CHAPTER V
The Indian nuclear tests conducted at Pokhran in 1998, is an achievement made by all the previous governments. All the previous governments kept the nuclear option always open, by refusing to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). It is the strong foundation laid by the previous governments which made it easier for the BJP government to carryout the 1998 nuclear tests.

On May 9th and 10th, 1998, the Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, informed about the cabinet's decision to conduct nuclear tests to the three service chiefs and top ranked bureaucrats. On May 11th, 1998, after a period of 24 years, India conducted three underground tests at Pokhran and on 13th May, two more tests were conducted. The series of five nuclear tests that were conducted by India in the Pokhran desert was made possible by the cooperative effort taken by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

On May 17, 1998, Dr. Kalam and R. Chidambaram disclosed the details regarding the five explosions in a joint statement, which stated that the five devices were placed in separate holes. The thermonuclear (45 kiloton), fission (15 kiloton) and low yield (0.2 kiloton) devices on May 11, were detonated simultaneously and two more sub kiloton devices (0.5 and 0.3 kiloton) were simultaneously triggered on May 13.
The tests conducted during May 11th and 13th, have improved India’s capability in computer simulation and India has attained a stage of conducting even subcritical experiments, if necessary. After conducting the nuclear tests, the Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, announced that the tests were conducted for self defence and not for aggression. He also added that the nuclear tests conducted will not change India’s pursuit of peace in the region. Brajesh Mishra, Prime Minister’s, Special Secretary said that the tests have established that India has a proven capability for a weaponised nuclear programme.

Dr. Chidambaram after, taking charge as the new Principal Scientific Advisor to the government, asserted that, the nuclear tests at Pokhran were very successful and ruled out any review of the country’s nuclear weapons policy. Moreover, he said that India has
developed a credible nuclear deterrent with a "mature and strong foundation", and since the Pokhran tests the country had made good enough progress in the development of nuclear weapons.²

RATIONALE BEHIND THE POKHRAN II NUCLEAR TESTS

Many factors can be cited which drove India to test its nuclear devices. Of all these, the main reason is China’s support to Pakistan’s nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. The other reasons which forced India to test its nuclear devices are:

a) India’s capability to manufacture nuclear weapons and the discriminatory policies adopted by the western nations to suppress developing nations.

b) The second reason was the threat perceptions emanating from India’s rival neighbours and also the absence of security guarantees from India’s friendly nuclear states.

IMPACT OF POKHRAN II

The series of nuclear tests conducted by India sent shockwaves throughout the world and it altered the regional and global security environments. Once the big five nations debated about preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons in South Asia, but now they have started to talk about "Management of a proliferated South Asia". At one point of time, efforts were taken to establish a nuclear weapons free zone but after the nuclear tests, efforts are taken towards the maintenance of a nuclear weapons safe zone.

Many countries criticised and condemned the nuclear tests, very sharply. The countries which condemned India are USA which is the only country that has used atomic weapons and which has carried out more than thousand nuclear tests so far; France, which has conducted nearly 50 nuclear tests; United Kingdom which wanted to go nuclear inspite being under the protection of the US nuclear umbrella; China which possessess a large nuclear arsenal and Japan which did not matter the nuclear tests conducted by USA and China,just to continue its trade and commerce with these countries.

The reaction of the Big Five nations to the Indian nuclear tests show that they don’t want any other nation to achieve the nuclear weapon status.

US RESPONSE

The Americans criticised the Indian nuclear tests of May 1998, because it was conducted so secretly. The then American President, Bill Clinton, himself led the western reaction against the Indian nuclear tests. Mr.Bill Clinton stated that it was a terrible mistake on the Indian side and that he was deeply disturbed by the nuclear tests. He also added that this action by India not only threatened the peace and stability of the South Asian region, but also directly challenged the firm international consensus to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. "He further commented that with democratic traditions, the nuclear path is not the way to "greatness". The State Department spokesman, James Rubin, accused the Indian government of being deceitful in its dealing with the US on the nuclear issues. He accused India of lying and conducting a "campaign of duplicity" during 20 high level meetings between the two countries."\(^5\) But

Congressman, Frank Pallone, supported India and he said that India was compelled to conduct the nuclear tests because of Pakistan’s test-firing of the Ghauri missile which placed India in a vulnerable position.

