

**CHINA AS A FACTOR IN THE MAKING OF  
INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY**

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CERTIFICATE

This Dissertation entitled “China as a Factor in the Making of India’s Nuclear Policy” submitted by **YOGESH KUMAR GUPTA**, Centre for South, Central, South East Asia and South West Pacific Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full for any other degree or diploma of any other University.

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**DEDICATED TO**  
**MY PARENTS**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:**

<b>IAEA</b>	International Atomic Energy Agency
<b>PNE</b>	Peaceful Nuclear Explosions
<b>PRC</b>	People's Republic of China
<b>AEC</b>	Atomic Energy Commission
<b>DRDO</b>	Defence Research and Development Organization
<b>CCD</b>	Conference on Complete Disarmament
<b>BARC</b>	Bhabha Atomic Research Center
<b>BJP</b>	Bharatiya Janata Party
<b>CPI(M)</b>	Communist party of India Marxist
<b>MDMK</b>	Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
<b>ICBM</b>	Inter Continental Ballistic Missile
<b>NPT</b>	Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty
<b>PTI</b>	Press Trust of India
<b>NDA</b>	National Democratic Alliance

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

In 1998, when India went overtly nuclear, I was writing my final year exams for the Bachelor of Arts degree. My knowledge of nuclear issues at that time was very limited. The implications of the test in terms of international sanctions on India however, made me think of conducting a research in this area, which got further enhanced at my M.Phil level.

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**Yogesh Kumar Gupta.**

## PREFACE

India's nuclear tests of 1998, which was followed by Pakistani nuclear explosions reopened the debate about the factors that motivate countries to go nuclear. This study is an attempt to analyse the ongoing debate in India as well as in West to assess the importance of China as a factor, which motivated India to go nuclear. The basic hypothesis is

- China has been the major factor in the making of India's nuclear policy in general and
- It along with Pakistan i.e. the nexus between the two is primarily responsible for India's nuclear weaponisation.

The basic objective is to

- Understand the evolution of India's nuclear policy.
- Develop an understanding about the threats from China to Indian security both in the past and present.
- Attempt has also been made to look into specific factors, which compelled India to go nuclear, especially the role of the nexus between China and Pakistan in making India go nuclear.

The study begins with understanding the reasons for acquisition of nuclear bomb by the first five nuclear powers U.S.A, U.S.S.R, Britain, France and China in subsequent years that gave a new twist to the security policies of other countries. A brief analysis of motivational aspects of nuclear weapons acquisition has been discussed in the first chapter.

India however, neither had the resources nor the desire to develop nuclear weapons in its early years after Independence. How India's nuclear policy evolves during various phases, is the basis of analysis in chapter two-Evolution of India's Nuclear Policy.

Chapter three looks into the perceived threats by India from China and the impact of those threats on its nuclear policy in various phases. Special focus has been given on various



periods when the debate on China factor was in public domain - for instance, in 1964, 1974 and 1998.

Chapter four focuses on the China-Pakistan alliance and the making of India's nuclear bomb. The proposed chapter takes up the direct and indirect threats posed by China, its nexus with Pakistan falling in the latter category. The conclusions have been put together in the last chapter.

The importance of the subject lies in the fact that nuclear issue has always occupied a predominant place in India's security policy and China has been a major determinant of India's defence and security concern in general and nuclear policy in particular. The Sino-Pakistan nexus in defence and nuclear matters underlines the imperative of undertaking the study.

## **CHAPTER - 1**

# **SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

# CHAPTER I

## SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

### INTRODUCTION

In the post cold-war period, two developing countries, India and Pakistan, have gone overtly nuclear. Acquisition of nuclear weapons by them, inter alia, reopened the debate on the factors that motivate countries to go nuclear. Generally speaking, reasons to go nuclear have varied with country, time, place and leadership.

Broadly, the term spread of nuclear weapons or nuclear proliferation refers to the process whereby states acquire nuclear weapons and (those who already possess them) try to improve the quality and quantity of such weapons through their nuclear policy. To justify the use of the term, spread of nuclear weapons, instead of nuclear proliferation, Kenneth Waltz has said, "I say 'spread rather than proliferation' because so far nuclear weapons have proliferated only vertically as the major nuclear powers have added to their arsenals. Horizontally, they have spread slowly across countries, and the pace is not likely to change much. Short-term candidates for the nuclear club are not very numerous and they are not likely to rush into the nuclear military business. Nuclear weapons will nevertheless spread, with a new member occasionally joining the club"<sup>1</sup>. Lewis Dunn and William Overhult have identified four factors that motivate countries to go nuclear. These are, "the strategic military or security calculations, influence and prestige, bureaucratic factors and economic consideration"<sup>2</sup>. Stephen M. Meyers, however, gives a better analysis as far as motivational aspects of acquiring

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<sup>1</sup>Waltz, Kenneth, Sagan, D Scott, *"The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed"*, (W. W. Norton & Co. New York), 2003, p.18.

<sup>2</sup>Dunn, Lewis, and Overhult, William, *Next phase in Nuclear Proliferation*, (Colorado, 1977), p.7

nuclear weapons are concerned. According to him, there are three factors or incentives that motivate countries to go nuclear: "They are international power- prestige incentives, military and security incentives and domestic-political incentives"<sup>3</sup>. In order to have a comparative overview of the determinants of nuclearisation, it is essential to look at the specific factors that have made countries go nuclear.

## **ARRIVAL OF THE BOMB**

In the history of warfare, nuclear weapons are relatively recent arrival in the armories of nations. It is only fifty-five years since the first atomic bombs were used in a conflict. According to Timothy Garden, "Actually speaking, the investment in financial and scientific terms that was needed to design and build the nuclear weapons was of a different order of magnitude than earlier weapons development. Even today, when the processes are well understood, producing a nuclear weapon is not a trivial task. The Manhattan Project, which developed the bombs that were subsequently dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, was the product of World War II"<sup>4</sup>. This was the time when atomic bombs were seen as more effective aerial bombardment weapons, which could be employed in future conflicts as well.

### **United States of America**

On August 2, 1939, U.S President F.D.Roosevelt was informed by Albert Einstein through a letter that, "In the course of the last four months it has been made probable through

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<sup>3</sup> Meyers, M. Stephens, *The Dynamics of Nuclear Proliferation*, (Chicago, 1984), p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> Garden, Timothy, "Why States Pursue Nuclear Weapons", (Church of Scotland Consultation), May 1, 2002, <http://www.stimson.org/cbm/la/lachron.htm>

the work of Joliot in France as well as Fermi and Szilard in America - that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of Uranium, by which vast amounts of power and large quantities of new Radium like elements would be generated. Now it appears almost certain that this could be achieved in the immediate future. This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs, and it is conceivable -- though much less certain -- that extremely powerful bombs of a new type may thus be constructed. A single bomb of this type, carried by boat and exploded in a port, might very well destroy the whole port together with some of the surrounding territory"<sup>5</sup>. Six years later, on April 24, 1945, Secretary of War Henry Stimson told President Truman, the man who succeeded Roosevelt, about their latest achievement, which was, the successful making of the atom bomb.

At an initial stage, the impetus behind the atom bomb project in United States came from a fear of the consequences of a unilateral German success in military exploitation of atomic energy. The German atomic threat, however, did not materialise.<sup>6</sup> However, once the U.S. project was well underway, the responsible officials expected a substantial return on their investment. For them, whenever the atomic bomb was available it would be a weapon that should be used against the enemies of the United States, notwithstanding, the arsenals enemies had available with them. Henry Stimson, U.S. Secretary of War from 1939 to 1945 made it clear that, "the common objective throughout the War should be to produce the atom bomb and use it"<sup>7</sup>.

The immediate question that arose all around the world, after bombardment of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was: Why did America use the bomb? Was it to win the Second World War, which it would have won anyway? What was the motive then, behind the use of nuclear bomb

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<sup>5</sup> Einstein, Albert, "Letter to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt", August 2, 1939, [www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/nukes.htm](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/nukes.htm)

<sup>6</sup> Freedmen, Lawrence, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategies*, (Houndmills Mcmillan, 1993), p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.23.

against a country, which was already going down the barrels? Taking into consideration the American position in July 1945 vis-à-vis its adversaries, makes it hard to believe that winning the war was the motive behind the dropping of nuclear bomb. On the contrary, its other objectives like proving its superiority in the international system and to have a demonstrating effect, seems to have motivated it for the decision.

### **Quest for Superiority**

The United States of America kept itself away from the Second World War till the Pearl Harbor incident took place. However, soon after entering in the war, it realized that, with all its military as well as economic strength it could dominate the world. The former U.S.S.R., then its main adversary ideologically, was no match for it in any respect and other allied powers like Britain were quite happy to play a secondary role to it. Putting all the factors together, that was the right time and a great chance for U.S. leadership to establish the country's supremacy not only amongst the axis nations but also within the allied powers. Atom bombs were dropped on August 6 and August 9, 1945, on two cities of Japan-Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The action was taken to achieve superiority in the international system. It exhibited that the U.S. has acquired the status of being the only superpower. Not just that, the use of bomb, apart from causing bloodshed, created terror in the hearts of other nations those were not with the US or didn't want to be with it. Monopoly over the atom bomb also gave U.S. tremendous bargaining power during post Second World War settlements.

### **Demonstrating Effect**

The Japanese leadership's unwillingness to surrender in 1945, despite the blatant hopelessness of the position, was not so much based on a lingering sense of glory and honour

as on a deep sense that constitutional essence of Japan, embodied in the personage of the Emperor, was at stake. However, that was an opportunity for United States to demonstrate its latest invention. In the discussion amongst scientists connected with the Manhattan project, the value of the atomic bombs, to a surprise attack was a major theme. The key influences on the bomb's use were Stimson, Marshall, Oppenheimer, Groves, Bush and Conant. To them the bomb was not seen purely as an intensive form of strategic bombardment. As Oppenheimer writes, "The visual effect of an atomic bomb would be tremendous. It would be accompanied by a brilliant luminescence which would rise to a height of 10,000 to 20,000 feet"<sup>8</sup>. It was on this spectacular quality that those considering the use of bomb began to move away from the previous implicit, strategy of cumulative pressure to one of maximum shock. Basically a spectacular display was accompanied by maximum destruction, and the sole motive of this was "to have a demonstrating effect".

## **FORMER SOVIET UNION**

Most of the groups and individuals who had considered the subject, from the Scientific Panel to the writers of the Franck Report, believed it necessary to inform the USSR of the imminent success of the Manhattan project. Failure to do so, "they believed, would guarantee post-war atmosphere of suspicion and hostility".<sup>9</sup> At the Potsdam Conference, however, President Truman chose to tell Stalin that, "U.S. possessed a new weapon of unusual destructive force"<sup>10</sup> To which the Russian Premier showed no special interest. All he said was that he was glad to hear it and hoped "we would make good use of it against the Japanese"<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p.25-26.

<sup>9</sup> Truman Tells Stalin, July 24, 1945. [www.dannen.com/decision/potsdam.html](http://www.dannen.com/decision/potsdam.html)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

The same Stalin got shocked and felt betrayed by Americans<sup>12</sup>. However, during the immediate post-war years, Stalin was determined not to allow the U.S. monopoly of the atomic bomb to influence the course of international affairs. A British journalist in Moscow wrote: "the news [of Hiroshima] had an acutely depressing effect on everybody. It was clearly realized that this was a new fact in the world's power politics, that the bomb constituted a threat to Russia."<sup>13</sup> Within weeks, Stalin issued a decree that made the development of the atomic bomb a top priority. The Soviet leader was prepared to allocate huge resources to the nuclear programme at a time when his country lay in ruins. "If a child does not cry", he told Igor Kurchatov, the scientific director of the project, "the mother doesn't understand what he needs. Ask for anything you like. You will not be turned down"<sup>14</sup>. If anything the Americans' possession of the weapon, made Stalin more obdurate. In September 1946 he told a British journalist James Bertram that, atomic bombs were meant to frighten those with weak nerves. He went on to concede that the bomb of course, created a threat. But he warned monopoly ownership of the atomic bomb cannot last long and he was right, it didn't. "On August 29, 1949, USSR tested its first atomic bomb",<sup>15</sup> well before American scientist's expectations."<sup>16</sup>

### **To Have a Deterrent Effect**

It is a known fact that along with the motives like, maintaining balance of power, vis-à-vis U.S.A. and enhancing its status in international system, the first and foremost Soviet motive behind the acquisition of nuclear weapons was to deter the United States from using its nuclear capability against it. In fact, addressing a meeting of scientists, Stalin himself stated that,

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>"The American Experience: Race for the Super bomb", [www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/bomb/peoplevents/pande.AMEX69.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/bomb/peoplevents/pande.AMEX69.html)

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.



"although, the possibilities of a direct nuclear confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union would be very less, seeing the destructive nature of the weapons. But that would happen only when, we would develop weapons of equal destruction to that of our adversary."<sup>17</sup>

## **Balance Of Power**

Achieving nuclear status became essential for Soviet Union to maintain its claim of being a Superpower in post Second World War scenario, when Cold War was at its peak. Eventual accumulation of such a stockpile by it therefore is often explained in terms of, action-reaction. Hence the Soviet nuclear proliferation should not be explained in terms of its security only, but also to maintain balance of power with the U.S.A. Actually, "the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki demonstrated in a dramatic way the destructive power and the strategic importance of atomic bomb. It was Hiroshima that brought the atomic bomb purely into Soviet strategic calculations"<sup>18</sup>. On December 3, 1945, the British Ambassador, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, told the Foreign Secretary, 'the Soviet victory over Germans had made the formers leaders confident that national security was within their reach'. Then came the atomic bomb, he wrote, a blow, the balance which had now seemed set and steady was shaken. Stalin echoed this assessment. He said, in his remark to Vannikov and Kurchatov, "Hiroshima had destroyed the balance of power between U.S. and USSR"<sup>19</sup>. However, the immediate threat he saw was not military, but that of atomic diplomacy. Stalin was afraid, "that the United States would try to use its atomic monopoly in imposing post-war settlements"<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Joon, Dong, Jo, "Determinants of Nuclear Weapons Proliferation" Pennsylvania State University, USA. [www.columbia.edu/~](http://www.columbia.edu/~)

<sup>18</sup> Holloway David, *Stallin and the bomb 1939 to 1956*, (Yale University Press, London, 1992), p.122

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, p.154.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*, p.154

## **GREAT BRITAIN**

According to Igor Sutyagin, "The history of the British nuclear project began in March 1940 when two German scientists, emigrated from Nazi Germany, physicists Rudolf Peierls and Otto Frish and prepared the memorandum which stated possibility to create fission explosive device and described ways and means to achieve that result"<sup>21</sup>. However, Beatrice Heuser writes "the real nuclear age began for Britain with joint British U.S. Canadian work that made Manhattan project and the development of first nuclear weapons possible".<sup>22</sup> With the end of the World War II, however, the U.S. unwillingness to continue the cooperation with Great Britain in the nuclear field and share the key knowledge about the nuclear weapons design became evident. Widely publicised Baruch Plan and especially passage of the McMahon Atomic Energy Act of 1946, which prohibited for the U.S. administration to cooperate with foreign countries in the field of nuclear energy in both its military and peaceful applications made it clear that Britain should not depend on the United States in this extremely sensitive matter.

### **Building Up Of Independent Deterrents**

The independent nuclear deterrence concept became the official British policy in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Actually, after the U.S. strike in Japan and the fear of Soviet retaliation, the political leadership in Britain as a sign of the country's independence considered acquisition of nuclear weapons. The British Chiefs of Staffs also advised the Prime Minister "that possession of atomic weapons of our own would be vital for our security."<sup>23</sup> Taking into

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<sup>21</sup> Sutyagin, Igor, "The Role Of Nuclear Weapons And Its Possible Future Missions", [www.guardian.co.uk/nuclear/article/0,2763,770601,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/nuclear/article/0,2763,770601,00.html)

<sup>22</sup> Heuser, Beatrice, *NATO, Britain, France and FRG, Nuclear Strategies and Forces for Europe 1949 to 2000*, (McMillan Press Limited, 1997), p.63.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p.65.

account his advise, on January 8, 1947, the Cabinet ad-hoc committee made the decision to restart the independent British nuclear programme. It has been argued that the best method of defence "against the new weapon is likely to be the deterrent effect that the possession of the means of retaliation would have on a potential aggressor. Therefore, it is essential that, the British production of nuclear weapons should start as early as possible. From the beginning, thus British planning did not focus on how atomic weapons might strengthen Britain's fighting power but on the fear of nuclear weapons in the possession of an enemy. Therefore, atom bombs were not seen as assets, but as a danger and the only way it was thought this danger could be checked, was through the threat of retaliation"<sup>24</sup>. Britain, it was implied, needed nuclear weapons to shield her vulnerability to nuclear attack. A key characteristic of its nuclear policy from the very beginning, hence, was for nuclear deterrents to work, it had to be credible. The concept therefore, was not just of existential deterrents. Instead they have emphasised that deterrence lies in being prepared to use. In 1953 therefore, British Chief of Staffs stated that "it was vital to reduce the threat to United Kingdom by countering at source, Russia's capacity of long range attacks"<sup>25</sup>.

### **Quest for a Great Power Status**

The Maud Committee 1945 had recommended that Britain should carry out the nuclear programme independently.<sup>26</sup> According to Igor Sutyagin, "The decision to develop British nuclear bomb however, was mainly driven by Winston Churchill's feeling that United Kingdom must possess each sort of the most important weaponry which the United States and the Soviet Union possess to keep its great power status. It was believed even at a preliminary

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.66.

<sup>25</sup> Sutyagin, Igor, n 21.

<sup>26</sup> Maud Committee was first set-up in 1940 and 1941 to look in to issues of British national security. In 1945 the committee was again setup to give its recommendations about British future nuclear approach.

stage of the nuclear program that the possession of nuclear weapons would symbolise the Britain's role as the great power"<sup>27</sup>. Even though, it was considered by the United Kingdom leadership that there were the same threats to the U.K. interests and security as to those of the United States, NATO and European countries. Nevertheless, the general consideration of the Whitehall Cabinet was that Britain's ability to reach the purposes of nuclear deterrence independently of any allied powers (i.e. independently of the United States and their support) would strengthen Great Britain's international status as the great power.

## FRANCE

Like many other countries France also had, had her nuclear programme before World War II. After the war however, it reconstituted its nuclear research programme barred like Britain, in technology sharing with the U.S. through the McMahon Act of 1946. Thus in 1954 at the latest the French Government decided that France should become a nuclear power and just six years later, on February 13, 1960, France conducted its first nuclear test in Reganne. The earliest rationale put forward by the French Government, for the need for nationally owned nuclear weapons at the end of December 1954 was that the armed forces which do not possess them, lose all effectiveness in the face of an adversary, who has them. "A great state" explains De Gaulle, "which does not possess nuclear weapons while other has them, doesn't command its own destiny"<sup>28</sup>. Two key themes of French nuclear programme, therefore, were the need for independence and deterrence of a stronger power by a weaker power. It was based on nuclear sufficiency, that is, the smallest nuclear arsenal that could satisfy the needs of such a strategy.

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<sup>27</sup> Sutyagin, Igor, n 21.

<sup>28</sup> Freedmen, Lawrence, n 6, p.313.

## Unreliability of Military Allies

In the spring of 1954, France failed to persuade President Eisenhower to threaten the use of nuclear weapons, to release French forces in Dien-Bien-Phu.<sup>29</sup> The following years saw France's further disenchantment with her European and American partners for security, in the context of, Suez crisis and France's attempt to hold on to Algeria. Having seen all this, the French drew their own conclusions. Beatrice Heuser says, "While Britain spoke in a rather circumspect manner about America's future reliability, displaying embarrassment at questioning the scruples of a friend, the French enjoyed the frank disclosure of unreliability of America's nuclear guarantees"<sup>30</sup>. As General Georges Catroux told the Defense Council of French Government, "those who have nuclear arms will act above all to serve their own interest. There will be states, which have the atomic bombs, (which won't use them among themselves). There will be states, which do not have the atomic bomb, and they will be the nuclear battlefields. Therefore, we need our own nuclear weapons for our own security and for our own negotiations and if possibility arises, for an atomic response"<sup>31</sup>. Thus from the beginning the French quest for an independent nuclear force was less a reaction to any perceived Soviet threat to France herself, than the quest for political weight, as conferred by nuclear weapons, vis-à-vis the Soviet Union on a global political stage and for independence vis-à-vis France's own allies.

