Nuclear Tests of India and Pakistan – 1998
The US Response

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled Nuclear Tests of India and Pakistan – 1998 submitted by **Garima Singh** is her original work and has not been previously submitted to any other University

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation

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Acronym

ABM	Anti Ballistic Missile
AEC	Atomic Energy Commission
AICC	All India Congress Committee
ASLV	Advanced Satellite Launch Vehicle
BARC	Bhabha Atomic Research Center
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CANDU	Canada Deuterium Uranium Reactor
CCNS	Cabinet Committee on National Security
CDS	Chief of Defence Staff
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIRUS	Canada Indian Reactor United States
COAS	Chief of Army Staff
CPI	Communist Party of India
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
DRDO	Defence Research and Development Organization
FMCT	Fissile Materials Cutoff Treaty
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICBM	Inter Continental Ballistic Missile
IGMDP	Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme

IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRBM	Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile
ISRO	Indian Space Research Organisation
KRL	Khan Research Laboratories
LoC	Line of Control
LCA	Light Combat Aircraft
MAPS	Madras Atomic Power Station
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NNPA	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSA	National Security Adviser
NSAB	National Security Advisory Board
NSC	National Security Council
PAEC	Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission
PARR	Pakistan Atomic Research Reactor
PINSTECH	Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science Technology
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PNE	Peaceful Nuclear Explosion
PTBT	Partial Test Ban Treaty

RAPS	Rajasthan Atomic Power Station
SAM	Surface to Air Missile
SNEP	Subterranean Nuclear Explosion Project
TAPS	Tarapur Atomic Power Station
TIFR	Tata Institute of Fundamental Research

Preface

Preface

One of the major developments that took place in the post cold war has been the nuclear test conducted by India and Pakistan in 1998. Both the countries have been pursuing a vigorous nuclear programme, especially during the last two decades. Though the world community views the nuclear programmes and policies of both India and Pakistan in the same perspective, the objectives, motivations and the means to achieve nuclear power are different for both the countries.

India conducted five nuclear tests in 1998, as there was deterioration in the nuclear environment at the global and regional levels. The growing nuclear and missile cooperation between Pakistan and China, the unresolved border dispute with China, the increasing involvement of Pakistan in abetting terrorism in Kashmir and the failure of the US to acknowledge these developments were some of the reasons for India's nuclear tests in 1998. At the international level, the failure of nuclear disarmament efforts, especially the narrow focus of the CTBT and indefinite extension of the NPT also factored in India's nuclear tests.

Pakistan also conducted nuclear tests in May 1998. The main factor, that guided Pakistan's nuclear tests and the nuclear programme was India. Ever since independence Pakistan had fought three wars till 1998, one of them proving very disastrous – the 1971 War, which ended up breaking Pakistan. The break up of Pakistan in 1971 and the first

nuclear test of India, which was conducted in 1974 led Pakistan to engage in a nuclear weapons programme, mainly with the assistance from China. The lack of US support at crucial periods, also was a factor, which contributed significantly to the development of Pakistan's nuclear programme, so that Pakistan could take care of its own security.

The US nuclear policy towards India and Pakistan, from the beginning was guided by its global cold war security interests. During the Cold War, the US nuclear policy had two distinct features. Firstly, the non-proliferation objectives of the US towards India and Pakistan were secondary to its global Cold War interests. The US ignored the nuclear programme of Pakistan, especially during the 1980s, as the main objective of the US during this period was to fight the Soviet troops in Afghanistan. Pakistan becoming a frontline state in fighting for the US interests against the Soviet Union made the US to ignore its nuclear non-proliferation objectives in Pakistan. The US administration, despite the Pressler Amendment, continued with its military and economic assistance to Pakistan. Despite having reports from his own intelligence agencies, the US President continuously certified to the Congress, that Pakistan did not possess or pursue a nuclear weapons programme.

The US, during the Cold War period, also used nuclear co-operation, especially with India, to achieve its security interests elsewhere. During the early 1960s, the US was even willing to assist India's nuclear programme to counter nuclear China. The recently de-classified US documents reveal that, much before the outbreak of India-China war in

1962, the US was seriously considering in either assisting India in its nuclear programme or providing nuclear weapons, as the US had confidential reports regarding China's nuclear programme. Thus, the non-proliferation objectives of the US, during the Cold War were secondary to its other global security interests.

Secondly, during the Cold War period, whenever there was a détente at global level between the two super powers, the US non-proliferation objectives towards India and Pakistan became primary. During the second half of the 1970s, the US was vigorously pursuing its non-proliferation goals in India and Pakistan. In the aftermath of the 1974 nuclear test by India, the US refused to supply enriched uranium to the Tarapur Atomic Power Plant. In 1976, the Carter administration made efforts to scuttle the deal made between Pakistan and France over the sale of a plutonium-reprocessing unit. The following year, the US suspended all its aid to Pakistan under Glenn-Symington Amendment.

In the post Cold War period, nuclear non-proliferation has become the primary objective of the US towards India and Pakistan. Ever since the end of Cold War, the US President suddenly stopped giving the annual certificate to the Congress on Pakistan's nuclear programme status, which resulted in stopping of US aid to Pakistan. In the 1990s, the US nuclear policy towards India and Pakistan was based on capping, reducing and eliminating the nuclear weapons programme of both the countries. As a part of this policy, the US pressurized both India and Pakistan to sign the NPT and CTBT.

Ever since the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in 1998, the nuclear policy of the US is aimed at three issues. Firstly, preventing India and Pakistan from conducting any further nuclear tests. The US has been pressurizing both the countries to become a part of the CTBT, as the treaty prevents any further testing. Secondly, the US non-proliferation policy also aims to prevent both the countries from weaponising. At present, both India and Pakistan have only conducted tests and the weaponisation of the two countries remain highly secretive. US efforts against the proliferation of long-range missiles, is a corollary of the above-mentioned objective. Thirdly, the US non-proliferation policy aims at preventing any nuclear war between India and Pakistan. The US involvement in the Kargil War was mainly to prevent any accidental use of nuclear weapons between both the countries.

The US imposed economic and military sanctions immediately after the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan. Besides, the US also used its leverage over global financial institutions, such as the IMF and World Bank from aiding India and Pakistan. However, few months after the sanctions, the US realised that sanctions would actually remove the US hold over India and Pakistan. As a result, the US started engaging India and Pakistan, by lifting some of the sanctions, at the same time maintaining its pressure over the nuclear weapons programme and policy of both the countries.

The study focuses on the nuclear policy of India and Pakistan, especially those factors, which led them to test. The study also focuses on the US response to the nuclear developments in India and Pakistan, with special focus on the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan. The first chapter, Nuclear Policy of India and Pakistan, traces the history and the growth of the nuclear programmes and policies of both India and Pakistan. This chapter analyses the different phases of the nuclear programmes and policies of both the countries in a chronological sequence. The 1964 nuclear tests of China and its implications on India's nuclear programme; and India's nuclear test in 1974 and its implications on Pakistan's nuclear programme are discussed in depth. The second chapter focuses exclusively on the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in May 1998. The various factors that were involved in making both the countries to go for nuclear tests; the objectives and motivations behind the testing are discussed.

The third chapter discusses the US response to India's nuclear test. The sanctions that were imposed on India and their impact are discussed in the chapter. The reasons for the US later removing its sanctions and the reasons for engaging India are also discussed. Fourth chapter focuses on the US response to Pakistan's nuclear tests in May 1998. The efforts taken by the US to desist Pakistan from testing after India's nuclear tests by Clinton administration is discussed. When it failed, the US imposed economic and political sanctions, only to be removed later. The reasons behind this US approach have also been focussed in this chapter. The final chapter concludes the major findings of the study.

The study is historical, descriptive and analytical. The study has taken into account primary documents such as the statements made by the leaders at national and international levels from both India and Pakistan on the country's nuclear policy and programme. A number of recently de-classified documents reveal the US nuclear policy towards India and Pakistan in the 1960s and 70s. A number of US intelligence agency reports have also been made use of, especially regarding the Pakistan-China nuclear and missile relationship. Besides, the study has also looked into the arguments and counter arguments made by various academics, journalists, and practitioners and retired military personnel in various books, articles and columns.

Chapter I

Nuclear Policy of India and Pakistan
A Background

Chapter I

Nuclear Policy of India and Pakistan: A Background

Nuclear programme in India and Pakistan, to a great extent, began during the 1960s and 70s. Initially, both India and Pakistan were primarily interested in building a nuclear programme mainly for developmental purposes. Both the countries initially were opposed to building nuclear weapons. The cold war along with its global nuclear arms race, the involvement of South Asian states, especially Pakistan in the Cold War, the conflict between India and China and Indo-Pak rivalry resulted in the growth of nuclear weapons programme in South Asia.

At the outset, it is essential to distinguish between the nuclear programme and the nuclear policy of India and Pakistan. "Nuclear policy" primarily involves the strategy in which the nuclear weapons are involved. These nuclear weapons could be either finished or in the process of making or could be easily assembled, with the entire necessary infrastructure in place. Though nuclear policy and programme could be differentiated, in the context of India and Pakistan, the nuclear policies of both the countries to a great extent influenced their nuclear programmes. As shall be seen subsequently in this chapter, the objectives of the nuclear programmes of both the countries underwent a change reflecting their nuclear policies. Hence, it is imperative to study both together.

Nuclear Policy and Programme of India: The Five Phases

India's nuclear policy and programme could be divided into five phases. The first phase from independence to 1964 when China detonated its first nuclear test, during which the nuclear policy of the country focussed on building nuclear energy for economic purposes. The second phase could be identified from 1964 to 1967/68, the period in which India was looking for a joint nuclear umbrella or guarantee from the nuclear states, in the aftermath of nuclear tests conducted by the People's Republic of China. The third phase could be identified from 1968 to 1974 during which the country's nuclear policy underwent a significant change. It was during this phase, the nuclear programme became militaristic. The fourth phase from 1974 to 1995, during which, despite having the technical capabilities, India refused to detonate further tests and contrary to the expectations of the many countries, especially the United States, did not undertake any weopanisation programme. The fifth starts from 1995, in which the nuclear policy of the country aimed to make India a nuclear weapons state and not merely a nuclear state.

Before going further, it is essential to look into how the decision is made regarding the nuclear policy and programme of the country in India. The President of India, though is the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces[1], he does not play any role in the country's nuclear policy. The Parliament of India, though has been used as a major forum to discuss the country's nuclear policy, neither the country's nuclear

[1] Article 53 (2) of the Indian Constitution states '...the supreme command of the Defence Forces of the Union shall be vested in the President..."

programme nor the crucial decisions regarding the country's nuclear policy were taken after a prolonged discussion. Vital decisions regarding the nuclear policy of the country have always been taken by a selected group, led by the Prime minister, including the Ministers of Home Affairs, Finance and Defence and key persons from the scientific establishment. The role played by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Defence has always been limited. When India conducted its nuclear tests in May 1998, the Defence Minister was not aware till the very last.[2] The Prime Minister Office, Home Ministry, Atomic Energy Commission and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) have been the key players in the country's nuclear decision making. India's nuclear programme during the initial phase, for more than one and half decades, was strictly under the control of two persons- Jawaharlal Nehru and Homi Bhabha. The Indian Army always played a subordinate role in influencing the country's nuclear programme.[3]

The First Phase 1947-1964: The slow but steady beginning

The first phase of India's nuclear programme and policy started immediately after India's independence, with Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first Prime Minister. At

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[2] Sukumar Muralidharan and John Cherian, "The BJP's Bombs", *Frontline*, (Chennai) June 1998, p5.

[3] Stephen P Cohen, *The Indian Army* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1971) p.173. According to Prof. Cohen, "India has no single department or institution adequately equipped, either intellectually or politically, to make decisions or even to study such an important issue as nuclear weapons procurement." (*The Indian Army,* p.175)

the policy level, India was committed to a global nuclear disarmament, which could be seen from the various statements and policy decisions taken by India. His "nuclear decisions 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 at Hiroshima and Nagasaki."[4] India's nuclear policy in the first phase was governed by this decision of Nehru. Nehru wanted to use the atomic energy for "peaceful and constructive purposes and that nuclear (including thermo nuclear), chemical and biological knowledge and power should not be used to forge weapons of mass destruction."[5] Nehru also asserted later in 1957 at Lok Sabha "even if we have the capacity to do so, and that in no event will we use nuclear energy for destructive purposes...I hope that will be the policy of all future governments."[6] During the same year he made it clear elsewhere that "whatever circumstances, we shall never use this atomic energy for evil purposes. There is no condition attached."[7]

During this phase, India was keen on using nuclear energy for economic reasons. Vijaya Laxmi, explaining India's nuclear policy at the UN General assembly told:

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[4] T.T.Poulose, "India's Nuclear Policy", in T.T. Poulose ed., *Perspectives of India's Nuclear Policy* (New Delhi: Young Asia Publications, 1978) p.102.

[5] Gopal Singh and S.K.Sharma ed., *Documents on India's Nuclear Disarmament Policy, Volume I,* (New Delhi: Anamika Publishers and Distributors Ltd, 2000) p.53.

[6] quoted in Praful Bidwai and Achin Vanaik, *South Asia on a short fuse: Nuclear politics and the future of global disarmament* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999) p.64.

[7] quoted in GG Mirchandani, *India's Nuclear Dilemma* (New Delhi: Popular Book Services, 1968) p.230.

> "India, like so many other countries in the world, was an under developed and under powered country in whose future economy atomic energy could expected to play an important role...India lacked some of the vital source of power, for instance oil. Therefore, the importance of atomic energy as a source of power was all the greater for that country."[8]

Thus the first phase of India's nuclear policy and nuclear programme focussed on the following:

- Emphasis on nuclear energy for economic development.
- Rejection of building nuclear weapons.
- Refusal to build nuclear weapons, despite having the capability.

However, this thesis, that India's nuclear programme in the initial phase was aimed only at peaceful purposes and it did not have any military purposes has been challenged. George Perkovich, in his well-researched work, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact of Global Proliferation*, writes "Contrary to most Indian and external historiography and conventional understanding, the founders of India's nuclear establishment recognised and welcomed from the beginning the options its military dimensions gave to India, notwithstanding Nehru's genuine hope that India could retain a purely peaceful mission."[9] He quotes Nehru's speeches in the Constituent

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[8] Vijaya Laxmi Pandit in the UN General Assembly, 4 November 1948. Gopal Singh and S.K.Sharma ed., n.5 p.04.

Assembly debates and the secret clauses of Atomic Energy Commission as reasons for his thesis.

Nehru, in one of the discussions held in the Constituent Assembly in April 1948 mentioned

> "...Now we are facing the atomic age; we are on the verge of it. And this is obviously something infinitely more powerful than either steam or electricity...The point I should like the House to consider is this, that if we are to remain abreast in the world as a nation which keeps ahead of things, we must develop this atomic energy *quite apart from war*-indeed I think we must develop it for the purpose of using it for peaceful purposes. It is in that hope that we should develop this. *Of course, if we are compelled as a nation to use it for other purposes, possibly in pious sentiments of any of us will stop the nation from using it that way.*"[10] (emphasis added)

However, an in depth analysis of the events and India's policies in the 1950 would reveal, that India, led by Jawaharlal Nehru had no intention of using nuclear power for military means. Till the outbreak of 1962 war with China, India did not perceive any major threat to its security. Hence it would be totally incorrect to consider, that India's nuclear policy had any military objectives during the initial phase.

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[9] George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: the Impact on Global Proliferation* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000) p.20.

[10] ibid, p.20.

On the technical side, the foundation of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) in 1945 can be considered as the first step of India's nuclear programme. The second step was the formation of the Atomic Energy Research Committee in 1946, under the chairmanship of Bhabha. Third step was the formation of Atomic Energy Commission in 1948, after the introduction of Atomic Energy Act in the Constituent Assembly. The Atomic Energy Commission aimed to take "such steps as may be necessary from time to time to protect the interests of the country in connection with Atomic Energy by exercise of the powers conferred on the Government of India by the provisions of the Atomic Energy Act."[11]

Fourth important step was the decision taken regarding the nuclear reactor. India initially had a series of problems facing it, in deciding its nuclear reactor. Despite having a series of discussions with the US, UK, France and Canada, India could reach a decision on this issue. Homi Bhabha wrote to the US Atomic Energy Commission Chairman in 1952 asking for its assistance. In his letter, Bhabha asked for "all de-classified information on reactor theory, design and technology...detailed designs of such reactors that have been completely de-classified, together with all operational data that may have been obtained concerning them."[12]

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[11] quoted in Dr. R.Ramanna, "Development of Nuclear Energy in India: 1943-73", in T.T. Poulose ed., *Perspectives of India's Nuclear Policy* (New Delhi: Young Asia Publications, 1978) pp.02-03.

[12] quoted in Itty Abraham, *The making of the Indian Atomic Bomb: Science, Secrecy and the Postcolonial State* (New Delhi: Orient Longman Limited, 1999) p.79.

