, 'Nuclear Non-Proliferation in South Asia', in Link, 29 March 1992, pp. 34-35.
1. The balance of obligations between nuclear and non-nuclear states. All the obligations are on the non-nuclear weapon states, hardly any on those who have the bomb.

2. The nature of the security assurances from the nuclear states to the non-nuclear states.

3. The prohibition of certain peaceful uses of nuclear techniques; and

4. The provisions regarding inspections.

India's representatives at the United Nations and its various committees seized with this issue called for an international regime to oversee and supervise this process so that the world could be rid of the nuclear scourge. But India's concept of nuclear non-proliferation was very different from that which the big powers came to adopt. India stood for genuine non-proliferation, nuclear abstinence by all countries of the world. India asked a total ban on the production of nuclear weapons. If such a self-denial was accepted by other countries, India was also prepared to forego any intent on its part to produce the Atom bomb. But the big powers had a totally different arrangement on their minds. Their intention was to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries but not to be restricted in their own production of nuclear weapons, their testing, their improvement and their refinement. This was very different from the kind of nuclear non-proliferation that India was demanding.


39. Ibid.
What appeared to be more unfair was the case with the nuclear technology needed by the non-nuclear weapon states for peaceful uses. Although Article IV of the Treaty had promised liberal transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, in actual practice the nuclear powers became more restrictive and their nuclear regime harsher. For all these reasons and more, India did not sign the NPT and has so far resisted the pressures from the west to sign it. There was also the problem of nuclear power on which India pinned a great deal of hope. Even Jawaharlal Nehru who was passionately opposed to nuclear weapons, was keen on nuclear power as the country was short of the normal source of energy—oil. India hoped to supplement the oil deficiency with nuclear power. Equally keen was India on the potentialities of the peaceful uses of the atom. The Pokharan explosion of 1974 conveyed two messages simultaneously: India's capability, if it wishes to manufacture the bomb, could not be doubted. Leonard Spector writes, 'India since 1974 has created all of the technology and facilities necessary to produce a significant number of nuclear weapons..., if it has not actually done so.' Since 1983, it has obtained unrestricted plutonium from its Madras reactor. It began to progress this Plutonium into weapons grade material in 1985. The other message of 1974 explosion was India's


intention to keep abreast with the technology and the possible benefits occurring from PNE.

India's policy is clear from the fact that after Pokhran explosion, it refrained from further testing and apparently from building a stockpile of weapons. In the early eighties it succeeded in getting a resolution adopted by the General Assembly declaring the use of nuclear weapons a crime against humanity and recommending that nuclear weapons shall never be used. Indeed India's credentials and record on nuclear non-proliferation are very clear. Rajiv Gandhi's address to the UN General Assembly's Special Session on Disarmament held in New York in June 1988 throws a light on the nuclear policy of India. He said, "Humanity is at a crossroads. One road will take us to our own suicide. That is the path indicated by doctrines of nuclear deterrence, deriving from traditional concepts of the balance of power. The other road will give us another chance. That is the path signposted by the doctrine of peaceful co-existence, deriving from the imperative values of non-violence, tolerance and compassion." He submitted an Action Plan which called upon the international community to negotiate a binding commitment to general and complete disarmament by the year 2010 at the latest.

43. Cordesman, Anthony H., op.cit., p. 52.
44. Rajiv's Address to UN General Assembly, 8 June, 1988, The Hindustan Times, 11 June 1988.
45. Ibid.
India's strategy for its nuclear diplomacy is double-edged. It falls back on Rajiv Gandhi's 1988 policy statements urging global disarmament and support of non-proliferation, while refusing to sign the NPT on the grounds that it is discriminatory. This is the stand that Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao took during his visit to the UN in early 1992. He favoured the global elimination of nuclear weapons with the suggestion that any such moves must be initiated by nuclear weapons states particularly China before any dialogue with nuclear threshold states could begin. The NPT or the idea of nuclear weapons free zone (NWFZ) seeks to sanctify the nuclear hegemony of the present nuclear powers over the non-nuclear world. India's stand point, throughout, has been that since nuclear proliferation has become a global phenomenon, it can not be talked through a regional approach. Hence, what India wants to establish is not a nuclear weapons free zone, but a nuclear weapons free world.