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<sup>29</sup> Dien-Bien-Phu was an associate state of Indo-China. In 1954 France wanted U.S. to use nuclear weapons against it because French forces, who wanted Dien-Bien-Phu to remain a French colony were defeated.

<sup>30</sup> Heuser Beatrice, N 22, p. 72.

<sup>31</sup> Burke, Patrick, *The Nuclear Weapons World, Who How and Where*, (Pinter publishers Ltd, 1988), p. 93.

## Status Enhancement and Morale Booster

For France, nuclear weapons were seen as a possible aid to national recovery, boosting morale and insuring that France returns to her proper rank amongst the nations. It was De Gaulle's belief that, nuclear weapons were the all powerful weapon system needed in modern times, and thus, key to France's renewed glory and prestige. In fact, status enhancement was announced as a principal, when France adopted its strategic rationale for acquisition of nuclear weapons.

## CHINA

According to Yang Zheng, "In 1953 the Chinese, under the guise of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, had initiated research leading to development of nuclear weapons. The decision to develop an independent strategic nuclear force was made no later than early 1956 and was to be implemented within the twelve-year Science Plan presented"<sup>32</sup>. On October 16, 1964, however, much earlier than many expected, Chou-En-Lai announced: "Comrades, Mao has asked me to tell you that, today afternoon China has detonated its first atomic bomb"<sup>33</sup>.

The Chinese motivation to go nuclear came from its threat perceptions, vis-à-vis U.S.A. and former USSR and its desire to upset American Soviet superiority in conventional weapons. This, however, is an extremely simplistic explanation of the Chinese nuclear agenda.

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<sup>32</sup> Zheng, Yang, "Nuclear Weapons", (National University of Singapore, Singapore).

<http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/nuke/>

<sup>33</sup> Lewis, John Wilson, and Xue Latai, *China Builds the Bomb*, (Stanford, Stanford University Press), 1988, p.189.

## **Perceived Nuclear Threat from an Adversary as well as from the Ally**

According to John W. Garver, "China's perceptions of external threat that led to its research development, accumulation, and deliberation about possible use of nuclear weapons, had almost entirely to do with, first the United States and later USSR"<sup>34</sup>. A possible American resort to nuclear attack was always very much in Chinese mind during its various international face off with U.S. like in the Korean War, Taiwan Strait crises in 1958 and Vietnam War of 1965. China's determination to develop nuclear weapons was also followed from its beliefs: that, its alliance with Soviet did not provide adequate security. In fact, in "1960s some Chinese leaders were beginning to fret about possible Soviet Union intervention in China and the unforeseeable consequences that might ensue"<sup>35</sup>. These perceived threats by China to its security were reflected soon after 1964 nuclear test. A Chinese journal *Current Affairs* published from Beijing wrote, "Atomic bomb is no longer monopolised by U.S.A. and Soviet Union, as it too had it now and if any one, dares to use the bomb, she naturally will get the retaliation deserved"<sup>36</sup>.

## **To Upset American /Soviet Superiority in Conventional Weapons**

Chinese think tank worked for the atomic bomb with an idea that, "a self reliant strategy of dissuasion by nuclear deterrents would better serve China's national security interest, than the alternatives of dissuasion by conventional deterrence or dissuasion by conventional defence. It also emphasised nuclear rather than conventional forces as the means for fulfilling the requirement of its deterrent strategy, because the revolutionary implication of this new

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<sup>34</sup> Garver, W John, Sam Nunn "Nuclear Weapons and the India China relations", (School of International Affairs), <http://meadev.nic.in/govt/johngarver>

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Freedmen, Lawrence, n 6, p.277.

military technology suggested that, such forces would provide for a more robust yet still affordable means for dissuading powerful foes"<sup>37</sup>.

## **Prestige**

China's leaders ardently and early on embraced the pursuit of international status via nuclear weapons. Chinese Premier Mao always claimed that he had a vision to make China a world power. Garver says, "An interest therefore, in bolstering China's international prestige also contributed to Beijing's decision to pursue nuclear weapons. Its policy proved to be right, and that steady development of Chinese nuclear arsenal was rewarded by its inclusion in the top tier of world powers"<sup>38</sup>.

## **PAKISTAN**

"If India builds the bomb, we will eat grass or leaves, even go hungry, but we will get one of our own. We have no other choice",<sup>39</sup> said Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, former President of Pakistan.

Actual initiation of Pakistan's nuclear programme can be assigned a very definite date- January 24, 1972- on this date President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto committed Pakistan to acquiring nuclear weapons at a secret meeting held in Multan in the wake of the country's devastating defeat in the 1971 Bangladesh war<sup>40</sup>. The decision to give in for nuclear weapons was taken mainly, to upset the Indian conventional superiority. The father of the Pakistan bomb however,

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<sup>37</sup> Davis, S Zachary and Frankel Benjamin, *The Proliferation Puzzle: Why Nuclear Weapons Spread and What Results*, (Frank Cass) 1993, p.226.

<sup>38</sup> Garver W John, N 34.

<sup>39</sup> Sublette, Carey, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Program - The Beginning"

[www.fas.org/news/un/other/19981020\\_gads3115.html](http://www.fas.org/news/un/other/19981020_gads3115.html)

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*.



tried to give it a civilizational overtone - Islamic bomb – primarily to get financial and moral support from the Muslim countries.

### **Achievement of a Status as a Regional Power Coequal with India**

According to the former Pakistani foreign minister Agha Shahi, "Pakistan's nuclear programme is linked to the sovereignty, independence and security of Pakistan".<sup>41</sup> However, this is a well-documented fact now that Pakistan's nuclear programme is overtly India specific. The most common rationale given for Pakistan's nuclear programme is the threat posed by India to Pakistan's national security. As V.P. Dutt says, "It has always believed or have at least projected by Pakistanis that, India has not reconciled herself to the fact of partition and could be expected to encourage overtly or covertly the undoing of it".<sup>42</sup> Therefore, the country has sought alliances with the United States and China. However, Pakistan's motive behind these alliances was, to achieve a status quo equal with India, in the context of both, regional as well as global affairs.

### **Islamic Bomb**

According to Sublette Carey, "The second rationale for Pakistan's nuclear programme has been its ambition to be the leader of the Islamic world. It had a concept that, if it would acquire nuclear weapons, then it could present itself as a technologically advanced country in the Islamic world."<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, the neo-rich Arab states, since early 1970s had been looking for opportunities to develop the nuclear option. Because by that time it got very clear

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<sup>41</sup> Singh, Jasjit, *Nuclear India*, (New Delhi, Knowledge World Publishers and IDSA), 1998. p.141

<sup>42</sup> Dutt, V P, *India's Foreign Policy*, (Vikas publishing house, New Delhi, 1987), p.185.

<sup>43</sup> Sublette, Carey, N 39.

that, Israel, their main adversary, had either developed or was developing nuclear weapons, which they believed, would, in turn aggravate further the balance of power in Israel's favour. The Arab leaders' ambition to nuclear power made it easy for them to be convinced of possibility of developing an Islamic nuclear option. It was with this dream in mind that, countries like Saudi Arabia became major financial supporters of Pakistan in its nuclear quest.

## **INDIA**

The prime determinants of Indian security are its two neighbours - China and Pakistan and the nexus between the two. In this context, India's security situation is peculiar, being surrounded by two nuclear neighbours. With both the countries India has border disputes and has fought wars with them. Both the countries are nuclear powers with China acquiring them in 1964 itself. The threat from neighbours has become more challenging because they have forged a strategic nexus against India, with Pakistan being helped by China in building up its nuclear programme. Thus its two neighbours mainly guide India's nuclear policy. A detailed discussion on India's nuclear policy and its determinants however, would follow in the coming chapters.

## **FURTHER SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

The chapter would remain incomplete, if it would not include, information about the countries, which have either acquired the nuclear weapons covertly, like, Israel or about the countries, which are trying their level best, to acquire them. To quote Waltz, "It is now clear that Israel has had a nuclear weapon capability for many years. Most authorities assume she, either has them in hand, or she can quickly assemble them. It is believed that, Israel went for nuclear weapons because, it had lived in fear of its adversary's present or future conventional

strengths"<sup>44</sup>. South Africa also had a well-advanced nuclear programme, which was discontinued, however, when the apartheid regime ended there.<sup>45</sup> Iran's nuclear aspirations are now being talked about, despite Iran's President's assertion that it has no plan to develop nuclear weapons. It is believed that Iran has been trying to acquire nuclear weapons since the days of the Shah.<sup>46</sup> In an interview to Washington Times, The President of Brazil, Luis Inacio Lula Da Silva, has said that, "Brazil should revive its nuclear weapons program it abandoned in 1994"<sup>47</sup> this implies, that the country had a nuclear agenda before 1994. There are reports that, Libya has also renewed its efforts to acquire nuclear weapons, after 1999, since U.N. sanctions were lifted from it. The Under-Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, John Bolton also said in Washington on May 5, 2002 that, "U.S. has no doubt that Libya is continuing its efforts to acquire a nuclear weapon. He said the administration believes that with the sanctions lifted in 1999, Libya's access to nuclear technology was increased"<sup>48</sup>. Apart from these countries, North Korea's nuclear programme is now an open secret. In November 2002, she even decided to remove U.N. seals from a nuclear power facility, which could provide fuel for a nuclear weapon in a matter of months. In fact, on February 13, 2003, I.A.E.A. published documents containing evidence that, North Korea could acquire nuclear weapons, as early as, "in next two months"<sup>49</sup> Fingers are also pointed towards Iraq's nuclear agenda by U.S. and its allies. Dr. Khidhir Hamza, who in 1980s was a senior Iraqi nuclear scientist, claimed to have said, "Iraq has been trying to obtain information about fissile material and weaponisation"<sup>50</sup>. Taiwan also obtained a nuclear reactor from Canada and started building other infrastructure in 1969, however, faced with non-proliferation pressures, on

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<sup>44</sup> Waltz, Kenneth, Sagan, D Scott, N I, p.21.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p.23.

<sup>46</sup> Edwards, Rob, *Iran's nuclear programme rapidly expanding* <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/030311/12/dv5zb.html>

<sup>47</sup> "Nuclear Renaissance", [www.isis-online.org/publications](http://www.isis-online.org/publications)

<sup>48</sup> "Libya's efforts to get nuclear weapons", [www.ezboard.com](http://www.ezboard.com)

<sup>49</sup> *The Hindu*, February 14, 2003.

<sup>50</sup> "Nuclear Renaissance", n 47.

September 14, 1976, Taiwan decided, "not to purchase or build nuclear reprocessing facilities"<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> Joon, Dong, Jo, N 17.

## **CHAPTER - 2**

# **EVOLUTION OF INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY**

## CHAPTER II

### THE EVOLUTION OF INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY

Lord Palmerston had said once, a century ago, "we have no eternal allies and we have no eternal enemies, our interests are eternal and it is one's duty to follow those interests".<sup>1</sup>

Bharat Karnad in his book, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security* writes, "There are two distinct sets of Indian thought that have evolved over the millennium. One is the robust, aggressive, proactive, violent and realistic matchpolitik of the Vedic India. The other is associated with the later development of the passive, insular, defensive and fatalistic mind set, stressing morality, self- abnegation and self sacrifice that took hold with the infusion of Buddhist and Jain precepts into Hinduism, which were manifested in the later day philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi."<sup>2</sup> This might be the reason that, nuclear option, which is adopted by India and the cultural values it has got, look contradictory to each other. The 1998 nuclear explosions by India therefore, according to some, were a reflection of growing realism in the country, whereas many saw these tests necessary for India's security, to some, going nuclear was a decision, which was taken by a Hindu fundamentalist government, some others saw these tests as essential demonstration of India's advancement in the areas of science and technology. India's nuclear policy is guided by its quest for achieving great power status or it went nuclear to overcome threats to its security needs to be looked into.

The present chapter intends to discuss Indian nuclear programme, as it evolved in various phases. It would also analyse the assertion, put forward by many, that India's nuclear programme and its quest for nuclear weapons was ambiguous right from the beginning,

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Khanna, V, N, *India's Nuclear Doctrine*, (New Delhi, Samskriti, 1999), p.35

<sup>2</sup> Karnad, Bharat. *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*, (Mcmillan India Ltd., 2002). p.64

although Indian media commentaries and government in its official pronouncements may deny any such ambiguity.

## **FORMATION OF INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY**

### **The Nehruvian Phase**

In a speech in Bombay 1946, Nehru said, "As long as the world is constituted, as it is, every country will have to devise and use the latest scientific devices for its protection. I have no doubt India will develop her scientific researches and I hope Indian scientists will use the atomic force for constructive purposes. But if India is threatened, she will inevitably try to defend herself by all means at her disposal. I hope India in common with other countries will prevent the use of atomic bombs".<sup>3</sup> Just one year later, in his presidential address to the 34<sup>th</sup> session of the Indian Science Congress, which was held in Delhi, on January 5 1947, Nehru talked of Hiroshima as creating inevitably a great deal of excitement. "He said, it seemed to me to herald all kinds of enormous changes, constructive as well as destructive"<sup>4</sup>. It produced conflict in people's minds about ends and means and observed that science has two faces like Janus, and both the destructive as well as constructive sides have gone on side by side and both still go on and that apart from the bomb aspect of it we are obviously on the threshold of a new age in the sense of enormous power resources being put at the disposal of humanity and community. Linking the atomic bomb to the invention of gun powder which Nehru said, at any rate put the middle ages away completely and rapidly and ushered in a new political and economic structure. He wondered, whether this so-called atomic age is not also the herald of a new age. He then, linked up the development of atomic energy in the country to the

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<sup>3</sup> Perkovich, George, *India's Nuclear Bomb the Impact on Global Proliferation*, (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1999), p.28.

<sup>4</sup> Karnad, Bharat, n 2, p.182.

building of a free and self-reliant India".<sup>5</sup> These statements prove the fact that India's foreign policy along with its security and nuclear policy were drawn and developed by its first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. As head of the government for the first seventeen years of India's independent existence, Nehru found moral-politik convenient vehicle to negotiate the turbulent currents of post Second World War international politics, but that can no way be taken as his weakness.

According to T.T. Poulouse also, "There was no guile in his nuclear policy as it originated from a mind imbued with high idealism, deep sense of history and a worldview and always with a vision of a strong and modern India. Nehru's nuclear decisions therefore, were not the outcome of any national debate but deeply rooted in his scientific temper, abhorrence of nuclear weapons, and nuclear allergy after the supreme tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki"<sup>6</sup>. Western writers like George Perkovich, however, often refer to Nehru's above statements in their analysis and claim to have found ambiguity in India's nuclear approach. This, according to them, was begun by Nehru and since then, seems to have been followed by each and every Prime Minister. Indian legend and commentary however, deny that claim. To them Nehruvian quest for nuclear power or his nuclear approach was never ambiguous. They claim that almost all of Nehru's speeches reflect his genuinely peaceful intention. For example, speaking before the Constituent Assembly in January 1947 as India's interim Prime Minister "Nehru condemned nuclear weapons as contrary to the 'human spirit' and called for a struggle against such inhuman weapons"<sup>7</sup>. Again, he told the Lower House of Parliament, the Lok Sabha, in 1957, "We have declared quite clearly that we are not interested in and we will not make these bombs, even if we have the capacity to do so".<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p.33.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p.182.

<sup>7</sup> Garvar, John W., "Nuclear Policy-Nuclear Weapons and the China India relationship", <http://www.ciaonet.org>

<sup>8</sup> Perkovich, George, n 3, p.36

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## BHABHA'S NUCLEAR INITIATIVE

Sumit Ganguly writes, "Homi J. Bhabha, a brilliant scientist tried to convince Nehru of the importance of atomic energy research in enabling India to build an industrial base and tackle the overwhelming problems of entrenched poverty."<sup>9</sup> The need to increase availability of electrical power was also a paramount objective of that time. Nehru also saw atomic energy as a viable means of achieving it. Thus, in 1948, the Indian government took direct responsibility for the atomic energy sector, one of the three industrial sectors over which public monopoly was established. In 1948 itself, Nehru introduced before the Constituent Assembly an Atomic Energy Act to create an Atomic Energy Commission and the legal framework for its take over. Bharat Karnad comments, "On the one hand Nehru noted, the nuclear bomb and the destruction of Nagasaki and Hiroshima illustrates the horrendous revolution that has taken place in military technology and on the other hand, the application of nuclear energy, to peaceful and constructive purposes has opened limitless possibilities for human development, prosperity and over abundance. This major challenge confronts our time, he said, with a choice between co-destruction and co-prosperity and makes it imperative for the world to outlaw war, particularly nuclear war".<sup>10</sup>

"Nehruvian aversion, on the other hand, to nuclear weapons", Karnad argues, "drew from his fundamental fear of the militarisation of Indian society. His opposition was also an outgrowth of his firm belief about the role of the use of military force in world affairs".<sup>11</sup> The adoption of such a stand by him was perceived by many as his 'idealism' but it was a well-calculated policy as many documents later revealed that he was aware that India wasn't advance enough technologically to produce nuclear weapons at that juncture. Therefore,

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<sup>9</sup> Ganguly, Sumit, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II: The Prospects and Sources of New Delhi's Nuclear Weapons Program", *International Security*, 23 (4), Spring 1999; pp.148-149.

<sup>10</sup> Karnad, Bharat, n 2, p.48.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.150.

despite his public opposition to nuclear weapons Nehru in his later years granted Bhabha a free hand in the development of India's nuclear infrastructure. In his book, *India's Nuclear Option*, Kapur recorded that in 1964 when Nehru approved Bhabha's memo describing the deal reached with Canada, he wrote a note in the margin somewhat as follows: "apart from building power stations and developing electricity there is always a built-in advantage of defence use if the need so arise".<sup>12</sup> According to Ashley Tellis, "The uncompromising opposition to nuclear weapons and to nuclear weaponry per se as instruments of high politics, actually subtly mutated during the 1960s when India--having become conscious both of the Chinese threat and of China's nuclear prowess following its defeat in the Sino-Indian border war of 1962".<sup>13</sup> In pursuit of this act Bhabha worked inexorably toward a complete mastery of the nuclear fuel cycle and toward a completely indigenous production process. Atomic science and technology therefore, assumed a special place in the overall plan for the technological development and modernization of India. Basically, Bhabha and Nehru took India to a unique position of restrained nuclear weapon capability.

## THE SHASTRI PHASE

India's second Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri succeeded a person who single handedly decided the course of countries foreign as well as security policy. Shastri was faced with dual challenge. On the one hand, he had to make sure that India doesn't undergo the experience, which it received in 1962. In order to do so, the advancement of India's weaponry became inevitable. At the same time he had to ensure that India keeps receiving the economic and political support in whatever capacity from both power-blocks. It was a balancing act, which he was expected to carry out. Most important of all however, was the

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<sup>12</sup> Cited in Perkovich, George, n 3, p. 92.

<sup>13</sup> Tellis, Ashley, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture*, (Washington, RAND, 2001). p.34.

nuclear challenge, which he had to deal with. Just after he took over in 1964, China had undertaken its first nuclear test, which made an already hostile neighbour even more powerful. Therefore, a debate was on in India as well as outside the country with a pre-drawn conclusion that India should pursue an active nuclear programme. This was also the time when credibility of India's policy of nonalignment was under severe scrutiny. It was under these circumstances, when, Shastri gave the approval of a "Subterranean Nuclear Explosion" (PNE).

