

# **Nuclearisation of India and Pakistan: Security or Holocaust?**

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### **Abstracts**

The paper identifies four situations in which a nuclear war between India and Pakistan can erupt. It argues that fear of mutual assured destruction would not prevent nuclear war between the two countries even if it arguably worked for US and USSR. Given the political history, persistent belligerent relations and prevalence of a jingoistic culture and mindset of the elite of the two countries, chances of eruption of such a war between them cannot be eliminated in the presence of nuclear weapons. The short term measures to reduce risk of such a war at best can temporarily avert but cannot eliminate it. The paper further argues that even if India does not denuclearise itself, Pakistan should unilaterally renounce its weapons to prevent the catastrophe of a nuclear war as well as to avoid implosion on the pattern of USSR. The overall benefits of such a policy are also identified.

The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe. Einstein

### **Introduction**

The consequences of development to nuclear weapons at global and national level can be evaluated in two frameworks - the global humanist and the nationalist. In the global humanist framework the central issues are the impact of nuclear weapons on survival and development of human race and how this threat can be eliminated. In the nationalist perspective the crucial issues are the benefits of nuclear weapons for a specific country in terms of sovereignty and security and how much it will cost to develop and maintain them. Within the nationalist framework two different sub-frameworks with competing values exist; one puts higher value on achieving national security, national power, glory and international status, the other on reduction of poverty, human resource development, peace and cultural development. A national elite operating in the first sub-framework is more likely to decide in favour of acquiring nuclear weapons than the one functioning within the second sub-framework.<sup>1</sup>

The present paper analyses the consequences of acquisition of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan within the humanist-global perspective.<sup>2</sup> It particularly focuses on the chances of

1. *The global humanist perspective and nationalist-developmental perspective often converge opposing the acquisition and proliferation of nuclear weapons though their arguments against them differ. Dialogue between the advocates of global-humanist and nationalist-developmental values is easier than between them and security oriented nationalists.*

2. *This perspective has been adopted for two reasons. First nuclear weapons for the first times in human history have created a situation in which human race could totally be eliminated from earth. They have thus linked the fate of even nation to global survival. Second only a small number of scholars in South Asia have written on this issue from global perspective. Most literature in this field is produced in nationalist framework.*

Eruption of nuclear war between the two countries. It also examines the relevance of the Western experiences of preventing nuclear war during the last 55 years to the situation in South Asia. At it discusses the options the two countries, particularly Pakistan have for preventing a nuclear war and ensuring its survival and security.

## II

### **Probability of Nuclear War in South Asia**

Seeds of nuclear war were sown in South Asia when India started its nuclear programme after its defeat by China in 1962 and exploded its first device in 1974 and Pakistan developed a similar programme in 1972 after defeat of its military in 1971. Deep-rooted historical animosity, three wars between the two countries, unresolved Kashmir issue, and political culture and mindset of the political and military elite provided fertile soil for these seeds to germinate. They began to grow rapidly after India and Pakistan tested their nuclear capability in 1998. In the second quarter of 1999 they were on the brink of a conventional war and possibly a nuclear war.

A nuclear war between the two countries can erupt in four different situations. First would be the situation in which one country with the intention to destroy the other initiates a nuclear war. In the second scenario the two countries can drift into such a war without intention. In the third situation one adversary can start a nuclear war due to inaccurate information and miscalculation the intention of the other. Finally, it can occur accidentally due to the failure of some technical device.

## 1. Intentional Nuclear War

The nuclear advocates world over rule out the possibility of an intentional nuclear war arguing that has not occurred so far and therefore is unlikely to happen in future. The fear of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) would prevent it as it did in the past. They assume that humans seek their individual and collective survival rationally and would not attempt to destroy their adversary if they are sure that they will be destroyed in the process.<sup>3</sup> From these premises some conclude that the proliferation of nuclear weapons can assure global peace rather than threatening it (Cimbala 1995/1996, p. 212).

The fear of mutual assured destruction (which is essentially a fear of assured self-destruction), on which the untested deterrence theory is based, provides weak grounds for preventing a nuclear war indefinitely. In certain situations some humans such as suicide bombers willingly choose to destroy themselves in order to destroy their enemy. Their motives to do this may be different such as seeking martyrdom for a sacred or secular cause, to take revenge for past humiliations, to redeem personal and national honour and for getting their names inscribed in history.<sup>4</sup> In certain situations a group and a nation can adopt this self-destructing behaviour for reasons similar to individuals. Indeed capacity of nuclear weapons to cause destruction at much

3. *Some among them argue that MAD will prevent even a conventional war between two countries equipped with nuclear weapons.*

4. *Nearly all societies strengthen such motivation in some of their members to induce them to sacrifice their lives for collective interest" by glorifying their heroism and inscribing their sacrifices in national monuments and history. Generally, militaristic societies and military organisations offer greater material and symbolic rewards for sacrifices.*

larger scale and in a very short time than the conventional weapons makes them different in their consequence. But seen from the perspective of a suicide bomber or a country having a mentality of a suicide bomber it is inconsequential if the weapon used for self-destruction is a cyanide pill or a nuclear weapon as their only concern is to cause greatest possible damage to the enemy. Nuclear weapons are more suited to achieve such a goal than the conventional weapons.

To assess to what extent mutual assured destruction will work for India and Pakistan now equipped with nuclear weapons, one needs to understand the political culture and constituents of the mindsets of military and political elite of the two countries. Such understanding is necessary to assess what meaning this elite would give to any aggressive move initiated by one country against the other and its response to it.

### **Political Culture and Elite Mindsets in India and Pakistan**

The way their culture has evolved and is presently structured, humans invariably respond to any threat to their perceived personal and collective survival with violence.<sup>5</sup> However the intensity of such violent response is not universally constant. It increases or decreases in the specific situation of a country or a society. Due to the reasons discussed later, such response instantly surfaces in case of India and Pakistan and determines their security relations. In such a situation elite and non-elite are in its grip equally. Pre-partition history of Hindu and Muslim communities and post-partition developments particularly three wars, Kashmir issue and other smaller conflicts between the two countries have sustained and invigorated such response continuously. Victory over the other country and martyrdom for achieving it have become two important values. The martial qualities such as bravery in causing greatest damage to the enemy and martyrdom are glorified. The nuclear tests of May 1998 have further strengthened this culture<sup>6</sup>

The above-described elements of culture of the two countries are sharper at the level of elite than at the level of masses. The elite in both the countries hold highly negative images of each other. They rationalise their policies and actions with reference to the past behaviour and faults of each other and often blame the other for the Partition of India and the consequences that flowed from it. The Pakistani elite repeatedly asserts that the Indian leaders continue to be un-reconciled to the existence of Pakistan wanting it to collapse. The Indian elite on the other hand believes that the Pakistani leaders are committed to seek fragmentation of India and reduce its international status. Both the elite blame each other for starting the three wars between the two countries. They also hold the adversary responsible for whatever internal turbulence and terrorism occurs in their country.

Re-enforcing each other, the dominant strains in the culture of elite and non-elite create a fertile ground for starting or drifting towards a nuclear war. In a conflict situation when intense

5. *Ubiquitous conflicts of various types including wars that have littered the known history of humankind provide evidence of it. Development of increasingly sophisticated weapons of doing violence including the ultimate destroyers - nuclear weapons - confirms the violence prone nature of this culture.*

6. *These values probably are more emphasised in the smaller Pakistan with strong martial tradition. Pakistan has put on display at a crossroad in Islamabad, its capital, the replica of the Chagai mountain where it conducted its nuclear tests to induce martial spirit in its people. One of its missiles. Ghori is named after the Muslim conqueror Shahbuddin Ghori who defeated an Indian ruler Prithvi several centuries ago. It carries an implicit message and a reminder to the Indians particularly their Hindu section that Muslims had defeated them in the past and now equipped with nuclear weapons can do so again.*

emotional frenzy seizes both the elite and masses they are likely to shape the decisions about the use of nuclear weapons. They may override the fear of mutual destruction, rationality and desire to live. Some evidence detailed later suggests that such frenzy during Kargil crisis had brought the two countries near to the nuclear precipice.