The US, for various reasons refused to provide assistance to India. During this period, India was also having continuous discussions with Canada and the UK on atomic energy. India signed agreements with Canada and the UK. India signed a nuclear agreement with Canada in September 1955, according to which "Canada had offered an NRX atomic reactor to India under the Colombo Plan...This type of reactor is a high powered research and experimental unit of the kind now in operation at the Canadian atomic energy establishment at Chalk river."[13]

India also signed an agreement with the United kingdom which provided for "cooperation and mutual assistance between the (UK Atomic Energy) Authority and the (Indian) Department (of Atomic Energy) for the promotion and development of th peaceful purposes of atomic energy...In furtherance of this agreement, the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority will provide the Indian Department of Atomic Energy with the enriched uranium fuel elements for the swimming pool reactor."[14] As a result, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) built the Swimming Pool type reactor in a record time.[15] *Apsara,* as it came to be known later, the one-megawatt (1MW) swimming pool reactor, went 'critical' on 4 August 1956.

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[13] Gopal Singh and S.K.Sharma ed., n.5, p.54.

[14] Indo-UK agreement on Atomic Energy on 23 December 1955. See Gopal Singh and S.K.Sharma ed., n.5, pp.55-56

[15] Dr. R.Ramanna, n.11, p.06

Two issues, of vital importance were associated with this period regarding India's nuclear programme, which greatly influenced the chain of events since then. First, was the nuclear decision making, which was limited to a very select individuals and the second being the secrecy involved in country's nuclear policy and programme.

The policy of taking nuclear decisions inside at the highest level, without any popular discussion either inside the Parliament or outside it, started with Nehru. India's nuclear policy to a great extent during this phase was governed and conducted by Nehru, based on his convictions rather than the outcome of any consensus arrived either at the Parliament or at Cabinet Committee meetings. Nehru's charismatic leadership, the popular support for Nehru and his party, his unquestionable authority inside the Congress party and the problems that India was facing in the immediate aftermath of India's independence resulted in making the policies of the country and Nehru synonymous. Decisions of vital national importance during Nehru's period was taken by Nehru himself and not by the cabinet.[16]

Secondly the nuclear policy and the programme of India remained secret. The Atomic Energy Act of 1948 and 1962 has made the country's nuclear programme secret and away from open probe. The Prime Minister has total control over the nuclear policy and programme and "developing, producing, deploying and maintaining nuclear warheads are activities overseen by the AEC under the direction of the Prime

Minster."[17] Though the 1948 Act was modeled on the Atomic Energy Act of the United Kingdom, it imposed greater secrecy over research and developmental issues than the United States and United Kingdom.[18] The Atomic Energy Act of 1962 made the functioning of the AEC even more secretive. One of the reason provided for the 1962 Act was to keep India's nuclear programme totally secret as by 1962 itself, the AEC was confident of conducting a nuclear test within a couple of years and "at best they (AEC) would have enough fissile material to conduct a test and still have some material left over for later weapons fabrication."[19]

The Second Phase 1964-1968: Searching a Nuclear Umbrella

The first major change in India's nuclear policy came after the 1964 Chinese nuclear explosions and 16 October 1964, the day in which the first Chinese tests took place was considered as "one of the defining moments in the history of Indian nuclear

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[16] John H Sandrock, *Understanding India's Decision-Making Process With regard to Nuclear Weapons and Missile Development*, Report prepared for the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 15 December 1994.

[17] Ashley J Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.640.

[18] George Perkovich,n.9, p.18

[19] Itty Abraham, n.12, p.123.

policy."[20] All along Nehru was insisting on global nuclear disarmament with the main objective being the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The 1964 Chinese nuclear explosions made India to reconsider its policy and started asking for a nuclear guarantee from the nuclear states in case of an attack by China.

Earlier the India-China war that took place in 1962, did not affect the country's nuclear policy to any great extent. The India-China war, "for all the turmoil it caused in the defence ministry, it did not lead at once to a wide spread call for the development of atomic weapons to protect against China or other enemies."[21] Despite the opposition parties pressurizing India to use India's research in atomic energy to make nuclear weapons,[22] Nehru was insisting on his stand that India would not produce nuclear weapons. Nehru then asked, "On the one hand, we are asking the nuclear weapons to give up their tests. How can we, without showing the utter insincerity of what we have always said go in for doing the very thing which we have repeatedly asked the other powers not to do?"[23] Nehru till his death remained opposed to the development of nuclear weapons and nine days before his death he stated in a

[20] K.Subrahmanyam, "Indian Nuclear Policy – 1964-98: A Personal Recollection," in Jasjit Singh, ed., n.27, p.26.

[21] Itty Abraham, n.12, p.125.

[22] The Jana Sangh Party in December 1997 formally demanded that India should reverse its nuclear policy and produce nuclear weapons. Ramachandra Bade, one of the Jan Sangh parliamentarian demanded "only those who wish to see Russians or Chinese ruling India will oppose the development of nuclear weapons. I beg the Prime Minister to make full use of our research in atomic energy." Quoted in George Perkovich, n.9, p.46.

[23] Quoted in G.G.Mirchandani, n.7, p.23.

television interview in New York, "We are determined not to use weapons for war purposes. We do not make atom bombs. I do not think we will."[24]

Chinese nuclear tests however did not result in India attempting to produce nuclear weapons automatically. Instead India expected "the nuclear powers to discuss some kind of guarantee which was needed not only by India but by all the non-nuclear countries."[25]

At least three reasons could be cited, why India decided to ask for a nuclear guarantee instead of producing nuclear weapons on its own. The first reason was the policy of the government, led by Lal Bahadur Shastri who succeeded Nehru as the Prime Minister of India. In December 1964 he told the parliament, "India is determined to pursue the path of peace and to work for the elimination of the nuclear weapons which faces the mankind today...It is the responsibility of the great nuclear powers, particularly the U.S.A and the USSR, to think of concrete steps for the elimination of the threat that overhangs mankind."[26] Shastri, despite pressure from the defence experts and analysts, Parliament and from his own party,[27] managed to stay away from following the nuclear weapons path.

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[24] Quoted in Sumit Ganguly, "Explaining the Nuclear Tests of 1998," in Raju G.C.Thomas and Amit Gupta eds., *India's Nuclear Security*, p.42.

[25] Quoted in A.G.Noorani, "India's quest for a Nuclear guarantee," *Asian Survey*, July 1967, vol.7, no.7, p.491.

[26] ibid, p.492.

The second reason was the demise of Jawaharlal Nehru in May 1964 and Homi Bhabha in January 1966, the two leading lights of India's nuclear programme. At the time of his death, Bhabha was the Director of TIFR, Director of the Atomic Energy Establishment, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, and Secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy.[28]

Third reason was the appointment of Vikram Sarabhai, as the Chairman of Atomic Energy Commission, who believed that atomic explosion, would not help India's security. It was only after the exit of Sarabhai in 1972, that there was a serious attempt towards a nuclear explosion by India.

Shastri in the aftermath of China's nuclear explosions in 1964 proposed the idea of nuclear guarantee during his visit to the United Kingdom. At a press conference he suggested, "I wanted to throw this idea out for the consideration of the big nuclear powers like the USA and the USSR...I have not suggested any kind of special guarantee, but it is for the nuclear powers to consider how to maintain peace in the world."[29] This nuclear umbrella, India wanted not through bilateral or multilateral agreement with the nuclear powers but through the United Nations. In May 1965,

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[27] There was a lot of pressure from the Congress party itself at that time to initiate a weapons programme at the Durgapur Congress held after the Chinese tests in 1965. (K.Subrahmanyam, "Indian Nuclear Policy – 1964-98: A Personal Recollection," in Jasjit Singh, ed., *Nuclear India*, p.27.)

[28] Itty Abraham, n.12, p.129.

India proposed a five-point plan to the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which focussed on "an undertaking through the United Nations to safeguard the security of countries who may be threatened by powers having nuclear weapons capability or embarking on a nuclear weapons capability."[30] India preferred to have a multilateral guarantee as it viewed any bilateral guarantee would be seen as a military alliance. India, then a leading nation among the Non-aligned countries and leading the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) did not want to sign any bilateral agreements with the nuclear states.

During the same period, a war broke out between India and Pakistan in 1965 and India feared that China would also join Pakistan in attacking India. In fact China charged India of violations with borders in Tibet and warned of an attack. When India increased the pressure on nuclear guarantee, the western powers suggested a nuclear plan, but with only two aspects – non-proliferation and non-acquisition but not any nuclear guarantee.[31] The failure of the nuclear states to provide any joint nuclear guarantee was one of the major reasons for India to re-shape its nuclear policy. Shastri after failing to get any nuclear guarantee gave permission to Bhabha "to begin theoretical work on explosions for peaceful purposes."[32] Bhabha had earlier announced that "a kilo ton explosion...would cost $350,000 or RS 17.5 lakhs" and "a

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[29] *The Hindu*, 07 December 1964 quoted in A.G.Noorani, n.25, p.491.

[30] quoted in A.G.Noorani, n.25, p.494.

[31] ibid, p.495.

[32] Raj Chengappa, n.29. p.98.

stockpile of some 50 atomic bombs would cost under Rs 10 crores and a stockpile of 50 teo-megaton hydrogen bombs something of the order of Rs. 15 crores."[33] Bhabha also believed in atomic weapons of a state as "a deterrent power against attack from a much stronger State."[34]

After getting the permission from Shastri, Bhabha set up the Study of Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes (SNEPP) on 5 April 1965.[35] The Indo-Pak War, the Chinese threat and the failure at international level to get any guarantee added extra pressure on Shastri to review his and the country's nuclear policy. However before he could make up his mind, he died of a heart attack in January 1966 at Tashkent, which resulted in Indira Gandhi becoming the Prime Minister in January 1966. Making atomic bombs were not her priority when she took over power as she had to deal with the internal opposition from her own party and the deteriorating economic conditions.

More than the internal pressures, the untimely death of Bhabha, who died the day after Indira Gandhi was sworn in as the Prime Minister, played a significant role in shaping her perception of the atomic bombs. Vikram Sarabhai, who succeeded Bhabha was against developing atomic bombs. With the major pressure from the

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[33] Bhabha quoted in George Perkovich, n.9, p.67.

[34] J.P.Jain, *Nuclear India*, vol.2 (New Delhi: Radiant, 1974) p.159.

[35] The SNEPP, however did not make any major process, as Bhabha died in January next year and the new AEC Chairman, Vikram Sarabhai closed down the SNEPP.

Scientific establishment to opt for atomic bombs dead and with the new Chairman of the AEC being anti weapon,

It is erroneously believed that the nuclear explosions of China in 1964 led to India changing its nuclear policy in favor of producing nuclear weapons. As has been seen earlier, though the nuclear explosion of China increased the pressure on the Indian government to undertake nuclear tests and produce nuclear weapons, the Indian government under the leadership of Shastri did not take up that option. On the contrary, India was still arguing against nuclear weapons. It was during this period, India submitted a five point proposal on may 1965 that the non-proliferation should aim at. These five points included the following:

- The nuclear powers should undertake not to transfer nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons technology to others
- The nuclear powers should agree not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states.
- UN should safeguard the security of those countries threatened by nuclear states.
- Tangible progress toward disarmament including a comprehensive test ban treaty and a complete freeze on the production of nuclear weapons
- Non-nuclear powers should commit not to make nuclear weapons.

When Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister, her first move regarding India's nuclear policy and programme was to get a nuclear guarantee from the super powers. She sent L.K.Jha, her Secretary and Vikram Sarabhai to get such a guarantee from the US, UK and the former USSR , however the nuclear powers refused again to provide any such guarantee.[36]

The Third Phase 1968-1974

Making the Buddha Smile

India exploded its first nuclear device on 18 May 1974 at Pokharan in the Rajasthan deserts. India was planning to conduct a nuclear explosion since 1967-68, and there is no exact date, when this shift occurred. Sometime during the end of 1967 or the beginning of 1968, India's nuclear programme under went a change, with "a small team of scientists at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre initiat(ing) the most concerted effort yet to develop nuclear explosives."[37]

During the same period, India's nuclear policy also under went a change. All along, India was against manufacturing nuclear weapons as seen by the statements made by successive Prime Ministers till then, both inside and outside India. At least four reasons could be cited, why there was change in India's nuclear strategy since 1967-68. First was Chinese nuclear explosions in the 1960s. Though India did not have any

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[36] Raj Chengappa n.29. p.108.

problems with other countries undertaking nuclear tests it had problems with China, as its security and existence was at stake after the India-China war of 1962. Secondly, the failure of the nuclear powers to provide a nuclear guarantee to India in case of a nuclear attack, made India to take necessary steps to protect itself. There was a direct link between the failure of the nuclear states to provide the guarantee and the shift in India's nuclear policy and programme. The third reason was the failure of the NPT to assuage India's nuclear concerns, which shall be discussed subsequently. Fourthly, there was an intense pressure from inside the country to develop nuclear weapons, especially after the nuclear explosions conducted by China. Besides these four reasons, another reason was also cited for India's change in the nuclear strategy. The Tashkent agreement, "sponsored by Moscow with Washington's tacit concurrence and showed to Indians the danger of effective *super power management* of regional conflict – and the danger of *superpower concert.*"[38] (Emphasis original) This thesis however lack support, as there were never any problems expressed by the leaders of both the countries over the Tashkent agreement. However, the immediate reason, that made Indira Gandhi to go ahead with nuclear tests was the US reaction to India during the 1971 Indo-Pak war. During the war, the US not only asked the Chinese to intervene against India, but also set the US Task Force, led by the nuclear aircraft

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[37] George Perkovich, n.9, p.139.

[38] Ashok Kapur, "The Indian Tests and the Nuclear Game Rules," *IDSA Journal*, July-September 1974, vol.7, no.1, p.28

carrier USS Enterprise, which had nuclear weapons in it and this nuclear intimidation had a significant influence in Indira Gandhi's decision to go ahead with the test.[39]

One of the reasons for India, not to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty was that it prohibited conducting nuclear tests for peaceful purposes. India from the beginning was in favour of utilising nuclear energy for economic purposes, which has been discussed previously in this chapter. It was this reason, which made India to set up *Apsara*, India's first nuclear reactor, even ahead of China and Japan. The 1974 nuclear explosion by India, was termed "peaceful" by India, precisely for these reasons – that it was for economic purposes and not for producing nuclear weapons. The 1974 nuclear explosion is considered, not as a result of diversion of resources from development, rather as a part of developmental progress.[40] The thesis that 1974 nuclear explosion of India was for military purposes have not been proved until now. Whereas the critics of India's nuclear explosion, especially the western critics did not believe that it was for peaceful purposes. The problem then with them was that they conceived the nuclear devise the same as nuclear weapons, which was the logic of the

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[39] K.Subrahmanyam, "Indian Nuclear Policy – 1964-98: A Personal Recollection," in Jasjit Singh, ed., n.27, p.31.

[40] K.Subrahmanyam, "The Indian Nuclear Test in a Global Perspective," *IDSA Journal*, July-September 1974, vol.7, no.1. p.5. K.Subrahmanyam, in fact consider, that the Indian nuclear test in 1974 was the only test that was conducted for peaceful and developmental purposes, whereas the other tests conducted till then by the five nuclear states were to "go in for a weapons programme." He also argued that India is the only country that had given "a long advance notice of a country's intentions to go for such tests."

NPT in the late 60s and early 70s and invariably all the nuclear states had declared openly their intention to develop nuclear weapons after their tests.[41]

However, during that period, there was a lobby,[42] which believed that India should develop nuclear weapons for various reasons. Firstly, nuclear weapons, during that period were seen as a currency of power against the rest of the world. One section of the pro weapons lobby had "no faith in the big powers behaving rationally, unemotionally and without hysteria...In a world which has been conditioned to believe that nuclear capability is a symbol of prestige and has to be flaunted before the world for the purpose, mere repetitions of (India's) peaceful intentions alone will not do."[43] Secondly, the pro-nuclear weapons lobby was not willing to agree that nuclear weapons would increase the expenses. The editorial of *Janata*, in November 1964, asking India to produce nuclear weapons argue "much nonsense has been said about not incurring the expense and the sin of manufacturing nuclear weapons. There is really no justification for not making them when we have busied ourselves in the last two years in acquiring other instruments of modern war and even entering into production of jet aircraft."[44] The Jan Sangh, in a resolution passed at its annual

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[41] Ashok Kapur, "The Indian Tests and the Nuclear Game Rules," *IDSA Journal*, July-September 1974, vol.7, no.1, pp.29-30.

[42] This lobby included political parties, media and academic community, which argued for India building nuclear weapons. See Shyam Bhatia,"The Nuclear Weapons Lobby in India after 1964," *IDSA Journal*, July 1973, vol.6, no.1. pp.77-91.

[43] K.Subrahmanyam, "The Indian Nuclear Test in a Global Perspective," *IDSA Journal*, July-September 1974, vol.7, no.1. pp.18-19.

[44] Editorial, *Janata*, 15 November 1964.

conference in 1964, supporting the above mentioned view proclaimed, "no price can be considered too high when the nation's defence is concerned."[45]

This phase also witnessed India not signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Why did India refuse to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty? As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons was that the NPT did not allow peaceful nuclear explosions. The second reason was, the NPT was an attempt to prevent horizontal proliferation, but not vertical proliferation. The NPT aims to limit the number of nuclear weapons to five countries – the US, former USSR, UK, France and China. It does not aim to halt proliferation among these nuclear states. The NPT "reserved to the five nuclear powers certain privileges – their prerogative to conduct test explosions and their exemption from inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency."[46] It was seen as an attempt by the nuclear weapons states to make the rest of the world to acknowledge their nuclear superiority, which was rightly called by India as nuclear apartheid. And India's nuclear test of 1974 significantly undermined the NPT, which was one of the objectives of the Pokharan I. India's nuclear explosion eroded the following four provisions of the NPT:[47]

- Nuclear weapon power are those who exploded a nuclear device before January 1, 1967 (Article IX)

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[45] Quoted in Shyam Bhatia,"The Nuclear Weapons Lobby in India after 1964," *IDSA Journal*, July 1973, vol.6, no.1. p.79.