## **SUBTERRANEAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION**

Lal Bahadur Shastri, a Gandhian, was strongly opposed to pursue the Indian nuclear option. But faced with numerous challenges, he decided to take up the responsibility of the head of the Atomic Energy Commission. He authorised 'studies' of underground explosions for peaceful purposes. During his term in office both, the budget as well as the research in nuclear field increased. Despite his public statements like, "I don't know that what would happen in the future but our present policy is, not to make a bomb now".<sup>14</sup> Ashley Tellis writes, "This was also the time when, Shastri began to flirt with the possibility of extending civilian nuclear technology to defence applications through its Subterranean Nuclear Explosion Project. Homi Bhabha, however, who did not have much affection for disarmament, accepted the policy of subterranean nuclear explosion as a compromise formula. This attempt to exploit the civilian nuclear energy and research infrastructure for strategic purposes reached its peak in 1974, when India carried out its first atomic test. In efforts to ward off Western pressures in the wake of this test, however, India affirmed its right to engage in 'peaceful nuclear explosions', while simultaneously reiterating its

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<sup>14</sup> Sitaram, Peter, "Domestic Politicians and Grand Foreign Policy Motivation of the Indian Nuclear Weapons Programme", *Journal of South Asian and Middle East Studies*, (Fall 2000), p. 58

opposition to nuclear weaponry".<sup>15</sup> Basically the essence of Shastri's policy According to John W Garver, was, "don't build the bomb now but prepare the political and technological ground for doing so, because if development unfavorable to India require it, she doesn't find herself in a self-defeating position."<sup>16</sup>

## NUCLEAR GUARANTEES

When Nehru was asked in Parliament in September 1963, about approaching foreign powers for military help, he thundered: "Why not accept armed forces from the West? Why not hand over India to somebody else? Why not put an end to India's Independence? Why not confess to the world that we are too weak to do anything, let others defend us".<sup>17</sup> Just contrary to that reply, "In December 1964 at a press conference in London, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri revealed India's efforts to obtain nuclear guarantee from the nuclear weapon states".<sup>18</sup> Sumit Ganguly argues, "Shastri pursued this course even though a number of politicians, including some within the ruling congress party, feared that it would compromise country's nonalignment stance.

At the same time political analysts with close connection to the government argued that India's credential, for boosting the nuclear disarmament agenda could be strengthen if the country refrain from developing nuclear weapons even in the face of potential aggression by a nuclear armed adversary. These sentiments were first aired in a vigorous debate that took place at the All India Congress Committee, between January 7 to 9".<sup>19</sup> "Bhabha also proposed that if "any state is to be asked to renounce a possible dependence on nuclear weapons to redress the balance of power against a larger and more powerful state not having

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<sup>15</sup> Tellis, Ashley, n 13, p.34.

<sup>16</sup> Garver, John W, n 7.

<sup>17</sup> Karnad, Bharat, n 2, p.182.

<sup>18</sup> Ganguly, Sumit, n 9, p.151.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p.151.

nuclear weapons, such as China, its security must be guaranteed by both the major nuclear powers". In other words, if Washington and Moscow did not want India to build nuclear weapons, they had to guarantee India's security".<sup>20</sup> In order to provide India with a nuclear umbrella, Shastri dispatched his Foreign Minister to ascertain the views of the United States, Former Soviet Union and the United Kingdom on India's request for a nuclear guarantee. Sumit Ganguly writes, "Swaran Singh's initial assessment suggested that the requisite guarantees would materialize".<sup>21</sup> Subsequently however, during a debate on May 10, 1965, in the Lok Sabha, Shastri admitted "the nuclear weapon states have ultimately failed to provide India with any such guarantee".<sup>22</sup> All that India received was a sympathetic response from America. The response was, "we believe that Indians have made a very wise decision and that while the United States will, of course, retain its freedom to make its decision in the light of all the circumstances existing at any given time, it has no doubt that any country which considered using nuclear weapons against India would be so aware of the heavy price it would have to pay for such action, but a guarantee of the kind New Delhi desired is nowhere in sight".<sup>23</sup>

Thus the issue of insuring nuclear guarantee became a major embarrassment for the Shastri Government. In fact, views were expressed by many leaders like, C.R. Gopala Chari of the Swatantra Party to join one of the power-blocks to provide the country with adequate security. Many, within and outside the government, however, favoured an indigenous and a more proactive nuclear policy. "The two-day debate in the Lok Sabha (Parliament) on November 23-24, 1964 "showed that the Congress party was split with a bare majority favouring pursuing a weapons programme".<sup>24</sup> On November 27, 1964, the most vocal

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<sup>20</sup> Perkovich, George, n 3, p. 74.

<sup>21</sup> Ganguly, Sumit, n 9, p. 155.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 155.

<sup>23</sup> Karnad, Bharat, n 2, p. 266.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p 266.

advocate of pursuing nuclear weapons, the Jana Sangh party, introduced a motion in the Lok Sabha calling for the manufacture of nuclear weapons.<sup>25</sup> These were the views however, that did not attract Prime Minister Shastri, but certainly impressed upon his successor. Since her takeover as India's Prime minister, she understood the power equation and therefore, worked for that. All in all, Shastri interregnum proved to be a political setback for the nuclear weapon programme. It had slowed down and was marginalized.

### **MRS. GANDHI'S PHASE**

Mrs. Gandhi succeeded Lal Bahadur Shastri who died of a heart attack on January 11, 1966, just hours after he had signed the Tashkent Declaration. Two weeks later, on January 24, incidentally the day when Mrs. Gandhi was sworn in, Dr. Homi Bhabha was killed while on a trip to Europe. Suddenly, India's impressively large nuclear establishment was left without any official plan or policy, to give it the required direction. Sumit Ganguly writes, "Prime Minister Indira Gandhi while reposing faith in Nonalignment reoriented India's foreign policy, putting fewer adherence on moral principles and more on the imperatives of statecraft".<sup>26</sup>

### **PREPARING FOR THE TESTS**

K. Subrahmanyam holds the view that "nuclear weapons continue to be the currency of global power and that although these weapons are not military weapons in the conventional sense", their value derives precisely from the fact that they are instruments of high politics and are therefore the means by which power and prestige are allocated in the global order".<sup>27</sup> Mrs. Gandhi was a realist in her approach towards policy-making. For

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<sup>25</sup> "India's Nuclear Weapons Program", <http://nuketesting.enviroweb.org/hew/India/IndiaWDevelop.html>

<sup>26</sup> Ganguly, Sumit, n 9, pp.148-159.

<sup>27</sup> Tellis, Ashley, n 13, p.174.

instance, reminding her colleagues at a ruling Congress Party seminar held on August 31, 1970, she said, "India has about as many friends as any other country has, and if it is in their interests to be friends with us, they will be friends and if it is not in their national interests, it does not matter what we do, they will still not be our friends"<sup>28</sup>. It appears as if She is following the simple geometry of the Mandala theory: which Kautilya had articulated in his Arthashastra, in 300 BC. Simplistically it means "a friend of a friend being a friend, a friend of an enemy being an enemy, and of an enemy of an enemy being a friend".<sup>29</sup> Though, India stood by and for non-proliferation, while focusing on restricting the spread of nuclear weapons to any additional states, India's Nehruvian policy of broadly opposing nuclear arms developed a pointed new emphasis. For example, while negotiating on NPT in 1968, Indian negotiator V.C. Trivedi adopted the stance advocating non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament "as long as it was universal".<sup>30</sup> Such line of thinking suggests that India's diplomatic policy towards Nuclear weapons made a fateful shift. As long as existing nuclear powers resisted disarmament, they left other nations no choice but to pursue the same option as they saw necessary. The quid pro quo was clear - India would not eschew nuclear arms option unless the existing nuclear states also shunned nuclear weapons. This fundamental logic grounded India's decision to refuse to sign the treaty on nonproliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT) and voting against it on June 12, 1968.<sup>31</sup>

By the end of 1970, it was apparent that the Atomic Energy Commission and the government were planning to conduct a peaceful nuclear explosion. Advocates (Vikram Sarabhai) of the explosives programme now controlled the Atomic Energy Commission".<sup>32</sup> "In September 1971 the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission announced at the fourth

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.324.

<sup>29</sup> Karnad, Bharat, n 2, p.324.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.324.

<sup>31</sup> "India's Nuclear Weapons Program", <http://muketesting.enviroweb.org/hew/India/IndiaWDevelop.html>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

Atom for Peace Conference "India had been working on a priority basis in the field of nuclear explosive engineering".<sup>33</sup>

In 1971, Indira Gandhi, fresh from smashing electoral and military victories, also assented to their request to authorise building a nuclear explosive device. According to Ashley Tellis, "Documents revealed that by the start of 1970s India had both the capability and the political motivation to conduct a nuclear test. The only question that remained about weaponisation was the political decision to proceed, based upon some assessment of the likely external repercussions of such a test". Mrs. Indira Gandhi saw this as a great opportunity to bolster India's newfound status in South Asia after its victory in 1971 War. In 1972 participating in a debate she said, "We are building up our atomic power. Of course we are using it for peaceful purposes. But in the meantime we are increasing our know-how and other competence" adding that it was a mistake to think that China could attack any country with nuclear weapons.<sup>34</sup> Actually the growing Sino-US-Pakistan alliance of 1971 and India's bilateral treaty with former U.S.S.R. in the same year gave another security twist to the region. Thus, Mrs. Gandhi was reported to have said, "Nuclear capability is one of the criteria to gain power in modern world and India's demonstration of its capability would help to establish it as an independent center of power in a multipolar world"<sup>35</sup>. She affirmed that, "While the Indian Government would like the great powers to rally to India's side.

In the final analysis, the effectiveness of a nuclear shield", she said, "would depend not on the spirit in which protected powers accepted it, but on the vital and national interest of the giver."<sup>36</sup> Her Defence Minister, Swaran Singh, had reinforced this message by saying in Parliament that he strongly deprecated "the tendency to think that at a time of crisis other

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<sup>33</sup> Paranjape Shrikant, *Parliament and the Making of the Indian Foreign Policy: a Study of Nuclear Policy*, (New Delhi, Radiant Publishers 1997), p. 55.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 44.

<sup>35</sup> Garver, John W, n 7,

<sup>36</sup> Karnad, Bharat, n 2, p.68.



countries would underwrite India's safety and independence and that it is time to realise that there is no option for this country but to stand on its own feet." <sup>37</sup>

## **POKHRAN I**

The countdown came to an end, and finally, India conducted its first nuclear tests on May 18, 1974, and called it a Peaceful Nuclear Explosion. The test, codenamed "Smiling Buddha," was carried out in "a 107 meters deep shaft at the Pokhran test site in the Rajasthan desert in western India, nine kilometers north-northwest of the village of Khetolai"<sup>38</sup>.

The news of India's PNE elicited, different reactions. France and the former Soviet Union supported India and China remained silent. The USSR noted,"that India has carried out a research programme striving to keep level with the world technology in the peaceful uses of nuclear explosion"<sup>39</sup>. The chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India received a congratulatory message from the French Atomic Energy Commission on the success of the experiment.<sup>40</sup> China officially reported the event without commenting on the explosion.<sup>41</sup> Commenting on the test on May 19, a white house spokesmen Martin said, "We condemn the test conducted by AEC of India. The United States has always been against nuclear proliferation. We have adopted this position because of the, adverse impact nuclear proliferation would have on world stability"<sup>42</sup>.

Reacting on the tests on May 19, British representative Haloworth said, "My Government shares the concern which others have expressed over the event and agrees that it has created a new situation"<sup>43</sup>. On May 18, 1974, Canadian Secretary of State for External

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p.328.

<sup>38</sup> "Known Nuclear Tests Worldwide, 1945-98", <http://www.thebulletin.org/issues/nukenotes/nd98nukenote.html>

<sup>39</sup> Lok Sabha Debates, Volume-38, No. 1-5, 22 July, 1974, p.266.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p.266.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p.266.

<sup>42</sup> Poulouse, T T, *Perspective of India's Nuclear Policy*, (New Delhi, Stockholm, Young Asia Publishers 1978) p.23.

<sup>43</sup> Jain, J P, *Nuclear India*, Vol. II, (New Delhi Radiant Publishers, 1974) p.332.

Affairs, Mitchell Sharp, commented, "The Government is very disturbed by the announcement that India has exploded a nuclear device. We are carefully considering the implications and are seeking further information from the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi. Canada has been consistently opposed to all forms of nuclear testing and we consider it most regrettable that yet another country has now conducted a nuclear explosion".<sup>44</sup> Reacting on the tests, on May 19, 1974, an Official Spokesman of Pakistan stated, "This does not come as a surprise to us. We have been repeatedly warning the United Nations particularly the nuclear weapon powers and the international community for a decade that India's ambitious nuclear programme aimed at equipping itself with a nuclear option was being undertaken to carry out nuclear weapon explosion and stake a claim to the status of a nuclear weapon power".<sup>45</sup>

Japanese reaction was no better. Speaking in the Conference on complete disarmament, on May 21, 1974, the Japanese representative said, "Japan opposes any nuclear test by any country. It has been maintained that the nuclear test of India was conducted for peaceful purposes. However, since there is no distinguishing between a nuclear test for peaceful purposes and a nuclear weapon test, the nuclear test of India even allowing that it was for peaceful purposes, is in contradiction to the international efforts and world opinion bent on preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons".<sup>46</sup>

The decision to go nuclear, however, was welcomed by vast section of Indians. Mrs. Gandhi though, lost much of the euphoria generated by Pokhran I due to her failure on domestic front. Not just that, she had to answer many questions in the Parliament in the debate that was followed after the tests. These questions were, "Can India produce atomic

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p.334.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p.336.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p.337.

bomb? What stand has India taken in the United Nations? How the country will deal with the embargo on the sale of nuclear material?"<sup>47</sup>

## **A NUCLEAR HALT**

### **Morarji Desai's Phase**

The next stage of India's nuclear programme was marked with little progress in attaining nuclear power status, even though, there was increasing public, military and some political support for acquiring nuclear weapons. According to Sumit Ganguly, "Two factors explain this restraint, at one level Indira Gandhi had taken stock of the adverse international reactions to India's nuclear tests. At another level a robust Indo-Soviet strategic relationship put an end to India's security concern".<sup>48</sup>

Morarji Desai took over as Prime Minister of a first non-Congress government in the center. A Gandhian in his approach, he strongly opposed the use of nuclear energy for military purposes. Though there were at least three Ministers in his Cabinet who were pro-bomb, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpaye, H. M. Patel and L. K. Advani. Morarji Desai, however, devoted little time in making his government's nuclear policy known. An opponent of nuclear weapons primarily on moral grounds, Morarji Desai reversed the direction of India's nuclear planning. He always had disparaged calls for India to acquire nuclear weapons. He believed since the days when he was the Finance Minister that the country could not afford nuclear arms.

Morarji Desai at his first press conference as Prime Minister, on March 24, 1977 stated, "the government did not believe in nuclear weapons and that he doubted the necessity of peaceful nuclear explosions".<sup>49</sup> In April, Desai told a West German interviewer, "I will

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<sup>47</sup> Paranjape Shrikant, n 33, p.55.

<sup>48</sup> Ganguly, Sumit, n 9, pp.162.

<sup>49</sup> Perkovich, George, n 3, p.226.

give it to you in writing that we will not manufacture nuclear weapons. Even if the whole world arms itself with the bombs we will not do so". He said "if internal pressure to build nuclear weapons would become too strong, he would resign".<sup>50</sup> Just contrary to this idealistic statement, on May 16, 1977, he declared that if a peaceful nuclear explosion were necessary India would do it, but openly. "We will not do it in hide and seek manner. We will tell the people what we are doing and let them come and witness".<sup>51</sup> He also added that "atomic weapons are no good for defence at all and they can't ever win a war".<sup>52</sup> India's nuclear programme came to a halt during Janata period.

## **MRS. GANDHI'S SECOND TERM**

Plagued with factionalism within and outside the party, the Janata government lost the confidence of the house and once again gave a chance to Congress party to get back to power. Mid- term elections were called for, in which, Mrs. Gandhi assumed the office after winning the election.

Mrs. Gandhi returned to power with a renewed interest in the nuclear weapons programme. In January 1981 she reappointed Dr. Ramanna as Director of BARC, in addition to his other positions. That month he is stated to have proposed to her that India should "begin work on constructing and testing the two weapon designs that had been developed in the intervening six years - the fusion boosted device, and the compact pure fission device. The weight of the fission device had been shrunk along with many other improvements in its components".<sup>53</sup> Mrs. Gandhi agreed, and "in February, two new test shafts began work on sinking two new shafts at Pokhran".<sup>54</sup> Unfortunately U.S. satellites quickly detected the

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p.226.

<sup>51</sup> Perkovich, George, n 3, p.226.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p.227.

<sup>53</sup> "India's Nuclear Weapons Program The Long Pause: 1974-1989", <http://nuketesting.enviroweb.org/hew/India/IndiaPause.html>

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

nuclear activity, and Senator Alan Cranston made this activity public in April. According to Raj Chengappa, "in May 1982 the time had arrived to decide whether to conduct the new nuclear tests. For the first time a leader of the Indian armed forces, Army Gen. K.V. Krishna Rao, was pushing for the nuclear option. Mrs. Gandhi held a meeting with Dr. Ramanna and Dr. Venkataraman as well as her new science adviser V.S. Arunachalam, and her top advisers Principal Secretary P.C. Alexander and Cabinet Secretary K. Rao Sahib, to decide on whether the test would be conducted."<sup>55</sup>

Chengappa and Perkovich offer somewhat different accounts of this meeting. Chengappa places it in May and asserts that no decision was made at the meeting; but Mrs. Gandhi approved the test (or tests) after the meeting ended".<sup>56</sup> Perkovich says "it was late in the year, even in early 1983, and that Gandhi did approve the test at the meeting. Both agree that within hours of her decision to test, she was forced to change the decision due to international pressure".<sup>57</sup> Despite Mrs. Gandhi's rejection of testing, India's nuclear infrastructure continued to advance.

## **RAJIV GANDHI**

Rajiv Gandhi's general orientation was toward technology and modern technological culture. Hence, he took great interest in the technical aspects of issues and actively promoted technological advancement. To begin with he did not support testing and deployment of nuclear weapons. His policies toward nuclear weapons were basically a continuation of the approach of his mother during her second term in office. Rajiv Gandhi's " relationship with the BARC scientific leadership has been described as ambivalent-- supporting their work but

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<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

treating their advice skeptically".<sup>58</sup> According to Perkovich, "In large part his opposition to proceeding with testing or deployment was because of his technology orientation. Rajiv recognized that India needed access to the advanced technology of the United States and that detectable progress toward acquiring nuclear weapons would slam many of those doors shut".<sup>59</sup> But during his term in office infrastructure was developed to support the manufacture of more sophisticated lightweight fission weapons. Rajiv Gandhi also took the initiative in his effort to formulate a nuclear policy for India and determine the means needed to implement that. "It was an informal but authoritative study group that was set up in November 1985 to answer queries by Rajiv Gandhi regarding defence planning. It encompassed the three services (Navy Chief of Staff Adm. Tahliani, Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. K. Sundarji, Deputy Chief of Air Staff John Greene), leaders of BARC (Ramanna), the DRDO (Abdul Kalam), and the AEC (Chidambaram), and India's most prominent strategic analyst K. Subrahmanyam".<sup>60</sup> Though no formal action was taken on this report, but it appears to have inspired Rajiv Gandhi to take additional preparedness. Crippled by international sanctions imposed after the 1974 nuclear test, India's civilian nuclear power programme fell short of the objectives throughout the 80s.

## **1989 TO 1998**

### **Period of Indecision and Nuclear Negotiations**

The decades of the 80's and 90's witnessed the gradual deterioration of our security environment due to nuclear and missile proliferation. As per the Indian government, "In our neighborhood, nuclear weapons increased and more sophisticated delivery systems were

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Perkovich, George, n 3, p.264.