US ECONOMIC SANCTIONS

As a result of the nuclear tests, the Clinton administration imposed certain sanctions under Section 102, of the Arms Export Control Act, also known as the Glen Amendment. These sanctions were much more severe than the sanctions of the past. The US government terminated,

a) The assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, except for humanitarian assistance.

b) The sales of defence articles and defence services and revocation of licenses for the commercial sake of any items on the US munitions list.

c) All the foreign military financing under the Arms Export Control Act.

Apart from this, US denied all the financial assistance given by department agencies and opposed the extension of any loan for financial or technical assistance by international financial institutions. It also prohibited US banks from making any loan or providing any credit to the Government of India except for purchasing any agricultural commodities. It also prohibited the export of specific goods and technology subject to export licensing by the Commerce Department.4

_Amitabh Mattoo, India’s Nuclear Deterrent: Pokhran II and Beyond, Har-Anand Publications. New Delhi, 1998, p. 29._
The US also encouraged other members of the G-8 countries to follow suit because it would reduce the rate of development of the Indian economy. The US intention was to stop the loans which were to be given to India which would ultimately result in spoiling the confidence of the investors.

CANADIAN RESPONSE

Canada joined other western nations in condemning the nuclear tests. The Canadian Prime Minister, Chretien, said that India’s tests could spark a nuclear arms race in the Indian sub-continent and would provoke other countries to develop and test nuclear weapons. The Canadian government recalled its ambassador and canceled all the non-humanitarian aids. It also halted the military cooperation and military sales to India. The Canadian Prime Minister, during his official visit to Britain before the G-8 summit, announced that he was cancelling immediately all Ministerial and official level contact between India and Canada. Canada along with USA. tried to persuade other G-8 members to impose economic sanctions against India.

CHINESE RESPONSE

China severely condemned India and it gave a call for capping and a roll back of Indian nuclear programme. The Chinese ambassador in India, Zhougang, stated publicly that India instead of conducting nuclear tests and improving its nuclear capability, should concentrate in developing its economy and improving the living standards of its people.
JAPANESE RESPONSE

The then Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Ryutar Hashimoto, described the Indian nuclear tests as grave and extremely regrettable, and he requested the Indian Prime Minister not to go ahead with such tests. After the nuclear tests on May 1998, the Japanese government suspended new grants-in-aid to India. It also declined to host the annual meeting of the Indian Development Forum in June, 1998 and asked India to sign the NPT and the CTBT at an early date. Yen loan programmes to India for new projects were also frozen and the Japanese Ambassador to India was temporarily withdrawn. Japan also announced that it will restrict the award of loans by financial organisations to India. Japan also urged the UN Security Council, not to recognise India as a nuclear weapon state. These reactions of Japan were mainly because of the immense pressure given by the US and also its desire for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

After all these events, the first official Indo-Japanese interaction after Pokhran II explosion took place between the envoy of the Prime Minister of India, Jawant Singh and the Japanese Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Masoeiko Komuro, on the sidelines of the ASEAN-ARF on July 27, 1998. However even after these meetings there was no remarkable improvement in the bilateral relations between the two countries because denuclearisation of India was found to be a real obstacle. Three months later, Japan tried to hold talks with India regarding the lifting of economic sanctions because of its own economic imperatives.

Anindyo J. Majumdar, Nuclear India into the New Millennium, Lancer Books, New Delhi, 2000, p. 265.
THE AFTERMATH OF POKHRAN II

India earned the wrath of the western nations for conducting the nuclear tests. After the tests, India did not take quick follow-up efforts to convince the US that the tests would not destabilise the regional security. India in an attempt to convince the western nations, blamed China for India’s nuclear tests and the BJP leaders severely criticised Pakistan. After the nuclear tests, the US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Karl Inderfurth, rejected India’s claim of a security threat from Pakistan and China as "unpersuasive" and accused the BJP government of deliberately misleading the US officials who had earlier visited India to discuss about its nuclear intentions.6

Following these developments, the US decided to take strict measures on India. In the first phase, in order to prevent Pakistan from conducting a follow-up test, the US called on India to sign the CTBT unconditionally. Pakistan was unable to react immediately to the Indian nuclear tests because of the economic crisis it was facing which would ultimately collapse, if sanctions were imposed on its testing the nuclear devices. But the Vajpayee government was doing all it could to instigate Pakistan to conduct nuclear tests. The BJP government linked India’s nuclear tests with the Kashmir dispute. The Indian Home Minister, L.K. Advani, while speaking in the State of Jammu and Kashmir said that India’s decision to become a nuclear weapon state has brought about a solution to the Kashmir dispute.