PRESSURE ON INDIA:

The world changed radically in just one year between February 1991 and February 1992. The Gulf war and Collapse of the Soviet Union left only one super power, U.S.A. in the field with enhanced determination to clamp a non-proliferation regime on others. Many Americans believe that their nuclear arsenal provides security and stability to the world while a nuclear weapon spread to more countries could spell instability and heighten terrorism in the world. One consequence


of all this has been the mounting of a new campaign of pressure on India to sign the NPT and to acquiesce in a proposal for a conference of five countries, USA, USSR, China, Pakistan and India to establish a nuclear-free zone in South Asia. This pressure is not new for India. The first major round of pressure came during the sensitive run up to the conclusion of the NPT in 1968. By most accounts, it was a close call for national policy at a time when India found itself, interestingly, in an exceptionally vulnerable position on the economic front. The second intensive round of pressure came as a direct result of the sensational May 1974 event, the peaceful Nuclear Experiment. India's refusal to sign the NPT does not indicate that a nuclear decision is imminent, it does symbolise the retention of the military option.

Among developing countries, India and China have the maximum experience in dealing with discriminatory non-proliferation pressure on the policy front. But it bears reiteration that China is radically different case from India's, for the simple reason that the socialist country became an undisputed nuclear weapon power in 1964, well before the negotiations began for the NPT. The Indian approach is dual - ensure that nuclear and technological options remain open and at the same time not appear unreasonable on this very vital issue. India, in a sense, has to find a way through these

49. Williams, Shelton L., op.cit., p. 76.
mutually contradictory objectives. The pressure to accede to NPT has been increasing every year. Throughout 1991, Washington has invested substantial diplomatic energies to press India to sign the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). American proposal for the five-nation conference - involving US, Russia, China, Pakistan and India - to declare South Asia a nuclear weapons free zone (NWFZ) is a variant of the same theme.

C. PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR POLICY

Pakistan's nuclear programme has been in practice from the late 1960s onwards, Z.A. Bhutto in July 1972 disclosed Pakistan's decision on a nuclear programme. Bhutto was serious about Pakistan's acquiring the capability to make the bomb and it became clear from his statement in which he said, "Due to my singular efforts, Pakistan acquired the infrastructure and the potential of nuclear capability." He also brought in the broader Islamic consideration, the need of an Islamic bomb. He wrote, "We know that Israel and South Africa have nuclear capability. The Christians, Jewish and Hindu civilizations have this capability. The communist powers also possess it. Only the Islamic civilization was without it, but that position was about to change." India's Pokhran underground nuclear device in May 1974

51. Joshi, Manoj, op.cit., p. 119.
52. Upadhyay, Rajesh Kumar, op.cit., p. 34.
created panic and changed the whole military scenario in South Asia. Pakistan Prime Minister, Z.A. Bhutto held out a solemn pledge of his countrymen that he would never allow Pakistan to become a victim of nuclear blackmail and declared that the people of Pakistan would be ready to offer any sacrifices and would even eat grass to ensure parity with India.

Pakistan has been steadily preparing both its own people and the outside world about its need to go nuclear. Pakistan's ambition to go nuclear is also a matter of rational consensus in that country. Prof. Stephen Cohen of the University of Illinois points out that, "Pakistan belongs to that class of states whose very survival is uncertain, whose legitimacy is doubted and whose security related resources are inadequate. These states will not go away nor can they be ignored. Pakistan has capacity to fight, to go nuclear, to influence the global strategic geographical location, surrounded by the three largest states in the world and adjacent to the mouth of Persian Gulf...." Pakistan's response to the Indian explosion was a combination of frustrations and aspirations. It was dismayed and frustrated by the impressive scientific advancements demonstrated by the alleged PNE (Peaceful Nuclear Explosive) and consequently the then Pakistan's Prime Minister expressed determination to quickly match the Indian accomplishment.