<sup>60</sup> "India's Nuclear Weapons Program The Long Pause: 1974-1989", n 53.

inducted. Further, in our region there has come into existence a pattern about clandestine acquisition of nuclear materials, missiles and related technologies”<sup>61</sup>. This was also the time when Cold War ended. While it transformed the political landscape of Europe, it did little to address India's security concerns. The relative order that was arrived at in Europe was not replicated in other parts of the globe.

The period from 1989 to 1998 witnessed instability on both, economic and political levels in India. During these years the country had as many as six Prime Ministers. First two among them, according to Bharat Karnad “V P Singh and his successor Chandrashekhar, were very supportive of the nuclear programme. But the latter, confusingly, made a distinction between strategy and policy without defining either. Saying that while those involved in the weaponisation process had a carte blanche in terms of deciding presumably, nuclear weapons strategy, he, as the Prime Minister would decide on the policy and that these two aspects, he cautioned, ought to be kept separate”.<sup>62</sup> Both the Prime Ministers however didn't last long in power. Mid term elections saw P.V.Narasimha Rao stepping in as India's new Prime Minister.

Rao was deterred from testing for fear of the effects of the Western sanctions on the economic reforms and liberalisation programme he had inaugurated by 1992-93. Karnad writes that “By 1992 itself, the Indian system began to rally as economic reforms raised hopes for the country's political-economic development and Indian leaders began to chart a foreign policy course more consonant with post-cold war global dynamics”.<sup>63</sup> According to Perkovich, “Rao apprehended that the change-over to an export driven economy, he envisaged, would become hostage to the incidence of the nuclear tests”.<sup>64</sup> Speaking at

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<sup>61</sup> Paper Laid on the table of the house on, Evolution of India's nuclear policy, May 27<sup>th</sup> 1998, <http://www.indianembassy.org/pic/nuclearpolicy.htm>

<sup>62</sup> Karnad, Bharat, n 2, p.279.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p.431.

<sup>64</sup> Perkovich, George, n 3, p.351.

Beijing University on September 9, 1993, Prime Minister Narsimha Rao said, "There is a need for real progress in nuclear disarmament. If there was any justification for the vast nuclear arsenals that certain powers maintain, that has long since ceased with the end of the Cold War. These inhuman weapons must be declared illegal: the world must embark upon a time-bound and firm programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons whether declared or clandestine. India has made proposals for a new international consensus on nuclear disarmament, and has listed the steps through which this can be achieved without affecting the genuine security interests of most countries".<sup>65</sup> Above statement, however, by Indian Prime Minister was misleading. As in "December 1995 Rao actually ordered the nuclear test but called it off under US pressure."<sup>66</sup> "These tests", Dixit reveals, "were first postponed to 1994 and then rescheduled for some time in 1995, but were never carried out during Rao's tenure."<sup>67</sup> "Chengappa in his book, *Weapons of Peace*, reveals that weaponisation of Indian nuclear programme was completed in May, 1994 when the Indian Air Force carried out the tests of toss bombing of a fully assembled nuclear bomb (minus its nuclear core) and checked its functioning with all its safety locks unlocking on a preprogrammed basis. Similarly, tests of missile warheads have also been carried out. Narasimha Rao and Scientific Adviser Abdul Kalam confirmed to the Kargil Review committee, that weaponisation was completed in 1992-94".<sup>68</sup>

In May, 1996 the Bharatiya Janata Party formed the government that lasted only 13 days. Perkovich claims that in that brief period, "Prime Minister Vajpayee secretly authorized nuclear weapon tests, and then quickly retracted the authorization. However, the BJP

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<sup>65</sup> Prime Minister Narasimha Rao at Beijing University, September 9, 1993, [http://ignca.nic.in/ks\\_41006.htm](http://ignca.nic.in/ks_41006.htm)

<sup>66</sup> Subrahmanyam K, "Undue Fears Pragmatic Approach to Signing the CTBT", [http://meadev.nic.in/OPn/99dec\\_13toi.htm](http://meadev.nic.in/OPn/99dec_13toi.htm)

<sup>67</sup> Perkovich, George, n 3, p.351.

<sup>68</sup> "Sub-continental Nuclear Tests I, Indian Airforce", <http://www.geocities.com/siafdu/nuclear1.html>



government fell and was replaced by a coalition of 13 parties led by Deve Gowda. The scientists again pressed for tests and, indeed, secretly had placed at least one nuclear device in a test shaft at Pokhran. Gowda did not turn the request down but hastily attended to more pressing matters."<sup>69</sup>

Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral who succeeded Deve Gowda was walking on a very tight rope. He was supported by Congress Party, which chose not to participate in the government. His nuclear policy however was clearer than his predecessors. Addressing a meeting with the council on foreign relations, New York, he said, "Our peaceful nuclear experiment in 1974 has not been followed by any subsequent test. We have scrupulously refrained from weaponisation. This voluntary restraint is unique in the nuclear age. However, we are also surrounded by nuclear weapons and we cannot remain indifferent to the threat posed to our security. We do not wish to be a nuclear weapon state, but, in the present circumstances, the need to keep our nuclear option open is unavoidable"<sup>70</sup>.

## **PREPARING FOR POKHRAN II**

In an article "From Indira to Gowda: It was Bomb All the Way" which was published in *The Times of India* on April 17, 2000, K Subramanyam wrote that there has been no difference between the Congress and the BJP in respect of nuclear strategy. He argues: "the Indian nuclear weapons programme had an overwhelming consensus among all Prime Ministers, irrespective of party affiliations. Therefore, the conduct of the Shakti tests was the culmination of the efforts of as many as seven Prime Ministers"<sup>71</sup>. The statement by Subramanyam about the unanimity of all the Prime Ministers on nuclear programme could

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<sup>69</sup> Perkovich, George, n 3, p.351.

<sup>70</sup> "Indo-U.S. relations: start of a New Friendship", Prime Minister I.K. Gujral's opening remarks at the meeting with the Council on Foreign Relations, New York, <http://www.indianembassy.org/indusrel/gujral.htm>

<sup>71</sup> Subcontinental Nuclear Tests I, <http://www.geocities.com/siafdu/nuclear1.html>

have been well researched, but there was a mark difference in the 1998 manifestoes of Congress and B.J.P. especially on nuclear issue. "The B.J.P. manifesto had spoken of the perceived need to induct nuclear weapons into India's arsenal along with a strategic review of India's security environment".<sup>72</sup> On the contrary, Congress's manifesto of 1998 did not even touch the nuclear issue. Thus the credit for the tests and withstanding successfully the international pressure over the last four years goes to the BJP.

## CONDUCTING THE TESTS

Perkovich claims "soon after Vajpayee won the confidence motion in the Lok Sabha on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1998, he in a meeting with the top scientists, asked Chidambaram to prepare for nuclear tests<sup>73</sup>. According to the writer the decision of nuclear tests was taken by a handful of scientists and politicians with little experience in international affairs. On May 11 1998, at 3:45 P.M. almost twenty-four years to the day since India conducted its first nuclear test, the desert ground near Pokhran shook again. India's strategic enclave simultaneously detonated three nuclear devices".<sup>74</sup> The tests have established that India has a proven capability for a weaponised nuclear programme. In a press conference on the very same day, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee tersely announced, "New Delhi had conducted three nuclear tests, one of which involved the detonation of a thermonuclear device".<sup>75</sup> Two days later India again announced "it had conducted two more detonations that purportedly completed the series".<sup>76</sup> Prime Minister's Principal Secretary and National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra justified the tests and explained, "We had to show a credible deterrent capability not only to the outside world, but to our own people".<sup>77</sup> This strategy was reflected

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<sup>72</sup> Ganguly, Sumit, n 9, p164.

<sup>73</sup> Perkovich, George, n 3, p.448.

<sup>74</sup> *The Hindu*, May 12, 1998.

<sup>75</sup> Tellis, Ashley, n 13, p.34.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p. 34.

<sup>77</sup> Karnad, Bharat, n 2, p.453.

in Prime Minister's statement of May 18, 1998, as well, explaining the tests, he said, "Our mindset is not in favour of a war. We wanted a deterrent. We conducted the tests"<sup>78</sup>.

Giving the reasons behind the Pokharan tests Prime Minister Vajpayee said in an interview "We conducted the series of nuclear tests in keeping with our commitment made to the people of India during the elections. It is part of the National Agenda for Governance. The decision to carry out these tests was guided by the paramount importance we attach to national security"<sup>79</sup>. He added, "India has never considered military might as the ultimate measure of national strength. I would, therefore, say that the greatest meaning of the tests is that they have given India Shakti, they have given India strength, they have given India self-confidence"<sup>80</sup>. Participating in a debate in Lok Sabha Vajpayee announced, "Our nuclear policy has been marked by restraint and openness. We have not violated any international agreements either in 1974 or now, in 1998. The restraint exercised for 24 years, after having demonstrated our capability in 1974, is in itself a unique example. Restraint, however, has to arise from strength. It cannot be based upon indecision or doubt. The series of tests recently undertaken by India have led to the removal of doubts. The action involved was balanced in that it was the minimum necessary to maintain what is an irreducible component of our national security calculus"<sup>81</sup>. Subsequently, however, he unilaterally announced "a moratorium on further nuclear tests and India's offered to formalise it into an obligation through negotiations with key world powers."<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p. 453.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1998, <http://www.indianembassy.org/pic/pm-interview.htm>

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Prime Minister Vajpayee's statement in the Parliament on May 27, 1998  
<http://www.indianembassy.org/pic/pm-parliament.htm>

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

## REACTIONS TO POKHRAN II

The series of explosions gave birth to more and more debates in India. They were received amidst mixed reactions within and outside the country. While Indian middle class generally welcome the tests. The *Times of India* conducted a survey in four metros in which it said that 91 percent of the respondents welcomed the move.<sup>83</sup> Many in the country however, challenged the credibility of them. Writers like George Perkovich claimed that tests were conducted mainly to achieve domestic gains. A view that is contested by people like Kapur, who in his book wrote, “domestic not external compulsions were instrumental in India opting for the tests”.<sup>84</sup>

Just like various writers, countries also reacted differently to Indian decision. The U.S. called the decision as amateurish, thanks to the failure of its intelligence agencies. A White House spokesman, Mr. Michael McCurry said on 12 May 1998, “Washington would take up the matter with New Delhi. We will however, continue to spare no effort in encouraging countries to both promulgate and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty”<sup>85</sup>. The European Union led by Britain condemned the tests. The statement issued by the Presidency expressed dismay at the news of the Indian nuclear tests. It said, “the European Union is fully committed to the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and has a strong interest in the peace and stability of South Asia, and is concerned about the risk of nuclear and missile proliferation”.<sup>86</sup> Australia, “condemned Indian tests and called its High Commissioner home from Delhi for consultations”.<sup>87</sup> Germany condemned “India's nuclear tests and cancelled aid talks with India”.<sup>88</sup> Responding to India's nuclear tests, Tokyo said, “it would consider freezing

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<sup>83</sup> *The Times of India*, May, 25 1998.

<sup>84</sup> Kapur, Ashok, *Pokhran and beyond: India's nuclear behaviour*, (Oxford, 2001), p.23.

<sup>85</sup> India conducts Nuclear Tests, [http://www.indiapolicy.org/lists/india\\_policy/1998/May/msg00038.html](http://www.indiapolicy.org/lists/india_policy/1998/May/msg00038.html)

<sup>86</sup> <http://www.hvk.org/articles/0598/0038.html>

<sup>87</sup> International Reactions to India's Nuclear Tests, <http://www.india-emb.org/eg/Section13E/Eng14F3.html>

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

economic assistance to New Delhi”.<sup>89</sup> Pakistan reacted with similar nuclear tests. China, which remained silent after 1974 PNE, initially chose to be silent again but after two days joined the criticism and condemned the decision saying, “these tests would lead to nuclear arms race in the region”.<sup>90</sup> The next chapter however, will discuss Chinese response in greater detail. France's reaction, however, was an exception. Paris reportedly told Washington that “frustration with Chinese behaviour, including unrelenting military pressure and missile deliveries to Pakistan, may have been responsible for the Indian action, and proposed that the US should use its influence to goad Beijing into a strategic dialogue with India on regional security to ease Indian concerns of military encirclement and political pressure by China”.<sup>91</sup> Russian response was also encouraging. Its Speaker of the lower house, Gennady Seleznyov, while giving an official response said that India acted correctly when it staged a series of nuclear tests. “I believe that India acted correctly and it was a correct decision not to curtail its research programme halfway despite US pressure. I can only admire their national pride”.<sup>92</sup>

## **INDIA’S PRESENT NUCLEAR POSTURE**

The history of India’s nuclear programme reveals two contradictory aspects. On the one hand, one can see the presence of some sort of confusion among the Indian leadership about their nuclear approach. On the other hand, unanimity of opinion between the public and the politicians could be seen on both the occasions, when India decided to go for nuclear test.

According to Jatin Desai “ the Country’s nuclear explosions on May 11 and 13 1998 have basically served two purposes. First, they have given our scientists the data on the basis of which they can, through computer simulation in a laboratory, design new warheads, and

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> “Chinese Reactions to the Indian and Pakistani Tests”,  
<http://216.239.57.100/www.ceip.org/files/publications/pdf>

<sup>91</sup> France not wary of Nuclear India <http://www.meadev.nic.in/govt/nuclear/toi.htm>.

<sup>92</sup> Nuclear Testing, India, International Response, Russia, Sri Lanka, Rumania, Iran,  
[http://members.tripod.com/~INDIA\\_RESOURCE/support.html](http://members.tripod.com/~INDIA_RESOURCE/support.html)

also carry out sub-critical tests. Secondly, it was designed to give a clear signal to the rest of the world of India's intention to acquire a nuclear deterrence".<sup>93</sup> After the tests however, it was widely felt that India needed a clearly defined document, which should contain principles on which India's nuclear policy would be based in the near future. On August 17, 1999, the National Security Advisory Board presented the Draft Nuclear Doctrine for the country. The document put forward India's present nuclear posture. Some of the important and accepted principles in the draft document are as follows:

{a} "In the absence of global nuclear disarmament India's strategic interests require effective, credible nuclear deterrence and adequate retaliatory capability should deterrence fail".<sup>94</sup>

{b} Therefore "India shall pursue a doctrine of credible minimum nuclear deterrence. In this policy of retaliation only, the survivability of our arsenal is critical. This is a dynamic concept related to the strategic environment, technological imperatives and the needs of national security. The actual size components, deployment and employment of nuclear forces will be decided in the light of these factors. India's peacetime posture aims at convincing any potential aggressor that any threat of use of nuclear weapons against India shall invoke measures to counter the threat: and any nuclear attack on India and its forces shall result in punitive retaliation with nuclear weapons to inflict damage unacceptable to the aggressor".<sup>95</sup>

{c} "Since no-first use of nuclear weapons is India's basic commitment, every effort shall be made to persuade other states possessing nuclear weapons to join an international treaty banning first use".<sup>96</sup>

Above text is an indication of growing clarity and maturity among the policy makers on the most important issue of national security and nuclear agenda, which India is pursuing.

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<sup>93</sup> Desai, Jatin, *Nuclear diplomacy: The Art of the Deal*, (Commonwealth, New Delhi, 2000), p.83.

<sup>94</sup> Draft Report of National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine August 17, 1999  
[http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/CTBT/nuclear\\_doctrine\\_aug\\_17\\_1999.html](http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/CTBT/nuclear_doctrine_aug_17_1999.html)

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

**CHAPTER - 3**

**CHINA FACTOR IN MAKING OF  
INDIA'S NUCLEAR BOMB**

## CHAPTER III

### CHINA FACTOR IN MAKING OF INDIA'S NUCLEAR BOMB

Gurmeet Kanwal writes, "A decision that would bring even one hydrogen bomb over one city of one's own country would be recognised in advance as a catastrophic blunder; ten bombs on ten cities would be a disaster beyond history; and a hundred bombs on a hundred cities are unthinkable".<sup>1</sup>

India and China are civilizational countries. In the contemporary international system both emerged as independent political identities in 1947 and 1950, respectively. The Sino-Indian relations can be traced back to the second century B.C. Two famous Chinese Buddhist monks Fahien and Xuen Tsang came to India to learn the Buddhist scriptures, and the Indian monk Budhi-Dharma went to China in the same Century, to do missionary work and established the Chan sect. This situation, however, changed drastically in the later half of the twentieth Century, as these countries have seen their relations getting bad to worse.

Both the countries, having a long history of friendly interaction and a fine tradition of learning from each other, suffered from imperialist and colonialist aggression, oppression and exploitation. "After achieving their independence and liberation, respectively, in the late 1940s, they should have treated each other on an equal footing, supported each other, and learnt from each other in the reconstruction of their own countries, to enable the peoples of both countries to lead a happy life. But it was deplorable that due to the misperceptions and

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<sup>1</sup> Kanwal, Gurmeet, "Nuclear Targeting Philosophy for India", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol 24, no.3, June 2000, p. 439.



mistaken policies of a few leaders, the development of Sino-Indian relations took a winding path”.<sup>2</sup>

The 1962 debacle, as it is remembered in India, was the inexorable ramification of a century-old British border dispute, thrust upon a newly independent India. When China reached a juncture when it could act proactively to the sense of injustice about colonial actions against them. The result was an eruption of a “xenophobic, aggressive “imperialism”.”<sup>3</sup> What followed the war was even more dangerous. In October 1964, China went overtly nuclear. Already weakened India was further cornered by a hostile neighbour. Therefore the security threats that India faced over a period of time are more regional than global.

This chapter attempts to analyze the perceived threats by India from China and the impact of those threats on its nuclear policy in its various phases. Special focus will be on the various periods when the debate on China factor was in public domain - for instance in 1964, 1974 and 1998.

## **EARLY YEARS OF SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS**

In the early 1950s, China and India had close exchanges and contacts. The two countries established diplomatic relations on April 1, 1950. In fact, when The PRC was formally proclaimed on October 1 1949, India was the second non-communist country to recognise it.<sup>4</sup> The year 1954 was a turning point in India China relations, as Chinese Prime Minister Chou En- Lai and Jawaharlal Nehru exchanged visits and much famous slogans of *Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai* (Indians and Chinese are brothers) were on a high note. During the

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Hongwei, Wang, Remembering a War, '<http://www.rediff.com>'

<sup>3</sup> The Sino Indian War: The aftermath, '<http://sinoindianwar.50megs.com/>'

<sup>4</sup> Jetly, Nancy, *India China Relations, 1947-1977: A Study of Parliament's Role in the Making of Foreign Policy*, (Radiant Publishers, New Delhi, 1979), p.2.

same visit the controversial Sino-Indian Treaty on Tibet was signed. The whole exercise was carried out under the rubric of "*Panchsheel*" (the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence). This honeymoon however, didn't last long. In the Bandung conference, 1955, in Indonesia which was called by Nehru to discuss Afro-Asian unity, Sino-Indian differences on range of issues came out in open.

## **BEGINNING OF THE TENSION AND SINO-INDIAN WAR**

Increasing tension and clashes on the border between India and China marked the period from 1955 to 1962. Yet India failed to evolve and formulate a comprehensive foreign policy vis-à-vis China, and tended to treat them as isolated incidents.<sup>5</sup> Naville Maxwell writes, "The issue of Tibet along with Aksai Chin and McMahon line gave a new security twist to the region. A ring road was constructed by China, which led from China to Tibet and from there via the Karakorum Range to Sinkiang and Mongolia and then back to China. In October 1958, the road was discovered by Locals, creating a flurry of diplomatic messages by each side, chastising the other for their territorial transgressions".<sup>6</sup> Further deterioration in Sino- Indian relations could be seen with the Tibet revolt of 1959 when young Dalai Lama and large numbers of Tibetan refugees fled to India and were given asylum. This according to Maxwell, was interpreted by the Chinese as violation of the treaty.<sup>7</sup> By late 1959 Chinese excursions into Indian territory were getting more and more frequent, and as a result the Army was finally given control of the Indian border in NEFA. Throughout this time, the Chinese claims were unreasonable and often contradictory, bordering on the incomprehensible. Increased tension, feeling of distrust and failed negotiations finally lead to 1962 direct border clash between the two countries. "Hostilities began on October 16, 1962.