The jingoistic political culture (seeking the destruction of the other country) is fed, sustained and expresses itself in more extreme form in the declared or undeclared political agenda of a number of religious groups and political parties in both countries. In India, Rashtaria Swayam Sevak Sangh (), a Hindu fundamentalist organisation that provides political support to the present ruling party, BJP, urged the Indian government during Kargil episode to use nuclear weapons against Pakistan. In an editorial appearing in "*Fanchajanya*" (June 20, 1999), a mouthpiece of the RSS, advocated dropping of nuclear bombs over Pakistan as a solution to the long standing Pakistani hostility and belligerence against India. The editorial called upon Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to earn the distinction of the man who brought about the "final solution" of Muslim problem in the Indian subcontinent. The leader of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad Ashok Singhal considers war a better step to teach Pakistan "a lesson" and has termed the nuclear tests conducted at Pokhran as a symbol of "Hindu revivalism (*The Asian Age*, May 24, 1998)."

There are a number of people, groups and political parties in Pakistan who seek conquest of India or its disintegration.<sup>7</sup> Some of them are not adequately aware of the consequences of such an act to their own country<sup>8</sup> or may be are willing to pay the necessary price.<sup>9</sup> Although they may not put their intentions in their declared agenda and public statements, in private

discussions they freely express them. At present such people may not be in power in the two countries but they can gain control of the state in future. Their direct and indirect influence over the state in both countries is increasing. Even if they capture power only in one country, the chances of nuclear war would certainly increase.

### **Nuclear Doctrines of India and Pakistan and Drift towards an Intentional Nuclear War**

Even if one assumes that such people will not come to power during the period the two countries possess nuclear weapons - a very precarious assumption indeed - the two countries can drift into an intentional nuclear war due to thrust of their nuclear doctrines. The Indian doctrine commits

7. *Maulana Sufi Muhammad, leader of Tehrik Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi declared that this party would liberate Kashmir and conquer India through Jihad further adding that the national treasury of India would be captured as war boot) and converted into Bait Maal (The News, September 6, 2000). A leader of Lashkar-e-Tayabah said that Lashkar's prime objective was the disintegration and fragmentation of India followed by liberation of Kashmir (The News, Nov. 23, 2000, p. 4).*

8. *An article in The News, February 18, 1994 written by a politician says "... nuclear war between India and Pakistan will not be a ten-minute affair, because the 120 million Pakistanis would fight for every inch of their land (quoted in Khattak, 1996, p. 349)." Obviously the politician is unaware that nuclear war is neither fought inch by inch nor it is fought by people.*

9. *Pro. Hoodbhoy of Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad has narrated a conversation with a serving Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee in which he told him that India must be destroyed even if it leads to the annihilation of Pakistan itself (quoted in "Dr. Nayyar Speaks" Political Economy, The News, June 11, 2000). Such thinking is prevalent also among a certain section of people particularly among students influenced by anti-India political parties. Pro. Nayyar of Quaid-i-Azam University addressed the students of National Institute of Psychology on the issue of distortions in textbooks of history in Pakistan on 2m1 Ma' 2flf/O. At the cud of his speech. a student got tip. berated him and then walked out. Other students in the class generally applauded him. The applause was loudest when the questioning student said that we should destroy India even if Pakistan itself was annihilated in the process ("Dr. Nayyar Speaks...." Political Economy. The News, June 11, 2000).*

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the country to expand its nuclear programme and develop a second strike capability (*The News*, August 18, 1999). Having at least a quantitative edge over Pakistan and perceived capability of withstanding first nuclear strike, India has conveniently proclaimed that it would not initiate a nuclear attack. Pakistan has committed itself to a policy of nuclear restraint and not to further develop its nuclear programme. However, to ensure full deterrent effect of its arsenal on India, Pakistan has declared that it would be compelled to use nuclear weapons when its integrity and survival was at stake and has refused to commit itself to "no first use" policy. Many Pakistani and Indian strategists know that Pakistan can use nuclear weapons against India when larger Indian conventional forces are about to overrun Pakistan's smaller forces.<sup>10</sup> As India knows the circumstances in which Pakistan would make a first strike, it

can make a pre-emptive strike before that situation arises despite its declarations to the contrary. Apprehending a first strike by India, Pakistan may not wait for the emergence of the situation it specifies and can initiate a strike before such a situation arises to reduce the damage the Indian second strike will do to it.<sup>11</sup> All these possibilities create a highly unstable situation in which nuclear war can erupt.

Since their nuclear tests both countries have made a number of threats of use of nuclear weapons against each other though always qualifying that they would do so only if attacked by the adversary. If the security environment between the two countries were free from jingoism and brinkmanship, such threats by a bellicose elite could be treated as empty and rhetorical and an attempt to please their local hawkish constituencies. However, the situation as it is between the two countries, such threats can only heighten the war hysteria pushing them towards a nuclear exchange.

Some evidence suggests that during the Kargil episode the two countries were drifting towards such an exchange. According to the assessment of a British Foreign Office Minister Peter Ham the two countries were “very close” to a nuclear exchange during this crisis. The then Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif on his return from Washington on July 8, 1999 reasoned that he ordered the withdrawal of “militants” from Kargil to avert an impending wider war between the two countries which would have turned into a nuclear war. He said, “India even turned the direction of its nuclear weapons towards Pakistan (*The News*, 13 July, 1999).<sup>12</sup> Raj Chengappa who has recently written a book on nuclear weapons in India says that a certain stage in Kargil episode India” ...activated all its three types of nuclear delivery vehicles and keep them at what is known as Readiness State 3 - meaning that some nuclear bombs would be ready to be mated with the delivery vehicles at short notice. Another Indian scholar Dr. Sanjay Badri-Maharaj in

10. *Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Inamul Haq has said: ‘There is no way Pakistan can hold out any assurance that it will not use any nuclear weapons if its existence is threatened (The News, July 21, 2000).’ Professor Hoodbhoy of Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad in a discussion with some army officers was told that Pakistan would use nuclear weapons if there was a major war with India and if the Pakistani army lost ground and was on the verge of losing a major city. This view is shared by other sections of the Pakistani society. Some surveys show that only 1% of the Pakistanis believed that their country would never use nuclear weapons compared to 44% Indians. Ninety eight percent Pakistanis believed that Pakistan could use nuclear weapons if India was about to attack it and 33% Indians believed that their country would use nuclear weapon if Pakistan were to take over Kashmir (Nayyar, 1997, p.166). Other statements defining such a situation more precisely have been made in seminars and private discussions.*



11. *Given the paranoiac state of mind of political and military elite of the two countries, the Pakistani elite in any case does not trust the Indian declaration of "no first use."*

12. *His explanation may be considered self-serving and contrived to cool down the anger of those who thought his visit to Washington was a national humiliation. But other evidence as documented in a recent book on Kargil situation confirms that he was telling the truth.*

his article "Nuclear India's Status" published in the *Indian Defence Review* quotes a security expert saying that "four nuclear armed Prithvis and one Agni were deployed for retaliatory strikes during Kargil (*The News*, June 19, 2000).<sup>13</sup>

## 2. **Drift towards Nuclear War: Kashmir Issue**

In the drift-prone mindsets of elite and structure of relations between India and Pakistan, the festering dispute over Kashmir between the two countries can suck them into an un-intended nuclear war. Such a drift led to wars in 1948 and 1965 particularly in the case of the latter. Neither of them wanted to start the war in 1965. Believing that Kashmiris were in revolt against India Pakistani leaders sent some semi-trained people in Kashmir to weaken Indian hold on it.<sup>14</sup> When they failed to achieve the expected results, Pakistan sent its forces into Kashmir believing that India would not cross the international borders but it did and the two countries got sucked into a three-week war.