Pakistan has long been suspected of attempting to develop a nuclear capability to offset India's conventional lead. Pakistan's efforts to acquire nuclear technology have continued both overtly and covertly. There is a long trail of evidence that Pakistan continues to pursue a nuclear weapons capability. Pakistan began to import nuclear weapons components in 1984, and was found to be producing weapons grade enriched uranium at its Kahuta enrichment plant in the first half of 1986. The possession of bomb by Pakistan is counter productive of a sense of psychological insecurity in India. The acquisition of nuclear weapons by Pakistan would upset the military balance and the resultant nuclear asymmetrical situation could make it difficult for India to safeguard its security against any possible use of nuclear weapons by Pakistan. But to the Pakistan's strategists, only nuclear weapons can produce the 'equaliser' against India.

Pakistan has been under intense political and economic pressure from the US and its allies to abandon an allegedly weapon oriented nuclear programme and sign the NPT. But Pakistan would never bow to pressure, as said Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. He said, 'Pakistan cannot unilaterally renounce the nuclear option because it would put the country at a disadvantage with India, which exploded a nuclear

device in 1974'. Gohar Ayub Khan, Speaker of National Assembly of Pakistan showed Pakistan's intention to sign the NPT on the dotted line simultaneously with India. He said in his speech at 89th International Parliaments Union Conference in New Delhi, "in addition to several proposals made to India since 1974 to keep our region free of nuclear weapons. Pakistan recently put forward three important and all encouraging proposals for arms control and nuclear proliferation in South Asia. These proposals are:

- Holding five nation conference involving US, Russia, China, India and Pakistan to ensure nuclear non-proliferation in South Asian region.
- Effecting bilateral arrangement for a regional regime for the prohibition of all weapons of mass destruction in South Asia, and
- Instituting mutual and balanced reduction of forces in South Asian region consistent with the principle of equal and undiminished security at the lowest level of armament.

In this context, it is clear that the policies of India and Pakistan on nuclear issue are not independent of each other. It is obviously not in India's interest to become an overt nuclear weapon power in response to Pakistan's policy for that itself will provide

63. Times of India, 29 March 1993.

64. Gohar Ayub Khan's Speech at 89th IPU Conference, New Delhi, in Link, 25 April, 1993, pp. 29-31.
Pakistan a justification to declare itself a nuclear power. Both sides, India and Pakistan, know the limits of brinkmanship. Pakistan may be stretching its hand in Kashmir and Punjab, but no one can claim the situation is alarming enough to warrant a war, especially one with a nuclear exchange. India and Pakistan have fought three declared wars and one mini-war in Siachen. In all of them both the sides seemed to be aware of their vulnerabilities and both maintained retaliatory capacity at the level where it barely suffices to meet the needs of direct military operation. The constant reiteration that India and Pakistan will blow each other up with nuclear weapons because they have a troubled relationship does not do justice to the history of the subcontinent nor to the complexity of the relationship between the two neighbours.

D. NUCLEAR WEAPON FREE ZONES:

The predominant factor leading to the development of interest in the concept of nuclear-weapon free zones (NWFZ) "has been the complete absence of nuclear weapons from various areas of the globe, where suitable conditions exist for the creation of such zones, to spurt the nations concerned from the threat of nuclear attack or involvement in the nuclear war, to make a positive contribution towards general and complete disarmament and thereby to strengthen international peace and security." The desire for NWFZ has been

66. Joshi, Manoj, op.cit., p. 120.
further promoted by the fact that a number of states in various regions of the world have or could have the capacity to develop nuclear weapon capability within a relatively short period.

No precise definition of NWFZ has been advanced so far. However, the widely accepted definition is the one which has been adopted by the General Assembly in its Resolution 3472 B:

"A Nuclear weapon Free Zone shall, as a general rule, be deemed to be any zone recognised as such by the General Assembly of the UN, which any group of states, in free existence of their sovereignty, has established by virtue of a treaty or convention whereby: (a) the statute of total absence of nuclear weapons to which the zone shall be subject including the procedure for the delimitation of the zone; (b) an international system of verification and control is established to guarantee compliance with obligation deriving from that statute."