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<sup>5</sup> "The Sino- Indian War", n 3.

<sup>6</sup> Maxwell, Neville, *India's China war*, (Natraj Publishers, Dehradun, 1997, p.134).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p.171.

same visit the controversial Sino-Indian Treaty on Tibet was signed. The whole exercise was carried out under the rubric of "*Panchsheel*" (the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence). This honeymoon however, didn't last long. In the Bandung conference, 1955, in Indonesia which was called by Nehru to discuss Afro-Asian unity, Sino-Indian differences on range of issues came out in open.

## **BEGINNING OF THE TENSION AND SINO-INDIAN WAR**

Increasing tension and clashes on the border between India and China marked the period from 1955 to 1962. Yet India failed to evolve and formulate a comprehensive foreign policy vis-à-vis China, and tended to treat them as isolated incidents.<sup>5</sup> Naville Maxwell writes, "The issue of Tibet along with Aksai Chin and McMahon line gave a new security twist to the region. A ring road was constructed by China, which led from China to Tibet and from there via the Karakorum Range to Sinkiang and Mongolia and then back to China. In October 1958, the road was discovered by Locals, creating a flurry of diplomatic messages by each side, chastising the other for their territorial transgressions".<sup>6</sup> Further deterioration in Sino- Indian relations could be seen with the Tibet revolt of 1959 when young Dalai Lama and large numbers of Tibetan refugees fled to India and were given asylum. This according to Maxwell, was interpreted by the Chinese as violation of the treaty.<sup>7</sup> By late 1959 Chinese excursions into Indian territory were getting more and more frequent, and as a result the Army was finally given control of the Indian border in NEFA. Throughout this time, the Chinese claims were unreasonable and often contradictory, bordering on the incomprehensible. Increased tension, feeling of distrust and failed negotiations finally lead to 1962 direct border clash between the two countries. "Hostilities began on October 16, 1962.

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<sup>5</sup>" The Sino- Indian War", n 3.

<sup>6</sup> Maxwell, Neville, *India's China war*, (Natraj Publishers, Dehradun, 1997, p.134).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.171.

The Chinese stated that they were responding to Indian provocations. By November 18 the same year, the Chinese had penetrated close to the outskirts of Tezpur, Assam, a major frontier town nearly fifty kilometers from the Assam-North-East Frontier Agency border. The Chinese however, chose not to advance further and on November 21, 1962, declared a unilateral cease-fire".<sup>8</sup>

War was historical for more than one reason. First, it created an ever-lasting feeling of fear amongst the Indians vis-à-vis China. Secondly, the Chinese attack demonstrated the miscalculations and wrong assessment by Indian leadership vis-à-vis threats to Indian security. The reason, however, for underestimating Chinese threat was not lack of information but their short sightedness, idealism and ignorance. For instance, "When the Indian public came to know about the construction of Chinese roads, Nehru was faced with increasingly vocal criticism in the Indian Parliament, and he once angrily asked his critics" whether, "they wanted him to go to war on this issue".<sup>9</sup> Very similar to this, "When Indian army expressed its opposition to the Chinese activities in Indian territories and wished resistance, but was overruled by Menon who insisted that Pakistan was the only real enemy. Little attention was paid to the lurking dangers".<sup>10</sup>

## INDIA'S THREAT PERCEPTIONS

The prime determinants of Indian security have been its two neighbours - China and Pakistan. Though intensity of good or bad relationship with both the countries have varied in different periods. In this context, India's security situation is peculiar, being surrounded by two nuclear neighbours. With both the countries India has border disputes and has fought wars with them. Both the countries are nuclear powers with China acquiring nuclear weapons

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<sup>8</sup> Sino-Indian War, [http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian\\_War](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War)

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> The Sino- Indian War, n 3.

in 1964 itself. The threat from neighbours has become more challenging because they have forged a strategic nexus against India, with Pakistan being helped by China in building up its nuclear programme. According to Jasjit Singh, "Threats facing India are twofold, they are Pakistan and China. While Pakistan represents a threat to the unity and democracy of the state through its support for Islamic separatist movements in India. China represents an existential threat because of its long-range missiles and nuclear warheads. India's development of ballistic missiles and its nuclear weapons programme therefore, are directed toward this threat. They are an "insurance policy" <sup>11</sup>

## CHINESE NUCLEAR TESTS AND INDIAN RESPONSE

### The 1964 Debate

Replying to a question in 1954 Nehru said, "we are far ahead of China in the industrial sector including atomic sector".<sup>12</sup> Though, China tested its first nuclear device in October 1964 where as India could do it comprehensively in 1998 only, 34 years after the Chinese tests. Soon after the 1964 explosions, however, the Indian state was urgently debating on one question. What should India do to counterbalance China?

Speaking in a public gathering on October 24, 1964, Homi Bhabha openly advocated that "India should acquire at least a small nuclear deterrent to neutralize a more robustly armed nuclear China. He argued that besides its deterrent value, Indian atomic bombs would level the playing field and that their absence would result in a dis-equilibrium in the security relationship with China".<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Sing, Jasjit, "It's Not Just Taiwan That's Concerned by China, "<http://www.info@jinsa.org/>'

<sup>12</sup> Perkovich, George, *India's Nuclear Bomb the Impact on Global Proliferation*, (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1999), p.235.

<sup>13</sup> Karnad, Bharat. *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*, (Mcmillan India Ltd., 2002). p234.

H. M. Patel (the man who had been sent by Nehru to Washington soon after Independence to see if an all-encompassing deal for defence cooperation could be struck with the US) opined in a seminar, which was held soon after the Chinese tests that nuclear weapons dampened the possibility of even conventional military actions because "the fear of plunging the world in nuclear war could restrain other nuclear powers from interfering, when one of them pursues expansionist policies through the use of conventional weapons. But then, he turned around and said that any attempt by India to acquire nuclear armament would be an 'extravagant folly'. He said that even though the status quo-ists or the proponents of 'the theory of inertia' were listened to by the government, "continuing with non-alignment did not any more meet Indian security needs. And, therefore, a formal alliance with the West was the best course to adopt".<sup>14</sup>

The two strong advocates of the bomb were a reputed economist, Mr Raj Krishna, of the Institute of Economic Growth, and Mr. Sisir Gupta, Research Secretary at the Council of World Affairs.

Gupta pointed out that "disarmament was only a pious hope, that arms will remain the determinants of a country's status, that power and prestige were no bad thing for India to pursue and cited the example of the USSR, which notwithstanding its unsolved fundamental economic problems, was now identified with sputnik satellites, and that India was at a 'policy crossroads' and ought to go in for a nuclear bomb both to shore up its security and as a nation-building device".<sup>15</sup> He accepted that India would lose foreign aid and face a deterioration in relations with great powers, but rationalised that once it shows it can withstand sustained pressure, the great powers would come around to negotiating with India because he said, "It is one of the rules of the game of power politics, that if you have failed to

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.241.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.242.

prevent the rise of a nation to power, it is necessary to accommodate it in a new power balance".<sup>16</sup> He ended by slamming the joint guarantee India was seeking from the US and the Soviet Union as symbolising the failure of the present Indian policy-makers who, he maintained, were seeing it narrowly in terms of sharing in the common urge of the great powers to curb China, and not in terms of nuclear weapons as India's larger strategic requirement.

Raj Krishna, for his part, damned India's non-alignment policy as a farce, mirroring what political leaders in the opposition, like C Rajagopalachari and Madhu Limaye had been saying. "I find it to be, in reality, an informal, unstated, unilateral alignment with unnamed powers".<sup>17</sup> Bharat Karnad writes, "Raj Krishna found two reasons for the joint guarantee-idea being a non-starter. First, Krishna argued it involved for the nuclear weapon states an incalculable commitment to plunge the whole world into a war whenever any small country is blackmailed or attacked...and that means an automatic escalation. And, secondly, because the asymmetry between a potential Chinese conventional foray into India and the (hypothetic) American retaliatory nuclear strike on China is such that those relying on this US action would do so on faith which is dangerously superficial"<sup>18</sup>.

The former secretary-general of the Ministry of External Affairs, RK Nehru suggested, "India should build-up its conventional military strength, as well as its nuclear capabilities and leave weaponising to a later date. But, at the same time, that New Delhi also unveil new disarmament initiatives, presumably, to show where India's heart really lay".<sup>19</sup>

Krishna Menon talked of India's venturing into the missile field, he said to Major General BD Kapur, Chief Controller of the Defence Research and Development

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid p.242.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.242.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.242.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, P.244.

Organisation, "Missiles will determine the course of all future wars and missiles mean atom bombs".<sup>20</sup>

Debates were equally hot in both houses of Indian Parliament.

Mr. Harish Chandra Mathur (MP) and seventeen others put a question to the minister:

(a) Whether Chinese threat to India has been reassessed in view of her (i) preparations on our border and (ii) development of nuclear device.

(b) The military and diplomatic steps taken to effectively meet the threat?<sup>21</sup>

Answer: the Deputy Minister in the ministry of defence (Dr. D.S. Raju) responded to (a) and (b) "assessment of threat from China is constantly under review and suitable counter measures are taken from time to time. Government has taken note of the activities of the Chinese on our border and also of the development of the nuclear device by them."<sup>22</sup>

On November 17, in Lok Sabha, Mr. P.R.Chakraverti (MP) along with other twenty-six members put the question that. "Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

(A) Whether Government has studied the implication of Chinese explosions of the first atom bomb on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 1964?

(B) To what extent the earlier decision of the Government not to utilize the countries resources and scientific talents for manufacturing atom bombs, despite her capacity to do so, will be revised: and

"How far Government has made a move in bringing the big powers together to devise a concerted policy to deal with the emerging menace to world peace and security?"<sup>23</sup>

The then Defence Minister, Mr. Swaran Singh, however, chose to postpone his reply.

On November 19 1964, participating in the on going debate, Mr. Kapur Singh (MP) asked the Prime Minister,

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.244.

<sup>21</sup> *Lok Sabha Debates*, third series, volume 35, 16-26 November, 1964, p.49.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p.49.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.58-59.



"We are anxious to know what steps the government has taken or proposed to take to secure for India a realistic and effective protection against the Chinese atomic menace?"<sup>24</sup>

The Prime Minister's reply however, was vague, he replied, "I do not think we can say anything at present in this regard. Naturally, the Government of India would consider it".<sup>25</sup>

On November 19, 1964, Mr. Vidya Charan Shukla (Congress) asked in Lok Sabha, "in spite of the fact that our policy of using the nuclear power for peaceful purposes is old, has the government taken a decision at cabinet level, after the explosion of Chinese atomic bomb, about the policy which the government is going to follow in future?"<sup>26</sup>

To which Shastri replied, "no Sir".<sup>27</sup>

Questioning the decision of not developing nuclear weapons, Mr. Bhagwat Jha Azad (MP) inquired "may I know if the decision of the government stands, even in case when this country is subject to aggression by an atomic power nation like China, when the sovereignty of this country is attacked by a foreign power with atomic weapons?"<sup>28</sup>

Shastri's reply was, "I could not follow".<sup>29</sup>

On November 20, Mr. Khadilkar (MP) asked, "When we signed the test ban treaty, was the signature conditioned to the extent that in case China explodes an atomic bomb, we will withdraw our signature?"<sup>30</sup>

The Speaker however, termed this question as hypothetical.

Putting the last question of the debate in that session. Hem Barua (MP) wanted to , "know if the decision not to develop atomic power for defence purposes has been taken on

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.1120.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p.1121.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p.1122.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p.1122.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.1122.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p.1122.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.1123.

the bases of any findings by an enquiry commission of experts into the matter or on the bases of government's preconceived notions of half-baked morality?"<sup>31</sup>

Shastri, replied, "neither the committee of moral experts nor of scientific experts nor of professors like Mr. Hem Barua is needed. No committee be setup; this is a matter on which government alone can take decision and will take the necessary decision".<sup>32</sup>

Giving his final remarks on the motion put forward, on November 23, 1964 about reorientation of India's foreign policy, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha stated, "This House, having considered the present international situation and the policy of the Government of India in relation thereto, regrets that Government of India has failed to reorientate its attitude and postures in regard to foreign policy to meet the demand of the situation and in particular this house regrets – (a) that the Government of India has failed to appreciate the serious threat to India's security due to China's successful entry into the nuclear club and also the immense psychological impact this Chinese achievement has made on Asian and African countries."<sup>33</sup>

There were also a group of people, who acknowledged that China posed a direct threat to the countries security, but they were either against the making of the bomb in India or they wanted India to encircle China through other means.

Morarji Desai(Congress) for instance said that "he did not care what happened to India but for reasons of morality the country should not have nuclear weapons".<sup>34</sup> He was, however, for a nuclear defence of India against the Chinese, as long as the Americans provided it. Commenting on Desai Bharat Karnad says, " Morarji preferred dead Indians to an immoral India".<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p.1123.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.1123.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p.1695.

<sup>34</sup> Ganguly, Sumit, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II: The Prospects and Sources of New Delhi's Nuclear Weapons Program", *International Security*, 23 (4), Spring 1999; pp.162.

<sup>35</sup> Karnad, Bharat, n 13, p.245.

Participating in the debate on November 30, 1964, in the Lok Sabha, on the issue of increasing funds for AEC, Mrs. Savitri Nigam (Banda) said, "Sir, while I was speaking on the supplementary demands for grant, I had made it clear that it would be the darkest day in the history of mankind not only for India-if we decide to shift from the present foreign policy and produce nuclear weapons. I would like to say, Sir, it has been proved that nuclear weapons are no deterrent at all. The moment we start producing nuclear weapons, we would be forcing the other nations of Asia and Africa to produce these weapons that will adversely affect or even destroy their developing economies. Sir, I am well aware that China poses a direct threat to Indian security but the only way this threat can be countered is through Chinese encirclement by India with the help of other developing countries and not by nuclear deterrents".<sup>36</sup>

### **Prime Minister's final reply**

Reacting to the Chinese explosions initially, the then Indian Prime Minister, Shastri admitted that the blasts came as a shock and posed a danger to world peace. But he denied India taking any reciprocal action. On November 24, 1964, however, replying to the weeklong debate in the Parliament, a major departure in Prime Minister's earlier nuclear policy could be seen. Speaking in the Lok Sabha he Stated, "While his government continued to oppose development of nuclear weapons, this position should not be regarded as permanent one".<sup>37</sup> Later on November 27, speaking in the Rajya Sabha, he said, "India was willing to consider the use of public declaration by the Indian government favoring development of nuclear explosives for any purpose".<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Parliamentary debates (India) Lok Sabha Third series, volume 36 Nov 30-to Dec 11<sup>th</sup> 1964 p. 2415-2417.

<sup>37</sup> Paranjape, Shrikant, *Parliament and the making of the Indian foreign policy, a study of nuclear policy*, (New Delhi, Radiant Publishers, 1997), p.65.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p.65.

Indian anxiety over the Chinese nuclear programme had never diminished since 1964. In this context, Shrikant Paranjpe writes, "concerns about China became even more serious with reports about the possibility of it being able to deploy medium range missiles".<sup>39</sup> In fact in 1968 government had presented an assessment of the nuclear strength of China. The assessment stated that China could produce about 40 nuclear bombs every year of 20-kiloton capability.<sup>40</sup> The demands for a nuclear weapons option therefore, became a regular feature in the Indian Parliament. By the beginning of 1970s the first signals about PNE started to make an appearance. The concerns about Chinese development were evident not only in the Parliament but also in the negotiations on the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty (NPT) where India opposed the monopoly of nuclear weapons by P-5 and defended its nuclear research programme. Besides these debates, the changing international environment like Sino-U.S.-Pakistan alliance of 1970, Indo-Soviet treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation with former U.S.S.R in 1971 and its victory over Pakistan in the same year, further motivated Mrs. Gandhi to pursue a more proactive nuclear policy.

On May 18, 1974, India conducted peaceful nuclear explosion. India's decision to go nuclear reopened the debate on the issues like, need of nuclear weapons for India and China as a motivating factor.

To take an overview of the various discussions that took place in both the houses of Indian Parliament and outside, on PNE, one can spell out certain areas that figured prominently.

- (a) The PNE experiment of 1974, its efforts in terms of knowledge gained, uses, dependence for technology and raw material, production of atomic weapons and cooperation with other countries.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p.67.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p.67.

- (b) The U.S. reaction in terms of fuel supply to Tarapur.
- (c) The Canadian reaction in the context of fuel supply to the Rajasthan plant.
- (d) Reactions of Pakistan and China.

## THE 1974 DEBATE

The statement by Foreign Minister Swaran Singh on May 21, 1974, on PNE read as:

“We are happy to note that the peaceful nuclear experiment which took place on May 18 1974, represents a step forward on the road to peaceful use of nuclear energy for the welfare of our people. We have no intention of developing nuclear weapons.... In performing this scientific test, India has not violated any of her international obligations.... It is singularly unfortunate that the peaceful nature of this nuclear experiment of ours should be mis-read in Pakistan.... India has always supported development of cooperation amongst countries of this region on the basis of sovereign equality.”<sup>41</sup>

Speaking on the tests, in the Conference on Complete Disarmament (CCD) on May 21, 1974, Mr. B. C. Mishra said, “India has constantly affirmed its inherent right to use nuclear explosion technology for peaceful purposes and declared its intention to pursue experiments in this direction... Some press reports have mentioned that India has become the sixth nuclear power. I should like to take this opportunity to clarify the position. All countries developing uses of nuclear energy are nuclear powers, those, which develop or possess nuclear weapons are nuclear weapon power. At the same time, India maintains its right to promote the fullest development of all peaceful uses of nuclear energy.”<sup>42</sup>

Giving her first statement in the Lok Sabha on July 22 1974 on PNE Mrs. Gandhi said: “Honorable Members are aware that at 08-05 hours on May 18, 1974 our Atomic

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<sup>41</sup> Jain, J P, *Nuclear India, Vol. II*, (New Delhi, Radiant Publishers, 1974) pp.339-340.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, pp.340-341.

Energy Commission successfully carried out an underground nuclear explosion experiment at a depth of more than 100 meters in the Rajasthan desert... I am glad to inform the Honorable Members that this successful experiment on May 18 has not resulted in any way in radioactive contamination of the atmosphere. ... All the material, equipment and the personnel in this project were totally Indian. .... This experiment has evoked mixed response from various countries. While developing nations have by and large, welcomed the experiment as a step in the research and development work carried on by India in the field of Atomic Energy for peaceful purposes, advanced nations, with some exceptions, have not shown equal understanding. .... China officially reported the event without commenting on the explosion.... No technology is evil in itself; it is the use that nations make of technology, which determines its character. India does not accept the principle of apartheid in any matter and technology is no exception."<sup>43</sup>

Participating in the Lok Sabha debate on July 27 Morarji Desai (MP) questioned the need for conducting PNE for the purpose of using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. He stated, "the results of PNE are inadequate compensation for the jolt to international public opinion and warned that the tests would have serious consequences on India's peaceful pursuit of nuclear knowledge".<sup>44</sup>

Joining the debate in Lok Sabha, on July 25, 1974, V P Singh (Congress) asked, "Will the Minister of Defence be please to state the steps been taken to ensure the safety of our atomic installations in the event of an external attack?"<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *Lok Sabha Debates*, Volume-38 No. 1-5, 22 July, 1974, pp.264-269.

<sup>44</sup> Paranjape Shrikant, n 37,p.56.

<sup>45</sup> *Lok Sabha Debates*, n 43, pp.146.