Kashmir dispute, which has remained with the two countries since 1947, is not easy to resolve and may remain unresolved for foreseeable future. In both countries the Kashmir policies of the two governments with their thrust to use force to solve the issue enjoys considerable popular support.<sup>15</sup> A peaceful settlement would require a major change in the attitudes of the Indian and Pakistani elite. Being part of deeper level of mindsets described above, these attitudes are unlikely to change in the near future. India seems determined to keep Kashmir as its part regardless of the amount of coercion it has to use against the Kashmiris and the damage such coercion causes to its democratic credentials and human rights record. Its past conduct shows that it is willing to go to war with Pakistan on this issue. The well-known Indian position on Kashmir under its control is that it is an integral part of India and it would not let Pakistan wrest it by force. It has persistently resisted all peaceful solutions including letting Kashmiris decide their future. It hopes that some day in future Pakistan, Kashmiris and the world community will forget about Kashmir. Pakistan on the other hand regards Kashmir as a disputed territory whose future is to be decided according to the United Nations resolutions. It is determined not to leave the Kashmir issue in cold storage and has several times in the past attempted to change the status quo. The declared policy of

Pakistan towards struggle of Kashmiris is to provide them moral and diplomatic support. But this support has often gone beyond the declared limits particularly since the start of insurrection in Kashmir in 1989 and during the Kargil clash. Since its nuclear tests in 1998, Pakistan is projecting Kashmir as a nuclear flash point. This may be just to draw attention of the world community to help solve the issue, but it can also become a self-fulfilling prophecy fading to eruption of first conventional and then nuclear war.

In addition to their determination to keep Kashmir under their control, the Indian leaders have repeatedly contended that the only issue concerning Kashmir to be resolved is its vacation by Pakistan of the area held by it. After its nuclear tests the Indian Home Minister Advani added to the intensity of this contention by announcing that now India would follow a proactive policy on

13. *Baidri-Maharj's article is not available to this writer for direct citation. Pakistan's response to India's mobilization is not Known.*

14. *According to Air Marshal (retd.) Nur Khan, their number was six to eight thousand (Ahmad, 2000).*

15. *In Pakistan there is a considerable support for solving Kashmir problem through use of force. According to a study conducted by Tariq Rahman a very high percentage of students in his sample belonging to different types of when asked 'should Pakistan conquer Kashmir' responded affirmatively (The News, 1 2. 2000).*

Kashmir (*The Telegraph*, Calcutta, May 19, 1998). India's Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Tourism, Madan Lal Khurana said "If Pakistan wants to fight another war with us they should tell us the place and time as we are ready for that (*The Asian Age*, May 22, 1998).<sup>16</sup>

The Indian leaders also demand from Pakistan to stop infiltrating into Kashmir the militants, which they believe are trained and armed by it. However, Pakistan rejects the charge of infiltration. If Indian army finds itself unable to control the militants and is on the brink of losing its grip on Kashmir, it may engage in hot pursuit of militants its forces crossing into Pakistani controlled Kashmir territory, a recipe for conventional war and a slippery road to nuclear war.<sup>17</sup>

### 3. Nuclear War due to Miscalculation and Misinformation

An unintended nuclear war can occur due to wrong assumptions about the adversary and miscalculation and misinformation about its strategies and military moves. Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 illustrates this danger.<sup>18</sup> In case of India and Pakistan this danger is more acute due to the above described mindsets of Indian and Pakistani political and military elite. They have strong tendency to make wrong assumptions about the intention of the other and misinterpret the information on security issues emerging from the other side. The unfolding of 1965 war and Operation Brasstacks illustrate the point. Before 1965 war, the Pakistani leaders assumed that India would not cross international borders if Pakistan moved its army into Kashmir by considering it a disputed territory. But contrary to this assumption, the Indians crossed the international borders.

During and before Operation Brasstacks the military leaders in both the countries misinterpreted the reason behind the movements of armed forces of the other country. Confidence-building measures that were in place during the crisis were not used. Whenever they were, both sides thought that adversary was giving it false information to mislead or deceive it. Their intelligence agencies further re-enforced this suspicion by deliberately feeding wrong information. Pakistan took the movement of Indian forces during the Operation so seriously that according to several reports emerging from Pakistani sources it threatened to use nuclear weapons against them (Bajpai & others, 1995, p. ii).

16. *It cannot be assumed that both Advani and Khurana were unaware of the nuclear capability of Pakistan at the time of their threats. It is likely that they made these statements to lure Pakistan into conducting a nuclear test when they found that it has not conducted its test even after 10 to 11 days of their tests.*

17. *Recently two factors have added to this danger; talks of a "limited war" against Pakistan in some circles in India and resumption of operations by I-lizbul Mujahideen, a major organisation of Kashmiri militants, after a two-week ceasefire. About two weeks after Hizb resumed its operation, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Abdus Sattar trned that a conventional war resulting from Kashmir issue can turn into a nuclear war (The News, 13 August 2000).*

18. *In 1989 Robert McNamara, US Defence Secretary at the time of crisis arranged in Berlin a meeting of the decision-makers during the Cuban crisis from US, Soviet Union and Cuba. In describing what they thought adversary was planning to do they discovered that they read the intentions of each other incorrectly. The Soviet leaders assumed that the US was going to attack Cuba to overthrow Castro. But McNarnara said in the meeting that they had no such intention. The Americans believed that Soviets would not move nuclear warheads in Cuba. But they did. The Soviets thought they could move these weapons in Cuba without being detected. They were wrong. Those who advised Kennedy to invade Cuba on the assumption that Soviets would not respond to it with military action were also "wrong, The Soviet participants said that they certainly would have responded with military action. The Americans assumed that there were 10,000 Soviet troops in Cuba. Actually they were 40,000. The Soviet Union had authorised local Soviet Commanders to use nuclear weapons if US attacked Cuba. Luckily the US did not attack otherwise nuclear war would have erupted certainly (McNamra. 1989).*

Both countries made similar wrong assumptions during Kargil episode Before the Kargil episode the Indians believed that Pakistan would not occupy Kargil hills if it left them

unguarded during winter. Pakistan did. Pakistan military leaders believed that India would not respond to Kargil so forcefully as it actually later did. As discussed earlier nuclear war was around the corner at that time.

Lack of well-developed and unambiguous command and control structure, foolproof safety mechanisms, early warning system and reliable means of communication further raises the danger of nuclear war between the two countries due to miscalculation and wrong information. Even if they develop such a system that appears to be beyond their technical and financial resources, it may prove ineffective at the critical moment. The few minutes in which their missiles have to fly to hit their targets is too small a time for their decision-makers to reverse a nuclear attack after discovering that it was launched on wrong information.

#### 4. **Accidental Nuclear War**

Finally a nuclear war can occur accidentally, due to technical failure or misreading of data from a technical device. Such misreading happened several times during the cold war between US and USSR (Sagan, **1993**).<sup>19</sup> Even after the end of cold war it happened at least once. In January 1995 Russian forces mistook a scientific rocket launched from Norway for a US attack leading to activation of Yeltsin's nuclear 'suitcase' (Krepon, 1999). If correction was not made in time, a nuclear war might have started. As such devices have not been installed in India and Pakistan their failure cannot cause a nuclear war. But the absence of these devices becomes an additional factor adding to vulnerability of the two countries to an accidental, unintentional and unauthorised nuclear war.