The Indian Prime Minister also made some clever moves. First, he offered to make a commitment of a moratorium on nuclear testing and second, he said that India was

ready to negotiate a no-first use agreement with Pakistan. Then the Prime Minister also tried to win the US confidence as he said that India was willing to move towards signing the CTBT. Despite all these efforts, India was still struggling with diplomatic fallout of the nuclear tests. The Indian Prime Minister mentioned that the reason behind the nuclear tests was the threat from China. This provoked China, which responded very angrily towards India. This diplomatic confrontation with China proved to be a real problem for the BJP government. Subsequently, the Indian Prime Minister reassured the major powers that the nuclear tests were not country-specific. While the Indian government was trying to pacify the world leaders, Pakistan announced that it had conducted its own nuclear tests.

After a few days of Pakistani tests, Vajpayee sent his personal envoys to visit, various western nations to explain India’s long-term security concerns about China and Pakistan and to resume the diplomatic dialogue. But the United States wanted peace talk to be held between India and Pakistan and it warned both the nations against nuclear arms race. The UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, also asked the Prime Minister’s of both the nations to reduce the escalated tension between them. After these developments, a dialogue between US and India began when the US Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Strobe Talbott, met Jaswant Singh, to insist India, to take a few steps which US had already explained. First, India should unconditionally sign the CTBT. Second, India should take steps to hold peace talks with Pakistan in reducing the tension. Third, it should rejoin the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) negotiations. Fourth, it should freeze its entire nuclear weapons programme. These conditions placed the Vajpayee government in a difficult position because India was very anxious to build a minimum nuclear deterrent force and it had no idea to roll back its nuclear programme.
Another meeting was held between Jaswant Singh and Talbott in New Delhi on July, 1998. After this meeting it was clear that US wanted the Vajpayee government to give a public statement stating that India was willing to sign the CTBT. But India argued that it was practically impossible to sign the CTBT immediately because the previous year only, it severely criticised the treaty. The BJP also believed that signing the CTBT will also damage its political image and bring unexpected problems because the BJP was running a coalition government with thirteen political parties.

The primary data collected from the intellectuals through questionnaires is interpreted below.

**Pokhran-II Nuclear Tests - Indo-Pak Relations?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. Responded</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Same as before</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Has deteriorated</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table - 5.1**

When asked about the nature of bilateral relations between India and Pakistan after the Pokhran II nuclear tests, about 30% of the respondents have said, it is the same as before, 50% have said that the relationship has deteriorated and the rest 20% have said it is good. This reveals that majority of the people feel that the Indo-Pak relations have deteriorated after the Pokhran II nuclear tests because Pakistan has been a deliberate spoiler of all the peace initiatives taken by India. Moreover, Pakistan also backs many terrorist outfits in the Kashmir region because of which infiltration and cross border terrorist rose up, leading to the Kargil war. Till April, 2003, there was no remarkable improvement in the relations between these two countries.
The Indian government which faced a diplomatic fallout after the nuclear tests, began to seriously think about forming a National Security Council (NSC), which would eliminate improper decisions in nuclear issues.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

India has always suffered in framing policies at the national level because of improper planning, as most competent Indian civil servants are generalists rather than specialists in many areas. The civil servants lack foresight of the development of India as a whole because still they view only the plan of their Ministries. It is for this reason that many political thinkers have been recommending for many years for the formation of a National Security Council (NSC), which would help to take proper decisions in nuclear issues. They also recommended for a permanent Secretariat for the National Security Council, which would be able to give important information, related to national security issues.