The Minister of Defence, Mr. Jagjivan Ram, replied, "Adequate measures to ensure the safety of our atomic installations in the event of an external attack have been provided for. It would not be in public interest to disclose further details".<sup>46</sup>

On July 27, 1974, Mr. N. K. P. Salve (MP) asked in Lok Sabha, "Will the Minister of Defence be please to state, (a) whether his attention has been drawn to the reported nuclear ground explosion conducted by China in the Sinkiang region on June 17, 1974, for the purpose of facilitating the manufacture of I.C.B.M; and (b) if so, the reaction of government thereto?"<sup>47</sup> The reply of Minister of the Defence, Mr. Jagjivan Ram, was: (a) "Yes Sir. (b) Government's policy with regard to the production of nuclear weapons has been explained to the house on many occasions. It is to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes only. Government believes that, the defence of our borders can be best ensured by adequate military preparedness based on conventional weapons".<sup>48</sup>

On July 27, 1974, Sardar Swaran Singh Sokhi and Mr. M M Joseph asked in Lok Sabha, "will the minister of external affairs be please to state: whether Pakistan has backed out to hold talks with India on various issues after the nuclear tests by India on May 18, this year, thus completely jeopardizing the process of normalization of relations which began after Simla Agreement"?<sup>49</sup>

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs, Mr. Surendrapal Singh, replied that, "Pakistan's unilateral action in postponing the talks scheduled for June 10 1974, for the implementation of some normalization measures envisaged in the Simla Agreement was totally unjustified. Even before India's PNE of May 18, Pakistan had shown a lack of enthusiasm for implementing normalization measures".<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p.147.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 148.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p.148.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p.152.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p.152.

## POKHRAN I TO POKHRAN II

The PNE of 1974 was clearly a step forward, on India's part, to counterbalance Chinese nuclear threat, though our leadership was reluctant to state anything directly against Beijing. The period after that, however, saw improvement in Sino-Indian relations. The Foreign Minister in Morarji Desai's government, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, went to China in 1979, after almost 16 years, but had to shorten his visit because of the Chinese attack in Vietnam. The major break-through however, in terms of improvement of relationship, was achieved after Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China in 1988. A Joint Working Group was set up to look into all outstanding issues. Indian leaders and official documents however, kept on expressing their concerns about Chinese threat to Indian security both, directly and indirectly, throughout 1990s. For instance, the 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> report of Standing Committee on Defence stated that China is likely to remain a primary security challenge to India<sup>51</sup>. The present Indian Defense Minister, George Fernandes though, was the first one who expressed his concerns publicly about Chinese threat, calling China as enemy number one. Speaking in a public gathering on May 5, 1998, he said, "We certainly have tensions and dispute with Pakistan, but for a country like India, Pakistan is not our biggest threat, the biggest threat is China".<sup>52</sup> This statement by the Defence Minister was the first remark, which directly targeted China since the conclusion of the 1964 debate. Soon after his remarks India conducted Pokhran II. Indian tests added fuel to the fire in terms of Sino-Indian relations. Various surveys and debates were conducted throughout the country vis-à-vis need of nuclear weapons for India and China as a motivating factor behind Indian decision of nuclear tests. Some of the arguments put forward in the debates in the Parliament and outside are as follows:

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<sup>51</sup> *Lok Sabha debates*, May 27 1998, Vol.II No.1-2, pp.301-302

<sup>52</sup> [http://www.tibet.ca/wtnarchive/1998/5/19\\_2.html](http://www.tibet.ca/wtnarchive/1998/5/19_2.html)



## THE 1998 DEBATE

Rationalizing the tests Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee wrote a letter to U.S. President Bill Clinton on May 13 1998. The text of the letter was: "I have been deeply concerned at the deteriorating security environment, specially the nuclear environment, faced by India for some years past. We have an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders; a state that committed armed aggression against India in 1962. Although our relations with that country have improved in the last decade or so, an atmosphere of distress persists mainly due to the unresolved border problem. To add to the distress that country has materially helped another neighbour of ours to become a covert nuclear weapons state. At the hands of this bitter neighbour we have suffered three aggressions in the last fifty years. And for the last ten years we have been the victim of unremitting terrorism and militancy sponsored by it in several parts of our country, especially Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir.... The deteriorating security environment, specially the nuclear environment faced by India for some years past has forced us to undertake limited number of tests which pose no danger to any country which has no inimical intention towards India".<sup>53</sup>

In both the houses of Parliament also, the Prime Minister under rule 193 initiated the debate on May 27 1998, where, he submitted a paper on evolution of India's nuclear policy. "I rise to inform the House of momentous developments that have taken place while we were in recess. On May 11, India successfully carried out three underground nuclear tests. Two more underground tests on May 13 completed the planned series of tests. I would like this House to join me in paying fulsome tribute to our scientists, engineers and defence personnel whose singular achievements have given us a renewed sense of national pride and self-confidence".<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> PM's letter to U.S. President Bill Clinton, '<http://www.indianembassy.org/indusrel/pmletter.htm> '

<sup>54</sup> Lok Sabha Debates, May 27 1998, Vol. II No. 1-2, P174-176

“In 1947, when India emerged as a free country to take its rightful place in the comity of nations, the nuclear age had already dawned. Our leaders then took the crucial decision to opt for self-reliance, and freedom of thought and action.... Our decision not to sign the NPT was in keeping with our basic objectives. In 1974, we demonstrated our nuclear capability. Successive Governments thereafter have taken all necessary steps in keeping in view of the national will, to safeguard India's nuclear option. This was the primary reason behind the 1996 decision for not signing the CTBT, a decision that also enjoyed consensus of this House.... In our neighbourhood, nuclear weapons had increased and more sophisticated delivery systems inducted.... At a global level, we see no evidence on the part of the nuclear weapon states to take decisive and irreversible steps in moving towards a nuclear-weapon-free-world.... Under such circumstances, the Government was faced with a difficult decision. The touchstone that has guided us in making the correct choice clearly was national security. These tests are a continuation of the policies set into motion that put this country on the path of self-reliance and independence of thought and action”.<sup>55</sup>

Participating in the debate in Lok Sabha, on May 27, 1998, Mr. Indarjit Gupta of CPI(M) asked, “Sir, What was the sudden provocation, if any, at this stage? If it was from China's side, we would like to know what that provocation was.... Various issues of mutual interest, including the boundary question, are being discussed in the framework of the India-China Joint Working Group and India-China Expert Group. Now, does this statement which has been submitted to the House on behalf of the Government give an impression that suddenly today there is a deterioration in India-China relations?”<sup>56</sup>

On May 27, 1998, Jagmohan (BJP) replied: “A number of friends asked from this side, why did you test now? What was the provocation? Please remember that many, who

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p 177-178.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p 279-281.

were in Government, are still in this House. There are, in this House, three former Prime Ministers. The last two Prime Ministers are Members of this House. The person who occupied that high office until the 18<sup>th</sup> of March, to which you succeeded on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March, is a Member of this House. Some of us are aware of the threat perceptions and threat assessments. We are not all in the dark. We are not all children. We are not all ignorant of what is happening around”.<sup>57</sup>

Making his remarks in Lok Sabha on May 27 1998, the present Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, first congratulated the scientists, technicians, engineers and armed forces, who were involved in this work. Mr. Fernandes said, “everyone is free to have his or her own opinion whether bombs or nuclear weapons should be manufactured or not. One should have no problem with that... But it was repeatedly asked by the honorable members, as to what circumstances forced the government to conduct these tests now... sir, I would like to refer to the standing committee of Lok Sabha report of 1995- 1996 in which the country was warned about the challenges it would have to face. Report also recommended the counter measures to be taken to meet these challenges.... Question is also raised about the timing of the tests. I would like to say that the tests are conducted now because they were not conducted till now.... It is stated that why people were not taken in to confidence before conducting these tests. I fail to understand that the people who are knowledgeable about diplomacy and foreign policy say such things. Like telling the whole world about the projects to be launched in the country.... Sir, we have taken this decision taking in to account the threat perception to the nation... My statement about China has been discussed in the house in detail. Sir, I maintain that in terms of threat perception China can be considered as enemy number one.... Finally, I would like to quote Mrs. Gandhi: on April 5 1968, Prime Minister late Mrs. Indira Gandhi assured the House: "We shall be guided entirely by self-enlightenment and the considerations

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p.301-2.

of national security. Sir, I would like to assure this house and the entire nation that when Atalji's government took this decision, at that time, we were also guided entirely by our self-enlightenment and the considerations of national security and nothing else".<sup>58</sup>

Joining the debate on May 27, 1998, Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala (Akali Dal) said, "Sir, China conducted its nuclear tests on the plea of necessity. Therefore, I feel that we have taken a step in the right direction".<sup>59</sup>

Participating in the debate on May 28, 1998, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav (Samajvadi Party) asked, "Sir, it is stated that Prime Minister has made India a great power through his decision of nuclear tests. My question is, are we ready to liberate our land occupied by China?".<sup>60</sup>

Joining the debate, on May 28, 1998, Minister for Home Affairs Mr. L K Advani said, "We have no aggressive intentions towards any country, but deterrent has been the principal reason behind India's nuclear tests".<sup>61</sup>

Continuing the debate on May 29, 1998, in Lok Sabha, Mr. Vaiko (MDMK) said, "We have got a bitter experience in 1962 with one of our neighbouring countries. We are for better relationship with China even today. But at the same time, you should not forget that unless we prove our might, unless we prove our strength, peace is not possible".<sup>62</sup>

On May 29, 1998, in Lok Sabha, Mr. Purno A Sangma (Congress) asked, "Mr. Speaker Sir, the recent test is an achievement for the entire nation, but my question is that, how is it going to affect the bilateral relations with our neighbours, particularly with China? I would like to know as to how the Government is going to handle that. What is the final stand of the Government on CTBT?".<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, pp.332,344.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p.350.

<sup>60</sup> *Lok Sabha Debates*, May 28 1998, Vol. II No. 1-2, pp.315-31.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, pp.331-42.

<sup>62</sup> *Lok Sabha debates*, May 29 1998, Vol. 2 No. 3, p.312.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p.334.

On May 29, 1998, Mr. Shanta Kumar, (BJP) while joining the debate commented: "The whole nuclear question has to be seen in the light of the fact that today many nuclear-tipped missiles target the heart of India or can do so in a matter of minutes. Therefore, India has to have adequate deterrence against any adventurism. The threat perception is not theoretical. India has had to suffer the ignominy of getting its nose bloodied by a country, which claimed to be its brother. With the bitter experience still rankling, three and a half decades later, it just cannot afford to lower its guard. Nuclear weapons can be an effective bulwark against any misplaced venture."<sup>64</sup>

Prime Ministers replied to the discussion in Lok Sabha on nuclear tests on May 29, 1998. A significant portion of Prime Minister Vajpayee's reply to Pokhran II dealt with China factor, though in a restrained manner.

He said, "At the outset, let me take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to the hounerable Members for the worthwhile discussion in this Hounerable House, spreading over the last two days. What we have been discussing here, as in the other House, is an Issue of vital national importance.

"I intend to take up three broad issues First, timing, security environment and threat perception; Secondly, concerns of United States of America; and Thirdly, relations with China".

Concern has been expressed by some Honorable Members regarding China's reaction to our decision. Let me assure this House that we seek good relations with all our neighbours, including China, our largest neighbour. India and China are two of the world's largest and most populous countries... There is considerable potential to expand our economic and commercial cooperation. But we have some concerns... There are issues relating to India's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security that have been reflected at various levels,

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p.339.

including highest levels... On the boundary question, we recognise that a resolution requires time and patience. But progress can, and should, be made. Our concerns regarding China's defence cooperation with Pakistan remain. Unlike India-China relations, which have shown improvement despite the difficulties of the past, Pakistan remains unreconciled to good relations with India. Our view in regard to external military assistance to Pakistan has been consistent over the last fifty years. Given Pakistan's approach to India, assistance in the defence field to Pakistan affects India's security directly and adversely... On our part, we do not seek a confrontation with China... We remain committed to the process of dialogue to resolve outstanding differences and to the development of friendly, cooperative, good neighbourly and mutually beneficial relationship with China. Statements by Honorable Members have clearly indicated a sense of solidarity in meeting any challenges to India's security with firmness and resolve. Government welcomes this expression of unity.”<sup>65</sup>

Academicians throughout the country and Indian Media also participated in the debate. In an edition of *frontline*, Dated, May 23 1998, Sukumar Muralidharan wrote, “The nuclear tests by the BJP-led Government have irrevocably altered India's strategic doctrine, undermined its policy of constructive engagement with its neighbours and invited a global backlash”.<sup>66</sup>

Questioning the decision of nuclear explosions, Praful Bidwai and Achin Vanaik wrote, "By conducting nuclear tests and launching a weapons-development program, India has taken the same ignominious path as the Big Five, and has thereby disgraced itself.... There had been no deterioration in India's security environment in recent years.... India's chanting of the 'China factor,' therefore, must be taken at face value".<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, pp.391,396.

<sup>66</sup> Muralidharan, Sukumar, “The BJP's Bomb”, *Frontline*, vol. 15, No. 11, May 23-June 5 1998, p.2.

<sup>67</sup> A very political bomb, Praful Bidwai, Achin Vanaik,  
<http://www.bullatomsci.org/issues/1998/ja98/ja98bidwai>.

Justifying the tests however, India's National Daily *The Pioneer* wrote on June 16, 1998, "no external guarantees can defend a country of India's size which has extremely sensitive borders... France itself, under the charismatic De Gaulle, strengthened its security over and above a US security cover due to political uncertainty in Europe. India too confronts an uncertain strategic climate forcing it to augment its security".<sup>68</sup>

The views expressed above makes it very clear that 1998 nuclear explosions by India did not enjoy the consensus. Indian Government along with many analysts however, stood firm on their stand that China presents a threat to Indian security. This posture adopted by Government vis-à-vis China was received amidst sharp reactions in PRC.

On May 5, 1998, Zhu Bangzao, a spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Office, described Mr. Fernandes' remarks as "absolutely ridiculous and unworthy of refutation and added that China had noted with the utmost regret and resentment his statements on China since coming to office". He said, "The remarks by the Indian Defence Minister Mr. George Fernandes have seriously sabotaged the friendly atmosphere for improving bilateral relations between China and India... China does not pose any threat to neighbouring countries. His accusation concerning China's relations with relevant countries is utterly fictitious and has no basis".<sup>69</sup>

The official *China Daily* wrote on May 20, 1998: "India's improper move of attributing its nuclear tests at Pokhran to potential threat from China has made the international community realise that the new Indian Government is not only irresponsible, but also immoral. This is the first time in history that a nuclear country has denied its own responsibility for its nuclear tests and shifted the blame to others. To justify its series of nuclear tests, India uses the political tactic of making India-China ties tense.... China had

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<sup>68</sup> Sanctions are no Solutions, *The Pioneer*, June 16 1998.

<sup>69</sup> 'Sino-Indian relations: a Chronology',

'[http://www.subcontinent.com/sapra/nationalsecurity/img\\_1999\\_04\\_23.html](http://www.subcontinent.com/sapra/nationalsecurity/img_1999_04_23.html)'

been taking a reserved attitude towards provocative statements from India in order to push forward Sino-Indian ties. However, India took China's forbearance as weakness."<sup>70</sup>

In an interview to the Press Trust of India on May 21, 1998, Sha Zukang, Director-General of the Department of Arms Control and Disarmament in the Chinese Foreign Office, said: "We have never posed a threat to India and history clearly shows that... We didn't have New Delhi in mind when we decided to go nuclear. Since China became a nuclear power, China has never threatened any country. On the contrary, because of our own bitter experience of being blackmailed, we have declared to the world that we would never be the first to use nuclear weapons. To say China's nuclear weapons are threatening the security of India is hurting."<sup>71</sup>

However, in an interview to K.K.Katyay and C.Raja Mohan, the New Delhi correspondents of *The Hindu* on July 9, Zhou Gang, the Chinese Ambassador to India, gave the first indication of the beginning of a mellowing down of the Chinese criticism of India. He made the following points: "It is up to the doer to undo the knot. Beijing would like India to provide responsible explanations for totally unreasonable and groundless accusations against China and, thus, create a favourable atmosphere for a new beginning in bilateral relations. The initiative for this must be taken not by China, but by India. It was China's set policy to develop a "constructive and co-operative partnership with India towards the new millennium. It was impossible to call for a dialogue and establish best relations while keeping up attacks on China, which had been the victim of baseless accusations. China would like these charges to stop and actual actions initiated. China would not like the present situation to go on. As two big powers, the high-level political contacts between India and China should be normal."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.



Addressing a seminar on Sino-Indian relations at New Delhi on February 25, 1999, Zhou Gang, the Chinese Ambassador, said: "We have consistently believed that the problems that cropped up in the Sino-Indian relations are temporary and can be surmounted. There exist extensive common interests between China and India and our commonalities far outweigh our differences. The outstanding issue between China and India is no more than the boundary dispute left behind by history. These differences could be resolved on the basis of the five principles of peaceful co-existence and in accordance with the principle of mutual understanding and mutual accommodation. We have noted that the Indian side has recently expressed its willingness to attach importance to its relations with China, not to view China as an enemy, and resume the dialogue, so as to find solutions to mutual concerns."<sup>73</sup>

The visit of George Fernandes in May 2003 is an indication of the fact that Sino-Indian relations are improving. Differences, however, on various issues like, boundary dispute, Chinese continuing help to Pakistan in its nuclear programme, still remain to be resolved. Till these issues are solved amicably, Chinese threat to Indian security remain, intact.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

**CHAPTER - 4**

**CHINA PAKISTAN ALLIANCE AND  
THE MAKING OF INDIA'S  
NUCLEAR BOMB**

## CHAPTER IV

### CHINA PAKISTAN ALLIANCE AND THE MAKING OF INDIA'S NUCLEAR BOMB

The Sino-Pakistan relations date back to 1950, the year People's Republic of China (PRC) was recognised by Pakistan. In the same year Pakistan supported PRC's claim to the UN seat. The diplomatic ties however, between the two countries were established in 1951.<sup>1</sup>

Sino-Pakistani defence co-operation has been stimulated and sustained by the two countries over the last 35 years, with common hostility to India. Especially for Islamabad, the search for security vis-à-vis New Delhi has been the single most important factor motivating it to strengthen its defence capabilities, a process in which Beijing has clearly played godfather. John W. Garver states that the Sino-Pakistani friendship has a special character. According to him, "Chinese alliance with Pakistan is guided by three considerations, (i) militarily, a strategic partnership between China and Pakistan presents India with a two front threat, in the event of a confrontation with either. (ii) A strong Pakistan, independent of and hostile to India, severely constrains India's ability to concentrate its force against China in the event of a China- India War. (iii) China derives a third, far more amorphous but perhaps even more important, political advantage from the existence of India-Pakistan enmity. As long as these two countries remain at loggerheads, foreign audience automatically compares them with each other. China therefore, is left apart, in a separate category, either on a higher moral plane or in the category of a greater power".<sup>2</sup> S. M. Burke writes, "China's

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<sup>1</sup> Pande, Savita, *Pakistan's Nuclear Policy*, (B.R. Publication Corporation, New Delhi, 1991), p.69.

<sup>2</sup> Garver, W John, *Protracted Contest: Sino Indian rivalry in the twentieth century*, (University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 2003), p.188.

policy toward Pakistan is an object lesson in how to attain long-term national goals by calm calculation, forbearance and diplomatic skill".<sup>3</sup>

This chapter attempts to study the indirect threat posed by China, through its support for Pakistan's conventional and nuclear weapons development programme. The special focus would be on three factors, (a) Is Sino-Pak nuclear co-operation directed against India? (b) How far did China help Pakistan in its nuclearisation? (c) Did China-Pakistan Nuclear nexus determine India's nuclear tests of 1998?

### **BASES OF THE SINO-PAKISTANI CO-OPERATION:**

T. V. Paul writes, "China's involvement in nuclear proliferation in South Asia has been long-standing. It is both a cause of and a contributor to proliferation in the region. As a military ally of Pakistan and an adversary of India, China has helped Islamabad to build its nuclear and missile capabilities. China has used this assistance to Pakistan as a way to balance India militarily and politically".<sup>4</sup> According to Robert Ross, "China continues its support for Pakistan by supplying nuclear and missile technology as China views a credible Pakistani deterrent as the most effective way to guarantee the security of its sole ally in Southern Asia against Indian power.... In this respect, China's relationship with Pakistan is similar to America's relationship with Israel".<sup>5</sup>

Pakistan, which happens to be the immediate neighbour of India, has always tried to establish parity with India. In order to do so, it has been trying to attract extra regional powers in the region. The India-Pakistan conflict is the direct consequence of the imbalance of power between the two states and Pakistan's insecurity about this imbalance. The conflict

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<sup>3</sup> Cited in Garver, W John, n 2, p188.