### **III**

#### **Relevance of Western Experience to Nuclear War in South Asia**

It is often argued by supporters of nuclear weapons in South Asia that the fear of mutual assured destruction that prevented nuclear war between United States and Soviet Union during the last fifty years would also prevent such a war in South Asia (Hussain, 1990, p. 32). The validity of this self-comforting assumption is questionable on several grounds. First, though the two superpowers did not actually launch a nuclear war, they were on the verge of it on a number of times particularly during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.<sup>20</sup> Explaining

what prevented nuclear war between US and USSR during this crisis General Lee Butler who headed the US Air Command has said that the world "... survived the Cuban missile crisis no thanks to deterrence, but only by the grace of God (Butler, 1997)."

Second, even after the end of cold war, reduction in nuclear warheads, and measures being taken under Salt II, US and Russia each have about 3,000 nukes targeted on each other. A serious provocation or an accident may trigger a nuclear war.<sup>21</sup> When US criticised Russia for its attack

19. *Sagan has listed many incidences of failure of technical devices during cold war. In one case an intruding bear caused false alarms and pilots of bombers equipped with nuclear weapons got into them to attack USSR.*

20. *A detailed study of threat of nuclear war during 39 years of cold war shows that 73% of this time a serious threat of use of nuclear weapons existed (Morgan. 1996).*

21. *The UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan in his message to Disarmament Conference in April 21)00. pointed out that nuclear war remained a "very real danger and verifying possibility" at the beginning of the 21st century (April 24. 2000).*

on Chechnya in 1998 the Russian President reminded it that it was dealing with a nuclear power. The message was clear that Russia would use nuclear weapons to protect its sovereignty over Chechnya.

Third, if a nuclear war did not occur between US and USSR, it cannot be automatically assumed that it will not erupt between India and Pakistan. A number of factors that could precipitate a war were missing in the case of US and USSR but are present in the case of India and Pakistan.<sup>22</sup>The US and USSR had no territorial dispute before or during the cold war. India and Pakistan have an explosive one over Kashmir. The US and USSR had no contiguous borders, historical animosity and sharp religious divisions. India and Pakistan have. The US and Russia purposively avoided direct confrontation and brinkmanship, They did not clash directly and their armed forces were under order not to provoke the other side. India and Pakistan even after their nuclear tests of May, 1998 have engaged in provocation and brinkmanship.

## IV

### Denuclearisation of South Asia

Having identified that chances of nuclear war in India and Pakistan are high and that they are higher than they were between US and USSR, one needs to examine the strategies for preventing such a war in South Asia. For this it is necessary to understand the process of global nuclear proliferation and non-proliferation and situate Pakistan and India in this process. This will help understand why they developed nuclear weapons and under what conditions they will be willing or unwilling to renounce them.

## 1. **Global Movement against Proliferation**

Apprehension of Allies during Second World War that Hitler's Germany may develop an atomic weapon led United States to start Manhattan project that successfully developed a nuclear bomb. After US demonstrated the immense destructive capability of atomic weapons on two cities of Japan the nuclear arms race started first joined by USSR and then by other countries. Certain factors, such as desire for domination over others, protection of "national sovereignty," parochial and often paranoiac approach of dealing with enemies, exaggerated fears of threat to national security and dreams of winning national glory sustained it. Every new entrant in the race often claimed that it had no choice but to go nuclear for the sake of its survival. The justification for race was sought within a nationalist-security framework ignoring global- humanist and nationalist-development consequences of nuclear race.

As nuclear arms proliferated both vertically and horizontally putting survival of human race at risk, a movement to eliminate them also came into existence. The movement was led by governments as well as by non- governmental international community. Concerned about the consequence of these weapons for themselves and for human race several non-nuclear countries started pressuring the nuclear powers to eliminate their nuclear arsenal. The pressure was

**22** See Schulz. 1993, p. 3 and Michael Quinlan quoted in Hussain, 2000. p. 20. Michael Krepon, Executive Director of Henry L. Stimson Centre, Washington D.C. and an authority on nuclear disarmament argued in his presentation to Islamabad Social Sciences Forum that nuclear war did not start in West due to the decision of the two superpower not to disturb the status quo, to avoid brinkmanship, and maintain a certain degree of trust. These conditions are absent in case of India and Pakistan.

exerted both within and outside the framework of United Nations. As a result, first came the non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968,<sup>23</sup> which set the goal of stopping the process of further proliferation of nuclear weapons.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, NPT is only a half step forward towards

denuclearisation of the globe, as the five nuclear powers did not set up a timetable for dismantling their arsenal totally. Many non-nuclear Weapons States (NNWS) interpreted NPT to be an instrument of Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) for establishing their monopoly over nuclear weapons. Indefinite extension of NPT in 1995 and unequivocal commitment by five nuclear powers in April 2000 to total elimination of nuclear weapons replacing their earlier vague commitment to terminate them ‘ultimately’ has somewhat mitigated this weakness of NPT. NPT was followed by CTBT<sup>25</sup> to promote the objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and expand the scope of partial test ban treaty.<sup>26</sup>

Global nuclear disarmament movement at the state level made further gains when seven states possessing nuclear capability or nuclear weapons gave them up for different reasons. South Africa, Argentina and Brazil abandoned them more or less voluntarily. Ukraine followed them and joined the NPT in November 1994 subsequent to the approval of its parliament and removed all the weapons from its territory by June 1996. Australia established a 15-member Commission in November 1995 consisting of world renowned figures who gave a unanimous verdict against the nuclear weapons (Bidwai and Vanaik, 1999, p. 45). More recently in December 1998 seven countries formed an alliance called New Agenda Coalition to bring pressure on regional nuclear states to commit themselves to a timetable for eliminating these weapons (ibid. p. 46)<sup>27</sup>

Anti-nuclear drive of governments also has led to the creation of four nuclear weapons free zones in Latin America (1967), South Pacific (1985), South East Asia (1995) and Africa. Only the last one is yet to be ratified and come into force. With an end to cold war and signing of several treaties by the US and Soviet governments including Start I and Start II, Salt I and Salt II, the size of nuclear arsenal has declined to almost half from 70,000 maintained at the height of cold war.

Anti-nuclear weapons drive at state level was preceded and accompanied by a movement at the level of scientists, intelligentsia and the people and exerted some pressure on the governments to move towards denuclearisation. It was started by some of the scientists who directly or indirectly contributed to the development of nuclear weapons and were joined by many other scientists. The destruction caused by nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and abuse of knowledge of science provided the stimulus.<sup>28</sup> Einstein and philosopher Russell issued an anti

23. *Since its promulgation all the UN member states except Israel, India, Pakistan and Cuba have signed it.*
24. *Agha Shahi, a veteran diplomat with extensive knowledge of nuclear issues, has written that NPT has been considerably successful in achieving its goal of “horizontal spread of nuclear weapons — with its main purpose, preempting regional nuclear competition and promoting the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones (1996, p. 9).”*
25. *The UN General Assembly approved the CTBT in September 1996 with the support of five declared nuclear weapons states and 153 non-nuclear states (Ahmed and Cortright, 2000, p. 3).*
26. *However, it has not been ratified by 23 nuclear capable states whose ratification is required to enforce it. Among them are US, China, India and Pakistan.*
27. *The Group includes Sweden, Ireland, Egypt, Mexico, Brazil, New Zealand, and South Africa.*
28. *A British scientist Rotblat resigned from Manhattan project in 1944 after learning that Germany has abandoned its nuclear project. Australian scientist Mark Oliphant and Soviet scientist, A. Sakharov the architect of hydrogen bomb also expressed their regrets for **contributing** to the development of nuclear weapons. Einstein whose famous*

nuclear manifesto in 1955. They were later joined by other scientists, philosopher, and retired generals and anti-nuclear Pugwash movement was born. A strong citizens’ movement against nuclear weapons developed in US and Europe on two different occasions. These movements created a considerable anti-nuclear consciousness.