[46] K.Subrahmanyam, n.44, p.14.

[47] Ashok Kapur, n.42, pp.30-31.

- Peaceful uses equal military uses if there is an explosion by a non-nuclear weapons state (Article II)
- There should be international safeguards on peaceful nuclear projects of non-nuclear weapon states (Article III) while the nuclear weapons states will be exempt.
- Only nuclear weapons states or the IAEA can offer nuclear explosive services. (Article V)

The decision to conduct a nuclear explosion was not taken on a single day and there exist no written record regarding the decision. Some time during the autumn of 1967, "Mrs. Gandhi cleared BARC to begin work again on the theoretical physics aspects of an explosion. Sarabhai, who had gone about shutting down SNEPP, was told to lay off."[48]

However, there is confusion over, when the actual decision to conduct a test was taken. There are different views on this, given the fact, thee was no record of the decision making on this issue. According to one perspective, the decision was taken some time during the late 1971, before the Indo-Pak war. In 1974, Jagjivan Ram, the then Minister for Defence announced that the decisions had been take three years before the test[49] conveying that it was taken some time during 1971. George

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[48] Raj Chengappa, n.29. p.112.

[49] *The Indian Express*, 19 May 1974.

Perkovich, in his colossal research work, through a series of interviews conducted with key persons involved in the testing concludes, "it may be conjectured that support in principle for developing a nuclear explosive device was solidified by late 1971, that concentrated work on building the vital components began in spring 1972 and that formal prime ministerial approval to make final preparations for the PNE occurred in September 1972."[50] According to K. Subrahmanyam, Indira Gandhi gave the green signal to the scientists "some time in October 1972."[51] The ground preparations for the 1974 nuclear explosion in October 1973.

Fourth Phase

"Non Use of Nuclear Option"[52]

The fourth phase started after the nuclear explosion of 1974. During this period, despite having the nuclear capability to produce nuclear weapons, the decision to manufacture them was not taken, as it was considered as a strategy. This phase cannot be explained in a well-defined time frame, as till date, there has been no official confirmation, that the country has nuclear weapons. Many studies have been made, as shall be seen subsequently on India's nuclear weapons.

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[50] George Perkovich, n.9, p.172.

[51] K.Subrahmanyam, "Indian Nuclear Policy – 1964-98: A Personal Recollection," in Jasjit Singh, ed., n.27, p.30.

Immediately after the test of 1974, though the scientists wanted to pursue further, the political instability that started in June 1975, with the Allahabad High Court invalidating Mrs. Gandhi's election to the Parliament in 1971. Emergency was imposed inside the country and when the elections took place in 1977, Indira Gandhi was defeated with Morarji Desai becoming the Prime Minister of the country.

Morarji Desai was against nuclear bomb and did not get along with scientific establishment.[53] Besides, it was during this period the Carter administration had passed the famous Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act (1978), that led to the Tarapur power plant controversy.[54] These factors did affect the country's nuclear policy and programme, which was pursued by Indira Gandhi.

However, the return of Indira Gandhi to power in 1980, witnessed the country's nuclear programme and policy being revived. Indira Gandhi decided in 1981 to test

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[52] This phrase is borrowed from Ashok Kapur, "The Indian Tests and the Nuclear Game Rules," *IDSA Journal*, July-September 1974, vol.7, no.1, p.30.

[53] According to Raj Chengappa, "He constantly mocked Sethna...But reserved much of his sarcasm for Ramanna. Whenever Desai saw Ramanna, his eyes twinkled with mischief and he would pointedly say:'Hello Mr. Bomb.'" Raj Chengappa, n.29. p.218.

[54] India in August 1963 had signed the *Agreement for Cooperation between India and the USA Concerning the Civil Uses of Atomic Energy*. The Tarapur plant aimed at utilizing slightly enriched uranium and was to consist of two units, each with a dual cycle boiling water reactor and associated turbo reactor of 210-mega watt capacity. Following the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) refused to license the next shipment of nuclear fuel for Tarapur. (Gursharan S. Dhanjal, *Tarapur: The Politics of Nuclear Age* (Delhi: Rajdhani Book Service). The Tarapur controversy was resolved finally in 1982, when the US agreed to France supplying the uranium fuel to the Tarapur power plant. (P.R.Chari, "Indo-US Relations: Non-proliferation Concerns", in Gary K Bertsch, Seema Gahlaut and Anupam Srivastava eds., *Engaging India: US Strategic Relations with the World's Largest Democracy* (New York: Routledge, 1999) p.07)

once again, which later was cancelled. Ever since, till her assassination, Mrs. Gandhi did not review her plan not to conduct nuclear tests. During this period, there was also pressure from the military establishment to produce nuclear weapons.

Though the nuclear tests were cancelled, Mrs. Gandhi did not give up further experiments in making nuclear weapons. It was during this period, she gave a go ahead for India's missile programme, whose main objective was to carry nuclear warhead. In September 1982, it was proposed to build five types of missiles.[55]

Rajiv Gandhi, who became the Prime Minster after the assassination of Indira Gandhi did not have his mother's enthusiasm in building nuclear weapons. He set up Policy Planning Group on National Security in April 1985 and in it's first meeting he told that he was against going ahead rapidly in building nuclear weapons. However in July 1985, he gave the permission for the Inter-Services Committee to carry out a study and prepare a report on how many nuclear weapons would India need. It was during Rajiv Gandhi's period, for the first time there was a major crisis between India and Pakistan, in which the threat of nuclear weapons was contemplated. During 1986-87, the Indian Army was conducting Operation Brasstacks[56], which led to Pakistan

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[55] The proposal included the following:

1. A surface-to-surface missile, later came to be known as *Prithvi*, capable of carrying half to one ton of war head to a distance of 150-250 kilometers.
2. A multi-role surfact to air missile, later came to be known as *Trishul*.
3. A surface-to-air missile, later came to be known as *Akash*.
4. An anti-tank missile called *Nag*
5. An Internediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM), later came to be called as *Agni*.

responding with Zarb-e-Momin. It is believed that Pakistan then was ready with its nuclear weapons then and was modifying their F-16 fighters to possibly carry nuclear bombs.

It was during this period that India realised that nuclear weapon cannot be fitted in the Jaguars, hence started working on Mirage 2000 purchased only few years earlier from France. The period 1987-89 is crucial for India and Pakistan, as it is believed, based on various sources, that both the countries had the capabilities to produce a nuclear weapon and fit in a delivery vehicle, in a short span of time. But, Rajiv Gandhi had not made the decision to produce nuclear weapons then, as he was more interested in a global elimination of nuclear weapons. It should be underlined that during 1988, Rajiv Gandhi submitted a detailed proposal towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.[57] But events moved so fast, that Rajiv Gandhi could not control the pace of them. By the end of 1988, India had reliable information, that Pakistan had almost through with its nuclear weapons. At the international level, there was no response for the proposal he had submitted on the elimination of nuclear weapons. The Cold-War between the US and the Soviet Union was coming to an end in Afghanistan, after Gorbachev becoming the President. It was also believed that, in the aftermath of war in Afghanistan, the US would let China to be the primary regional power in the region. China's relations with Pakistan, especially over nuclear and missile

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[56] Kanti Bajpai et al, *Brasstacks and Beyond: Perception and Management of Crisis in South Asia* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1997)

[57] In October 1987, Rajiv Gandhi asked Muchkund Dubey, then an additional secretary at the Ministry of External Affairs to draft a proposal on the elimination of nuclear weapons, which would be acceptable and practical. It was this draft, that

technology had been secret and productive. At the same time, Dhruva went critical in 1988, producing enough weapons grade plutonium. With all these events, it was left to Rajiv Gandhi to take the crucial decision, whether India should go in for producing nuclear weapons or not. And Rajiv Gandhi, finally decided to for nuclear weapons.

In 1990, there was a crisis between India and Pakistan over the latter's decision to start a proxy war in Kashmir. India also believed during this period, that Pakistan was ready to attack India and use even nuclear weapons. The crisis was exacerbated, with the US sending a team led by Robert Gates, a senior official in the George Bush administration. The US perception of the 1990 crisis and the efforts taken are dealt with in subsequent chapters

During the same period India was developing its missiles. *Agni* was tested for the first time and by 1990, *Prithvi* had been tested at least eight times. When PV Narasimha Roa became the Prime Minister in 1991, he pursued the policy of his predecessors – keeping the ambiguity of India's nuclear policy and programe Agni was tested for the second time in May 1992, though the test was a failure. During the same period, Pakistan had ordered for M 11 missiles and the US had tightened its policies vis-à-vis missile programme, which shall be seen in later chapters.

The year 1994 was crucial for India's nuclear weapons programme. On 19 February 1994, the third test flight of Agni was successful. On 18 May 1994, for the first time

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Rajiv Gandhi submitted at the Third Special Session on Disarmament of the UN General Assembly.

since the 1974 tests, India undertook tests, with missile loaded with core minus plutonium in a Mirage 2000, which were successful. 1995 was also equally crucial, not for any developments inside the country, but outside it. The US was forcing India to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Rao, fearing that India's options would be closed on nuclear weapons once the NPT was signed, asked Chidambaram to prepare for a series of tests and the Army was asked get the shafts ready. However, the fear of economic pressure did not let Rao to proceed further.

Gowda, however in March 1997, gave the scientific establishment, to prepare for tests. Later IK Gujral also cleared digging of another shaft in July 1997, but did not proceed. The decision was finally taken by Vajpayee and India tested its nuclear devices ion 11 and 13 may 1998.

Nuclear Policy and Programme of Pakistan

Pakistan's nuclear programme[58] and policy could be divided into three phases. The first phase from 1954 to 1964, during which, the nuclear programme and policy were mainly towards achieving peaceful purposes. The second phase from 1965 to 1976, during which the nuclear policy and programme made a shift towards making the

[58] A concise but detailed chronology Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, from 1955 to 1990, compiled from various open sources can be seen in Ravi Shastri and Savita Dutt, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Programme: A Chronology," *Strategic Analysis*, February 1991, vol.13. no.11.

"Islamic Bomb." The third phase, starting from 1976, in which the nuclear programme came totally under the control of the military establishment.

1954-1964: The First Phase

The first phase witnessed the beginning of Pakistan's nuclear programme, with the establishment of key institutions. However, there was no coherent nuclear policy during this phase, especially there was absolutely no emphasis on a nuclear weapons programme and making Pakistan a nuclear weapons state. The reasons for this were many. Firstly, unlike India, the polity in the first decade, especially after the assassination of Liaqat Ali Khan was in shambles. None of the Prime Ministers could survive long during this period, to formulate a coherent long-term policy. Secondly, there was no understanding between the political leaders and the scientific establishment, especially the nuclear establishment in Pakistan. In India, during the same period, there was a thorough understanding of each other among Nehru and Homi Bhabha. Such an understanding in Pakistan would develop only later during the period of Zulfikar Bhutto and AQ Khan in the 1970s. Thirdly, unlike in India, the interference of bureaucratic establishment as shall be seen subsequently was acting as a hindrance towards the growth of nuclear programme. In India, the Atomic Energy Act of 1948 and 1962, to a greater extent gave financial and administrative independence to the nuclear establishment and Bhabha was asked to report directly to Nehru. Such a development in Pakistan would happen, again only during the period of Bhutto, when he told them that he would take care of their needs and they should take

care of the bomb. Fourthly and most importantly, since 1954, Pakistan had already become a part of the US led military alliance system. Pakistan was part of the CENTO and SEATO and the leaders – both political and military believed that Pakistan then was a frontline state for the US and if there arise a need to deploy nuclear weapons, they could buy from the west "off the shelf."[59] These four factors mainly shaped Pakistan's nuclear policy during its first phase, in which there was no emphasis on the nuclear programme.

Pakistan began its nuclear programme in the mid 1950s and was mainly a fallout of the Atoms for Peace proposals, which was announced in December 1943 and submitted by the US President Eisenhower to the United Nations in September 1954.[60] Establishment of High Tension and Nuclear Research Laboratory in 1954, with an objective to provide research facilities to students was the first step in Pakistan's nuclear programme.[61] In October 1954, Pakistan announced for the first time its blueprint to constitute an atomic research body. The Atomic Energy Committee was named in January 1955, under Dr. Nazir Ahmad, which recommended the appointment of an Atomic Energy Commission.[62] Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) was established in 1956 with the objective to develop

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[59] Samina Ahmed, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapon's Program: Turning Points and Nuclear Choices," *International Security*, Spring 1999, vol.23, no.4, p.181

[60] Ashok Kapur, *Pakistan's Nuclear Development*, (London: Croomhelm, 1987) p.35.

[61] S.J.Burki, "High Tension and Nuclear labarotary", *Pakistan Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No.2, Autumn 1960, p.116.

peaceful uses of atomic energy; to establish an Atomic Energy and Nuclear Research Institute; to install Research and Power reactors; to negotiate with International Atomic Energy bodies; and to select and train personnel for the purpose.[63]

The initial phase of the nuclear programme witnessed three significant developments. The armed forces of Pakistan were not excited on Pakistan's atomic energy research. One of the main reason for Army's lack of interest in nuclear programme, despite coming to power in 1958 itself, was that it believed that it would be able to protect Pakistan; security vis-a-vis India with conventional weapons.[64]Besides, Pakistan's Foreign Office, despite not so good relations with India, was also not interested in developing a nuclear programme in Pakistan.[65] This could be seen from the complaints made by Dr Nazir Ahmad, the Chairman of PAEC during this period. He was critical of the government's attitude and blamed the government publicly for the 'red tape.'[66] Thirdly, there was no coherent, long-term plan or policy on the country's nuclear programme during this period. The 'poor administrative strategy', the then prevailing political conditions were considered as a major reason for the lack of interest in developing nuclear programme for Pakistan during this period.[67] Though

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[62] Nasir Ahmad, "The Atomic Energy Commission", *Pakistan Quarterly*, Vol.7, No.3, autumn 1957, p.14.

[63] ibid, p.14

[64] Samina Ahmed, n.60, p.181.

[65] Ashok Kapur, n.61, pp.39-45.

[66] ibid, p.41.

the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) finalized its plan to acquire a research reactor in 1957 itself, bureaucratic impediments and lack of conviction from the government side resulted in he plan not getting materialized.[68]

Pakistan started with an allocation 2.5 million rupees for atomic research in 1955-56, and the total expenditure on the research during 1956-60, that is, during the First Five Year plan period, was around 23.5 million rupees.[69]

The slow pace of development changed in the 1960s, after Dr.I.H.Usmani becoming the Chairman of PAEC in 1960. Dr. Usmani, Dr. Abdus Salam and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became a 'new winning coalition', with active support from President Ayub Khan and "revealed a remarkable commitment to develop nuclear energy in the country."[70] This could be seen from the increased allocation for the country's nuclear programme in the second five year plan 1961-65. During this period, 46.5 million rupees was allocated to the atomic energy development and the 1960-61 budget allocated 12.5 million rupees for a reactor.[71] It was during this period, Pakistan

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[67] Savita Pande, *Pakistan's Nuclear Policy* (Delhi: B.R.Publishing Corporation, 1991) p.28.

[68] Naeem Ahmed Salik, "Pakistan's Nuclear Programme: Technological Dimensions." In P.R.Chari et al (ed.), *Nuclear Non-Proliferation in India and Pakistan: South Asian Perspectives* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1996) p.87.

[69] S.B.Guha, "Pakistan's Atomic Energy Programme", *IDSA Journal*, Vol.3, No.1, July 1970, p.119.

[70] Ashok Kapur, n.61, p.54.

[71] P.B.Sinha and R.R.Subramanian, *Nuclear Pakistan: Atomic Threat to South Asia* (New Delhi: Vision Books, 1980) p.32-33.

Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology (PINSTECH) was established[72] near Islamabad at Nelore at a cost of 41.3 million rupees.[73] The US agreed to supply enriched uranium and plutonium for a research reactor at PINSTECH.[74] The first reactor, which was supplied by the US and set up at PINSTECH, was a "swimming pool" type research reactor, which went critical in December 1965.[75]

It was during the same period, Karachi Nuclear Power Project (KANUPP) was established with the Canadian support in 1968. Pakistan purchased a reactor from Canada, which was formally inaugurated in November 1972 at a cost of 480 million rupees.[76] Thus the first phase witnessed a modest beginning, with no active support or demands, either from the military establishment or from the bureaucratic establishment. All these would change completely in its second phase.

1965-1977: The Second Phase

Eating Grass and Making an Islamic Bomb

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[72] There is confusion over the establishment of the PINSTECH. The exact date of its establishemnt is not known.

[73] Brij Mohan Kaushik and O.N.Mehrotra, *Pakistan's Nuclear Bomb* (New Delhi: Sopan Publishing House, 1980) p.67.

[74] P.B.Sinha and R.R.Subramanian, n.72, p.33.

[75] ibid, p.33.

[76] Brij Mohan Kaushik and O.N.Mehrotra, n.74, p.69.