<sup>4</sup> Paul, T. V. "Great Powers and Nuclear Non-proliferation Norms: China in South Asia," cited in <http://www.ciaonet.org/isa/pat01/>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

between India and Pakistan is ever present and this is a consequence of the persistence of this imbalance and of Pakistan's attempts to correct it. The structure of the international system however, in South Asia has constrained the choices available to India and Pakistan in their relations with each other. Pakistan being the weaker power, these constraints have been more pronounced for Pakistan than for India. This overwhelming advantage that Indian has is the primary reason why Pakistan's balancing efforts have been more frantic than those of India. Thus Pakistan has responded with greater energy to changes in international alignments than India has. Pakistan's policy, for the last five decades has been geared towards correcting this imbalance of power in South Asia.

Kenneth Waltz writes, "States in the international system have one of two ways of dealing with their perceived aggressors: they can balance against such aggressors, either with their own capabilities, which is called as internal balancing or by joining like-minded states against the aggressor, which is known as external balancing".<sup>6</sup> Pakistan's strategic choices reflect a mix of the balancing options. It has used as much of its domestic resources as possible, and whenever such option was available, supplement it with alliances with other powers, mainly the United States and China.

## **EXTERNAL BALANCING**

Pakistan's external balancing efforts have mainly focused on establishing alliances with the US and China. Its search for great power allies, against India, initially focused on the United States. But as Anglo-American efforts to build-up Indian defence began in the aftermath of the 1962 Sino-Indian border war, Pakistan's apprehensions towards USA increased. As Sino-Indian relations worsened, Sino-Pakistan relations rapidly improved.<sup>7</sup> A

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<sup>6</sup> Waltz, N. Kenneth, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979), p.168.

<sup>7</sup> Sherwani, Latif, Ahmed, *Pakistan, China and America*, (Karachi, Council for Pakistan Studies, 1980), p.117.

week before the Sino-Indian war began; China and Pakistan began talks to settle their border dispute, which was completed a few months later.<sup>8</sup> The years 1962 to 1965 saw a marked improvement in Sino-Pakistan relations, increasingly giving the impression of a military alliance, an impression that Pakistan sought to cultivate. Though, the exact commitments China made to Pakistan remain unclear. However, the then Foreign Minister of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, claimed in Parliament that "any Indian attack on Pakistan will involve India with "the territorial integrity and security of the largest state in Asia," presumably China".<sup>9</sup>

Pakistan's balancing efforts are viewed with suspicion in New Delhi, where political leaders have repeatedly claimed that such efforts are unnecessary. Further, Pakistan was accused of acquiring military might disproportionate to her "legitimate" needs and during the Cold War years, of bringing the Cold War to South Asia by inviting external powers to the region.

Indian security planners therefore, always have to include among the risk factors the likelihood of Chinese intervention in a major Indian-Pakistani war, especially one in which India appears likely to win a decisive victory over Pakistan. Similarly, should a major war develop between China and India, Pakistan would seize this opportunity to correct the power imbalance between India and Pakistan. Thus, Beijing has long been the most important factor in the India-Pakistan-China triangular relationship.

## **SINO-PAK DEFENCE CO-OPERATION**

Swaran Singh writes, "The origins of Sino-Pakistan defence co-operation can be safely traced back to 1963, when Gen. Ayub Khan was quoted by the Washington Post as

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<sup>8</sup> Yaacov, Vertzberger, *Enduring Entente: Sino-Pakistani Relations 1960-1980*, (Washington, D.C.: Washington Papers/95, 1983), p.2.

<sup>9</sup> Cited in, Sherwani, Latif, n 7, p. 55.

saying that 'if India grew menacingly strong, Pakistan might feel compelled to enter into a military pact with China'.<sup>10</sup> Just two years after his statement, in 1965, the first Sino-Pakistani defence co-operation agreement was signed. This however, was made public only on March 23, 1966, on the occasion of Pakistan's National Day celebration; the fly-past was led by four Chinese MiG-19s flown by newly trained Pakistani pilots.<sup>11</sup> The Sino-Pakistani joint ventures in defence production started with the setting up of a factory for the production of assault rifles at Ghazipur in East Pakistan. Later, China also provided technical and financial assistance for setting up another ordinance factory near Dhaka. However, all these factories were lost to the newly independent state of Bangladesh.<sup>12</sup> The disintegration of Pakistan however, provided a great boost to Sino-Pakistani defence co-operation in terms of rebuilding the conventional weapons production sector.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, apart from his much-publicised obsession with building a nuclear deterrent against India's conventional superiority, was equally determined to strengthen Pakistan's indigenous capabilities in conventional defence technologies. It was during his short tenure of five years, as Pakistan's supreme leader, that the foundations of Pakistan's defence facilities in conventional weapons were laid with Chinese assistance. These involved the Heavy Mechanical Complex Heavy Foundry and a whole tangle of defence-related industries, the most noticeable of which was Pakistan's largest aeronautical complex at Kamra near Attock. In terms of establishing formal channels of Sino-Pakistani defence co-operation in May 1974 Bhutto signed a protocol on collaboration in defence production. The setting up of a joint Sino-Pakistani military committee in 1976 followed this.

A special mention also needs to be made of the Heavy Mechanical Complex, which is the biggest undertaking of its type in Pakistan. It was set up at Taxila in 1979 with the help of

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<sup>10</sup> Singh, Swaran, "Sino-Pakistan Defence Co-operation: Joint Ventures and Weapons Procurement", *Peace Initiatives*, 1999 pp.1-2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.5.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.6.

Chinese expertise.<sup>13</sup> Swaran Singh writes, "One important feature of Pakistan's weapons procurement from China is that while the other major suppliers like U.S. and U.S.S.R. resorted to arms embargoes during crises, Chinese assistance increased during Pakistan's conflicts with India in 1965 and 1971".<sup>14</sup> In fact, going by Pakistan's current arsenal, China in last 35 years has supplied Pakistan over 78 per cent of its MBT, 63 per cent of its combat aircraft and over 77 per cent of its petrol boat and missile craft.<sup>15</sup>

## THE SINO-PAKISTAN NUCLEAR NEXUS

G. Parthasarthy writes, "All Pakistan's military rulers have invariably professed their commitment to improving relations with India, especially to gullible visitors from India. But their true sentiments about their neighbour are more accurately reflected in the views they voice to their own countrymen and to their western and Chinese interlocutors. China also, despite its protestations of innocence, has consistently provided Pakistan with wide-ranging assistance to enable Pakistan to develop nuclear weapons and a wide variety of missiles, ranging from short range M-11s to medium range M-9s and intermediate range M-18s".<sup>16</sup> The long-standing friendship continues to be strong even today. Speaking at the Institute of Strategic Studies in Islamabad on November 15 2000, he proclaimed to an audience that included Indian High Commissioner Vijay Nambiar: "Pakistan's security interests lie in maintaining a regional balance. And in this it would desire an active Chinese role. This role will remain vital especially in the changing geo-strategic realities".<sup>17</sup>

It is very difficult to assign a definite date for the beginning of Sino-Pakistan nuclear co-operation. One of the first pointers to the existence of a secret nuclear deal between

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, pp.7-9.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.10.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.7.

<sup>16</sup> Parthasarthy, G, 'The Growing Sino-Pakistan Nexus: Military Dimensions are Alarming' *The Tribune*, May 23, 2001.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.



Pakistan and China is contained in the last testament of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, where he said, "in the light of the recent developments which have taken place, my single most important achievement which I believe will dominate the portrait of my public life is an agreement with China of June 1976, which I arrived at after an assiduous and tenacious endeavor spanning over eleven years of negotiations. Now we have the brainpower, we have the nuclear power plant at Karachi. All we needed was the nuclear re-processing plant: we were on the threshold of full nuclear capability".<sup>18</sup> This statement by Pakistan's former President makes it very clear that Pakistan was trying to establish a nuclear relationship with China since 1965. Further, on January 29, 1977, Pakistan and China signed a protocol on scientific and technical co-operation. Chinese assistance for the development of nuclear energy was implicit in the protocol. The incident was reported by an Iraqi news agency, that a "generous offer" of nuclear co-operation to help Pakistan build a reprocessing plant was made by China in view of the special relationship that existed between the two countries.<sup>19</sup>

Reports of Chinese assistance to Pakistan for development of atomic weapons' had begun to appear from early 1979. The London-based Lebanese magazine *Uruba-val Arabi* reported that China had "responded positively" to a Pakistani request to conduct a nuclear test on China's soil.<sup>20</sup> Another report published in "New Scientist" (London) in 1981, citing American and Israeli intelligence sources, said that China might provide a site for Pakistan's first bomb which was expected to explode later that year. It also stated that negotiations had already taken place between China and Pakistan to ready the site by the end of summer.<sup>21</sup> In 1983, US intelligence agencies reported, "China had transferred a complete nuclear weapon

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<sup>18</sup> Pande, Savita, n 1 p.134.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p.73.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.74.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.74.

design to Pakistan, along with enough weapons-grade uranium for two nuclear weapons. It was also reported that China was helping Pakistan operate its Kahuta uranium-enrichment plant".<sup>22</sup>

More information on Sino-Pak nuclear collaboration came in June 1984, when Senator Cranston told the Senate that Pakistan had already acquired the nuclear capability. According to him "Pakistan can make at least a dozen bombs".<sup>23</sup> In 1986, China concluded a comprehensive nuclear co-operation agreement with Pakistan. Later in the year, Chinese scientists began assisting Pakistan with the enrichment of weapons-grade uranium. China also reportedly transferred tritium gas to Pakistan that could be used to achieve fusion in hydrogen bombs and boost the yield of atomic bombs.<sup>24</sup> In 1991, US officials alleged "China provided Pakistan with enough weapons-grade uranium for two nuclear weapons, and that Pakistan now has a "workable bomb" weighing 180 kg. In the same year, German officials also said, that China sold Pakistan enough Tritium in 1986 for ten nuclear weapons. Pakistan has been testing nuclear weapons parts of Chinese design with the aid of Chinese scientists at a clandestine nuclear project in Kahuta".<sup>25</sup> On December 31 1991, Jiang Xinxiong, General Manager of the China National Nuclear Corporation and Ishfaq Ahmad, Chair of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission signed a contract under which China was to export a 300 mega watt nuclear power plant to Pakistan. Chinese Premier Li Peng was present at the signing ceremony in Beijing.<sup>26</sup>

Five years after the conclusion of the above agreement, on February 5, 1996, the Washington Times was the first to disclose intelligence reports that the China National Nuclear Corporation, a state-owned corporation, transferred to the A.Q. Khan Research

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<sup>22</sup> "China's Nuclear Exports and Assistance to Pakistan", <http://www.nti.org/db/china/npakpos.htm>

<sup>23</sup> Pande, Savita, n 1, p.75.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p.72.

<sup>25</sup> "China's Nuclear Exports and Assistance to Pakistan Statements and Developments", <http://cns.miis.edu/research/india/index.htm>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

Laboratory in Kahuta, Pakistan, 5,000 ring magnets, which can be used in gas centrifuges to enrich uranium. According to the report, intelligence experts believed that the magnets provided to Pakistan are to be used in special suspension bearings at the top of rotating cylinders in the centrifuges.<sup>27</sup> The Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), in June 1997, submitted a mandatory report to Congress stating that during July-December 1996, "China was the most significant supplier of WMD-related goods and technology to foreign countries".<sup>28</sup> Gordon Oehler, former head of the CIA's Nonproliferation Center, testified on June 11, 1998, to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that in November 1992, "the Chinese delivered 34 M-11s to Pakistan".<sup>29</sup>

## PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR TESTS

In 1998, Pakistan conducted its nuclear tests in Ras Koh range in Chagai Hills in Balochistan. The extent of Sino-Pakistani collaboration became clearer following Pakistan's nuclear tests, as China's reaction to Pakistani's tests was muted in comparison to its reaction to India's tests. Reacting to the Indian tests, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao stated that, the "Chinese government expresses grave concern over India's nuclear tests. . . . India's nuclear tests under such circumstances run counter to the international trend and are not in the interest of South Asia's peace and stability."<sup>30</sup> Whereas, while responding to Pakistani test the same spokesman stated, "The present situation in South Asia was caused solely by India, while Pakistan's nuclear tests were conducted as reactions to India's intimidation".<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *The Washington Times*, February 5 1996.

<sup>28</sup> Congressional research service (CRS) report on Chinese illegal transfer of weapons of mass destruction and missiles, Washington D.C. 1997, p.850.

<sup>29</sup> Congressional research service (CRS) report on China's proliferation of weapons of mass destruction Washington D.C. 1998, p.168.

<sup>30</sup> 'Chinese reactions to Indian and Pakistani Tests' in [www.ceip.org/files/publications/pdf/CH3](http://www.ceip.org/files/publications/pdf/CH3).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

While it was preparing for the tests, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary, Shamshad Ahmed, made an unannounced visit to Beijing. Moreover, after Pakistan's nuclear tests on May 28 and 30, 1998 Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, while giving his first official statement lauded his country's 'time-tested' relations with Beijing, and said that, "Our friendship has been further strengthened.... We are proud of our great neighbour".<sup>32</sup>

Sino-Pakistani nuclear co-operation therefore, presents India with a dual threat. (i) Pakistan can use the technology provided by China against India, in wake of a possible war in which it finds itself in a self-defeating position. (ii) Since China and Pakistan are good friends, and Pakistan is geographically contiguous to India, Beijing can use Pakistan's territory to launch an attack on India, thereby reducing the possibilities of error in choosing and hitting the targets. Following are the two tables, one about Chinese nuclear and missile stockpile and another about Pakistan's nuclear and missile storage. These tables would display Sino-Pakistani nuclear and missile stockpile, which would help to analyze the intensity of threats this alliance poses to Indian security.

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<sup>32</sup> Nawaz Sharif's speech, May 28 1998, *news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/not\_in*

**Table.1-SUMMARY OF CHINESE MISSILE AND NUCLEAR STOCKPILE**

Weapon System	Warheads								
	Type	No. deployed	Year deployed	Range (km)	Stages	Payload (kg)	Warhead x yield	No. In stockpile	Comment
<b>Aircraft*</b>									
Hong-6 (B-6)	100	1965	3,100	Na	4,500	1-3 x bombs	100	"Badger" type	
Qian-5 (A-5)	30	1970	400	na	1,500	1 x bombs	30	MiG-19 redesign	
<b>Land-based missiles**</b>									
Dong Feng-3A/CSS-2	40	May 1971	2,800	one	2,150	1 x 3.3 Mt	40	liquid/mobile	
Dong Feng-4/CSS-3	20	Nov 1980	4,750	two	2,200	1 x 3.3 Mt	20	liquid/caves/roll out	
Dong Feng-5A/CSS-4	20	Aug 1981	13,000+	two	3,200	1 x 4-5 Mt	20	liquid/silo	
Dong Feng-21A/CSS-5	48	1985-86	1,800	two	600	1 x 200-300 Kt	48	solid/mobile	
Dong Feng-31/CSS-X-9	0	late-1990s	8,000	three	700	1 x 200-300 Kt	0	solid/silo-based	
<b>Submarine-based missiles</b>									
Julang-1 (CSS-N-3)	12	1986	1,700	two	600	1 x 200-300 Kt	12	solid/one SSBN	
Julang-2 (CSS-N-4)	0	2010?	8,000	three	700	1 x 200-300 Kt	?	solid <sup>33</sup>	
<b>Nuclear Bombs</b>									
		1997					400 <sup>34</sup>		
** The Chinese define missile ranges as follows: short-range, less than 1000 km; medium-range, 1,000-3,000 km; long-range, 3,000-8,000 km; intercontinental range, over 8,000 km. The nuclear capability of the DF-16/CSS-6 (M-9) is unconfirmed and not included.									

<sup>33</sup> Table of Chinese Nuclear Forces, 2002, <http://www.nrdc.org/nuclear/nudb/datab17.asp>

<sup>34</sup> Imai, Ryukichi. "Initiative Regarding the Nuclear Test by India and Pakistan" IIPS, *Asia-Pacific Review* 5(3): Fall/ Winter 1998: pp.173.

**Table. 2- SUMMERY OF PAKISTAN'S MISSILES**

Name	Alternate Names	Range (km)	Payload (kg)	Test Firings	Developer	Status
Hatf-1		80	500	April 1989	KRL	In service since 1996
Hatf-1A		100	500	February 2000	KRL	In service?
Hatf-2		260-300	500	April 1989	KRL	In service?
Hatf-3		800		3 July 1997?	KRL?	Never deployed
Hatf-4	Shaheen-1	750	1000	15 April 1999	NDC	Deployed September 2000
Hatf-5	Ghauri-1	1100-1500	700	6 April 1998	KRL/DPRK	
Hatf-6?	Ghauri-2	2000	500-700?	14 April 1999	KRL/DPRK <sup>35</sup>	
Hatf-7	Shaheen-2	2400-2500	1000	Declared ready for test Sept. 2000	NDC	
	Ghauri-3? (Ghaznavi?)	3000		15 August 2000??	KRL/DPRK?	
M-9	CSS-6/DF-15	600-650	500		China	Supplied?
M-11	CSS-7/DF-11	300	500-800		China	30-80 supplied
Notes						
1. NDC: National Defence Complex 2. KRL: A.Q. Khan Research Laboratories 3. DPRK: Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) 4. Hatf-2 may be a Pakistani manufactured M-11 5. Shaheen-1 believed to be based on Chinese M-9 technology and design 6. Shaheen-2 believed to be based on Chinese M-18 or DF-21 technology and design 7. Ghauri and Ghauri-2 are believed to be DPRK (North Korea) No-dong missiles or No-dong based designs <sup>36</sup>						

<sup>35</sup> Beri, Ruchita, 'Pakistan's Missile Programme' in Singh, Jasjit(ed) *Nuclear India* (New Delhi, Knowledge World Publishers and IDSA, 1998) p.125.201.

<sup>36</sup> "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Program: Present Capabilities", August 6 2001, <http://nuketesting.enviroweb.org/hew/Pakistan/PakArsenal.html>

Above statements, reports, agreements and table are indicators strong enough to show that China has helped Pakistan build its nuclear and military weapons and their joint venture poses a serious threat to Indian security. Both the sides however, deny any such relationship and claim that, their co-operation in nuclear field is for peaceful purposes only. In 1996, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang, in response to a report that the CIA had evidence that China transferred ring magnets to Pakistan, stated: "China, a responsible state, has never transferred equipment or technology for producing nuclear weapons to any other country, nor will China do so in the future."<sup>37</sup> On similar lines, on April 4 1998, in an interview with *Janes's Defense Weekly*, Dr. A. Q. Khan, the father of Pakistan's nuclear weapon denied that China aided Pakistan in developing its nuclear weapons. He said, "I can tell you with full authority and very honestly that we have had no access to any Chinese data. If we produce a hamburger, the West will say that it has been copied by McDonald's."<sup>38</sup>

## **TREATS FACED BY INDIA IN VARIOUS PHASES FROM SINO-PAKISTAN ALLIANCE**

India has time and again expressed its concerns about Sino-Pakistani defence co-operation, particularly their nuclear co-operation and in view of those threats that India has faced or is facing for last 40 years. International community however, for different reasons has always turned deaf ears to India's security concerns. In fact, it won't be an exaggeration to state that one of the foremost reason for the growth of Sino-Pakistani friendship has been their common animosity with India. Though Chinese officials throughout have dismissed India's threat perceptions and insisted that their friendship with Pakistan is not directed against India. Most recent of these statements came on July 23 2000, from Tang, who was a

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<sup>37</sup> "China's Nuclear Exports and Assistance to Pakistan - Statements and Developments", <http://cns.miis.edu/research/india/index.htm>

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

highest-ranking Chinese official to visit since India's nuclear tests in 1998. He stressed that "the relationship with Pakistan was a normal, bilateral, sovereign relationship and not directed against any country, particularly India".<sup>39</sup> His statement however, doesn't match Indian experiences, which the country has been through, in the past. Following are the major events when India has faced with direct security threats from Sino-Pakistan alliance.