The anti-nuclear movement got moral support from a judgement of International Court of Justice, delivered on July 8, 1996. The Court held that their use and threat to use them was contrary to international law except in defence to ensure survival of a state under threat. The president of the Court Bedjaoui called them blind weapons and “ultimate evil”<sup>29</sup> The Court urged the nuclear powers to engage in serious negotiations to eliminate them. The judgement to a great extent delegitimised nuclearism.

The halting and slow process of nuclear disarmament has suffered certain setbacks also. Four countries Cuba, India, Israel and Pakistan have yet to sign the NPT. Two of them India and Pakistan have conducted nuclear tests in 1998 against their earlier repeated claims that their programmes were for “peaceful” purposes.<sup>30</sup> US continues to pursue modernisation programmes of its weapons and US Congress has refused to ratify the CTBT making the future of this treaty uncertain. Persistent effort of US to change the 1972 ABM treaty for developing a limited antiballistic defence system called Nuclear Missile Defence (NMD) is another blow to the nonproliferation process. If implemented it may start a new cycle of nuclear proliferation pushing some countries particularly China to upgrade their programmes. None of the eight countries that possess atomic weapons, though publicly advocate nuclear disarmament and abhor their use, is willing to abandon them unilaterally and unconditionally.



They often demand that others (particularly their specific enemies) should do it first - a demand that helps perpetuate nuclear status quo.

### Indian and Pakistani Positions on Nuclear Issue

The nuclear tests by India at Pokhran and Pakistan at Chagai in May 1998 caused a serious setback to global denuclearisation according to UN Secretary General.<sup>31</sup> They were conducted at a time when the world was moving towards nuclear disarmament and some countries had abandoned their programmes.

The root cause of genesis of nuclear programmes of India and Pakistan is the same fear that initiated nuclear programmes in US and Europe earlier. It is based on the perception that an attack by a nuclear adversary can be deterred only by developing one's own nuclear weapons. This fear first led US to develop nuclear weapons, which then spread from US to Soviet Union, to Europe and later to China. The nuclear weapons programmes of India and Pakistan are products of the same fear and the same logic. In addition, the fear of repetition of defeat and humiliation they suffered at the hand of a neighbour in 1962 and 1971 added to the urgency to start nuclear

*theories indirectly helped create these weapons said that if he knew that his theory would lead to nuclear weapons he would have chosen to become a shoemaker rather than a scientist.*

29. *He further added that "(t) The existence of nuclear weapons is therefore a challenge to the very existence of humanitarian law, not to mention their long-term effects of damage to the human environment, in respect to which the right to life can be exercised" (Emphasis original).*

30. *The y now demand that NPT be amended to give them the status of de jure nuclear states.*

31. *See his address to the Disarmament Conference in April 2000*

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programme<sup>32</sup> Both justify possession of nuclear weapons nationalistic security perspective. Following early proliferators they have also disregarded global humanistic concerns.

India, which supported global humanist point of view against nuclear weapons for two decades, started building its nuclear programme from mid sixties Though its leaders still condemn nuclear weapons, their operational nuclear policy is governed by nationalist security paradigm.<sup>33</sup> The insecure Pakistan has justified its nuclear weapons consistently from nationalist security paradigm that continues to guide it.<sup>34</sup> Beside the dominant security

concerns, both India and Pakistan have additional reasons for possessing nuclear weapons. Indian programme gets its sustenance and support from Indian elite's ambition to make India a regional and eventually a global power. This elite views these weapons as a symbol of power and glory and hopes that they will enhance international status of their country. Pakistan, besides seeking deterrence against Indian nuclear weapons through its weapons also sees them important instruments of countering the expanding power of India in the region.<sup>35</sup>

Governments of India and Pakistan have often claimed that their nuclear programmes have widespread public support and enjoy national consensus. Some indirect indicators show that such a claim may be valid. Most political parties<sup>36</sup> in both countries and elite in different categories support the programme.<sup>37</sup> A part of residents of major cities in both countries displayed great jubilation over May 1998 tests.<sup>38</sup> However, a deeper examination of public opinion data shows that such consensus is limited to the elite of the two countries<sup>39</sup> mostly living in urban areas and may not be as widespread as believed.

32. *India started it sometime in 1964 after its defeat in Sino-Indian border war in 1962 and Pakistan started it in 1972 after its military defeat by India in 1971 war.*

33. *Since 1998 tests global-humanistic concerns seem to have practically disappeared from Indian discourse though occasional rhetoric continues. The message of Ahimsa preaching anti-nuclear Gandhi who considered development of nuclear weapons a most sinful and "diabolical use of science" has lost relevance for India's nuclear policy (Bidwai and Vanaik, 1999, P. 140).*

34. *Efforts of Pakistan to create nuclear free zone in South Asia, to join NPT simultaneously with India and bilaterally renounce nuclear weapons, laudable as they are, are derived more from the nationalist security concerns than global humanistic ones.*

35. *For perception of a part of Indian and Pakistani elite why their country needs nuclear weapons see for India Cortright and Mattoo (eds.) 1996, p. 128 and for Pakistan Ahmed and Cortright (eds.), 2000. p. 122.*

36. *In Pakistan only two regional parties, Awanui National Parties' and Balochistan National Party oppose nuclear weapons publicly.*

37. *The two surveys of opinion of urban based elite in India and Pakistan conducted before May tests show that in both countries a large majority (90% in India and 93% in Pakistan) support nuclear programmes of their countries. Those who absolutely oppose them were 8% in India and 6% in Pakistan. The support is evenly distributed among different categories of elite in both countries. In both countries most of the interviewed elite in the military and business supported the programme. Limited opposition is mainly concentrated among artists and sportsmen in both countries. A larger percentage of the elite in Pakistan supports nuclear weapons than that of Indian elite (Nayyar. 1997. p.164).*

38. *Most of the surveys of public opinion in Pakistan and possibly in India included only urbanites of major cities. A broader survey of Indian public on 25 December 1998. showed that 47 per cent of people had not even heard of the May tests (Bidwai and Vanaik, 1999, p. 273). The situation may not be different in Pakistan*

39. *Apparently this support is now spreading in the younger generations as well. Large number of students in different types of schools in Tariq Rahim's study cited above wanted Pakistan to develop its nuclear programme.*

Several factors explain why nuclear programmes and nuclear weapons have received so much apparent support in India and Pakistan. The support is product of fear and ignorance of the nature of nuclear weapons and their consequences for national and personal lives and not of a well informed rational judgement. Both programmes were started after military defeat and humiliation that lent them certain degree of emotional attachment, which barred rational scrutiny.<sup>40</sup> Both Indian and Pakistani governments presented the nuclear programmes to the public as a security necessity against their traditional enemies. Indian government also added China to the list. Some religious groups (Sangh Parivar in India and Jamaat-e-Islam<sup>41</sup> together with other religious groups in Pakistan) lent them religious legitimacy and sanctity. In both countries protection of their nuclear programme was considered necessary to defy the pressure from nuclear weapon states and to break the monopoly of nuclear power by super powers.

In both countries nuclear programmes were started in secrecy and remained secret for long time. Except for a very small part of political and military elite, rest of the public including professional social scientists never had access to the information to evaluate their economic, physical and political consequences. Indian parliament that has remained in existence since independence never debated its cost.<sup>42</sup> Pakistani parliaments even when they existed were barred to discuss military expenditure including cost of nuclear weapons.