The second phase of Pakistan's nuclear programme, the most important phase, began with Bhutto. Right from the beginning, Bhutto was interested in building a strong nuclear weapons programme. Much before he becoming the President, he announced in 1965 itself that, "If India developed an atomic bomb, we too will develop one, even if we have to eat grass or leaves or to remain hungry, because there is no conventional alternative to the atomic bomb."[77] The reason that was stated for Bhutto's emphasis to produce nuclear weapons was the SNEP being sanctioned by Shastri in India, which Bhutto believed, let Bhabha to secretly carry out research to design a bomb.[78] Bhutto anticipated India going nuclear much by the end of 1960s itself and in fact expected that India would conduct its tests much before 1974.[79] In 1958 itself, Bhutto, then the minister for Fuel and Power and Minister in charge of atomic energy, urged Ayub Khan to explore the nuclear weapons option, which Ayub rejected.[80]

During this phase, Bhutto pursued a multi pronged strategy, especially after he becoming the President of Pakistan. First, he gave financial and administrative independence to Pakistan's nuclear programme. Secondly, he was focussed on

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[77] Z.A.Bhutto, *Awakening the People: Speeches of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto 1966-69*, (Rawalpindi: Pakistan Publications, 1970) p.21.

[78] Zafar Iqbal Cheema, "Pakistan's Nuclear Policies: Attitudes and Posture," in P.R.Chari et al (ed.), *Nuclear Non-Proliferation in India and Pakistan: South Asian Perspectives,* p.105.

[79] Bhutto's perspectives can be seen in his book published in 1969, in which he has one full chapter "Deterrent Against Aggression". See Z.A.Bhutto, *The Myth of Independence* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1969)

producing nuclear weapons clandestinely for Pakistan, with the assistance of the west initially and later with China. His third strategy was to argue for a nuclear weapons free zone for South Asia at the regional and international forums, while pursuing a weapons programme inside the country. This was the strategy adopted even by India. Fourthly, he attempted to get the political and financial support from the Islamic countries in producing the bomb, which later became emphasised by the international community as "Islamic bomb."

Immediately after becoming the President of Pakistan, he convened a meeting of the scientists at Multan in January 1972, which is considered to be very crucial in Pakistan's nuclear programme. During this meeting, it is believed Bhutto asked that whether they would be able produce the bomb.[81] In the words of Khalid Hassan, foremer Bhutto's press release aide, "...this is a very serious political decision which Pakistan must make and all Third World countries must make one day, because it is coming. So you can do it."[82] When the scientists said yes, provided they were given the resources and facilities,[83] Bhutto told them, "I shall find you the resources and I shall find you the facilities,"[84] but needed the bomb in three years

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[80] Samina Ahmed and David Cortright, "Going Nuclear: The Weaponisaton Option," in Samina Ahmend and David Cortright ed., *Pakistan and the Bomb: Public Opinion and Nuclear Options* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998) p.90.

[81] quoted in Savita Pande, n.68, p.32.

[82] Weissman and H Krosney, *The Islamic Bomb* (New York: Times Books, 1981) pp.44-45, quoted in Ravi Shastri and Savita Dutt, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Programme: A Chronology," *Strategic Analysis*, February 1991, vol.13. no.11, p.1318, pp.1317-84

Then, like in India, Bhutto under took a series of measures to bring the nuclear programme totally under his control. A separate Ministry of Science, Technology and Production was formed; the atomic energy affairs was brought directly under his control; and the Chairman of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission was made totally answerable only to him.[85] Munir Ahmad Khan was appointed as the Chairman of the PAEC in March 1972,[86] as Dr. Usmani was opposed to nuclear weapons development programme.[87] In 1971, KANUPP, the first nuclear reactor of Pakistan constructed with the assistance of Canada, became critical.[88]

In 1973, negotiations were started with Canada to build the second nuclear power plant, capable of producing 500 MW near Chashma Barrage on the banks of Indus river.[89] Bhutto held negotiations during the same year with France to buy a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant.[90] By 1974, Pakistan had started working on a uranium fuel

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[83] quoted in Zafar Iqbal Cheema, "Pakistan's Nuclear Policies: Attitudes and Posture," in P.R.Chari et al (ed.), *Nuclear Non-Proliferation in India and Pakistan: South Asian Perspectives,* p.106.

[84] Weissman and H Krosney, n.83, p.1318.

[85] quoted in P.B.Sinha and R.R.Subramanian, n.72, p.37.

[86] ibid, p.37

[87] Savita Pande, n.68, p.33.

[88] Naeem Ahmed Salik, "Pakistan's Nuclear Programme: Technological Dimensions." In P.R.Chari et al (ed.), *Nuclear Non-Proliferation in India and Pakistan: South Asian Perspectives,* p.87

[89] P.B.Sinha and R.R.Subramanian, n.72, p.38.

fabrication plant, a project of 35 million rupees, with Canada offering an interest free loan of 1.7 million dollars.[91]

Some time during this period the meeting between Dr. A.Q.Khan and Bhutto took place and the former was invited to work on Pakistan's nuclear programme.[92] Khan in an interview, after the May nuclear tests of Pakistan told The Herald

> In December 1974 I met him (Bhutto) in Islamabad and briefed him on the details of the (nuclear) programme...When I returned to Pakistan in December 1975...Bhutto asked me stay on in Pakistan and I did.[93]

According to many Western intelligence reports, A.Q. Khan, it was alleged, had brought with him stolen designs from the URENCO ultra centrifuge enrichment plant.[94]

India conducted its first nuclear test in 1974, which "had a catalytic impact in generating a drive in Pakistan for nuclear weapons technology."[95] Most of the

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[90] Salamat Ali, "Pakistan's Atomic Dilemma", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 September 1978, Vol.101, No. 36.

[91] P.B.Sinha and R.R.Subramanian, n.72, p.39.

[92] Zahid Malik, *Dr. A.Q.Khan and the Islamic Bomb* (Islamabad: Hurmat, 1992) pp.59-62.

[93] "Without Kahuta, nothing can be done," AQ Khan's interview, The Herald, June 1998, reprinted in *Strategic Digest*, August 1998, vol.27, no.8,p.1215

[94] Quoted in George Perkovich, n.9, p.196.

Pakistani writers emphasis that it was the 1974 nuclear tests which guided the subsequent nuclear programme and policy of Pakistan. It is true, that the 1974 India test, did have an impact on Pakistan's nuclear programme and policy, but to shift the entire blame is over simplification of Pakistan's nuclear objectives. This perspective totally ignores, the efforts taken by Bhutto since 1972.

Pakistan during that period actually looked at the capability of India's nuclear programme and not its intentions. Mr. Aziz Ahmed, the then Minister of State for Defence and Foreign Affairs told at the Islamic Foreign Minster's Conference in Kuala Lumpur in June 1974, that India possessed material for 17 plutonium bombs.[96]

After India's nuclear tests, Pakistan doubled its efforts in its nuclear programme. Munir Khan, the Chairman of the PAEC announced its grand plan to build twenty-four nuclear plants in March 1976.[97] The nuclear weapons programme was established separate from the PAEC,[98] and was headed by A.Q.Khan.[99] Dr Khan

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[95] Zafar Iqbal Cheema, "Pakistan's Nuclear Policies: Attitudes and Posture," in P.R.Chari et al (ed.), *Nuclear Non-Proliferation in India and Pakistan: South Asian Perspectives*, p.106

[96] ibid, p.106

[97] P.B.Sinha and R.R.Subramanian, n.72, p.38.

[98] One of the reasons for the separation from PAEC was the bureaucratic delay involved and the filure of the PAEC and its leadership to understand the issue involved in uranium enrichment. Maulana K Niazi, who was a member of Bhutto's cabinet and involved in the process, explain the internal problems that led to the creation of a separate organisation under AQ Khan. Maulana K Niazi, "Unknown facts about the Reprocessing Plant," reproduced in *Strategic Digest*, May 1987, pp.882-88.

[99] Samina Ahmed, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapon's Program: Turning Points and Nuclear Choices," *International Security*, Spring 1999, vol.23, no.4, p.181. According

assured the Prime Minister that he would make Pakistan an atomic power in seven years and under his leadership, the Kahuta Research laboratories, which came into being in 1976, worked secretly, enjoying full freedom, while the PAEC was acting only as a show piece.[100] In May 1976, Bhutto visited China during which he asked for the Chinese help in Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme.[101] Pakistan, in 1976, according to Edgar O'Ballance, "persuaded China to supply nuclear technology and apparatus, and planned to explode its first nuclear device in December in 1977. However six months before that date, General Zia seized power in Pakistan, and Chinese cooperation on this project terminated."[102] Bhutto later accused that the US knowing his nuclear ambitions made a deal with Pakistan military and toppled his government.

During the same year, Pakistan also signed an agreement with France to acquire a plutonium-reprocessing unit to be installed at Chasma.[103] It was this plant, which ran into problem with the US, later during Carter's period. The

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to AQ Khan, Bhutto at his request, "asked his chief of army staff, to arrange for civil engineers from the army (to assist Khan). We selected the site at Kahuta and brigadier Zahid Ali Akber made all necessary arrangements."("Without Kahuta, nothing can be done," AQ Khan's interview, The Herald, June 1998, reprinted in *Strategic Digest*, August 1998, vol.27, no.8,p.1216.)

[100] Maulana K Niazi, "Unknown facts about the Reprocessing Plant," reproduced in *Strategic Digest*, May 1987, p.886.

[101] George Perkovich, n.9, p.196.

[102] Edgar O' Balance, "The Islamic Bomb," *National Defense*, December 1980, reproduced in *Strategic Digest*, June 1981, vol.11, no.6, p.509

[103] Zafar Iqbal Cheema, "Pakistan's Nuclear Policies: Attitudes and Posture," in P.R.Chari et al (ed.), *Nuclear Non-Proliferation in India and Pakistan: South Asian Perspectives*, p.106

detail of the problem between Pakistan and the US shall be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Since 1977: The Third Phase

Pakistan's Nuclear Programme under Khaki shadows

When Zia-ul-Haq over threw Bhutto and later hanged him, the nuclear programme, which was totally under the control of civilian leadership, came under the military establishment, after which till today, is controlled by it.

Pakistan's nuclear policy under the military rulers pursued the same policy that of Bhutto's. Ever since the programme came under military's control, there were serious efforts to weaponise the programme at the same time mentioning its peaceful purposes in the international and regional forums. The military leaders came closer to China, which helped Pakistan in its nuclear and missile programme. Thirdly, the military establishment cleverly exploited the situation in Afghanistan in 1980s to their advantage, especially on the nuclear field. Despite reports from its own intelligence agencies, the American leadership did not take any serious measures in the early and mid 1980s against Pakistan, because of its involvement in the Afghan war against the then Soviet Union. Pakistan knew this very well and exploited it to its advantage and was clandestinely pursuing its nuclear weapons programme inside the country and with the assistance from outside, especially China. By the time, the Afghan war came

to end in 1989 and the American leadership decided to impose sanction on Pakistan, it was too late.

Though one does not know, when Pakistan crossed over the threshold from nuclear capability to nuclear weapons capability, it is presumed, that by 1985, Pakistan was ready to assemble a nuclear bomb. According to Bhutto, Pakistan, by the end of 1977 itself "was on the threshold of full nuclear capability. All we needed was the nuclear processing plant."[104] In April 1978, according to Khan Pakistan started,

> "work on uranium enrichment ...at a location near Rawalpindi. Another plant was later set up at Sinhala. In 1979, we shifted to Kahuta, which was by then complete. In 1980, the plant became operational. We started high uranim enrichment by 1982."[105]

However it took time and it was during February 1984, AQ Khan claimed that Pakistan had succeeded in enriching uranium and possessed the capability to build a bomb.[106] During 1983-84, Pakistan cold tested a number of nuclear weapons designs.[107] In July 1984, Zia announced, "We have the N-capability but our financial

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[104] Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *If I Am Assassinated*...(New Delhi: Vikas, 1979) pp.137-38.

[105] "Without Kahuta, nothing can be done," AQ Khan's interview, *The Herald*, (Karachi)June 1998, reprinted in *Strategic Digest*, August 1998, vol.27, no.8, p.1216.

[106] A.Fareed Ameen, "Pakistan's Nuclear Capability." *The Muslim*, (Islamabad) 05 August 1986, reproduced in *Strategic Digest*, September 1986, vol.16, no.9, pp.1248-50.

[107] "Without Kahuta, nothing can be done," AQ Khan's interview, *The Herald*, (Karachi) June 1998, reprinted in *Strategic Digest*, August 1998, vol.27, no.8,p.1216

resources do not permit us to make the bomb."[108] In the controversial interview given by A.Q.Khan to Kuldip Nayar, he told him, it took seven years for him to make the bomb.[109]According to Kuldip Nayar's calculations, Khan returned from Holland in December 1975; Kahuta plant took three years to complete and if seven years were added to it, then "Pakistan could said to have acquired the bomb either towards the end of 1985 or the beginning of 1986."[110] A.Q.Khan, in an interview, for the first time told about Pakistan's readiness in its weapons programme. Answering a question, how soon Pakistan would produce nuclear weapons, he said, "if in the interest of the country's solidarity, the President of Pakistan were in extreme need and gave the team of scientists an important mission, it would not disappoint the nation."[111] By 1987, Pakistan was in possession of the bomb, as could be seen from an interview Zia gave to the *Time* Magazine. He said, in March 1987, "...You can virtually write today that Pakistan can build a (nuclear) bomb whenever it wishes. What is difficult about a bomb? Once you have acquired the technology, which Pakistan has, you can do whatever you like."[112]

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[108] *The Washington Post*, 17 July 1984, quoted in Ravi Shastri and Savita Dutt, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Programme: A Chronology," *Strategic Analysis*, February 1991, vol.13. no.11, p.1322.

[109] Kuldip Nayar, "Pakistan has the bomb," *The Tribune* (Chandigarh), 01 March 1987 reprinted in *Strategic Digest*, May 1987, p.864.

[110] Kuldip Nayar, "Pakistan has the bomb," *The Tribune* (Chandigarh), 01 March 1987 reprinted in *Strategic Digest*, May 1987, p.864

[111] "Pakistan's Nuclear Chief says it could build the bomb," *The Washington Post*, 10 February 1984, quoted in Zafar Iqbal Cheema, "Pakistan's Nuclear Policies: Attitudes and Posture," in P.R.Chari et al (ed.), *Nuclear Non-Proliferation in India and Pakistan: South Asian Perspectives*, p.107.

[112] *Time Magazine*, 30 March 1987.

The military control over Pakistan's nuclear programme continued, despite the return of democarcy in 1989, when Benazir Bhutto became the Prime Minster, after the death of Zia-ul-Haq. Benazir Bhutto did not have control over the allegedly secret Nuclear Weapons Programme Coordinating Committee chaired by Ghulam Ishaq Khan.[113] In the 1990s, despite government being elected directly by the people, unlike in India, the nuclear programme remained under the direct control of the Pakistani military. And this trend continues till today.

[113] Zafar Iqbal Cheema, "Pakistan's Nuclear Policies: Attitudes and Posture," in P.R.Chari et al (ed.), *Nuclear Non-Proliferation in India and Pakistan: South Asian Perspectives,* p.115.

Chapter II

Nuclear Tests of India and Pakistan – 1998

Chapter II
Pokharan and Chagai Nuclear Tests

India and Pakistan under took nuclear tests during May 1998. Though both the countries had the capability to test for a long time (India already had tested in 1974), India and Pakistan did not test for various reasons. The factors that made both the countries to under take nuclear tests, their objectives and motivations shall be discussed in this chapter.

Pokharan II

India's Nuclear Tests: Objectives and Motivations

Vajpayee had decided to undertake nuclear tests, the day he became the Prime minister for the second time. Why did India decide to test in 1998, after a gap of nearly 25 years? What were the objectives and motivations of India's nuclear tests? Many reasons have also been given by various analysts and opinion makers for India's decision to go nuclear. These reasons need not necessarily be the correct ones, as they are not always unbiased. However, this chapter would look into the various reasons that have been suggested; analyse them and find out the most plausible reasons for the tests.

Broadly speaking, three factors guide a nation in making crucial decisions, such as producing nuclear weapons. They are long term factors, mid term factors and short-term

factors.[1] Long term factors include geography, economic and human resources; Mid term factors include economic circumstances, security considerations and domestic politics and; short-term factors include immediate events. India's decision to undertake nuclear tests were determined by medium-term events, that took place since the 1990s.[2]

The reasons for nuclear reasons could be classified into two broad themes – Political and Strategic, which may further be subdivided. Politically, the internal pressures facing the BJP led government, BJP's views on nuclear policy and weapons and the powerful bomb lobby inside the Hindu parivar are the main reasons for the nuclear tests. Besides, the pressure from the Indian nuclear establishment also needs to be taken into consideration in analysing the reasons for India's nuclear tests.

Various reasons have been provided on the strategic front for India's nuclear tests in 1998. It includes the following: asymmetrical strategic relationship with China, maturation of Pakistan's nuclear weapon programme and the growing pressure from the development of nuclear arms control and non-proliferation;[3] security dilemma posed by China's military capabilities, political choices in responding to the Chinese and Pakistani

[1] Stephen P Cohen, "Why did India 'Go Nuclear'?" in Raju G.C.Thomas and Amit Gupta eds., *India's Nuclear Security*, (New Delhi: Vistaar Publications), p.14.