Many Indian governments in the past have tried to create a National Security Council, but all in vain. The former Indian Prime Minister, Mr. V.P. Singh, created such a body for the first time in 1990, to formulate and co-ordinate the national security policy. But it was not revived by the Congress government led by P.V. Narasimha Rao, who became the Prime Minister in 1991. After the Congress regime, I.K. Gujral, became the Prime Minister who had the intention to set up a NSC. "Importance of an NSC, said I.K. Gujral," lies in the fact that, it can provide varied inputs on the basis of which the most comprehensive picture of the country's security needs could be outlined". Although Gujral had all these ideas, he did not succeed. Many other attempts were also made.

between 1990 and 1998 but none of them survived due to strong bureaucratic and political opposition.

After India’s nuclear tests on May, 1998, BJP was very curious in setting up the National Security Council, for which it had already set up a task force on 14th April, 1998, to draft the constitution and functions of the NSC. K.C.Pant, the former Defence Minister and Jaswant Singh, were appointed as the Chairman and Convenor respectively. The task force held discussions with over 230 officials, former officials and non-governmental experts in security issues and it arrived at a decision that a system of managing national security was very important for a vast country like India. The task force recognised that the national security management required synchronised application of political, military, scientific and technological resources of the state, to protect the national security. The task force concluded that national security not only means military strength but it also includes the country’s foreign policy and internal peace.

So, in order to strengthen the security of India, the task force strongly recommended the formation of the NSC which should function within the government and be responsible to the parliament. It also suggested that the NSC should perform the following functions.

a. Long-term strategic planning.

b. Co-ordinated intelligence assessment for national security planning.

c. Co-ordination of decision-making and policy implementation.
Thus, the report containing all these suggestions and recommendations of the task force was presented to the Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee on 26th June, 1998. Following their recommendations, a new National Security Council (NSC) was formed in 1998. The creation of NSC was severely opposed by senior bureaucrats in the Ministry of External Affairs, as they considered that the formation of NSC would affect their role in the making of foreign policy. But the formation of this council was greeted by many Indian defence analysts amidst the doubts of political commitment for using it effectively.

However, the NSC was formed consisting of three tiers, having the "Principals" at its core. The core consists of the Prime Minister, who chairs a council consisting of the Home, Defence, Finance and External Affairs Ministers. The Principal Secretary to Prime Minister currently serves as the National Security Adviser.

**INDIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL**

![Diagram showing the structure of the National Security Council](image-url)
Under this committee, is a Secretariat that consists of the chiefs of the independent intelligence services, the police and paramilitary forces. Below the Secretariat is the third tier, consisting of two bodies. They are

a. The Strategic Policy Group (SPG), is headed by the Cabinet Secretary and consists of senior civil servants in charge of important ministries, the Heads of Armed Services, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and the Governor of Reserve Bank of India.

b. The National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) is headed by a convenor appointed by the government and it consists of retired civil servants, retired military officers, academics and non-governmental experts.

Important issues affecting the nation will be jointly discussed by the SPG and the NSAB. After deliberations, they would give their suggestion to the National Security Advisor, through his secretariat. These suggestions will be then passed on to the Principals of the National Security Council. The information provided by these bodies are also helpful in taking important policy decisions in the military communities and the secretariat of ministries.

The NSC is helpful in long-range strategic planning and monitoring threat environments to issue warning. The main drawback of the NSC is that the three most important bodies which make it are various forms of the existing governmental institutions. The Principals of the NSC are nothing but the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, which is now renamed as the Cabinet Committee on National Security. The only

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difference is that the latter has also got the responsibility to take decisions after deliberations. The Strategic Policy Group (SPG) is simply the modification of the "Committee of Secretaries", presided over by the Cabinet Secretary, and the New National Security Council Secretariat is nothing but the old Joint Intelligence Committee.

Many Defence analysts argue that these bodies cannot concentrate on long-range planning because they have day-to-day functions which consume all their time. The National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) is the only body which can undertake long-range strategic planning because its members do not have day-to-day responsibilities in administration. But of the various bodies only the Principals, the Secretariat and the Strategic Policy Group have access to the analysed information that affects policy decisions. The NSAB has not been given access to the information collected and it is dependent on how it is being used by the National Security Advisor. The National Security Council as a whole is largely dependent in the process than the strength of its organisational structure. The National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) drafted the Indian Nuclear Doctrine which was released by the National Security Advisor in 1999.