In both countries state has played a decisive role in generating support and controlling opposition to their nuclear programmes. A study on Indian programme states that government was able to control much of the discussion on nuclear issue "... through state patronage of research institutes and universities and the release of selected information to sympathetic investigators (Cortright and Mattoo, 1996, p. 6)."<sup>43</sup> In Pakistan government and pro-nuclear lobbies have played greater role in creating support for nuclear programme and curbing opposition. In Pakistan most seminars organised by government or government-financed organisations on nuclear issues during 1990s were slanted in pro-nuclear official policy. Pakistan Television never invited anti-nuclear analysts in its discussion forums to critically examine the issue lest it breaks the consensus. State controlled universities and research organisations just tolerated the small number of nuclear opponents.<sup>44</sup> Most of intelligentsia and newspaper columnists even when they had knowledge about the cost and consequences of these

40. The Pakistani nuclear programme was started in 1972 in a highly emotional environment as revealed by Mahmood who graphically describes it. “Addressing a meeting of scientists on January 20, 1972 in **Multan**. Bhutto. Then President of Pakistan said ‘we would build atom bomb even if we have to eat grass for it. We would teach India a lesson.’ Perhaps Bhutto wanted to say something more but scientists stood up and chanted slogans of ‘Allah-Akbar.’” Amid clapping, Bhutto asked the scientists how many years it would take them to make atom bomb. There were different voices, in ten years, in five years, in six years and in seven years. Meanwhile, one Dr. Sakhi Muhammad Bliutta climbed the chair and in an emotional tone said loudly that we would make the bomb **iii** three years. Bhutto said all right three years time was good (Mahmood, 2000, p. 5).”

41. *Read several articles of Khurshid Ahmad the Naib Amir (Vice President) of Jamaat particularly his 1995.*

42. *A senior Indian official acknowledged privately that debate on economic aspect of the nuclear programme would “cause an uproar if the Indian public knew the cost (Schulz, 1993. p. 6).”*

43. *See also Mian in Cortright and Ahmed, pp. 54-56.*

44. *It appears that while scientists and academicians in Pakistan do not publicly express their opposition to nuclear weapons, a significant number of them do so in private discussions and interviews. Percentage of such persons is larger in Pakistan than in India. Interviews of the academicians and scientists conducted by Cortright amid Mattoo in India and by Ahmed and Cortright in Pakistan show that 10% of Indian academics and scientists and 36% of their Pakistani counterparts opposed nuclear weapons of their countries*

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weapons either support the government policy or have remained indifferent and silent.<sup>45</sup> Material rewards in combination with fear of being declared traitor, an Indian or American agent suppressed expression of dissent. As a result there was never a substantive debate on the issue.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to attempts of governments in both countries to limit discussion on nuclear issue, nuclear zealots in public and some in media in both countries have taken upon themselves the task to contain such a debate through use of threat of violence or actual violence. Some examples are cited below from Pakistan.

To the news or rumour of rolling back of nuclear programme in 1992 Senator Tariq Chaudhry reacted in the following words. “. . . Countrymen will lynch those who want to stop nuclear programme. Few generals will be at one side and the whole nation and army on the other side and there will be pools of blood on the streets if nuclear plan was abandoned (*The Muslim*, January 11, 1992).” Obviously the threat of civil war by a senator, close to the then

President Ishaq Khan and military establishment, worked and there were no further news on change in nuclear policy.

To a statement by Foreign Minister, Sardar Assef Ali in May 1994 that Pakistan should consider opening up its nuclear facilities for inspection some leaders of opposition parties reacted in the following way; “We can bear anything ... even the demolition of the fencing around our houses, but we can not bear the opening of our nuclear facilities. To us the nuclear programme is similar to the honor of our mothers and sisters, and we are committed to defending it at all cost (Quoted in Khattak, 1996, pp. 348-9).” By fusing the honour of mothers and sisters with protection of nuclear programme these leaders were creating strong emotional resistance to change in nuclear policy and foreclosing any discussion on an alternative nuclear policy in rational way.

The chief of Jammāt-e-Islami whose party attaches religious value to nuclear programme once threatened the government officials he suspected have gone abroad to make concessions on nuclear issue that they would not be permitted to return to the country. After the nuclear test of May some pro-nuclear journalists disrupted a press conference by anti-nuclear activists and a journalist threw a chair on one of them.<sup>47</sup> The violent tone of some nuclear zealots did not change even after a military government led by Gen. Musharraf took over in 1999.<sup>48</sup> The threat of a civil war, a blood bath, equation of nuclear weapons with the honour of mothers and sisters and use of force have to a great extent maintained a national consensus.

#### Cost-benefit Analysis of Nuclear Weapons of India and Pakistan

The security policies of India and Pakistan have raised their expenditure on conventional military apparatus and nuclear infrastructure to such a level that it affects every aspect of their national

45. *“Instead, domestic constituencies in both countries are bombarded by articles from the more hawkish retired generals and statements by jingoistic opinion leaders, and are thus predisposed to support their governments’ current policies (Schulz, 1996, p. 6)”*

46. *Government sponsored debate on CTBT in the first quarter of 2000 was not on the substantive issue of renouncing nuclear weapons but whether signing or not signing CTBT will help retain them.*

47. *Nuclear zealots in India also act similarly as evident from incidents in Bangalore in 1998 and in Calcutta in 2000.*

48. *During a debate on CTBT Gen. (retd) Hamid Gull in a personal discussion with this writer threatened that if government signed CTBT. a civil war would start in the country.*

life.<sup>49</sup> Instead of providing security, nuclear weapons have given them fear of a nuclear holocaust. Instead of economic and social development they have contributed to their rising poverty and unemployment and have slowed down their economic development. In place of fostering a science and technology beneficial to their people, nuclear policies of the two countries have given them weapons that can be used only for killing other human beings on large scale. In place of international respect and prestige they have earned them international isolation and abhorrence. In addition these weapons have brought on them international sanctions, turned off flow of foreign investment, and made nuclear knowledge and technology that could be used for peaceful purposes inaccessible to them. Their cost to future generations will be immense if the two countries stick to their present nuclear policies.

The nuclear policies of India and Pakistan have neither contributed to military stability between them nor improved their chronically tense relations. The military tensions have aggravated particularly after the Kargil episode. Indian nuclear weapons did not deter Pakistan to move into Kargil. Pakistan's nuclear weapons did not stop India from giving a war-like response to it. India almost threatened to cross international borders and started getting its nuclear weapons ready for possible use. The level of mutual mistrust between the two countries has risen to new heights after the nuclear tests of May 1998.

No expected "benefits" from nuclear weapons have accrued to either country. They have not reduced the conventional military expenditure as some advocates of these weapons argued that they would. Instead their substantive conventional military expenditure has increased particularly that of India, which has raised it by 29% for the year 2000-2001.

If the cost of nuclear weapons of India and Pakistan is determined in global humanist framework, it is considerable. They have done immense damage to global nuclear disarmament movement by creating an upward spiral of nuclear proliferation and new hurdles to signing of CTBT. They have provided new arguments and justification to the pro-nuclear lobbies in the world particularly to the lobby in US.

The cost of nuclear weapons to the two countries is not just what they have spent in developing them in the past. This cost is only a small percentage of what is to be spent on

their maintenance, delivery system and establishing an effective system of command, control, and communication in future.<sup>50</sup> This cost is likely to rise in future if the two countries remain in nuclear race in which they are engaged for last three decades. Given lack of mutual trust, animosity, preference to use violence to solve their mutual problems and intents of their nuclear doctrines, the race is likely to become faster in future for reasons discussed below.