[2] ibid, p.14

[3] Richard W Hu, "Making sense of the Indian Bomb," *The Monitor*, (Center for International trade and Security, University of Georgia) Fall 1998, Vol.4, No.4, p.32.

threats and the capability of India to manufacture nuclear weapons.[4] These reasons need to be analysed.

A. Need for Nuclear Tests: The Government's Perspective

The official reason stated by the government was the threat from China and nexus between China and Pakistan over nuclear and missile programme. This can be seen from Vajpayee's letter to President that got notoriously leaked to the press:

> We have an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders, a state, which committed armed aggression against India in 1962...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 50 years. And for the last 10 years we have been the victim of unremitting terrorism and militancy sponsored by it in several parts of our country..."[5]

The reasons provided by the government based on the various statements and reports for the test fall under the following categories:

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[4] Sumit Ganguly, "Explaining the Nuclear Tests of 1998," in Raju G.C.Thomas and Amit Gupta eds, n.1, p.39.

[5] Prime Minister Vajpayee's letter to President Clinton, *The Hindu*, 14 May 1998.

a. Failure of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treat (CTBT). The CTBT, "in its final shape, this Treaty, left much to be desired. It was neither comprehensive nor was it related to disarmament."[6]

b. Nuclear tests conducted in May 1998 were "inevitable" and "a continuation of policies from almost the earliest years of independence."[7]

c. Gradual deterioration of India's "security environment as a result of nuclear and missile proliferation."[8]

d. Indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), "perpetuating the existence of nuclear weapons in the five countries, who are also permanent members of the UN Security Council."[9]

e. Unresolved border dispute with China[10]

f. Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme and its success

g. China-Pakistan nuclear and missile nexus.

h. It is the "sovereign right of every nation to make judgement regarding its supreme national interests and exercise its sovereign choice."[11]

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[6] "Evolution of India's Nuclear Policy," Paper laid on the table of the House reproduced in *Strategic Digest*, July 1998, pp.1079-1084.

[7] Jaswant Singh, "Against Nuclear Apartheid," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 1998, vol.77,no.5,pp.41.

[8] "Evolution of India's Nuclear Policy," n.6, pp.1079-1084.

[9] ibid, pp.1079-1084.

[10] Prime Minister Vajpayee's letter to President Clinton, *The Hindu*, 14 May 1998.

[11] "Evolution of India's Nuclear Policy," n.6, pp.1079-1084.

i. Failure to provide "security guarantees from major nuclear powers of the world."[12]

These factors need to be analysed, in the light of comments and criticisms provided by various defence analysts and experts.

a. Failure of the CTBT to address India's concerns

One major factor, which led India to under take nuclear test, was the failure of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to meet India's concerns. Not only the CTBT, but also the indefinite extension of the NPT, which made India to realise that the global nuclear regime, is not in favour of India's nuclear disarmament objectives. According to India, the global nuclear regime, "makes denucelarization impossible and to the extent that it allows the existing nuclear weapon states to continually maintain and perhaps improve their arsenals eve if only in qualitative terms."[13]

India since the 1950s believed in global disarmament, including nuclear disarmament. India's participation in treaties such as the CTBT, Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) and Fissile Material Cut-Off treaty (FMCT) were based on the belief that these treaties would lead to global nuclear disarmament.

[12] "Evolution of India's Nuclear Policy," n.6, pp.1079-1084.

[13] Ashley J Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture: Between Recessed Deterrent and Ready Arsenal* (New Delhi: Oxford, 2001),p.22.

Reacting to US nuclear tests in Bikini Atoll in 1954, Nehru stated:

> We have maintained that nuclear (including thermonuclear) chemical and biological (bacterial) knowledge and power should not be used to forge these weapons of mass destruction. We have advocated the prohibition of such weapons, by common consent and immediately by agreement amongst those concerned. Pending progress towards some solution, full or partial, in respect of prohibition and elimination of these weapons of mass destruction, the government would consider, some sort of what may be called 'standstill agreement' in respect, at least, of these actual explosions, even if agreements about the discontinuance of production and stockpiling must await more substantial agreements amongst those principally concerned.[14]

The 1990s witnessed the focus on the NPT, CTBT and FMCT. India perceived these treaties as a part of disarmament process that would put an end to arms race. India joined the CTBT believing that there exist a linkage between the CTBT and nuclear disarmament, meaning that there would be time bound disarmament plan. Secondly, India also hoped that the CTBT would be a true test ban treaty, meaning the ban would include all laboratary tests and experiments on release of nuclear energy.[15] It should be

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[14] Jawaharlal Nehru in *Lok Sabha*, 02 April 1954.

[15] G.Bala Chanran, "CTBT and India," *Strategic Analysis*, June 1996, p.493.

emphasised, that the CTBT in practical terms only affect the five nuclear weapon states and the three 'threshold states' – India, Israel and Pakistan.[16]

However, the debate on CTBT during 1994-96 witnessed the different perspective and India realised that the nuclear weapons states had their own interests vis-à-vis the others and were not willing to concede anything beyond a certain limit. India's objections with the CTBT were focussed on three issues: the preamble, the scope and Entry into Force (EIF) clause.

Since the beginning of the CTBT discussions, the preamble became a source of conflict between the G-21, in which India is also a part and the nuclear weapons powers.[17] The G-21 wanted the Treaty to curb vertical proliferation and make a time bound commitment for disarmament.[18] The P-5 was against elimination of nuclear weapons and rejected India's proposal for a time bound total elimination of nuclear weapons.[19]

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[16] Jasjit Singh, "India and the CTBT," *Strategic Analysis*, September 1996, p.835.

[17] The Conference on Disarmament divides its membership into western Group (the US, UK, France), the Eastern Group (Russia) and G-21 (members of the Non-Aligned including India)

[18] The P-5 states include all the five nuclear states – US, UK, France, Russia and China.

[19] The final Preamble now reads the objective of the Treaty as to, "contribute effectively to the prevention of nuclear weapons in all aspects, to the process of nuclear disarmament an to the enhancement of international peace and security." Gopal Singh and SK Sharma, ed., *Documents on India's Nuclear Disarmament Policy, Volume III*, (New Delhi: Anamika Publishers, 2000) p.1401.

The second issue, in which India had problem in the Treaty proceedings, was related to the scope of the treaty. The scope of the CTBT was intended to halt qualitative development, up gradation and improvement of nuclear weapons and the non-nuclear states wanted a ban on nuclear simulation tests in laboratories also, thus attempting to broaden the treaty scope and to curb vertical proliferation. However, the P-5[20] managed to limit the scope, according to their technological preferences. The scope of the CTBT now reads as

> Each state party undertakes not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion and to prohibit and prevent any such nuclear explosion at any place under its jurisdiction or control.[21]

The third issue was related to India's security and India felt that the CTBT did not take care of its security needs.[22]

These differences made India to reject the CTBT in its present form and Arundhati Ghose, Indian Ambassador to CD announced on 20 June 1996

> ...we are obliged to conclude that the basic prohibitions, as drafted so far, which define the scope very narrow and do not fulfil the mandated

[20] Even among the P-5, there was no unanimity regarding the scope. For example, the Hydro nuclear experiments became a major contentious issue among them.

[21] Gopal Singh and SK Sharma, ed., n.19, p.1402.

[22] Savit Pande, "India and the Test Ban," in Jasjit Singh ed., *Nuclear India* (New Delhi: Knowledge World, 2000)

> requirement of a comprehensive ban. This approach would give us only a 'nuclear-weapon-test-explosion-ban-treaty' and not a comprehensive test ban treaty...
>
> Today the right to continue development and refinement of arsenals is being sought to be legitimized through another flawed and eternal treaty. Such a treaty is not conceived as a measure towards universal nuclear disarmament and is not in India's national security interest. India, therefore, cannot subscribe to it in its present form.[23]

India, thus refused to sign the CTBT based on two issues – its traditional approach to nuclear disarmament and its national security concerns.[24]

In the aftermath of the CTBT, India realised that its 'window of opportunity' was shrinking and had only three options:[25]

a. to renounce the nuclear choice, by accepting the CTBT without testing
b. to adopt a rejectionist approach and reject all discriminatory treaties such as the NPT, CTBT and FMCT and maintain status quo

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[23] Statement made by Arundhati Ghose in CD on 20 june 1996 on CTBT. Gopal Singh and SK Sharma, ed., n.19, pp.1385-88.

[24] Arundhati Ghose, "Negotiating the CTBT: India's Security Concerns and Nuclear Disarmament," *Journal of International Affairs*, Summer 1997, vol.51, no.1, p.239.

[25] Manish, "India's policy towards the CTBT and the FMCT," in Amitabh Matoo ed., *India's Nuclear Deterrent: Pokharan II and Beyond* (New Delhi: Har Anand Publications, 1999) pp.342-43.

c. to cross the nuclear rubicon, that is to come out of nuclear opacity and socialise with the dominant nuclear power behaviour.

In the aftermath of the failure of the CTBT, India realised "that the country's national security in a world of nuclear proliferation lies either in global disarmament or in exercise of the principle of equal and legitimate security for all."[26]

b. Indefinite extension of the NPT

Jaswant Singh, in his article 'Against Nuclear Apartheid' in *Foreign Affairs*, argues the indefinite extension of the NPT led to the overt nuclear weaponization, for which the nuclear tests were necessary. He writes

> ...the forcing of an unconditional and indefinite extension of the NPT on the international community made 1995 a water shed in the evolution of the South Asian situation. India was left with no option but to go in for overt nuclear weaponisation. The Sino-Pakistani nuclear weapons collaboration – a flagrant violation of the NPT – made it obvious that the NPT regime had collapsed in India's neighborhood...India could have lived with a nuclear option but without overt weaponisation in a world where nuclear weapons had not been formally legitimized. That course

[26] Jaswant Singh, n.7, pp.41-42.

was no longer viable in the post-1995 world of legitimized nuclear weapons.[27]

c. Threat from China

Ever since the war with China in 1962 and the loss of territory to China, India considered China as a major threat to its security. As seen in the previous chapter, China becoming a nuclear power had a direct impact on India's nuclear programme. The Chinese tests in 1964 initially led India to search for a nuclear guarantee against possible nuclear strike from China. When the search for such a guarantee failed, India during 1967-68 decided to pursue a nuclear programme, that could be used for military purposes too.

However many consider the connection between the China threat and India's nuclear bomb as very weak. Their argument is based on the following: First, China's nuclear posture and military planning are not India specific and China considers nuclear weapons as irrelevant to any conflict along the Sino-Indian border.[28] Even inside India, many consider Pakistan as a major source of threat and not China and were not satisfied with BJP government's thesis that China was the main reason for India's nuclear tests. This perception is not correct. Not only inside India, but also outside, the leaders and the defence analysts seemed to equate India's security perceptions only with Pakistan and not with China. If only the general global perception not linked India's security only with

[27] Jaswant Singh, "Against Nuclear Apartheid," n.7, p.45.

[28] Richard W Hu, "Making sense of the Indian Bomb," *The Monitor*, (Center for International trade and Security, University of Georgia) Fall 1998, Vol.4, No.4, p.32

Pakistan, "Indian statements about the Chinese threat, the PLA presence in Tibet and so forth would have received far more attention and credence."[29]

China is considered as a threat to India's security for the following reasons: Its continued military modernisation, expansion an up-gradation of its nuclear arsenal, export of nuclear and missile technology to Pakistan and the sale of military hardware to India's neighbours.[30] The Annual Report 1997-98 of the Indian Ministry of Defence presents the Indian perception of the Chinese threat as follows:

> India is conscious of the fact that *China is a nuclear weapon state* and continues to *maintain one of the largest standing armies* in the world. *Its military modernization programme* is rapidly transforming the technological quality and force projection capabilities of its armed forces in all aspects. *China's assistance to Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme and the sale of missiles and missile technology to Pakistan also directly affect India's security.* India is aware of military collaboration between China and Myanmar, including the development of strategic lines of communication.[31] (Emphasis added)

The Annual report clearly mention the threat from China in the following terms:

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[29] John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001) p.189.

[30] Nancy Jetly, "Sino-Indian relations: Old legacies and New Vistas," *China Report*, vol.30, no.2 (1994) p.219.

[31] Government of India, Ministry of Defence, *Annual Report 1997-98* (New Delhi: Government of India, 1997) p.2.

- Possession of Nuclear weapons by China.
- Maintenance of one of the largest standing Army in the world.
- Continuos modernization of its military
- Assistance of Pakistan in terms of nuclear and missile technology.
- Military collaboration between China and Myanmar.

d. China-Pak Nuclear and Missile Nexus

One of the main determinants of India's nuclear programme since Pokharan I has been the close nuclear and missile cooperation between China and Pakistan. Not only the nuclear and missile co-operation between Pakistan and China upsets India, but also their close relations that got strengthened since the 1962 war. The implications of China-Pakistan military relationship for India, John Garver, explains:

> Militarily, a strategic partnership between China and Pakistan presents India with a two front threat in the event of confrontation with either. A strong Pakistan, independent of and hostile to India, severely constrains India's ability to concentrate its forces against China in the event of a China-India war. Conversely, a militarily potent China aligned with Pakistan constrains India's ability to concentrate its forces against Pakistan.[32]

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[32] John W. Garver, n.29, p.188.

The Sino-Pak nuclear relations started after the 1974 nuclear explosions. China did not criticize the 1974 nuclear test of India for two reasons. The first reason being any major criticism would actually make India to consider weaponisation seriously. Secondly, any serious Chinese disapproval and condemnation would enable India to get rid of the global criticism and sanctions.[33] However, China stated its support to Pakistan very clearly, when Pakistan's foreign minister visited China immediately after the 1974 nuclear test of India. China promised then to Pakistan, "full and resolute support in its just struggle in defense of its national independence and sovereignty and against foreign aggression and interference including that against nuclear threat and nuclear blackmail."[34]

In June 1976, a secret agreement between Pakistan and China was concluded on nuclear cooperation, which Bhutto considered as "single most important achievement" and his "greatest contribution to the survival of (Pakistani) people and nation."[35] Besides assisting in Pakistan uranium enrichment, around 1983, China supplied the design of a nuclear weapon, which it tested in 1966.[36]

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[33] K.N.Rama Chandran, "China and Nucear Non-Proliferation Issue," *IDSA Journal*, July-September 1980, vol.13, no.1, pp.94-105.

[34] *China Quarterly*, July-September 1974, no.59, pp.653-54 quoted in John W. Garver, n.29, p.326.

[35] Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *If I Am Assasinated...*(New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1979) p.221.

[36] quoted in John W. Garver, n.29,, p.329.

Not only China provided assistance in nuclear field to Pakistan, but also helped in Pakistan's ballistic missile proliferation. Between 1988-94, Pakistan received nearly 34 M-11 ballistic missiles from China.[37] Some time during 1987-88, the missile cooperation between China and Pakistan started and it was reported that China sold either M-9 or M-11 missiles to Pakistan.[38] In 1986, Chinese scientists started assisting Pakistan in enriching weapons grade plutonium.[39] In 1989, according to reports, China conducted a Pakistani test at Lop Nur.[40] During the same year, China was assisting Pakistan with Hatf-2 missiles.[41] In November 1989, China and Pakistan agreed for China's supply of a 300 MW nuclear power reactor.[42]

In the 1990s, China's continued assistance to Pakistan over the latter's nuclear and missile programme, increased the nuclear concerns of India.[43] China, in the 1980s and early 90s, became a major supplier of nuclear technology and hardware to Pakistan and

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[37] Philip Saunder, Jing-dong Yuan and Gaurav Kampani, "How and Why China proliferates ballistic missiles to Pakistan," in http://www.rediff.com/news/2000/aug/22spec.htm

[38] Gordon Jacobs and Tim Carthy, "China's Missile Sales – Few Changes for the Future," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, December 1992, p.560.

[39] "Robert Shuey and Shirley A Kan, "Chinese Missile and Nuclear Proliferation: Issues for Congress," *CRS Issue Brief*, 29 September 1995, p.9.

[40] James L. Tyson, "Chinese Nuclear Sales Flout Western Embargoes," *Christian Science Monitor*, 10 March 1992.

[41] Gordon Jacobs and Tim Carthy, n.38, p.560

[42] "Nuclear Proliferation Accord Signed with Pakistan," *Proliferation Issues*, 16 January 1992, p.2.

[43] Mohammed Ayoob, "India's Nuclear Decision: Implications for Indian-US Relations" in Raju G.C.Thomas and Amit Gupta eds., n.1, p.127.

also provided, "Pakistan the design for a low yield uranium device, based on data China had obtained during its fourth series of tests in 1964."[44] According to K.Subrahmanyam, India's leading defence analyst, "Weapon cooperation between China and Pakistan goes back to 1976 and Pakistan initiated the negotiations in 1965. Throughout the eighties, China assisted the Pakistani weapons programme. It was to be expected, that China which armed Pakistan in spite of NPT would have no compunction about transferring missiles." [45]

In May 1991, China admitted to the US officials regarding the sale of M-11 missiles to Pakistan.[46] In June 1991, Wu Jianmin, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman stated:

> China did supply some conventional weapons to Pakistan, including a very small number of short-range tactical missile...China's short range missiles (are) those with a range of about 200 kilometers.[47]

The M-11 missiles, which were purchased from China were stored in Pakistan's Sargodha Air Force base since 1992.[48] In August 1996, The Washington Post reported that Pakistan was building a missile factory, near Rawalpindi based on blueprints and

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[44] Samina Ahmed, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapon's Program: Turning Points and Nuclear Choices," *International Security*, Spring 1999, vol.23, no.4, p.186-87.

