CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

The previous chapters dealt with the evolution and growth of the Indian nuclear policy during various periods and also the nuclear tests of 1998 and its aftermath. In this chapter, the researcher sums up the major findings of the study and provides recommendations. The research question is India, with a policy of "minimum nuclear deterrence", already has scores of missiles with various ranges and a well established nuclear weapons programme. Having achieved this capability, is it still necessary to spend crores of rupees annually in strengthening its nuclear arsenal instead of spending it for socio-economic development? The answer to this question will be apparent, if the primary and secondary data collected are analysed carefully.

The Indian sub-continent is one of the most volatile and insecure regions of the world. In 1947, when India emerged as an independent nation, the nuclear age had already dawned. The partition of India is considered to be the starting point of various forms of security issues. The partition separated both India and Pakistan and it eventually resulted in the deterioration of the bilateral relation in the subsequent years.

The 1962, war with China shattered the political image of Nehru. This year is considered to be the turning point in the Indian history, as China inflicted a humiliating defeat on India following a dispute over the McMohan line. After this, in 1965, Pakistan waged a war against India, in which India successfully countered the Pakistani attack. Once again Pakistan attacked India in 1971 and this time also Pakistan was defeated which led to the separation of East Pakistan and emergence of Bangladesh as a new state.
The US entered the rivalry between India and Pakistan by providing weapons to Pakistan. In addition to the US support, Pakistan also had the backing of China which helped Pakistan by supplying weapons and also in the development of the Pakistani nuclear programme. From then onwards, China has been a critical element in the Indian security equation. Soon after the Sino-Indian war, China was considered the primary threat which caught the attention of the Indian political leaders.

Right from the year of independence, the Indian leaders wanted India to be a self-reliant nation having freedom of thought and action. During the cold war between US and Soviet Union, India chose the non-alignment. The Indian leaders had a strong notion that a nuclear-weapon-free world will enhance the Indian security. So they always supported disarmament and this was a major element in India’s foreign policy.

After independence, India gave a call to all the nations to bring an end to all nuclear weapon testing. Pandit. Jawaharlal Nehru, called for negotiations for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and in the interim a standstill agreement to halt nuclear testing. But the nuclear weapon states refused to agree with this idea. In 1965, India gave the idea of an international non-proliferation agreement under which the nuclear weapon states would agree to give up their arsenals and other counties would refrain from developing or acquiring such weapons. This idea was also not accepted. As a result, India made it clear that it would not sign the NPT.

In 1968, the Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, said that India will act according to the needs of its security. In 1974, India demonstrated her nuclear capability at Pokhran in Rajasthan. All the successive government’s thereafter have done all they can, in keeping with the national will to safeguard India’s nuclear option. After 1980,
India witnessed greater threat to her security because of missile proliferation all over the world in general and South Asia in particular. Moreover, India also faced problems from externally aided terrorism. It was during this period that China’s threat once again arose due to various reasons. The Chinese missiles capable of striking any target in India posed a direct threat on one hand and on the other hand the supply of missiles by China to its neighbourhood countries posed an indirect threat. China’s support to Pakistan further worsened the situation and initiated an arms race in the subcontinent. Further, the US offer of arms sales to China added fuel to the fire, for it indicated the rise of threat to the Indian security, from all angles. The United States arms sales to Pakistan had made substantial impact on Indo-Pak relations and also in formulating Indian security perceptions in South Asia.

Pakistan, unable to defeat India in the wars, began to strengthen its security by trying to acquire nuclear capability with the help of China. The nuclear policy of Pakistan is to a large extent, said to be in response to the nuclear policy of India because Pakistan considers India to be its arch rival. India on the other hand, had its own compulsions to strengthen its security. It not only perceived threat from Pakistan but also from China, ever since its aggression against India in 1962. India felt that because of its size, population and strategic location it had larger security concern. This explanation given by India was not accepted by USA and other western nations.