49. *Due to government policies of putting tight lid on information on the cost of nuclear weapons. one can only estimate it. Saleem, (2000) has quoted an estimate prepared by the Brookings Institution, IAEA and ISIS that "... Pakistan must have spent an average of \$300 to \$400 million a year over the past two decades" to attain the present level of nuclear development. That adds up to six to eight billion dollars. He adds that "For each explosive costing \$300 million a year matching funds of some \$3.9 billion a year will be needed to actually deploy these nuclear explosives. Additional millions, if not billions, shall be required for the management and disposal of large quantities of toxic and radioactive wastes left over from their production." See also Mian in Cortright and Ahmed, pp. 51-52. For cost of nuclear weapons to India see Bidwai and Vanailc 1999, pp. 100-108.*

50. *Their estimated cost for Pakistan will be \$20 billion (Saleem. the News. 2000).*

After the May, 1998 tests both India and Pakistan have declared a moratorium on runner nuclear testing that does not include development of missiles.<sup>51</sup> As most of missiles being tested are for improving the delivery of nuclear weapons, the race remains on though in a different form. Simultaneously both countries have declared that they want to maintain Minimum Credible Deterrence (MCD). Both define it to be dynamic concept meaning that they would not fix the number of their warheads and missiles and their qualitative capacity at any given time and would enhance them to remain credible if their security so demands.<sup>52</sup> It means that a country has to revise its estimate of "minimum" to remain credible in the light of its estimated capability of the other country. If one country comes to believe, rightly or wrongly, that nuclear capability of its adversary has gone up it will have to revise its definition of "minimum" and upgrade its capability to remain credible. Otherwise in its own perception the deterrent value of its weapons will be eroded. This will fuel the race between the two countries.<sup>53</sup>

The changing estimate of nuclear capability of each other by India and Pakistan are not the only factor that can destabilise their MCDs. Their MCDs may change in response to changes occurring in nuclear policy of a neighbour and in global nuclear regime. As India's nuclear policy now also seeks deterrence against China<sup>54</sup> its MCD is hitched to that of China. This will constrain India to respond to improvements in China's nuclear capability. In turn this will create pressure on Pakistan to raise its MCD. The apple cart of MCDs of China, India and Pakistan can be upset further by changes in unstable international nuclear regime. For

instance if US establishes its National Missile Defence (NMD), it will destabilise the existing MCDs of Russia and China. A change in China's MCD will have its repercussion on India and Pakistan keeping the nuclear arms race between them going.

Hesitation of India and Pakistan to sign CTBT also provides a clue that both countries do not want to foreclose the option of upward revision of their MCDs and stop the nuclear race. Both apprehend that the Treaty would prevent them from upgrading their weapons in future and leave them behind in a race.<sup>55</sup> The debate in the two countries over signing or not signing the CTBT

51. *This gives a message to rest of the world that they have stopped or slowed down the race But their nuclear doctrines particularly that of India and the way both the countries define MCD reveals that this is not a very credible message. The race also reveals itself in development of missiles and oilier nuclear infra-structure, which seems to be going on in both the countries.*

52. *In his inaugural address to the seminar on "Pakistan's Response to the Indian Nuclear Doctrine" organised by the Islamabad Council for World Affairs and Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad on November 25, 1999. Pakistan Foreign Minister, Abdul Sattar said: "Minimum nuclear deterrence will remain the guiding principle of our nuclear strategy. The minimum cannot be quantified in static numbers (emphasis added). The Indian build-up will necessitate review and reassessment. In order to ensure the survivability and credibility of the deterrent. Pakistan ill have to maintain, preserve and upgrade its capability. But we shall not engage in any nuclear competition or arms race (Tue Nuclear Debate. Strategic Issues, March 2000. No. 3, p. 3)."*

53. *Fear that nuclear capability of the other may have improved or may improve in future kept the nuclear race going between the US and Soviet Union each attempting to outdo the other. Stable deterrence and stable MCDs are difficult to maintain for the countries that are caught in intense adversial relations.*

54. *While remaining without nuclear deterrence to China's nuclear weapons for long time, recently the Indian leadership has declared that it wants to develop MCD against China also. This stand of India has added a new dimension to the race.*

55. *Such apprehensions are unfounded because the CTBT would come into force out when both the countries sign it.*

also reveals that they want to retain their nuclear weapons and intend to remain in the race in the race in future.

### **Breaking the Nuclear Trap**

Developed in nationalist-security framework nuclear policies of India and Pakistan have specified the conditions under which they can renounce their nuclear weapons. India has linked its renunciation to global process of denuclearisation. This linkage is maintained to ensure that China, which India considers a nuclear enemy, also agrees to renounce its nuclear weapons before or at the same time India does that. Pakistan in turn has linked its denuclearisation to India. These linkages have closed on the two countries the option of immediate renunciation of nuclear weapons - the only course that can effectively remove the



danger of nuclear war between them. Neither the obvious possibility of nuclear holocaust nor the material incentives offered by international community nor the dividends of peace and high cost of their weapons have so far persuaded them to alter this course. In this framework they have narrowed their options of avoiding nuclear war to instituting measures that reduce the risk but do not eliminate the danger of a nuclear war. They include the following three;

1. Finding solutions of tension producing issues such as Kashmir.
2. Instituting technical means of risk reduction such as installing command, control and communication systems (C3).
3. Introducing Confidence Building Measures (CBMs).

As discussed below if effectively implemented these measures may reduce to some extent the risk of an accidental and unintended nuclear war but they cannot eliminate the possibility of intentional nuclear war or getting sucked into it.

The central issue underlying tension between India and Pakistan as discussed earlier is the dispute on Kashmir. A peaceful solution of Kashmir issue acceptable to both countries and Kashmiris would certainly lower the tension between the two countries and reduce the risk of conventional and nuclear war. But it is not certain that such a solution will necessarily induce them to give up nuclear weapons. India whose attitude towards denuclearisation of South Asia is critical links its denuclearisation to a firm timetable from five nuclear powers for their global elimination. This condition is not going to materialise in near future. In addition India's pursuit of becoming a regional and eventually a global power in which its nuclear capability plays a significant role may stand in the way of its renunciation of nuclear weapons. The resolution of Kashmir dispute may not persuade Pakistan that has always been linking its denuclearisation with India to unilaterally renounce its nuclear weapons. After the solution of Kashmir it will certainly demand that the two countries must renounce their nuclear weapons simultaneously.<sup>56</sup>

Even if one assumes that solution of Kashmir issue will enable the two countries to renounce their nuclear weapons, such a solution may not emerge in near future. The solution acceptable to one country is unacceptable to the other. Even use of force by both countries has not produced a solution. If it does it will be only a temporary one keeping it alive for coming decades.

56. *An influential pro-bomb lobby particularly the section that identifies nuclear achievement of Pakistan with renaissance of Islamic Umiuali will resist renunciation of nuclear weapons even after settlement of Kashmir issue. Qazi Hussain Ahmad, chief of Jamaat-e-Islami has made several statements that Pakistan should not abandon its nuclear weapon in any case.*

The possession of nuclear *weapons* and fear of drifting into a nuclear war via Kashmir has not encouraged India and Pakistan to seek a peaceful solution of Kashmir issue.<sup>57</sup> To the contrary both countries have used retaliatory threats of use of nuclear weapons more than a dozen times since May 1998 tests. Soon after the tests, the Indian Home Minister said that that under the changed security environments Pakistan should change its Kashmir policy, as India would take a tougher stand on Kashmir now. Danger of nuclear war did not dissuade Pakistan to occupy Kargil hills in 1998. From several accounts of Kargil episode it brought them close to a nuclear exchange.<sup>58</sup>

A second method through which India and Pakistan can reduce the risk of nuclear war is by installing an advanced Command, Control and Communication (C3) system. The two countries have though established a rudimentary Command and Control system they do not at present possess advanced technical components of such a system without which efficacy of Control and Command system to prevent an accidental war is very limited. The Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) are unwilling to share with India and Pakistan the advanced technology of communication as this requires recognising them as de jure nuclear weapon states that they are unwilling to do.<sup>59</sup> It is doubtful if the two countries can develop this highly complex, expensive and unaffordable system on their own.<sup>60</sup> Even if they get such a system or develop indigenously, its effectiveness in specific situations of India and Pakistan with contiguous border and high level of mutual mistrust may not significantly reduce the risk of nuclear war.<sup>61</sup>

The third method that generally countries outside South Asia suggest to India and Pakistan for averting nuclear war is the introduction of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs).<sup>62</sup> Efficacy of these measures in preventing nuclear conflict depends upon a degree of trust. As discussed above due to historical factors such trust does not exist between the leaders of India and Pakistan. Neither has it emerged after acquiring these weapons. In fact the acquisition of these weapons is itself consequence of lack of trust. This mistrust has made some CBMs introduced previously ineffective and aborted some peace initiative taken earlier. More recently Kargil episode has undermined the limited trust generated by Lahore declaration.