[45] K.Subrahmanyam, "India's Lotus Eaters: Myth of Pakistan's Nuclear Celibacy," *The Times of India*, (New Delhi) 20 April 1998.

[46] Gordon Jacobs and Tim Carthy, n.38, p.560.

[47] *China Daily*, 21 June 1991.

[48] *The Hindu*, 15 June 1996.

equipment supplied by China.[49] In November 1997, the US Defense Department in its report stated that "China remains Pakistan's principal supplier of missile related technology and assistance."[50]

e. Success of Pakistan's Nuclear and Missile Programme

Though India's nuclear programme in the late 1960s and early 70s were aimed to protect itself from a possible nuclear attack from China, in the 1980s, especially since 1985-86, India was aware of Pakistan's successful nuclear weapons programme and its implications for India. As seen in the previous chapter, the statements made by Pakistan's nuclear and military establishment, especially Zia and AQ Khan during 1985-87,[51] was seen as a clear evidence for the developments that had taken place inside Pakistan on the nuclear field.

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[49] "Pakistan secretly building missile plant, says *Post*" *The Indian Express*, 26 August 1996; "Pakistan is building missiles factory with Chinese help, reveals Post," *The Times of India*, 26 August 2001; "China helping Pakistan build missile factory: USA," *The Statesman*, 26 August 1996.

[50] Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Proliferation: Threat and Response*, November 1997.

[51] A.Q.Khan, answering a question, how soon Pakistan would produce nuclear weapons, said, "if in the interest of the country's solidarity, the President of Pakistan were in extreme need and gave the team of scientists an important mission, it would not disappoint the nation."(quoted in Zafar Iqbal Cheema, "Pakistan's Nuclear Policies: Attitudes and Posture," in P.R.Chari et al (ed.), *Nuclear Non-Proliferation in India and Pakistan: South Asian Perspectives*, p.107); Zia, in an interview to the *Time* Magazine in March 1987 said, "...You can virtually write today that Pakistan can build a (nuclear) bomb whenever it wishes. What is difficult about a bomb? Once you have acquired the technology, which Pakistan has, you can do whatever you like"(*Time Magazine*, 30 March 1987)

Immediately after the Ghauri test in April 1998, Abdul Qadeer Khan stated:

> We are ready to carry out nuclear explosion anytime and the day this political decision will be made, we will show the world...We have achieved uranium enrichment capability way back in 1978 and after several times we asked different government to carry out a nuclear test. But we did not get the permission[52]

One of the immediate reason for India's decision to go ahead with its nuclear tests were the Ghauri missile test by Pakistan.[53] Pakistan tested its Ghauri missile which had the capability to hit a target 1500 km away. Ghauri, is an intermediate-range ballistic missile, built with the assistance from either the China or the North Korea, can carry a pay load of 750 kilograms for a range of 1,500 kilometers, targeting twenty six cities in India.[54]

India was aware of Pakistan's nuclear and missile programme since the beginning of the 1990s, as seen earlier. By May 1993, Pakistan was progressing well in developing three

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[52] AQ Khan quoted saying in an Urdy daily *Ausaf*. "Pakistan ready to test nuclear bomb," *The Times of India*, (New Delhi) 17 April 1998.

[53] There is a difference of opinion among the analysts on this issue. Some consider that the Ghauri tests in effect made the BJP to realise the security threat posed by it, hence undertook the tests. Others consider that the Ghauri tests were used as excuse by the BJP to fulfil one of its election manifesto. See Sumit Ganguly, "Explaining the Nuclear Tests of 1998," in Raju G.C.Thomas and Amit Gupta eds., n.1, p.55; Mohammed Ayoob, "India's Nuclear Decision: Implications for Indian-US Relations" in Raju G.C.Thomas and Amit Gupta eds., n.1, pp.123-144.

[54] Sumit Ganguly, "Explaining the Nuclear Tests of 1998," in Raju G.C.Thomas and Amit Gupta eds., n.1, p.55.

Hatf missiles, one of them was capable of hitting New Delhi with a 500 kilogram nuclear warhead.[55]

The testing of Ghauri missile, was taken seriously by the Government, which could be seen from its statement which stated:

> We are aware of Pakistan's clandestine acquisition of missiles and missile technology and the country would take resolute steps to meet any threat to its national security.[56]

Testing of Ghauri missile had two serious implications on the nuclear tests. First, it gave a justification for the pro-bomb lobby, including the BJP and secondly, it weakened the position of anti-bomb lobby and anti-weaponization lobby.[57]

Along with the testing of *Ghauri*, the statements made by policymakers and scientists in Pakistan worried India. Hameed Gul, former Chief of Inter Service Intelligence after the Ghauri test stated, "It is a clear and loud message for our so called friends and enemies...Ghauri missile can target the heartland of India. Though Madras is quite on the

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[55] "Pak N-missile can hit Delhi, says ISRO scientist," *The Times of India*, (New Delhi)20 May 1993; "Pak missile can hit Delhi, says Indian scientist," *The Muslim*, 21 May 1993.

[56] "Government Assessing Pakistan's Missile Test Impact," *The Hindu*, (Chennai) 08 April, 1998.

[57] Stephen P Cohen, "Why did India 'Go Nuclear'?" in Raju G.C.Thomas and Amit Gupta eds., n.1, p.30

extreme, the missile can reach the city." [58] AQ Khan announced, "We are ready to carry out nuclear explosion anytime and the day this political decision will be made, we will show the world."[59] A week after the tests AQ Khan also stated, "Ghauri is a beginning and by the grace of Allah this would be followed by Ghaznavi."[60] Ghaznavi is Pakistan's proposed missile with a range of 2000 kilometers. The Ghauri, according to a Pakistani analyst was to be deployed, "from at least six locations between Sialkot and karachi and would be directed against specific targets in India." [61]

Three days after the Ghauri tests, there was a meeting between Brajesh Mishra, Abdul kalam and Chidambaram on 09 April 1998. It was during this meeting, Vajpayee asked, "how quickly the (nuclear) tests be conducted?" for which Abdul Kalam answered "T minus thirty days."[62]

f. May 1998 Tests: Continuation of India's Nuclear Policy

[58] "Ghauri's test major shift in Pak foreign policy: Gul", *The Muslim*, (Islamabad) 08 April 1998.

[59] "Pakistan ready to test nuclear bomb," *The Times of India*, (New Delhi) 17 April 1998.

[60] "Ghaznavi to follow Ghauri with 2,000 km range: Qadir", *The Muslim*, (Islamabad) 16 April 1998.

[61] Tariq Majeed, "Ghauri meaningless without Ghauri' will," *The Muslim* (Islamabad), 24 April 1998.

[62] Raj Chengappa, *Weapons of Peace: The Secret Story of India's Quest to be a Nuclear Power*, p.51.

The above mentioned factors had always influenced the nuclear weapons programme of the country, especially since the 1980s. In fact by the end of 1970s, the decision to initiate a nuclear weapons programme gained momentum. In November 1979, C.Subramaniam, the then Defence Minister, in his address to the National Defence College presented reasons for why India should go nuclear.[63] The main reason was the serious efforts taken by Pakistan in its nuclear weapons programme.

As discussed earlier in the previous chapter, Pakistan, by mid 1980s, had taken enormous leap in its nuclear weapons programme. During 1983-84, Pakistan cold tested its nuclear weapons designs.[64] In February 1984, AQ Khan made claims that Pakistan had succeeded in enriching uranium and possessed the capability to build a bomb.[65] In July 1984, Zia announced that Pakistan then had the N-capability.[66] And by 1987, India knew very well that Pakistan was in possession of the bomb, which was also confirmed by Pakistani President Zia in an interview to the *Time* Magazine in March 1987. He told the interviewer "...You can virtually write today that Pakistan can build a (nuclear) bomb

[63] K.Subrahmanyam, "Indian Nuclear Policy – 1964-98: A Personal Recollection," in Jasjit Singh, ed., *Nuclear India*, p.27

[64] "Without Kahuta, nothing can be done," AQ Khan's interview, *The Herald*, (Karachi) June 1998, reprinted in *Strategic Digest*, August 1998, vol.27, no.8,p.1216.

[65] A.Fareed Ameen, "Pakistan's Nuclear Capability." *The Muslim*, (Islamabad) 05 August 1986, reproduced in *Strategic Digest*, September 1986, vol.16, no.9, pp.1248-50.

[66] *The Washington Post*, 17 July 1984, quoted in Ravi Shastri and Savita Dutt, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Programme: A Chronology," *Strategic Analysis*, February 1991, vol.13. no.11, p.1322.

whenever it wishes. What is difficult about a bomb? Once you have acquired the technology, which Pakistan has, you can do whatever you like."[67]

When Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister again in 1980, she took the threat from Pakistan's nuclear programme seriously and decided to speed up India's nuclear programme. She transferred Dr. Ramanna back to BARC from being the Scientif Adviser to the Defence Minister; Dr. Abdul Kalam was asked to head the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) and authorised Ramanna to prepare for an underground test in 1983.[68]

After the assassination of Indira Gandhi, during 1985-87, Rajiv Gandhi was not interested in pursuing nuclear weapons programme.[69] It was only after the failure of the nuclear powers to respond to his Action Plan submitted in 1988 at the UN asking for total elimination of nuclear weapons and the threat from Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme became serious, he decided to pursue nuclear weapons programme. Then he

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[67] *Time Magazine*, 30 March 1987.

[68] K.Subrahmanyam, "Indian Nuclear Policy – 1964-98: A Personal Recollection," in Jasjit Singh, ed., n.63, p.37

[69] During 185-87, Rajiv Gandhi was more interested in global and regional disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament. During this period he formed an Inter-disciplinary group which included two Chief Ministers – Karunakaran and Saikia, Arun Singh, the Cabinet Secretary Pratap Kaul, AEC Chairman Ramanna, Chairman of the Chief of Staff Committee General Vaidya, the Director R&AW Girish Saxena, Director of IB Barari, Chief Economic Adviser Bimlal Jain and the Director of IDSA Subrahmanyam. This group focussed on India's nuclear policy, only to end abruptly in November 1985. A task force report, which proposed for a balanced minimum detterent force did not meet Rajiv's approval then. Rather, Rajiv Gandhi signed an agreement with Zial-ul-Haq during this period not to attack each other's installations. During this period, Rajiv Gandhi, rather preferred to be like his grand father – a crusader for disarmament.

asked Dr. Arunachalam and Dr.P.K.Iyengar, to go ahead with Indian weapons programme.[70]

During Narasimma Rao's period, the decision to undertake nuclear tests, though discussed, but did not take place for economic reasons. During this period, India was well aware of the transfer of missiles to Pakistan from China and the US silence regarding this. During this period, the NPT was extended indefinitely. Rao, though asked the scientists to hold the tests towards the end of 1995, he withdrew it later, as the Americans came to know of it.

Deva Gowda and Gujral, during their period as Prime Ministers, though did not under take nuclear tests, they were aware of the external security environment and kept the country's nuclear programme going, though did not decide to test.

The May 1998 nuclear tests of India, thus is not a sudden development. The country came to testing many times during the 1980s and 90s, but did not do for various political and economic reasons. The sudden change of governments (as in the case of Rajiv Gandhi and Indira Gandhi) at crucial time, when the decision to test was so close played a significant role in taking nearly 25 years after Pokharan I tests in 1974.

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[70] K.Subrahmanyam, "Indian Nuclear Policy – 1964-98: A Personal Recollection," in Jasjit Singh, ed., n.63, p.44.

B. Need for Nuclear Tests: Internal Factors

Four significant internal reasons could be cited for the BJP's decision to conduct nuclear tests in May 1998. These reasons, as shall be seen, were not only the reasons, but had their own implications in the decision to test. They are as follows:

a. Internal threats from the BJP led coalition
b. The BJP and RSS views on the nuclear bomb and the internal pressure from the Hindu Parivar
c. Pressure from the Indian Scientific establishment
d. Popular support for the nuclear bomb, especially in the aftermath of NPT and CTBT negotiations

a. Internal Threats from the BJP led Coalition:

When Vajpayee became the Prime Minister for the second time, he was aware that the main threat to his government would come from inside, especially from his coalition partners. The critics of the Pokharan II consider that the May 1998 nuclear tests by the BJP was not directed so much against an external security threat but from its own allies. [71]Internal political compulsions are considered as "one obvious reasons" for the BJP deciding to ahead for the nuclear tests, as then it was leading a 18 party coalition, that

[71] Praful Bidwai, "India defiled, Indians diminished," *Frontline*, (Chennai) June 5, 1998. p.25.

was politically heterogeneous.[72] Jayalalitha, the leader of the AIADMK, which was then part of the BJP, led coalition "had a huge list of demands including Cabinet berths and allegedly wanted assurances that the Central Government would dilute the investigations by various agencies into corruption charges being leveled against her."[73] It was imperative for the BJP "to pull a rabbit out of the hat to silence critics both within and outside the coalition" for which the nuclear tests "seemed the perfect solution."[74]

Even inside his own party, Vajpayee was facing problems. The BJP was under pressure to meet the demands from the Sangh parivar, and Vajpayee had to fulfill at least to this demand. Only the bomb was left, as the BJP by April 1998 had compromised on several political issues such as building a temple at Ayodhya, changing the personal laws and removal of constitutional autonomy for Kashmir.[75]

b. The Hindu Bomb: The search for a "Hindutva Weapon"[76] by the RSS and BJP

[72] Kalpana Sharma, "The Hindu Bomb," *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, July-August 1998, p.30. Many writers and analysts support this view.

[73] Raj Chengappa, n.62, p.30.

[74] Kalpana Sharma, n.72, p.30

[75] Praful Bidwai, "BJP hardens nuclear stance in India," *The New Nation*, (Dhaka) 22 April 1998; Stephen P Cohen, "Why did India 'Go Nuclear'?" in Raju G.C.Thomas and Amit Gupta eds., n.1, p.29.

[76] The phrase "Hindutva Weapon" is borrowed from Aijaz Ahmad, "The Hindutva Weapon," *Frontline*, June 5, 1998, pp.21-23.

Both the BJP and its parent organisation the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), right from the beginning believed in nuclear bomb.

M.S.Gowalkar, the RSS supremo stated in 1965:

> The possession of the atom bomb by communist China has mde it imperative for us to manufacture the same. That alone will ensure confidence in the minds of the people and he armed forces about our ability to achieve ultimate victory. No doctrinaire or academic inhibitions should be allowed to come in the way.[77]

Reevaluation of "country's nuclear policy and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons," was a part of the BJP's election manifesto.[78]

The BJP, much before coming to the power, repeatedly assured of weaponisation, and on assuming power, highest priority was given to carrying out the nuclear tests and implemented its agenda.[79] The critics, especially the left, consider that for the BJP, "nuclear weapons are an article of faith, part of the essential identity of a powerful, awe-inspiring militarist 'Hindu India' that can boast of its 'manliness' and 'virility' and thus prove to the world the superiority of Hindu civilization."[80] For them, the BJP led Hindu

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[77] Quoted in N.Ram, *Riding the Nuclear Tiger* (New Delhi: Left World Books, 1999) p.16

[78] "Our National Security: BJP Election Manifesto," in the BJP website – http://bjp.org.nagenda.htm.

[79] Aijaz Ahmad, "The Hindutva Weapon," *Frontline*, (Chennai) June 5, 1998, p.22.

[80] Praful Bidwai and Achin Vanaik, "A very Political Bomb," *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, July-August 1998, p.52.

Right from 1951 have been advocating nuclearisation, without any proper consideration of security needs and the May 1998 tests were "determined solely by the fact that the BJP led coalition took power six weeks before the event."[81] The critics of the BJP and the RSS consider that there exist a close nexus between the BJP's decision to acquire nuclear weapons and its Hindutva agenda. Giving nuclear teeth to a Hindu rashtra has been one of the main objectives of the RSS since the 1950s.[82] According to them

> The RSS has long dreamt of making India a chauvinistic-militaristic power based on majoritarian rule. For such a Hindu rashtra to succeed, it must be able to mobilize people around an aggressive anti-Muslim platform and to create a permanent divide between Hindus and Muslims that can justify an authoritarian state. That is why in the 1960s, when India achieved nuclear capability, the Bharatiya Jan Sangh became a fervent advocate of making the bomb. The bomb was the mascot of the RSS long before the Ram temple acquired religious-political overtones for it in the 1980s. If the BJP's climb to power was aided by the temple-mosque controversy at Ayodhya, with the party coming to power at the Centre, the RSS has set out the next step in its long term agebda of making the bomb...the retaliatory tests undertaken by Pakistan are what the RSS-BJP hoped would happen. Hence to see the Pokharan tests as a natural culmination of India's

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[81] Praful Bidwai and Achin Vanaik, n.80, p.52

[82] N.Ram,n77, p.15.