THE INDIAN NUCLEAR DOCTRINE

India is always aware that it is lagging behind in economic development, which has made it to concentrate more on human development. India has fought many wars with its neighbouring countries China and Pakistan and has learnt that peace was a precondition to the country's development and hence defence is an alternate choice for development. The philosophy of Indian defence is the concept of defensive-defence. The roots of the philosophy lie in the traditional, cultural and political Indian approach to conflict and its
prevention and resolution. The prime objectives of India is to achieve economic, social and scientific developments within a peaceful and democratic framework. Even though, India is a peace-loving nation, it has to have a strategic policy owing to its strategic location and volatile environment.

Some of the Indian and Western scholars were of the view that India lacks a strategic policy. Thus, situations forced India to conceptualise its strategic policy and bring it for public discussion. In December 1996, the parliamentary committee on defence had emphasised the need to have a clearly enunciated defence policy. Many reasons can be cited for drafting India’s nuclear doctrine. It is rooted in an critical examination of its potential adversaries, China and Pakistan and more recently the Kargil intrusion and also the growing nuclear power of Pakistan. All these events made India to think over consolidating its position in the future. Viewed from this background, the need was felt to clearly define the nuclear doctrine. So, the National Security Council (NSC) ordered the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) to formulate a nuclear doctrine.

The newly constituted NSAB drafted the Indian nuclear doctrine, with the help of 27 Board members. The draft was released by the National Security Advisor, Brajesh Mishra, on August 17, 1999, for public debate. This document prepared on India’s nuclear doctrine was designed for informal public debate. The central logic of India’s nuclear doctrine is build on some essential principles, which contains 8 parts. They are as follows:


1. Preamble

The Preamble speaks about the nuclear weapons as a threat to humanity and the stability of the whole world. The apprehension of India regarding the legitimisation of nuclear weapons in the hands of few, through the indefinite extension of NPT in 1995, is expressed in the Preamble. The chemical and biological weapons have been banned by international treaties but on the other hand nuclear weapons are considered to be symbol of prestige and national security. Nuclear weapon states have also proclaimed that they cannot totally abandon nuclear weapons, which is a setback to efforts taken towards disarmament. All these are included in the Preamble. Moreover, the Preamble also expresses India's right in decision making in the developmental process and in strategic matters. The document is also stated to have outlined the principles of development and deployment of India's nuclear force.
2. Objectives

   a. India requires effective and credible nuclear deterrence and adequate retaliatory capability if deterrence fails.

   b. The requirements of deterrence should be carefully assessed to provide for a level of capability consistent with maximum credibility.

   c. India will follow a doctrine of credible minimum nuclear deterrence.

   d. India will not be the first to use nuclear weapons but will respond with destructive retaliation, if deterrence fails.

   e. India will not use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear state.

   f. India will maintain a highly effective conventional military capability to counter any military conflict.

3. Nuclear Forces

   India’s nuclear forces will consist of a triad of aircraft, mobile land-based missiles and sea-based assets. It also says that India’s nuclear forces will be effective, enduring and responsive to the requirements in accordance with the concept of credible minimum deterrence. The doctrine also envisages the ability to retaliate effectively even in case of severe degradation and damage because of hostile strikes.
4. **Credibility and Survivability**

According to India's "No-first use" policy, the credibility of its forces must be made known to adversaries. They must know that India can and will retaliate with nuclear weapons to inflict unacceptable damage. As far as the survivability is concerned, the Indian nuclear forces and their command and control system will be organised for survivability against surprise attacks. They will be deployed in such a way so as to ensure survival against a first strike.

5. **Command and Control**

The authority to use nuclear weapons rests with the Prime Minister or the designated successor(s). An effective **C4I2** (Command, Control, Communication, Computation, Intelligence, Information) system is also envisaged. It is also stated that space based and other assets will be created to provide early warning.

6. **Security and Safety**

Precautionary measures to avoid theft, loss, damage or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons are to be incorporated because safety is an absolute requirement. The doctrine also envisages that India will develop proper disaster control system capable of handling any unexpected situations involving nuclear weapons.