This being on one side, the global scenario showed no evidence on the part of the nuclear weapon states to take decisive and irreversible steps in moving towards a nuclear weapon free world. Instead, the NPT was extended indefinitely and unconditionally which not only paved way for the nuclear weapon states to develop their nuclear programme with the same pace, but also opened the door for nuclear proliferation.
India refused to sign the CTBT on the grounds that it is discriminatory and also non-comprehensive. India saw that the CTBT was in favour of the nuclear weapon states as they could establish their monopoly over nuclear weapons and be superior to the rest of the world. All these circumstances pressurised India to go nuclear. The Indian nuclear tests were mainly conducted because the time for signing the CTBT was approaching very fast and India had to take a decisive step as quick as possible. Under these circumstances India was left with no other option, than to explode its nuclear device and join the nuclear club. The nuclear tests are seen as a continuation of the policies which has put India on the path of self-reliance and independence of thought and action. If India had signed the CTBT it would have stopped India from achieving the nuclear power status.

Soon after the explosions, India made public that it would not use nuclear weapons to commit aggression or threaten any country and they are simply weapons of self-defence. Defence analysts say that even if CTBT is signed now it will not stop India from making the bombs because it only says that India cannot test them. It is well know that the Department of Atomic Energy has gained enough knowledge from the 1998 tests to use computers to simulate later tests. In the current nuclear debate the top nuclear scientists of India argue that India needs no more nuclear tests and large-scale build up of capabilities. It is also felt by the scientific community that India could sign the CTBT without compromising the country’s security.

India declared that the 1998 nuclear tests were conducted only on account of the national security because India has taken many initiatives in the past for the elimination of nuclear weapons all over the world, but the Indian proposals did not receive a positive response from other nuclear weapon states. Had their response been positive India would not have opted for the nuclear tests.
In response to the Indian nuclear tests, Pakistan exploded six nuclear devices on its part. The nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan sent shock waves throughout the world and transformed the strategic environment in South Asia because the tests were conducted at a time when the entire world was talking about the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

Within India, slogans were raised for and against nuclearisation of India. Those who support India's nuclearisation argue that nuclear weapons will enhance India's prestige and status because it is widely believed that the Chinese nuclear explosion in 1964, enhanced its status to a very high level. It is also argued that by acquiring nuclear weapons, India will have a stable deterrent relationship with China. Moreover, they say that nuclear weapons will act as a good bargaining chip for India in exercising her options and strategic goals. The Indian strategic analysts also consider that nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them are the "currencies of international power" and it meant that India's voice could not be ignored in any future negotiations on arms control and disarmament.

On the other hand, people who oppose India's nuclearisation argue that the massive cost of nuclear weapons programme would obstruct the socio-economic development of India, and by going nuclear, the policy makers would be violating the legacy of Gandhian principles. Above all, they view that nuclear weapons are against the peaceful coexistence of mankind.

In general, India's nuclear tests cannot be said to be wrong because it had not violated any treaty or political commitment but the NPT was violated only by the NPT member states. Moreover, the UN has also not taken any concrete steps to solve the
Indian security problems, in real terms. All along these years, it has not been able to persuade the nuclear weapon states towards total abolition of nuclear weapons. The UN Security Council has also stumbled to provide security guarantees for the non-nuclear weapon states. For a nation like India, threat could only come from nuclear weapon states which are all permanent members of the UN Security Council with Veto power. So the UN cannot be totally relied for providing protection against nuclear threats to India.

Like India, Pakistan had its own reasons for achieving nuclear capability. The achievement of nuclear weapon status forced both the nations to improve bilateral relations and avoid nuclear wars by initiating Confidence Building Measures (CBMs). The Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee’s journey by bus to Lahore is one such effort in this direction. This event raised hopes in both the nations, and Indo-Pak relations began to grow strong. Following this event, the Prime Minister’s of both the nations met and issued the historic Lahore declaration, which among other things, condemned all kinds of terrorism and resolved to set amicably all issues between the two countries including the Kashmir issue. Before the Lahore accord could resolve and reduce tension between the two nations, Pakistan initiated the Kargil war. The Kargil war spoiled all the efforts taken by India to develop friendly relations and it also shattered Pakistan's image by bringing to light its evil intentions. The western nations rebuked and condemned Pakistan for its act of irresponsibility.

After the Kargil crisis, Nawaz Sharif was dethroned and General Pervez Musharraf came to power. During his reign, hitherto there has been no noteworthy improvement in the Indo-Pak relations. Both the nations have developed their missile programmes in a very rapid pace after the year 2000 and the possession of ballistic missiles by both the nations has generated tension between them. So the possibility of escalation of arms race
in the future has increased considerably and the situation will further aggravate because both nations have nuclear weapons capability. If India and Pakistan use ballistic missiles in any future confrontation, it may result in a nuclear war. If missiles are used the industrial, defence and population centres may become their targets, which will end up in huge loss and massive destruction on both sides.