> nuclear policy from the 1950s is not only naïve but harmful to the very basis of secular democratic Indian state.[83]

The BJP's objective of nuclear tests, according to the critics, is to graduate from 'Hindu' nationalism to 'Indian' nationalism and to become a 'national hegemonic power.'[84] It has also been criticised, the date of the Pokharan tests (May 11 also happened to be Buddha purnima) and the phrase, "The Buddha smiles" were deliberately chosen to convey a meaning and was seen as an effort to legitimise weapons and to offend the neo-Buddhist dalits.[85] According to Aijaz Ahmad

> ...if the Ayodhya movement re-defined the role of Ram in Indian belief systems as an all India deity and warrior prince, the Pokhran explosions were deliberately scheduled on Buddha purnima and were nick named "Buddha smiles again"; if Ambedkarites have their anti-caste Buddha, Hindutva will have its own Buddha who will bless nuclear weapons for the greater glory of *Bharat Mata*.[86]

Besides the party's ideology, Vajpayee always believed in the nuclear bomb. He believes that nuclear bomb provides India the strength and self-confidence.[87] On 22 December,

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[83] Prakash Karat, "A Lethal Link," *Frontline*, (Chennai) 19 June 1998, p.20.

[84] Aijaz Ahmad, "The Hindutva Weapon," *Frontline*, (Chennai) June 5, 1998, p.23.

[85] Praful Bidwai, "India defiled, Indians diminished," *Frontline*, (Chennai) June 5, 1998. p.25.

[86] Aijaz Ahmad, n.84, p.23.

[87] Interview with Prabhu Chawla. (Raj Chengappa, n.62, p.36)

four months after China's atomic test, Vajpayee argued in the Rajya Sabha: "What is the answer to atom bomb? The answer to an atom bomb is an atom bomb nothing else."[88] It was this belief on the bomb, that guided the BJP to undertake nuclear tests, when Vajpayee became the Prime Minister for the first time on 16 May 1996. The very day he became the Prime Minster, he sent a word to Abdul Kalam,[89] who met him on the very next day. During this meeting Vajpayee asked him to "proceed with nuclear tests" following which the "scientists then worked frantically to prepare for the tests."[90] When Vajpayee took the decision in 1996, clearly there was no assessment of India's strategic environment, no consensus and not even there was a debate, either inside the Parliament or outside of it. It was merely based on the BJP's belief on nuclear weopns.

It was decided then to conduct two explosions, an 'improved version of the 1974 atomic device' and a 'new boosted fission atomic bomb.'[91] The devices needed for the tests were brought from BARC[92] to Pokharan, but the scientists stopped the preparations when they realised that the BJP government would fall.

c. Pressure from the Scientific Establishment

[88] Raj Chengappa, n.62, p.37.

[89] Narasimha Rao, the outgoing Prime Minister sent Vajpayee a hand written note "Speak to Kalam. He knows a lot about the N issue." (Raj Chengappa, n.62, p.31)

[90] Raj Chengappa, n.62, p.31.

[91] ibid, p.32.

[92] ibid, p.30

The scientific establishment formed an important lobby in the country's nuclear weapons programme. This lobby assumed importance in the decision making process due to two factors. First, starting from Nehru, invariably every Prime Minister was interested in making the country well advanced in science and technology. Due to their efforts, at present, India has created one of the finest science training systems in the non-western world.[93] The second factor is the corollary of the first. Since the scientists were able to satisfy the nation's needs to a great extent, there exist an widespread adulation of scientists, even among the India strategic elite.[94]

It is essential to understand, while talking about the pressure from the scientific establishment, the nature of their pressure. Though, the scientific community presented various choices, including the making of nuclear weapons, the ultimate decision always rested at the hands of the political leadership.[95]

The scientific establishment, from the beginning was always interested in making the bomb. Homi Bhabha told Ramanna in 1949 itself "We must have the capability (to have an atomic bomb). We should first prove ourselves and then talk of Gandhi, non-violence

[93] Stephen P Cohen, "Why did India 'Go Nuclear'?" in Raju G.C.Thomas and Amit Gupta eds., n.1, p.16.

[94] ibid, p.16

[95] Sumit Ganguly, "Explaining the Nuclear Tests of 1998," in Raju G.C.Thomas and Amit Gupta eds., n.1, p.38.

and a world without nuclear weapons."[96] Bhabha, the founder of Indian nuclear programme wanted to acquire nuclear weapons, and in 1958 he had a conversation with Lord Blackett, the British physicist and defence adviser on this issue.[97] Bhabha also believed that nuclear weapons had deterrence value. According to him

> Nuclear weapons coupled with an adequate delivery system can enable a to destroy more or less totally the cities, industry and all-important targets in another State. It is then largely irrelevant whether the State so attacked has greater destructive power at its command. With the help of nuclear weapons, therefore, a State can acquire what we may call a position of absolute deterrence even against another having a many times greater destructive power under its control.[98]

Bhabha sincerely believed in nuclear weapons as the most powerful deterrence. In 1964 Bhabha stated in All India Radio broadcast that "a minimum supply of nuclear weapons coupled with an adequate delivery system confers on a State the capacity to destroy more or less totally important cities and industrial centres of another State. The only defence against such an attack appears to be a capability and threat of retaliation...Capability of retaliation appears to be the most powerful deterrence." [99]

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[96] Ramanna quoted in Raj Chengappa, n.62, p.82.

[97] Shyam Bhatia, *India's Nuclear Bomb* (Delhi: Vikas, 1979) p.114.

[98] Bhabha quoted in Sumit Ganguly, "India's pathway to Pokharan II: The prospects and Sources of New Delhi's Nuclear Weapons Program," *International Security*, Spring 1999, vol.23, no.4, p.152.

[99] quoted in A.G.Noorani, "India's quest for a Nuclear Guarantee," *Asian Survey*, July 1967, vol. 7, no.7, p.490.

The pressure from the scientific establishment on the political leadership to agree for a nuclear test always continued. In 1995, Kalam and Chidmabaram, in a series of meetings with the then Prime Minister Narasimma Rao, argued "vociferously for tests."[100] Deva Gowda, in his letter to Vajpayee, dated May 15, 1998, states, "scientists had approached two previous governments to continue tests, once in 1995 and then in 1997...I was requested to make a decision to conduct fresh nuclear tests. I convinced the scientists that the time was not ripe."[101]

Why did the scientific establishment so eager in conducting a nuclear test? At least three reasons could be cited for their pressure.

First, the scientific establishment, consider it as a matter of pride and prestige. Ramanna said much later regarding the views of his and Bhabha. "There was never a discussion among us over whether we shouldn't make the bomb. *For us it was a matter of prestige that would justify our ancient past.* The question of deterrent came much later. Also, as Indian scientists we were keen to show our western counterparts, who thought little of us those days, that we too could do it.[102] (emphasis added)

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[100] In one of the meetings, apparently Kalam told Narasimma Rao, that nuclear tests could benefit him politically, for which Rao told him, "Let me worry about the politics of it. You tell us if it is scientifically required or not." Raj Chengappa, n.62, p.393.

[101] Deva Gowda's letter quoted in T.Jayaramn, "Of scientists and nukes," *Frontline*, (Chennai) 19 June 1998, p.34.

[102] Ramanna quoted in Raj Chengappa, n.62, p.82.

The scientific establishment consider that the technologies underlying India's nuclear weapons programme would make the country a great scientific and modern power.[103] P.K.Iyengar, former Chairman of Indian Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) congratulating Vajpayee for giving the support for the tests says, "It is interesting to speculate on where India would have stood, if it had carried out additional tests in the 1980s or early 1990s."[104]

Second, the need to verify their findings and pass it on to the next generation of the scientists. The scientific establishment led by Chidambaram and Abdul Kalam wanted to undertake nuclear tests as they though otherwise, 'the older generation would retire and the knowledge would go with them.'[105]

Third, the closing of options for India, especially in the 1990s, with the proceedings of the CTBT. Since the CTBT would be coming for review in September 1999 with its provisions prohibiting nuclear explosions, India's options would be very limited. Hence Chidambaram in his meeting with Vajpayee urged him on the need to under take nuclear tests.[106]

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[103] Stephen P Cohen, "Why did India 'Go Nuclear'?" in Raju G.C.Thomas and Amit Gupta eds., n.1, p.15.

[104] P.K.Iyengar, "Pokhran revisited," *Frontline*, (Chennai) June 5, 1998, p.29.

[105] Raj Chengappa, n.62, p.34.

[106] Raj Chengappa, n.62, p.33.

d. Popular Support for Nuclear Bomb

Crucial decisions on India's nuclear policy have always been taken by a select few, usually the Prime Minister along with his most trusted colleagues, from the period of Jawaharlal Nehru. It does not mean that there were no discussion on nuclear issues at the cabinet level, inside the Parliament, among the academic community and defence analysts and finally the common population. These issues were discussed, but the decisions were always taken, by a select few. Interestingly, the armed forces of India have never been effectively consulted in nuclear decision making process.

The only exception to the above took place in the aftermath of nuclear tests of China in 1964. The issue was discussed in detail in the Parliament, for the first time, especially whether India should become a nuclear weapons power, align with the United States or continue with the current policy. As seen in the previous chapter, the opposition was effectively arguing (including Vajpayee, then a Member of Parliament) for building a nuclear deterrence against China. Even inside the Congress Party, there were arguments favouring nuclear weapons. However, Shastri, refused to change India's (synonymous with Nehru's) nuclear policy.

The involvement of population in the country's nuclear policy has been nil, though there has been wide spread support for India acquiring nuclear weapons, as shall be seen

subsequently. According to David Cortright and Amitabh Mattoo, who had under taken two surveys of India's nuclear policy, before and after the tests, "India's nuclear policy has never been an issue in general elections, and even among non-governmental organisations, discussion of national security and nuclear issues is scarce."[107]

According to the survey carried out by David Cortright and Amitabh Mattoo in 1994,[108] the main findings include the following: Only 8 percentage of those who were surveyed favored renunciation of nuclear option by India, whereas 33 percentage preferred weaponizaton and outright acquisition of nuclear weapons capability and 57 percentage preferred the then Indian government's policy of neither rejecting nor confirming a de facto nuclear capability, while supporting global nuclear disarmament. Another important finding of the survey, is that 54 percentage identified threats from Pakistan for advocating nuclear weapons, whereas only 20 percentage identified China as a threat.

The findings of the survey are as follows:

Table 1

Indian supporters of Official Policy, circusmstances justifying the development of nuclear weapons (%)

[107] David Cortright and Amitabh Mattoo, "Elite Public Opinion and Nuclear Weapons Policy in India," *Asian Survey*, May 1996, vol.36, no.5, p.547.

[108] The survey was taken among 1000 respondents in seven cities of India during September-November 1994. David Cortright and Amitabh Mattoo, n.107, no.5.

Base in actual numbers	563
Threats from other nuclear powers	52
Pakistan tests a nuclear device	48
Increased international pressures on India's domestic policies	18
A serious deterioration of relations with China	17
Kashmir on the verge of secession	12
Breakdown of India's relations with western countries	10
Increased turmoil in the country requiring a new rallying symbol for national unity	08
Threats of trade sanctions	06
Under no circumstances	13

Source: Samina Ahmed, David Cortright and Amitabh Mattoo, "Public Opinion and Nuclear Options for South Asia, *Asian Survey*, August 1998, vol.38, no.8, p.731.

Table 2

Public stance on Nuclear Issues in India (%)

Supporters of Official policy	57
Nuclear Advocated	33
Nuclear opponents	08
No Opinion	02

Source: Samina Ahmed, David Cortright and Amitabh Mattoo, "Public Opinion and Nuclear Options for South Asia, *Asian Survey*, August 1998, vol.38, no.8, p.730.

As seen from the surveys, there was a popular support for India building nuclear weapons. Two reasons seem to have played a vital role in making them believe the need for the nuclear weapons – threats from other nuclear powers and threat from Pakistan. However, there was no popular pressure on the BJP government to under take nuclear tests at that juncture.

Pakistan's Nuclear Tests

Objectives and Motivations

In the aftermath of nuclear tests by India in May 1998, Pakistan, then led by Nawaz Sharif was in a vulnerable position. The international community had clearly warned that any nuclear testing by Pakistan would result in economic sanctions. But not conducting a nuclear test would be a political suicide for Sharif government, as the opposition was mobilising itself against Sharif. The option, then the Sharif government had was to "explode the bomb, and prepare to eat grass. Or decide against it, and it humble pie."[109] However, it is not possible for the Sharif government to undertake nuclear tests within

[109] Zaffar Abbas, "The Hardest Choice," *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, July-August 1998, p.36.

two weeks, unless it was well prepared much ahead in terms of the tests; the materials essential to conduct a test; and the site for tests.

The manner in which the Pakistani tests were conducted clearly proves that Pakistan's nuclear programme had been in progress for a long time. As seen in the previous chapter, the nuclear weapons programme of Pakistan was well developed by then. What were the reasons for Pakistan to under take tests? If Pakistan was ready to undertake tests in such a short notice, then what were the causes for its preparedness? What were its motivations in developing a nuclear weapons programme?

The following factors could be identified, which led Pakistan to under take nuclear tests and for its nuclear weapons programme:

a. India's Nuclear Tests and Nuclear Capability
b. Pakistan's security
c. The US non proliferation objectives in Pakistan
d. The Islamic Bomb
e. Internal pressure

a. India's Nuclear Tests and Nuclear Capability

Many believe that it was India, which made them to go for nuclear weapons programme. In an interview to Kuldip Nayar, A.Q.Khan said

> It is you, who have forced us to go nuclear. The super powers had to because of mutual fear, China being a big country had to make the bomb because both the Soviet Union and USA had done it. Why should you have done it? India had no such serious security problems. It had a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union. This was meant to threaten us, to establish its hegemony in the region, we were left with no alternative.[110]

Pakistan from the beginning never believed that India's nuclear programme was peaceful and its nuclear explosion in 1974 was not meant for peaceful purposes. In the words of Lt. Gen. A.I. Akram, "with all the talks about the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and peaceful nuclear explosions, a decade after Pokharan not a single canal had been built in India with nuclear power, not a single mountain pass blasted, not a single dam site prepared. So much for the peaceful uses of nuclear explosions!"[111]

Pakistan also considers the advancement of India in nuclear field, which is also indigenous as a matter of concern. Not only the Indian nuclear test of 1974, but also the successive developments in the nuclear field made them nervous. *Dhruva*, a research reactor located near Trombay, which went critical in 1985 and fast breeder reactor built at Kalpakkam, both outside the scope of IAEA are seen as potential producers of weapon

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[110] Kuldip Nayar, "Pakistan has the bomb," *The Tribune* (Chandigarh), 01 March 1987 reprinted in *Strategic Digest*, May 1987, p.865.

[111] Lt.General (Retd.) A.I.Akram, "South Asia and the Bomb," *Regional Studies*, Winter 1986, vol.4,no.1, pp.3-19, reproduced in *Strategic Digest*, September 1986, vol. 16, no.9, p.1255.

grade plutonium. Both the reactors, Pakistan felt during the 1980s, "brought India even closer nuclear weapons status and accelerated the process."[112]

There is a belief inside Pakistan, that the nuclear programme of India is Pakistan oriented and not China oriented.[113] This line of thinking believes, that though at one time, India would have wanted to have a credible nuclear deterrence against China, it gave up the plan to do so. None of the worthwhile nuclear targets of China is in the striking range of India, whereas all the major cities of India in the north are vulnerable to a nuclear strike by China.[114]

b. Pakistan's Security

The break up of Pakistan, in the aftermath of its war with India in 1971, is a major factor in Pakistan's nuclear policy and programme. Pakistan sincerely believes, as could be seen from the writings and statements made by political and military leadership and academic community, that India's final objective is to destabilise Pakistan.

AQ Khan, in his interview told Kuldip Nayar, "Pakistan will not use it (the bomb). But if it is driven to the wall, there will be no option left in that eventuality. Nobody can undo

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[112] ibid, pp.3-19

[113] ibid, pp.3-19

[114] ibid, pp.3-19

Pakistan or take us for granted. We are there to stay and let it be clear that we shall use the bomb if our existence is threatened."[115]

Pakistan also feels that the entire world is against Pakistan's nuclear programme. There was a feeling inside Pakistan that the Americans, Indians, Russians and the Jews had a common meeting point in denouncing Pakistan's nuclear programme and considered as a threat to the world peace.[116] It is worth quoting this Pakistani feeling – "Every kind of trick was used by the opponents of Pakistan's nuclear programme to vilify its efforts and cast them in a sinister mould. Interested parties would plant false information in the papers and then quote those very papers as evidence against Pakistan, evidence which they had themselves fabricated. Political figures would quote journalists and journalists would quote political figures as having said such and such, without anyone producing the slightest, worthwhile evidence. At the same time, Pakistan's denials were played down or ignored."[117]

c. US Non-Proliferation Policy as Anti-Pak

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[115] Kuldip Nayar, n.110, p.865.

[116] This aspect has been emphasised by many defence experts and academics from Pakistan. For example, see, F.Hassan, "An analysis of propaganda against Pakistan's peaceful nuclear programme," *The Muslim*, 16 March 1984, reproduced in *Strategic Digest*, May 1984, pp423-31; Lt.General (Retd.) A.I.Akram, "South Asia and the Bomb," *Regional Studies*, Winter 1986, vol.4, no.1, pp.3-19.

[117] Lt.General (Retd.) A.I.Akram, n.111, pp.3-19.