7. **Research and Development**

India will continue to take efforts in research and development to keep in pace with the technical advances in this field without accepting any restraints on building its research and development capability.
8. Disarmament and Arms control

Global nuclear disarmament, no-first use of nuclear weapons, confidence building measures and security assurances to the non-nuclear weapon states were given importance.

THE INDIAN NUCLEAR DOCTRINE - A CRITICAL EVALUATION

No-first use

India has opted the policy of "No-first use" of nuclear weapons with an intention to reduce the tension and threat of nuclear war with her neighbours. China is the only nuclear weapon state to commit herself to the policy of "No-first use" of nuclear weapons. In order to make the "No-first use" credible, India has to possess an effective and survivable second strike capability. This needs research and development in this area which will require additional financial assistance. The second strike capability should have a proper triad system well enough to deter Pakistan, whose nuclear doctrine is based on "first strike".

No-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states

This principle is to avoid non-nuclear weapon states from being threatened by the Indian nuclear doctrine and also to prevent such nations aligning with India’s adversaries who possess nuclear weapons.

Triad System

The Indian nuclear doctrine mentions a triad of air-craft, land-based missiles and sea-based assets. Although, India has ballilistic missiles of various capabilities, their
accuracy needs to be improved to a greater degree. Apart from this, India has to strengthen its sea-based assets because this field is almost non-existent.

**Minimum deterrence**

The Indian philosophy of deterrence does not deny the certainty of the destructive power of its arsenal, but it warns its adversaries that they cannot escape retaliation, if they were to resort to use of nuclear weapons.

The doctrine of credible minimum deterrence should be quantified based on the possible adversaries and the likely targets.

**Command and Control System**

The final word to use the nuclear weapons rests with the Prime Minister, but during the time of emergency there has to be an alternate democratic chain of command in the event of conflict escalating into a war. The effective command and control of nuclear forces cannot be organised without appropriate, credible intelligence capabilities, survivable surveillance and reconnaissance mean and computer networks. So India is in position to develop C_{2}SR system (command, control, computing, communications, survivable surveillance and reconnaissance).^{11}

It assures civilian control of nuclear weapons by a democratically elected leadership through a system of command and control.

Safety Systems

Civil defence safety system to control damage, and to assist the civil population to recover from the damages inflicted by nuclear explosions is required. India must also acquire protective safety systems for nuclear weapons to ensure that own people are not exposed to any nuclear misadventure by India’s force.

Global Nuclear Disarmament

The doctrine believes that "globally verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament is a national security objective". It speaks on disarmament more authoritatively. The Indian plea for nuclear disarmament cannot be dismissed as mere idealism in an anarchical international society.

The doctrine emphasises on credible minimum deterrence because the efforts taken by India for global nuclear disarmament several times previously have not been responded properly by the western nations.

Credible minimum deterrence

The Indian nuclear doctrine speaks about the need for a credible minimum deterrence for India in the future. Deterrence does not mean the mere possession of a bomb. To deter, is to prevent an aggression on oneself by the threat of retaliation. Credible deterrence, therefore means the capability to retaliate. The strength of any deterrent logic consists in convincing the opponent that the pain of punishment far out weighs the gains of aggression.\textsuperscript{12} The pain of punishment is a perception which depends

\textsuperscript{12} Raja Menon, \textit{A Nuclear Strategy for India}, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2000, p.152.
on the capability of the deterrior and the perceived certainty that punishment will be inflicted. Even during the US-Soviet cold war, there was a notion of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), which means that even if one side launched a successful first strike, it cannot escape punishment from the opponent and eventually both the sides would be destroyed.

The capability to retaliate even after a successful first strike depends on two things.

1. The possession of delivery vehicles that can reach the enemy targets to inflict punishment.
2. The survivability of a retaliatory force.

Firstly, a country must have the ability to attack its enemy. This is possible only if it has the necessary delivery vehicles. Secondly, a country must survive a first strike to retaliate. This requires early warning systems to alarm that the other side has launched a first strike. This is very important because the challenger has no doubt that a retaliatory attack can be launched.

The primary data collected from the intellectuals through questionnaires is interpreted below.