In the mid 1950's the idea of establishing Nuclear weapons Free Zones (NWFZs) began to be discussed extensively. The first nuclear free zone proposal was presented on October 3, 1957, called as the Rapacki Plan. The plan called for the denuclearisation of Central Europe. Most of the plans presented after that have been replicas

of this plan. In the post-NPT period, the NFZ concept came to be seen as complementary measure to the NPT, the treaty for Non-proliferation of Nuclear weapons, of utilizing regional treaties to bring into the NPT regime, those states which found NPT as discriminatory.

1. **SOUTH ASIA AS A NUCLEAR WEAPON FREE ZONE:**

The proposal for declaring South Asia as a NWFZ, was first mooted by Pakistan especially after India exploded a nuclear device in May 1974. The Pakistan's proposal came up before the 29th session of UN General Assembly. In its explanatory memorandum, Pakistan stressed the urgency and need for establishing a NWFZ in South Asia. Pakistan pleaded that since all the countries of South Asia had already proclaimed their opposition to the acquisition of nuclear weapons or to the introduction of such weapons into the region, this common denominator could form the basis of an agreement to establish a NWFZ in South Asia. Pakistan considers this proposal as complementary to the Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal. This signifies the assumption that mere withdrawal of naval forces of the superpowers would not make the Indian Ocean a peace zone; this would also require regional detente, denunciation of nuclear weapons by the Indian Ocean states.

and mutual and balanced force reduction among the key regional states.

During the debate on this question in the General Assembly's 29th session, the Pakistan's delegate Ahmed, told the General Assembly on 27th of September, 1974:

"Other countries of South Asia have also proclaimed their opposition to the introduction of nuclear weapons into the region or their acquisition .... Pakistan feels that this common desire of the states of South Asia needs to be translated into a formal arrangement.... We are confident that all members of the UN that desire to promote a climate of peace in South Asia and all those that, like us, feel concerned at the prospect of nuclear proliferation will welcome the proposal to declare the South Asian region a nuclear free zone." Before and after the nuclear explosion of 1974, India constantly proclaimed that it would use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes only. The Indian representative Mr. Jaipal, while participating in the debate on establishing South Asia as a NWFZ said,

"... any proposal to establish a nuclear free zone in any part of the world is an important question as it would engage the vital interests of all the countries in that zone. It would have been natural, therefore, for


the countries in the proposed zone first to discuss among themselves the necessity for a nuclear-free zone. This has not happened."

India further asserted that it would be undesirable for the General Assembly to declare a particular area in the world a nuclear free zone without the prior agreement of the countries in that area. While explaining India's views regarding nuclear weapon free zone, Mr. Jaipal said,

"we have supported the establishment of such zones only when the states within the zones concerned have agreed among themselves and where suitable conditions exist for their establishment. The same cannot be said of the so-called South Asian zone."

The Indian view is aptly summed up in the UN comprehensive study in NWFZs, "South Asia is only a sub-region and an integral part of the region of Asia and the Pacific and it is necessary to take into account the security environment of the region as a whole." India supported the idea of NWFZ with reservation. It stated that suitable conditions should exist in the region and all the countries should adhere to it. In India's view, the South Asian countries are surrounded by the nuclear weapon states or countries belonging to

73. Ibid., p. 97.
74. Ibid.
75. UN Comprehensive Study in NWFZs, op.cit., p. 28.
their alliances. The existence of nuclear weapons in the region of Asia and the Pacific and the presence of foreign military bases in the Indian Ocean have complicated the security environment of the region thus making the situation inappropriate for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in the sub-region of South Asia. India while explaining its stand reiterated that it was of the view that the whole world should be free of nuclear weapons. Sub-regionalisation would not only be inconsistent with the global approach to the question but would also change it from a universal to a sub-regional or regional concept.