The competitive nuclearisation of both India and Pakistan will not stop because the relations between both these countries have been more competitive than co-operative during the last fifty years. India has now started to look for strategies which would make it one of the most powerful nations in the world. So it is always keen to supersede Pakistan and is now concentrating more, to improve its internal economy and technological modernization. So, to emerge as a powerful nation, the nuclear power status is very important and in this connection, the 1998 nuclear tests of India holds a vital value.

India did not stop with the nuclear explosions but went on further to form a National Security Council (NSC), in the same year. Though there are arguments by many defence analysts that the National Security Council cannot help in long-range strategic planning, in reality the NSC is very helpful in strategic planning. The National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) of the NSC drafted the Indian nuclear doctrine and it was released in 1999. This contains certain principles of the Indian nuclear policy. It says that India will follow the doctrine of

1. "No-first use" of nuclear weapons against nuclear weapon states.
2. No use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states.
3. Credible minimum deterrence.
Firstly, although India possesses nuclear weapons, it will not use it in first hand against another nation but if the other nation uses nuclear weapons against India, it will retaliate with an effective and punishing second strike.

Secondly, India will not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states. India has adopted this policy to avoid non-nuclear weapon states, from being threatened by India's nuclearisation.

Thirdly, the policy of "Credible minimum deterrence" means that having reliable nuclear weapons in required numbers which is capable of deterring the enemies.

All these policies depict that India is a peace loving nation and will not confront any nation unnecessarily, but if India is attacked it will retaliate appropriately. For launching a second strike, India needs to survive the attack by the enemy. This asks for a proper command and control system which will ensure that nuclear weapons will be used only under proper authorisation.

So, in order to manage its arsenal of atomic weapons, on January 4, 2003, India announced a set of political principles called the Nuclear Command Authority (NCA). This announcement by the Government should be welcomed by all, because India has to have nuclear weapons owing to the nuclearisation of China and Pakistan. If this is the case then it is a must to place them under strict civilian control with the "nuclear button" in the hands of the Prime Minister. It is important to announce these arrangements publicly to reassure the public that the right to use nuclear weapons rests with the right person.
To avoid hasty launch of nuclear weapons during war time or accidental nuclear war, the objectives of the Indian nuclear doctrine has to be carefully adopted and put into action. The announcement made by the government also speaks about "the state of readiness and alert". Care should be taken that none of the weapons be kept ready to be launched instantly. Only when they are maintained and kept in full alert, there arises chances of making quick decisions to launch a counter-attack during war time and it will also make the no-first use policy, meaningless. So it is better to keep the arsenal in a state of de-alert by having built-in delays, from the time the decision is taken to attack and its implementation. One such way to create a delay is by storing the nuclear weapons far from their delivery vehicles. India is believed to follow this tactic and it is hoped that it will continue this method.

India need not worry about keeping the weapons in a de-alert stage because even if India retaliates very late, it could inflict a severe damage on the enemy. Moreover, it is not necessary that India should have a huge arsenal as that of UK or China. The size of their arsenal was very big in response to the thousands of weapons that the USA and USSR had, which in turn was based not just on deterrence but on ambitions of winning nuclear wars.

The Indian nuclear doctrine also envisages about early warning systems. It may be said that early warning system strengthens the security and safety. Generally, early warning systems are always related with ready-to-fire weapons because only then they are of maximum use. India, by possessing early warning systems that can detect incoming missile attacks it would be tempting to link it to quick retaliation if there are nuclear weapons ready to be launched. This would create a very dangerous situation, if India is to make a nuclear response within those few minutes as it would place the Prime Minister
under immense pressure to press the nuclear button. Therefore, any early warning system should be used only for warning of enemy's military preparation rather than warning of missiles after they have been launched. This will avoid, any temptation which compels to press the nuclear button.

Thus, by analysing all the previous chapters, it is seen that India has come a long way through, overcoming all the obstacles to achieve this nuclear power status. This has been made possible not just by the effort of any single government but by the efforts taken by all the governments, right from the independence. The Indian scientific community has to be saluted, for it has worked hard to make a dream come true. This is an achievement which has made every Indian feel proud and has also raised the status of India.