The uncertain positive impact of the three measures discussed above on reducing the risk of a nuclear war will be lessened further if the two countries continue their nuclear arms race. As shown above such a race in a certain form already exists and is likely to continue. The race can end if one of the two countries is unable to support it technically or financially and thus drops out of it through sheer exhaustion. This may produce severe consequences for the dropout country. They

57. *For detailed discussion on Kashmir see Section I, subsection 2.*

58. *See section I.*

59. *Russian Presidents statements during his visit to India in September 2000 may help India to secure advance technology from Russia.*

60. *Some papers in Strategic Issues, No. 3, March 2000. pp. 53-120 have identified the difficulties that Pakistan will encounter in securing such a system.*

61. *See section II.*

62. *Some of the CBMs introduced before May 1998 include cooperation in the ambit of SAARC. Islamabad-Deihi hot line, formal accord not to attack each others nuclear installations, weekly military-to military talks and agreement not to violate each others air space and advance notification of military exercises (Carranza. 1996. p. 570). The post-nuclear tests CBMs include starting Ddlii-Lahore bus service and signing of Lahore Declaration. Effectiveness of these CBMs remains uncertain particularly after Kargil episode.*

may include obsolescence of its weapons, compounding its economic and political difficulties, increasing its vulnerability to aggression and putting its survival at risk. The case of USSR and some of its successor states illustrates the point. Both conventional arms and nuclear races with US forced the Soviet Union to raise its military expenditure to an extent that their share in GNP became three times larger than the share of military expenditure of US in its GNP. The crushing burden of this expenditure contributed to the collapse of once mighty Soviet state (Inayatullah, 1997, pp.349-359). Three successor states that inherited Soviet nuclear legacy found it so difficult to maintain nuclear weapons that they joined the NPT. One of them Ukraine sought technical and financial help from US to dismantle its arsenal.

The other way to end the race between India and Pakistan is that one country decides to renounce them through a conscious and considered policy based on an insight into the overall consequences of these weapons. Brazil and South Africa took the route of renouncing nuclear weapons through conscious decision though under different circumstances. South Africa destroyed its weapons in 1991. Its decision was helped by reduced military threat of a Soviet-led or sponsored attack in 1989, realisation that nuclear weapons were of no use to it to keep

its apartheid system intact and that they were aggravating its isolation from the international community (Sagan 1996/97, p. 60). The fear that the nuclear weapons may fall into the hands of a black government after the end of apartheid also contributed to this decision (Bidwai and Vanaik, 1999, p. 36).

Argentina and Brazil, which became nuclear capable states but did not develop nuclear weapons, renounced them through an agreement to mutually monitor their nuclear facilities and by opening them to International Atomic Energy Agency. This change in their nuclear policy was facilitated by a shift from military to democratic rule in the two countries allowing anti-nuclear public pressure to register itself on their governments. The collective pressure of Latin American countries to establish nuclear free zone in the Continent also facilitated their renunciation (Maass, 1996, p. 126; Redick, 1994, p. 5). It remains uncertain if both India and Pakistan or one of them will follow the examples set by the three countries.

The most effective and direct method of eliminating nuclear weapons all over the world for saving human race from nuclear catastrophe and breaking the nuclear trap in South Asia is to accelerate the process of global denuclearisation. This will require US with the largest nuclear arsenal playing a leading role. But the US is ambivalent to do so. Some significant steps it has taken towards reduction of nuclear weapons since the end of cold war have not proved sufficient to create a snowball effect for total elimination of nuclear weapons. Russia and China link their pace of denuclearisation with that of US and demand a faster denuclearisation process from US which US is hesitant to take. Several factors specific to US explain ambivalent nuclear policy of the US. Rightly or wrongly some elements in the US Establishment fear that certain countries such as Iran, Iraq and North Korea may develop nuclear weapons in future threatening its security.<sup>63</sup> The cost of maintaining nuclear weapons is not as prohibitive to US economy as it is to its nuclear rivals. These weapons help US to ensure its global hegemony. Finally, US policy makers do not see immediate danger of outbreak of a nuclear war with Russia and China. If it occurs they are confident that they can do greater damage to them than they can do to it. Thus there are no compelling reasons to push US towards total elimination of nuclear weapons.

63. *This fear further shows the hollowness of deterrence theory. Huge arsenal of nuclear weapons and missiles cannot deter a nuclear attack on world's sole superpower*

Given the fact that movement towards global nuclear disarmament is not fast enough to oblige India and Pakistan to change their present nuclear policies and chances of eruption of nuclear war between the two countries are high, responsibility for preventing such a catastrophe squarely lies on them. The deterrence theory that is only a hunch and not an established scientific theory should not be allowed to determine the fate of two people. As argued above even if it is assumed that it prevented nuclear war between US and USSR, it is likely to break down in the specific situation of the two countries.

The only sure way of removing the danger of nuclear war from South Asia is to eliminate the weapons themselves. If renunciation is done bilaterally and simultaneously, it will be easier to achieve than one country renouncing its weapons alone. However, as India links its denuclearisation to global process of denuclearisation and its economy in spite of sanctions can sustain its present nuclear policy for some time, it is not under a strong pressure to renounce its weapons bilaterally with Pakistan. Given Indian policy and economic and political situation of Pakistan, only way to break the nuclear impasse is that Pakistan renounces its programme unilaterally. It has several compelling reasons to do so. Pakistan with smaller GNP compared to India, low level of scientific and industrial development, acute debt burden and higher dependence on foreign aid and resources has suffered the negative consequences of acquiring nuclear weapons more than India. Its nuclear programme has brought upon it harsh and discriminatory sanctions. Aid and grants from friendly countries have been stopped. More capital is flowing out than flowing in the country particularly after the government froze foreign currency accounts apprehending a sharp capital flight after nuclear test. Since May 1998 the country is in the grip of an economic crisis never known in its previous history.

There are additional reasons for Pakistan to renounce its nuclear weapons unilaterally. It is in the grip of multiple internal crises of institutional breakdowns, political instability, frequent constitutional breakdowns and long rule by military, mis-governance, increasing corruption and declining faith in the future of the country. These crises are partly, if not wholly, the result of its security policy that has contributed to high military expenditure and development of nuclear programme. If Pakistan renounces its nuclear weapons certain benefits will accrue to it. It will be spared of international isolation. It will help lift sanctions against it, lower its debt burden, give boost to its stagnant economy and enable it to solve several other difficult economic problems. The pressure on it for continuing the unaffordable nuclear race will end.

It may also help it find more effective and rational means of meeting threats from its neighbour, which its costly security policy based on nuclear weapons has prevented it from seriously considering and adopting.

Such a policy may not be easy to develop and implement in Pakistan. The Pakistani rulers have succeeded in creating an emotion-laden consensus on nuclear issue. Due to lack of knowledge about the cost and consequences of nuclear weapons their retention enjoys a considerable support among politically active urban middle class and intelligentsia. Any government seen to be abandoning nuclear weapons will invite serious domestic trouble. But the harsh reality should be placed before the people. They should know that nuclear weapons do not offer them and their children a peaceful, bright and secure future. With them they have two unpleasant options; either to die in a nuclear war or their country falling apart under the heavy weight of defence expenditure including the cost of producing, maintaining and upgrading the nuclear weapons and their infrastructure. Once people become fully aware of these options they will choose the path of Argentina, Brazil and South Africa which spared their people from agony and misery instead of Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan who renounced their nuclear weapons when they found them strategically useless and were unable to maintain them.

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