Pakistan put a new proposal of five nation conference in June 1990 to facilitate declaring South Asia as a nuclear weapons free zone. This proposal had been accorded high priority by the then U.S. President Mr. George Bush. Aside from India and Pakistan, the U.S. wanted itself, Russia and China to be involved in an effort to find a regional settlement. India maintained its position on nuclear non-proliferation. Prime Minister P.V. Narsimha Rao said that this sensitive issue could not be discussed in a vacuum. He argued Mr. Bush to take up the issue in a larger world perspective. Rao made it clear that the Pakistan's proposal was inadequate since India shared a border with China which has nuclear weapons. Indian stand is this that the whole notion of a nuclear weapon free zone

in South Asia, has become meaningless after the Pakistan's confirmation that Pakistan does possess all essential components of the nuclear bomb which it can put together in a jiffy.

Pakistan has used nuclear ambiguity to its fullest advantage. China is already a nuclear weapon state, in this context of mistrust and uncertainty a nuclear-weapon-free-zone will be a misnomer in South Asia. Thus, the problem of non proliferation has to be solved outside the spheres of NWFZ or NPT. An alternative has to be searched with the consensus of all the countries in the region and other nuclear weapon states to attain non proliferation. Any voluntary, honourable, equitable arrangement which has a long-term perspective and is in the benefit of humankind, would be the only solution to non-proliferation. Pakistan has made at least five proposals at different points of time; mutual renunciation of nuclear weapons, mutual inspection, third party verification, a nuclear-weapons-free-zone in South Asia and joint signing of the NPT. In contrast, India has made one proposal that of complete global nuclear disarmament. Bhutan had also been opposing the proposal of nuclear weapon free zone. India has reiterated that the proposal for establishing a NWFZ should not be imposed from outside but should come from the countries of the concerned region. Moreover, 'Region', a geographical concept is hardly recognised by the long range nuclear delivery systems of nuclear weapon states.

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80. *Ibid*.
There should not be a limited approach to the question of freedom from nuclear threats and dangers and, therefore, the whole world should be declared a nuclear-free-zone.

2. NEPAL AS A PEACE ZONE:

The South Asian states have adopted two main models for their national security, the autonomy model and the dependency model. The first model has eventually led to the policy of non-alignment and self-reliance. The other has resulted in the states joining the global alliance systems of the non-regional powers, whether it be in the nature of a military pact, strategic consensus or understanding based on facilities conceived in the context of Great Power Policies. Of late, military pacts have become an outmoded concept in the context of South Asia. Nepal has added a new dimension to its customary model by putting forward the concept of a zone of peace, without specifying either the guarantors of that peace or its linkage with South Asian Security. A militarily weak and economically underdeveloped state, situated in the central Himalayan region between two colossal neighbours, China and India - Nepal has chosen to stay out of military involvement. She presents a fascinating example of a small nation trying to balance its relations with the two big neighbours.

84. Ibid.
Nepal's proposal for a zone of peace, born out of the desire to internationalize peace adds a new dimension to its foreign policy. The origin of proposal can be traced to a fear psychosis, generated by the emergence of India as a prominent regional power in South Asia. During the years immediately following the Bangladesh crisis, an unwarranted apprehension about India's possible expansionist designs was created in the Nepalese circles after the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union. The proposal dates back to 1973, when King Birendra said while addressing the Non-Aligned Summit in Algiers: 'Nepal, situated between two of the most populous countries in the world, wishes within its frontiers to be declared as a zone of peace.' The king's overriding desire to immunize Nepal against the periodical ups and downs in the relations with its neighbours, and against the possibility of the ultimate breakdown of those relations, showed his desire to have an international guarantee, more or less on the Swiss model, of Nepal's independence, sovereignty and neutrality in the event of a war in the region.