It is good that India has made this achievement but this alone will not make India a developed nation. This is just one aspect of a developed nation. There are still many more areas where India is still lagging behind and many problems for which solutions are yet to be found. There are numerous problems of which poverty, unemployment and illiteracy are very important. There are millions of families without proper food, clothing and shelter. Because of the lack of these basic human needs they cannot afford to send their children to schools. The Government schools which are run to provide education in a least cost, still lack basic infrastructures and they have failed to give quality education to the poor children. This being on oneside, there are millions of people either unemployed or under-employed in India.

If all these things are taken into account, it makes us think which is more important for the nation: spending crores of rupees annually for nuclear and missile
programmes that the government claims are needed only as a deterrent and not for first use, or educating thousands of children. So, in the future the Government should take efforts to develop India, not just by strengthening its nuclear arsenal alone, but by bringing development in all spheres that would enhance the quality of life of its citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS

a. The United Nations should be pressurized by India to take steps towards universal nuclear disarmament, so that the nuclear weapon states do not have advantage over the non-nuclear weapon states in the possession of nuclear weapons.

b. India should claim for permanent membership in the UN Security Council because now it is a nuclear weapon state.

c. The United Nations should take concrete steps to stop nuclear proliferation all over the world if not it will be impossible to stop nuclear proliferation across the globe.

d. India should strengthen its relations with China and Pakistan which would greatly reduce the tension prevalent in South Asia.

e. India should not only think of reducing the risks in the using of nuclear weapons but also should strive hard to establish a nuclear-free South Asia.
f. There should not be a third party intervention in the Indo-Pak dispute and both the nations should iron out their differences through dialogues, as there cannot be a military solution to this problem.

g. India should persuade Pakistan to stop its support, aid and abatement of terrorist activities in the Kashmir region.

h. Stern action should be taken by India to curb low-intensity conflicts and all other forms of internal threat.

i. India, China and Pakistan should co-operate with each other and develop cordial relationships which would ultimately slow down the disastrous arms race in South Asia.

j. India and Pakistan should sign an agreement not to use their missile capabilities against each other.

k. The accuracy of the existing missiles should be improved rather than developing new missiles.

l. India should adopt the necessary precautionary measures to avoid damage or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons.

m. The bodies of the National Security Council should be relieved of their day-to-day work which would help them to concentrate on long range strategic planning effectively.
n. It should be made clear, how the power to press the nuclear button will move down the political chain if in case the Prime Minister is incapacitated during a crisis.

o. In future, India should not conduct any nuclear tests.

p. Deterrence does not require that India’s arsenal should match that of her enemies. It is enough if it is able to threaten to inflict unacceptable damage. So India should not aim to possess a large nuclear arsenal but rather apply its technology to maintain a credible minimum nuclear force which will serve as effective deterrent.

q. Money should be spent on the survivability of a small and credible arsenal than to keep on making more weapons just because the required fissile material is available.

r. Possession of nuclear weapons may satisfy the ego of the Indian ruling elite and elevate India to the position of being a nuclear weapon state but it must be remembered that a nuclear war cannot be won. So India should reduce its defence spending on missile programmes and concentrate more on socio-economic development because it is the responsibility of the nation not only to protect its territories from its enemies but also to provide better life for its citizens.

s. Achievement of nuclear power status is a must for a large nation like India but this alone will not make it a fully developed nation. In the future, India should channelise all its wealth and resources to develop the educational
and industrial base of the country because they are the backbone and building block of a developed nation.

India's position on nuclear weapons is based on its civilizational values and it has always raised its voice against nuclear weapons, mainly because they are indiscriminate, inhuman and meaninglessly devastating. India's interest has always been that the world should be free of nuclear weapons but it was forced to go nuclear because of security threats. India, with the policy of "minimum nuclear deterrence", already has scores of missiles with various ranges and a well established nuclear weapons programme. Having achieved this capability, it is not necessary to spend crores of rupees annually to strengthen its nuclear arsenal, instead it should be spent for socio-economic development because it is also a nation's obligation to raise the standard of life of every citizen. An effective and reliable nuclear deterrence coupled with socio-economic development will make India emerge as one of the most powerful nations, not only in the South Asian region but also in the whole world.