### **PHASE I 1962 TO 1971**

The Sino-Pakistan border settlement of March 3, 1963 is often cited as the first expression of their joint friendship in an anti-India alliance. More definite signs however, of Sino-Pakistani co-operation appeared during 1965, when immediately before and during the Indo-Pakistan war, China not only sided openly with Pakistan and put its armed forces at the Indian border on full alert but also threatened India of dire consequences. On September 8 1965 a Chinese official Liu Shaoqi sent a letter to Ayub stating that "China would respond to an Indian attack on East Pakistan. War however, won't be restricted to that area but would go in the Himalayas".<sup>40</sup> Just one day later, on September 9 Chao En Lai stated, "A struggle between aggression and anti-aggression is unfolding beside China.... The Indian aggressors had attacked first the people of Kashmir and then the people of Pakistan.... If peace is to be safeguarded, aggression must be opposed.... India's acts of aggression pose a threat to peace in this part of Asia, and China cannot but closely follow the development of the situation."... He concluded by reiterating the stern warning that the Indian government must bear full responsibility for all the consequences arising from its extended aggression".<sup>41</sup> Threatening

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<sup>39</sup> "China says military ties with Pakistan no cause for Indian concern", [http://www.tibet.ca/wtnarchive.2000/7/23\\_2.html](http://www.tibet.ca/wtnarchive.2000/7/23_2.html)

<sup>40</sup> Garver, W John, n 2, p.198.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p.199



statements were also disseminated by PRC Embassies. The First Secretary of the Chinese Embassy in Damascus told the editor of major Syrian daily on September 9 that “China was ready to provide arms and troops to Pakistan if and when required”.<sup>42</sup> In fact it threatened to open a second front against India. These were not just warnings. According to Garver, “During the Indo-Pakistan war, PRC deployed nearly sixty thousand soldiers in Tibet and another sixteen thousand in western Xinjiang region”.<sup>43</sup>

### **1971 WAR AND THE SINO-PAKISTAN ENTENTE**

Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 was fought under the umbrella of two Super Powers and China, with U.S. and China on Pakistan’s side and Former U.S.S.R. supporting India. Though later emerged victorious after the war, its borders were threatened by both China and America through their direct support to Pakistan. Chinese intervention in the dispute started in early 1971. On April 6 1971 China delivered a protest to India charging it with cross interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan and warned that Pakistan would have China’s firm support if the Indian expansionist policy dare to launch an attack on Pakistan.<sup>44</sup> In November 1971, when Bhutto visited China, he was assured again by Chinese leadership that, in the event of a war China would be willing to undertake as it had been in 1965, diversionary action in the Himalayas to hold down the Indian forces.<sup>45</sup> Garver writes, “Once the war began, and Indian forces drove rapidly into Bangladesh to bring the Awami League to power and accomplish the independence of Bangladesh, China launched a blistering polemic against India and its Soviet supporter. Those two had, Beijing charged, established through their aggression a new puppet state, Bangladesh, equivalent to Manchukuo

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p.199.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p.207.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p.208.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p.208.

established by Japan in China's northeast in 1932".<sup>46</sup> These statements were threatening for India. This time however, China for various reasons did not intervene militarily in the war as it did in 1965.

## **CHINESE INTERVENTION ON KASHMIR ISSUE**

China is an important third party to the dispute over Kashmir. Especially after the agreement of 1963 through which Pakistan illegally ceded one-third of the territory of Jammu and Kashmir to China. Legal document signed between the two countries in 1963 says, "The Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Pakistan; having agreed, with a view to ensuring the prevailing peace and tranquility on the border, to formally delimit and demarcate the boundary between China's sinking and the contiguous areas the defence of which is under the actual control of Pakistan, in a spirit of fairness, reasonableness, mutual understanding and mutual accommodation, and on the basis of the ten principles as enunciated in the Bandung Conference. Being convinced that this would not only give full expression to the desire of the people of China and Pakistan for the development of good neighbourly and friendly relations, but also help safeguard Asian and world peace".<sup>47</sup> Rajpal Budania writes, "Though, Indians do not recognise the 1963 border agreement the Chinese reached with Pakistan over the section of Kashmir under Pakistani control. It is a reality that China along with Pakistan borders Kashmir and has played a significant role in the negotiations that has taken place over the issue and in the United Nations organisation".<sup>48</sup> In fact China along with U.S. and Britain have helped Pakistan to

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p209.

<sup>47</sup> "Sino-Pakistan Frontier Agreement, 1963", <http://www.kashmir-information.com/LegalDocs/SinoPak.html>

<sup>48</sup> Budania, Rajpal, *India's National Security Dilemma: The Pakistan Factor and India's Policy Response*, (Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2001, p.94).

internationalise the Kashmir issue. Following are the stands taken by China at various occasions on the issue: In February 1964, after the conclusion of Chou En Lai's visit to Pakistan, a joint communiqué was issued which said, "the Kashmir dispute should be resolved in accordance with the wishes of the people of Kashmir".<sup>49</sup> This is a clear pro Pakistani stand. One year later, on September 4 1965, Chinese Foreign Minister Chert Yi said, "China resolutely condemns India for violating the Kashmir cease-fire line and kindling and aggravating the conflict. China firmly supports Pakistan's just action in hitting back at armed Indian provocations".<sup>50</sup>

In 1970s however, Chinese changed their position on the issue and have maintained since then that Kashmir is a bilateral issue and should be resolved bilaterally. Swaran Singh writes, "The first noticeable and oft-cited example of this return to silence by the Chinese over Kashmir issue was the 1982 joint communiqué between Zia-ul-Haq and Zhao Ziyang in Islamabad in which PRC reiterated its earlier stand that Kashmir is a bilateral dispute".<sup>51</sup> In December 1996, Chinese President Jiang while addressing the Pakistani Senate said, "Pakistan should resolve all their disputes with India including Kashmir on a bilateral basis".<sup>52</sup> A recent statement by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesmen, Sun Guoxiang, however, suggest that China wants to play a more proactive role to resolve the Kashmir dispute. His statement came following the visit of Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf to China on December 22 2001. Guoxiang stated, "Jiang and Musharraf discussed the tensions between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue.... We realise that Kashmir issue is the core question between India and Pakistan.... The Pakistani side has not given up any efforts for the improvement of its relations with India...".<sup>53</sup> When asked, whether China would offer

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<sup>49</sup> Yahuda, Michael, "China and the Kashmir Crisis", June 2 2002, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/2020788.stm#top](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/2020788.stm#top)

<sup>50</sup> Garver, W John, n2, p.198.

<sup>51</sup> Singh, Swaran, "The Kashmir Card", <http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/oct/28chin.htm>

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> "China Wants Role in Kashmir Solution", *The Times Of India*, December 22 2001.

to play a role as mediator, he said, "If China has any role to play, we will help relaxation of tensions and improvement of relations between India and Pakistan"<sup>54</sup>

## **SINO-PAKISTAN NEXUS AS A MOTIVATING FACTOR FOR POKHRAN II**

Pokhran II was followed by, various charges, sanctions and explanations. Government of India however, rationalised the explosions on two grounds. (i) China presents India with a direct military threat, as it had deployed missile and nuclear arsenals along side Indian borders and since India has had boundary dispute with the former, it needs deterrence to meet with any eventuality. (ii) Threat presented by China becomes even more dangerous because it had helped Pakistan in acquiring nuclear and missile technology, which the latter can use against India. The last chapter discussed in detail, various debates that have taken place in India about direct Chinese threat to Indian security. A mention has also been made in the present chapter about Chinese assistance to Pakistan, in its nuclear programme and former's support to the latter in its various encounters with India.

It is important to look into various statements at both, Governmental as well as other levels before and after Pokhran II, which talked about the Sino-Pakistan alliance and justified the 1998 tests conducted by India.

On June 11 giving his first interview to a foreign television channel, Public Broadcasting Station (United States) India's then External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, justified the Indian decision to go nuclear. When asked "the circumstances under which India would use nuclear weapons", he said, "I can't understand any circumstance about India using these nuclear weapons. In today's world they really have a deterrent capability. If we have the kind of neighborhood that India has, which is extremely troubled, and if we have

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

two declared nuclear weapons powers in our neighborhood, the basic requirement is to acquire a balancing deterrent capability".<sup>55</sup>

To the question if India looked at China, even more than Pakistan, with some trepidation, he answered in the negative adding, "These are issues which are objective realities on the ground. It is a fact that Tibet, which is a neighboring area to India, was really militarized in the 1950's, resulting in the Dalai Lama, having to flee Tibet and seek shelter and refuge in India. There has been a border conflict with the People's Republic of China in 1962 with India. We have a situation of a border dispute. A very large part of India is claimed by China. They are sitting on that territory. There is an unsettled border. These are areas of concern, not of trepidation".<sup>56</sup>

Commenting on the Indian tests, on May 14 1998, K Subrahmanyam wrote, "Nuclear weapons have only one legitimate purpose - to deter intimidation by another nuclear weapon power and to retaliate if a nation has been struck with a nuclear weapon. India's sole justification for acquiring nuclear weapons is to deter Pakistan and China if ever they resort to nuclear blackmail. There is no other purpose for the Indian weapon"<sup>57</sup>.

On May 28 1998, Indian Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, while reacting to Pakistan's nuclear tests stated in the Lok Sabha, "Pakistan's nuclear tests have vindicated India's stand that the former had a covert nuclear programme and that it has been helped by an external power in its efforts".<sup>58</sup>

Speaking in the Lok Sabha on July 27, 1998, the then Minister of State for External Affairs, Ms. Vasundhara Raje, again reiterated the Indian security concerns vis-à-vis Sino-Pakistani nuclear co-operation and said, "The government has communicated its

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<sup>55</sup> Singh, Jaswant, "Interview with P.B.S.", June 11 1998, [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/asia/jan-june98/india\\_6-11.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/asia/jan-june98/india_6-11.html).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> K Subrahmanyam, "Pokhran II and After", *The Times of India*, May 14 1998.

<sup>58</sup> *Lok Sabha Debates*, May 28 1998, Vol. II No. 1-2, pp.211.

apprehensions to various countries, including China, at a bilateral level about the defence cooperation between China and Pakistan, including supply of materials and technology".<sup>59</sup>

Replying in the Lok Sabha on May 29 1998, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee made the most direct reference to Sino-Pakistan alliance. He said, "Our view in regard to external military assistance to Pakistan has been consistent over the last fifty years. Given Pakistan's approach to India, assistance in the defence field to Pakistan affects India's security directly and adversely. The Chinese side should pay attention to the depth of feeling on the Indian side".<sup>60</sup>

This kind of statements and views from Indian leaders and analysts were neither new nor were they manufactured within a few months.

On May 2 1989, Indian Express wrote, "Starting with the transfer of technology for building the reprocessing plant at Nilore in 1965 to agreeing to supply heavy water in May 1976, the nuclear cooperation between the China and Pakistan has evolved considerably. The Chinese scientists have been visiting Kahuta and China has provided a design of one of its own atomic bombs and enough highly enriched uranium for two bombs".<sup>61</sup>

Expressing the Indian concerns over its security environment, the Congress Party's manifesto issued before the 1991 general election said, "We are deeply concerned that Pakistan is developing the nuclear weapons. To meet its objective it is taking help from external powers. It is hoped that they will desist from this disastrous path. They have already inflicted four wars upon India. In case Pakistan persists with the development and deployment of nuclear weapons, India will be constrained to review her policy to meet the threat".<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> *Hindustan Times*, July 17 1998.

<sup>60</sup> *Lok Sabha debates*, May 29 1998, Vol. 2 No. 3, pp.391, 396.

<sup>61</sup> *Indian Express*, May 2 1989.

<sup>62</sup> Congress, Manifesto (Indian National Congress, Delhi, 1991), p.54.

The concerns expressed above by members of ruling alliance, security analysts, the largest opposition party (Congress) and Indian media makes it clear that perceived Indian threat from Sino-Pakistan alliance was not something which the country presented just to justify its nuclear programme, but was a result, of a long assessment and genuine security concerns of India.

## **CHAPTER - 5**

# **CONCLUSION**



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

United States of America first acquired nuclear weapons in 1945. Since then six more countries have overtly joined the nuclear club. They are Former Soviet Union, Britain, France, China, India, and Pakistan. Israel is also supposed to have a covert nuclear programme since 1975. The February 13, 2003, International Atomic Energy Agency report has claimed that North Korea can also produce nuclear weapons in next few months,<sup>1</sup> this suggests that the race for the acquisition of nuclear weapons may not be over.

#### INDIA'S PATHWAY TO POKHRAN II

India's security as well as its nuclear approach was outlined by its first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. He along with Bhabha took India to a unique position of restrained nuclear weapons capability. It was in 1964, however, when India first started debating whether it should make nuclear weapons to encounter China or not. Though, no decision could be taken at that time about the making of an indigenous bomb. A consensus was reached to speed up the research in atomic field. In 1974, Mrs. Gandhi took a decision when she decided to go for PNE and then by National Democratic Alliance, a coalition of political parties coming together to form a government, in 1998 when it chose to go overtly nuclear.

The study of the evolution of India's nuclear policy reveals two facts: (i) there is a lack of continuity in India's nuclear programme. The influence of personality of successive Prime Ministers being one of the factors that shaped the India's nuclear agenda. (ii) Opinions

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<sup>1</sup> *The Hindu*, February 14, 2003.

vary among the politicians, academicians and security analysts about the Indian decision of Pokhran II tests. For example, after the tests, some quarters, called India's decision to go nuclear as the darkest day in the history of India and termed it as "the decision of a Hindu fundamentalist party".<sup>2</sup> Such kind of statements and stands were not seen after 1974 PNE.

## CHINA AS A DETERMINING FACTOR

China along with the Pakistan factor has played a pre-dominant role in India's security and nuclear concerns. Since both the countries are India's neighbours the threats it is facing are regional and not global.

The Chinese threat to India started with the militarization of Tibet and the construction of a ring road between Karakorum Range to Sinkiang. The 1962 Sino-Indian border war was another example of Chinese expansionist policy. In fact, we still have a border dispute with that country. A very large part of India was annexed by force, by China. Further, China refuses to acknowledge Indian sovereignty over some territorial parts of India.

Chinese threats do not end here. China's support to Pakistan in its militarization that includes its nuclear weapons programs presents an indirect threat for India. This support to Pakistan in its nuclear and missile programme, presents India with a dual nuclear threat, thereby making the latter vulnerable in case of an encounter with either of the two, giving credibility to the saying, *red missiles painted green*.

Though, China dismisses India's threat perceptions and maintains that it does not pose or has posed any nuclear threat to India or for that matter to any country as it has announced the policy of no-first-use soon after its tests. In an interview to the Press Trust of India on May 21, 1998, Sha Zukang, Director-General of the Department of Arms Control and Disarmament in the Chinese Foreign Office, said: "China has never threatened any country.

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<sup>2</sup> Praful Bidwai, Achin Vanaik, A very political bomb,,  
<http://www.bullatomsci.org/issues/1998/ja98/ja98bidwai>.

On the contrary, because of our own bitter experience of being blackmailed, we have declared to the world that we would never be the first to use nuclear weapons".<sup>3</sup>

These justifications however, are often seen in India with skepticism and distrust. As the Chinese have not kept their promises made in the past. Secondly, the Chinese policy of No-First-Use is not applicable to its own territories, which includes Taiwan and Arunachal Pradesh, a state of India.

## **INDIA'S PRESENT NUCLEAR POSTURE**

External threats are primary in the conceptualization of the national security of India. China has remained, over the years a primary security concern to the country. It represents an existential threat as China possesses long-range missiles and nuclear warheads. India's nuclear policy and its tests of 1998 therefore, should be seen in light of the Chinese superiority in conventional and unconventional weapons vis-a vis India and its co-operation with Pakistan in nuclear and missile field.

In August 1999, the National Security Advisory Board of India drafted a nuclear doctrine for the country. The document accepts the dual threat to Indian security, both from China and Pakistan. Acknowledging the fact that both, China and Pakistan, along with other major powers are busy in acquisition of most advanced weapons, especially the nuclear weapons, the document emphasizes less on disarmament and more on deterrents. Clearly showing a shift in the formulation of policy as compared to earlier governments. For example: The first objective of the doctrine says, "In the absence of the global nuclear disarmament India's strategic interests require effective, credible nuclear deterrence and

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<sup>3</sup> Sino-Indian relations: a Chronology,  
'[http://www.subcontinent.com/sapra/nationalsecurity/img\\_1999\\_04\\_23.html](http://www.subcontinent.com/sapra/nationalsecurity/img_1999_04_23.html)'

adequate retaliatory capability should deterrence fail."<sup>4</sup> Moreover, disarmament is relegated to the last paragraph of the document; where it says, "Global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament is a national security objective. India shall continue its efforts to achieve the goal of a nuclear weapon-free world at an early date".<sup>5</sup>

## **SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY**

After the 1998 Pokhran explosions, India and China have shown the signs of maturity as they have shown willingness to improve their bilateral ties notwithstanding the disputes. These developments suggest that, relations between India and China should and can improve, but for that to happen, China must accept the fact that India is a nuclear weapon state. Beijing should also understand India's concerns vis-à-vis Pakistan and its hostile attitude towards India. For this to happen, the issue of transfer of nuclear and missile technology to Islamabad should be addressed. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the nuclear explosions of 1998 have demonstrated India's advancement in nuclear field. Its open projection of China as a threat to Indian security however, was not a welcome move by the Indian side politically and diplomatically and therefore, could have been avoided. India's approach vis-à-vis its security should be now directed towards achieving the two folds objectives. First, India should try to improve its diplomatic relations with Beijing and simultaneously the country must go ahead for further advancement in the field of nuclear research. This means resisting the pressures, at all costs, to roll back its atomic programme.

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<sup>4</sup> Draft Report of National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine August 17, 1999  
[http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/CTBT/nuclear\\_doctrine\\_aug\\_17\\_1999.html](http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/CTBT/nuclear_doctrine_aug_17_1999.html)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid,

## VAJPAYEE'S TALKS WITH BEIJING

In June 2003, Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, undertook a visit to China. According to C Raja Mohan, "The biggest political outcome from the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to China has been the decision by the two sides to explore a final settlement of the boundary dispute".<sup>6</sup> At the end of his visit, Mr. Vajpayee went on record to state that India had discussed the boundary dispute "as never before" and further "a road map" has been prepared for its resolution. The Joint Declaration in Beijing had stated that the "two sides agreed to appoint a Special Representative to explore the political aspects of the overall bilateral relationship and the framework of boundary settlement".<sup>7</sup>

Suryanarayana, identifies three dimensions that are very important for Sino -Indian ties at this moment and the Pakistan factor is one of them. He argues that Pakistani factor has not been erased in this endeavor by Vajpayee's visit to china. He writes," Pakistan factor in the Sino-Indian equation has been managed at this stage without being solved to official India's satisfaction. "<sup>8</sup>

There is very little scope to doubt the fact that the visit by the Indian Prime Minister to China was a path breaking one. Any far-reaching conclusions drawn at this stage about the Sino-Indian agreement or the joint declaration will be hasty and premature. The 1954 Agreement with China generated much hype and euphoria leading to the slogan of *Hindi Chinee bhai-bhai*. Though, what followed thereafter is also a very well known fact.

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<sup>6</sup> Raja, C Mohan, Settling the China border, *The Hindu*, July 3 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Suryanarayan P.S., 'Sino-Indian Comfort at a New High' in *The Hindu*, July 1 2003.

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