The Nepalese Government prepared a detailed format of the peace zone proposal in 1982. Its particulars were explained by the then Nepalese Prime Minister, B.S. Thapa, under 7 heads as follows:

86. Ibid.
87. The Rising Nepal (Katmandu), 9 September 1973.
88. Ibid., 22 February 1982.
1. Nepal will adhere to the policy of peace, non-alignment and peaceful co-existence and will constantly endeavour to develop friendly relations with all countries of the world, regardless of their social and political systems and particularly with its neighbours on the basis of equality and respect for each other's independence and sovereignty;

2. Nepal will not resort to the use of the threat or force in any way which might endanger the peace and security of other countries;

3. Nepal will seek peaceful settlement of all disputes between it and other states;

4. Nepal will not interfere in the international affairs of other states;

5. Nepal will not permit any activity on its soil that are hostile to other states supporting this proposal and in reciprocity states supporting this proposal will not permit any activity hostile to Nepal;

6. Nepal will continue to honour the obligations of all the existing treaties which it has concluded with other countries so long as they remain valid; and

7. In conformity with its policy of peace and non-alignment, Nepal will not enter into military alliance nor allow the establishment of any foreign military base on its soil. In reciprocity, other countries supporting this proposal will
not enter into military alliance nor allow establishment of military base on their soil directed against Nepal.

Nepal's move could promote certain foreign policy objectives. It might come handy in balancing its two neighbours, India and China, one against the other. As a result of Nepal's efforts to enlist support for the concept of a peace zone, more than 25 countries have already endorsed it. These, of course, do not include India. China's response was immediate, favourable and encouraging. In sharp contrast the super powers responded with restraint. They commended Nepal's move for establishing peace in the region, but refrained from giving formal support to the proposal.

India's initial response was frosty. She, nevertheless, continued its policy of good neighbourliness towards Nepal. There are two reasons for this type of response, first, India believes that proposal ignores the basic geo-political realities. Indo-Nepalese relations cannot be equated with Nepal's relations with China. While India's security is tied with Nepal's, China's is not. While Indian presence in Nepal cannot threaten China's security, China's presence can threaten Indian security. Secondly, India is firmly committed to Nepal's territorial integrity and stability through the 1950 treaty and there is no need for additional guarantees. In sum,

89. Dharamdasani, M.D., op.cit., p. 89.
90. Ibid., p. 89.
91. Ibid., p. 90.
New Delhi does not want to endorse any proposal which might put its political and security interests in jeopardy. Among other South Asian countries, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan endorsed the proposal readily.

Nepal's initiative is essentially the product of small nation's sensitivity about its big neighbours. But the question is whether general endorsement of a zone of peace will, by itself, and ensure perpetual peace in Nepal and free it once and for all from involvement in armed conflict. In this connection, it is appropriate to consider whether Nepal is in a position to follow Switzerland in having its permanent neutrality universally recognised. There are several reasons why Nepal is not in a position to copy the Swiss model. Firstly, Nepal is not economically and militarily as strong as Switzerland. Secondly, Switzerland borders on three countries - Germany, Italy and France - and is economically interdependent with all the three approximately to the same extent. Nepal borders on two giant neighbours but is more dependent on one, India. Furthermore, the historical antecedents in the case of Nepal and Switzerland are different. Switzerland has retained its freedom by compelling the neighbouring countries to respect its neutrality. Nepal, during the last century and a half, has maintained its peace and national


independence by acting in concert with the stronger Government of India.

Nobody can find fault with Nepal's desire to free itself from entanglement in potential armed conflict in the region. But no country can be immune to the pressure of ideas and events in neighbouring regions, least of all Nepal, one of the least developed countries. Nepal's strategic location has afforded it scope for manoeuvring within certain limits. These limits are, in practice set by what India and China consider to be their minimal interests in a given situation.

Much can, and must, be done to improve the regional security environment, especially between Pakistan and India. The bilateral agreement ruling out attacks against each other's nuclear installations points the way to go in terms of confidence-building measures. But it is not U.S.'s business. Neither a five nation conference nor creation of a Nuclear weapons free zone in South Asia can be accepted in a highly discriminatory international environment. The situation in South Asia could be identified more as a post-proliferation stage rather than a non-proliferation stage. Proliferation has taken place here and the task before us is that of living with it and controlling its spread. Thus, instead of making the subcontinent nuclear weapons free zone, it can and must be made nuclear weapons safe region.

95. Ibid.
96. Upadhyay, Rajesh Kumar, op.cit., p. 35.