The Indian Nuclear Deterrence - Against Threats

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. Responded</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Will be less effective</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table - 5.2
When asked about the reliability and effectiveness of the Indian nuclear deterrent against potential threats, about 70% of the respondents have responded that it will be effective and the remaining 30% have replied that it will be less effective. Majority of the people feel that India’s potential rivals China and Pakistan will be deterred by the Indian deterrent as India has a well established nuclear weapons programme and also missiles with various ranges capable of carrying nuclear warheads which can reach the main cities of both China and Pakistan.

"Credible Minimum Deterrence" - Deterrence & Defence Budget

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<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table - 5.3

When asked whether the policy of "Credible minimum deterrence" would help India to deter its rivals and also reduce its defence spending, about 76% have responded with the answer ‘Yes’ and only 24% of them have said ‘No’. This shows that majority of them think that adhering to this policy, will in no way affect the effectiveness of the Indian deterrence and also it will reduce the annual defence spending which can be used for socio-economic development. Every year a lion’s share goes to the country’s defence budget which can be minimized if the present nuclear force is maintained properly.

The main requirement for survivability is command and control of nuclear weapons. There should be a reliable command and control system so as to ensure that
nuclear weapons are not used without proper authorisation and that, it is used only when the proper authority orders their use.

**Nuclear Command Authority (NCA)**

Nearly four years after the Pokhran-II nuclear tests, on January 4, 2003, India announced a set of political principles and administrative arrangements to manage its arsenal of atomic weapons.

Absolute political control over decision-making, maximum restraint in the use of nuclear weapons and proper relationship between civilian and military leaders, in the management of atomic weapons, were some of the important points in the announcement made by the government. Decisions in these areas were taken during a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) which was held to review the progress in implementing India’s nuclear doctrine, the state of readiness of its strategic forces and the procedures for their command and control. The importance of the CCS statement lies in the government’s decision to share information on some key aspects of its nuclear weapons management with the Indian public and the world. Although, the Indian nuclear doctrine was well known to all in its full sense, the nature of its command and control over the atomic arsenal had remained unclear.

The Indian government filled that gap by revealing that a two layered structure called the Nuclear Command Authority (NCA), was responsible for the management of its weapons. The NCA consists of a Political and an Executive Council. The Political Council will be chaired by the Prime Minister and it is vested with the power to authorise the use of nuclear weapons. The Executive Council will be chaired by the National
Security Advisor to the Prime Minister and it will provide inputs required for making decisions by the NCA and also executes the directives given to it by the Political Council.

The CCS also approved the appointment of a commander-in-chief, Strategic Forces Command, who would be responsible for the administration of the nuclear forces. A senior officer of the Air Force is expected to be nominated to the post. Taken together these administrative arrangements form the crucial link between the civilian and military leadership on nuclear decisions and their execution.12

The CCS expressed satisfaction over the preparedness of the Indian arsenal and announced its decision to limit India’s capability to a "credible minimum deterrent". It has also decided to use nuclear weapons only in retaliation. India once again reaffirmed that, it would not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states and against nuclear weapon powers it would follow the policy of "No-first use". Eventhough, India has chosen not to use nuclear weapons first, it warned potential adversaries that the nuclear retaliation to a first-strike will be massive. India emphasised its readiness to join multilateral arms control agreements and its commitment to global disarmament. This broad framework is outlined in the draft nuclear doctrine and the announcement made on January 4, 2003, confirmed the essence of that draft as official policy. Moreover, India also reiterated that its arsenal aimed to deter threats even from those of chemical and biological weapons. The CCS said that if there was a major attack against India by biological or chemical weapons, India will retain the option of retaliating with nuclear weapons.

The CCS, however did not tell about the actual composition of the NCA at its Political and Executive levels. The Indian Government has stated that, it has reviewed and

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approved the arrangements for alternate chains of command for retaliatory nuclear strikes in all eventualities. This is a reference to a situation in which the Prime Minister may be incapacitated during a crisis. But the CCS does not reveal how the power to press the nuclear button will move down the political chain in the event of such a contingency.

Thus, after the Pokhran-II nuclear tests, India has taken the necessary measures for planning and decision making in the nuclear issues.