US non-proliferation policy was seen as anti-Pakistan and aimed at capping and destroying Pakistan's nuclear weapons programmme. Besides, the US efforts, especially since the mid 1970s to curb proliferation were seen as an effort to down play Pakistan's genuine security concerns and de-stablise Pakistan's nuclear programme, which is considered vital for Pakistan's security and survival.

d. The Islamic Bomb

One of the reason that has been cited for the objective and the growth of Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme has been that, it wanted to develop a nuclear bomb, which would not only be for Pakistan, but for the entire Muslim ummah, which is commonly referred to as an 'Islamic Bomb.' Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has been said to be the father of the Islamic bomb. How far is this concept of Islamic bomb is based on facts?

Zulifikar Bhutto, nowhere mentioned about this Islamic bomb. Maulana K Niazi, who was a member in Bhutto's cabinet, provides extensive information about the so-called Islamic bomb. Bhutto, much before the India's nuclear test in 1974, wanted to speed up Pakistan's nuclear programme, aware of India's nuclear programme. His biggest problem then in meeting his nuclear objectives, "was the procurement of S300 million" for the nuclear project. Niazi says

> For this ($ 300 million) he turned towards the Gulf states and the oil rich nations of the Arab world. He received positive response from them

> particularly from Libya, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait and Iraq who assured him of full financial cooperation. Bhutto had acquired the highest respect of the world because of the Pakistani Army help in the defeat of Israel. The Arab leaders believed that Pakistani atomic bomb would be their biggest guarantee against the aggression of Israel.[118]

It was this effort to mobilise fund from the Arab states by Bhutto has been called, especially by the western media and leaders as "Islamic Bomb."[119] The Muslim states during the 1970s were equally interested in possessing nuclear weapons for two reasons. First, the 1973 Oil Crisis, which made them to realise the potential of their oil weapon. After realising that potential, these states also wanted to possess the next potential weapon – the nuclear weapon. The second reason was the 1973 Yom Kippur war, in which the Muslim countries believed that Israel had assembled nuclear warheads. After the war, according to Edgar O Balance,

> "certain Arab countries, such as Libya and Iraq (attempted) to try to obtain nuclear weapons. In 1975 Colonnel Qaddafi of Libya tried to assemble a team to make a nuclear warhead, but found there were no Arab scientists

[118] Maulana K Niazi, "Unknown facts about the Reprocessing Plant," reproduced in Strategic Digest, May 1987, p.883.

[119] Edgar O'Balance in his article "The Islamic Bomb" provides a detailed sketch of where did Pakistan received funds, the essential nuclear materials and technology. According to him, Qadaffi provided most of the money; plans for separating and reprocessing plant were stolen from Holland; and uranium was purchased from Niger. See Edgar O'Ballance, "The Islamic Bomb," *National Defense*, December 1980 reproduced in *Strategic Digest*, June 1981, vol.11, no.6, pp.509-514.

sufficiently advanced to do this, nor could the essential equipment obtained."[120]

This concept of Islamic Bomb, however was not shared by every one inside Pakistan. For them, not only a common bomb for the Islamic world, even a joint Islamic nuclear response is considered not as practicable and desirable. To quote Brigadier Abdul Rahman Siddiqui, "in actual terms, this would amount to pitting one third of the world population against two thirds which in a nuclear confrontation could mean the end of world itself or a larger part thereof. In the first place, therefore, we should banish from our minds any thought of a joint Islamic response to a future nuclear conflict. Let us make it quite clear to the world that there is no such thing as an 'Islamic Bomb'."[121]

e. Internal Pressure

The immediate reason for Pakistan to conduct nuclear tests in May 1998, without any doubt, was India's nuclear tests in May 1998. There was a direct link between the two.

Internal Pressure for Chagai: Nawaz Sharif was facing enormous pressure from inside to go ahead with Pakistan's nuclear tests. The Jamaat-e-Islami asked the government not

[120] Ibid, p.510.

[121] Brig. Abdul Rahman Siddiqui, "Nuclear Arms Race and Disarmament" The Islamic Perspective," Defence Jopurnal, vol.10,no.3, pp1-7 reproduced in Strategic Digest, June 1984, vol.14,n.6.p.580.

to "be afraid of the United States, be afraid of Allah. Step forward and conduct a nuclear test."[122] The pressure, that the then Sharif government faced could be observed from the following observation:

> In the week following the first round of India's tests, it seemed as if people in Pakistan did nothing but discuss the options that the country was left with. For those few days, Pakistani news papers were obsessed with the nuclear controversy. The national dailies published more than a hundred articles on the subject by defense and political analysts, scientists, and academics...An overwhelming number of Pakistani politicians and other opinion makers demanded tht Pakistan match India – that Pakistan explode a nuclear device to reestablish what has come to be known here as the 'strategic balance'. For most of them, it was a question of the country's pride and honor, and of its survival as a proud nation.[123]

Besides the internal pressure, there always was a strong popular support inside Pakistan favoring nuclear weapons. According to a survey[124] done exclusively on the nuclear issue

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[122] Ayesha Khan, "Pakistan joins the club." *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, July-August 1998, p.34.

[123] Zaffar Abbas, "the Hardest Choice," *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, July-August 1998, p.36.

[124] The survey was conducted in 1996 for the Joan B Kroc Institute fo International Peace Studies at Notre Dame and the Fourth Freedom Forum on the opinion of Pakistan's educated elite about nuclear weapons. The survey was conducted among the educated elites belonging to the following fields: Government bureaucrats, Armed Forces, Politicians, Academics, Public and private Sector Executives, Journalists, Lawyers, doctors, Sports Figures and artists. The survey was undertaken in Islamabad, Rduring

in 1996, inside Pakistan, 61 percent supported Pakistan's policy then of keeping the nuclear option open; 32 percent supported acquisition of nuclear weapons and only six percent favored renunciation of nuclear weapons.[125]

The survey also found that ninety eight percent felt that nuclear weapons could be used if India, "were about to attack Pakistan across the international border."[126]

Table 3
Public stance on Nuclear Issues in Pakistan (%)

Supporters of Official policy	61
Nuclear Advocated	32
Nuclear opponents	08
No Opinion	01

Source: Samina Ahmed, David Cortright and Amitabh Mattoo, "Public Opinion and Nuclear Options for South Asia, *Asian Survey*, August 1998, vol.38, no.8, p.730.

Table 4

Pakistani supporters of Official Policy, circusmstances justifying the development of nuclear weapons (%)

February-May 1996, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Faislabad, Peshawar, Quetta, Karachi and Larkana.

[125] ibid, p.5.

[126] ibid, p.6.

Base in actual numbers	554
India conducts another nuclear test	85
India deploys its Prithvi and/or Agni missiles	72
India gains a further conventional arms advantage	36
A serious deterioration in relations with Russia	0
A break down of Pakistan's relations with Western countries	0
Threats from other nuclear powers	0
Threats of economic sanctions	0
Increased international pressures on Pakistan's domestic policies	2
Under no circumstances	16

Thus, there was always popular support for Pakistan's nuclear weapons. And the only reason for the popular support Pakistan's nuclear weapons, as seen in the previous tables is threat from India.

One of the major reason for Nawaz Sharif to under take nuclear test was this popular pressure. With opposition parties also pressuring for nuclear tests, along with popular support, not undertaking nuclear tests would have meant political suicide for Sharif.

Chapter III

The US Response to Pokharan II Tests

The US Response to Pokharan II Tests

The US did not expect that India would under take a nuclear test in 1998. Unlike the earlier attempts under Narasimha Rao and Rajiv Gandhi, when the American intelligence agencies were able to find out that India then was planning for nuclear test, before May 1998, the US could not find out what was happening in the deserts of Rajasthan.

When India conducted its nuclear tests, it came as a rude shock to the US and was not prepared. As shall be seen subsequently, since it was not prepared for the Indian nuclear tests, the US response during the first six months since the nuclear tests of India and Pakistan seemed to be confused. Initially the US imposed economic and military sanctions, only to dilute it later within the next three months.

The American response to the Indian nuclear tests was the continuation of its nuclear policy towards India in the last three decades, especially since the first nuclear tests of India. These included the following:

- forcing India to agree to the global nuclear regime, by signing the NPT, CTBT and FMCT;
- pressurising India not to weaponise and also not to deploy nuclear weapons and
- to cap and roll back not only India's nuclear weapons programme, but also its missile programme, that includes the production of *Prithvi* and *Agni*.

An analysis of the American nuclear response towards India would reveal that it pursued a unilinear direction, unlike that of Pakistan. US nuclear relations with Pakistan, as shall be seen in the next chapter, always were always secondary to other American security interests in Pakistan.

This chapter, to begin with would focus first on the US nuclear objectives in India, especially since the first nuclear test conducted by India in 1974 and then would focus the US response to India's nuclear tests in May 1998.

I. Indo-US nuclear relations since 1960s

India appeared in the US nuclear security calculus, in the early 1960s, not for India's nuclear programme, but because of Chinese nuclear programme, which the Americans believed is progressing fast with active help from the Russians. The US feared that, in the event China became a nuclear threat, it would have to face a Sino-Soviet nuclear bloc, which was considered as a serious threat to its security. This aspect of the US security calculation could be seen from the recently declassified US documents. According to a Memorandum submitted to the US Air Force Chief in 1961. the US feared that, "...if the Russians provide the Chinese with nuclear weapons, they most certainly will do everything to ensure that the weapons remain under Russian control. Under this situation

with respect to nuclear capabilities, the United States would still be faced with a monolithic Sino-Soviet Bloc.[1]

To counter a possible nuclear Sino-Soviet bloc the US started looking for probable countries in Asia. One of the options that the US had then was to "encourage selected Asian nations, e.g., Japan, India and Taiwan to build up their nuclear air defence forces to meet the threat of possible CHICOM nuclear aggression."[2] This option also included encouraging "Japan, India, Taiwan and possibly Korea, Pakistan and the Philippines to arm themselves with US offensive nuclear missile systems provided through sales or grants."[3]

Thus India started appearing in US nuclear security calculus to counter nuclear China and a nuclear Sino-Soviet bloc. In September 1961, in a memorandum to Dean Rusk, the then Secretary of State George McGhee, US State Department Official wrote that China would "detonate a nuclear device as early as 1962...it would be desirable if a friendly Asian power beat Communist China to the punch" and there was "no likelier candidate than India."[4]

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[1] Memorandum from Lt. General John K. Gerhart, Deputy Chief of Staff, Plans & Programs, U.S. Air Force, to Air Force Chief of Staff Thomas White, "Long-range Threat of Communist China," 8 February 1961, Library of Congress, Thomas White Papers, box 44, Air Staff Actions. http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB38/

[2] ibid.

[3] ibid..

[4] McGhee to Rusk, "Anticipatory Action Pending Chinese Communist Demonstration of a Nuclear Capability," September 1961, FOIA files, India, National Security Archive,

This has been cited as a one of the reason for the US to support to the Trombay plutonium reprocessing plant, which India started constructing began in April 1961. This plant, the US knew had essential facility required for an atomic bomb.[5] However the US ignored this capability of India

During this period, the US considered the following to assist India's nuclear programme:[6]

a. To extend special assistance to the Indian AEC associated with the insertion of full plutonium cores in the Tarapur and /or Rajasthan reactors
b. To develop an intensive US-Indian information exchange including the training of Indian personnel in pertinent U.S. facilities.
c. To provide special assistance to India in the construction and operation in India of critical plutonium lattice experiments designed to test out the characteristics of the plutonium fuels prior to large-scale insertion of such fuels in the Tarapur or Indian CANDU reactors

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Washington, D.C., quoted in George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000) p.52.

[5] George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.52.

[6] "Discussion Paper on Prospects for Intensifying Peaceful Atomic Cooperation With India", Letter from John G Palfrey, Atomic Energy Commission, to Ambassador Llewllyn E Thompson, November 23, 1964. http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB6/ipn3_3.htm.

d. To fabricate, a limited number of plutonium fuel elements for insertion on a test basis in the Tarapur and /or Rajasthan reactors during their initial phases of cooperation at USAEC expense.

During the same period, the US was also contemplating "to offer immediate financial assistance to another large scale power reactor, along the lines of assistance already being extended to the Tarapur station."[7]

However, these US efforts did not proceed further for various factors. First was the decision not to aid other countries in nuclear area, especially after the Gilpatrick Committee's report. The Committee on Nuclear Proliferation recommended, "preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons is clearly in the national interest despite difficult decisions that will be required."[8]

Secondly, during this period, the US was involved in the Vietnam War, hence its attention got distracted over other issues, including Chinese nuclear explosions.

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[7] "Discussion Paper on Prospects for Intensifying Peaceful Atomic Cooperation With India", Letter from John G Palfrey, Atomic Energy Commission, to Ambassador Llewllyn E Thompson, November 23, 1964. http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB6/ipn3_5.h.

[8] Roswell L. Gilpatrick, "A Report to the President by the Committee on Nuclear Proliferation," January 21, 1965, p.1, Nuclear Non-Proliferation Policy, FOIA files, National Security Archive, Washington, D.C, quoted in George Perkovich, n.5, p.102.

In the aftermath of Chinese nuclear tests in 1964, initially the US believed that the Chinese nuclear explosion would not make any changes in India's nuclear policy. According to a CIA report *Indian Government Reaction to Chicom Nuclear Explosion*, India would continue its long-standing policy of not producing nuclear weapons.[9]

It was during this time. India was looking for a nuclear guarantee, [10] in case of a nuclear attack from China, which has been discussed the previous chapters. The US was against any such guarantee as it "would have serious disadvantages for (the US) and which would probably result in (the US) having to give similar guarantees to a large number of other countries."[11]

It was the efforts taken by India, after failing to get a nuclear guarantee, to develop its nuclear programme, made the US to consider India's intention seriously. It is generally believed that after the failure to get such a nuclear guarantee, that India had decided to militarise its nuclear programme.[12] One reason that has always been quoted was the

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[9] CIA report (TDCS-314/04322-64), "Indian Government Reaction to Chicom Nuclear Explosion," 19 October 1964, LBJ Library, quoted in Dennis Kux, *Estranged Democracies: India and the U.S.* (New Delhi: Sage publications, 1993) p-263

[10] India's motivations and efforts for a nuclear guarantee during the period 1964-67 has been well explained in A.G.Noorani, "India's Quest for a Nuclear Guarantee", *Asian Survey*, Vol. VII, No. 7, July 1967, pp.498-99.

[11] "Indian Nuclear Weapons Capability", Memorandum from the State Department, January 30, 1965, Subject-Numerie File, 1964-1966; Central Files of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives, Washington, D.C. http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB6/ipn6_1.h.

[12] P.R.Chari, *Indo-Pak Nuclear Standoff: The role of the United States*, (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1995), p.12.

decision by Shastri, the then Prime Minister of India to sanction Subterranean Nuclear Explosion Project (SNEP) which many believed "once the go-ahead was given, it would take three months to have an explosion."[13]

Two events took place in the early 1970s, on Indo-US nuclear relations. First was the Indian nuclear test in May at Pokhran in the deserts of Rajasthan and the second was the controversy over Tarapur power plant. The first issue had been discussed already on the previous chapters.

India and the United States signed an *Agreement for Cooperation between India and the USA Concerning the Civil Uses of Atomic Energy* in August 1963 that entered into force on 25 October 1963.[14] Following the Nuclear Non Proliferation Act (NNPA) in 1978 the US, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) refused to license the next shipment for Tarapur.[15]

The NNPA also included the following:[16]

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[13] Ashok Kapur, *India's Nuclear Option: Atomic Diplomacy and Decision making*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p.194.

[14] For the full text of the agreement see Gursharan S. Dhanjal, *Tarapur: The Politics of Nuclear Age* (Delhi: Rajdhani Book Service) pp. 111-123

[15] Dennis Kux, *Estranged Democracies: India and the U.S.* (New Delhi: Sage publications, 1993), p.357.

[16] For a summary of the Act see Gursharan S. Dhanjal, *Tarapur: The Politics of Nuclear Age* (Delhi: Rajdhani Book Service)

- IAEA safeguards of indefinite duration on US supply and as a continuing condition of US supply on all peaceful nuclear activities in non-nuclear weapons states
- Return to the US of nuclear materials if a recipient non nuclear weapons state detonates a nuclear explosive device, terminates a safeguards agreement or materially violates the cooperation agreement
- US consent to the retransfer and/or reprocessing of spent fuel irradiated in US supplied reactors
- US approval of facilities for storage of weapons material
- One or more of these requirements may be waived by the President if US non-proliferation objectives or national security would otherwise be jeopardized.

The issue was finally settled in 1982, when both India and the United States reached an agreement in which both the countries agreed that the US would not insist on safe guards, once the supply contracts expire in 1993 and secondly that France would replace the US as the fuel supplier.[17]

In the 1980s, nothing significant happened between India and the US over the nuclear relations, whereas during the same period, there was a lot of tensions between Pakistan and the US, especially over Chinese assistance and the nuclear capabilities of Pakistan. There were minor irritants during this period related to nuclear aspects. One such issue was the sale of Cray supercomputers by the US to India. Then under the leadership of

[17] George Perkovich, n.5, p.235.

Rajiv Gandhi, India was on a path to modernise itself technologically. Rajiv Gandhi sincerely believed that developing technological base of India is far more important than developing nuclear weapons programme. As seen in the previous chapter, Rajiv Gandhi, in his initial period was against India developing nuclear weapons. During his visit to the US in 1985, India showed interest in purchasing the Cray Super computer, to use it for meteorological purposes. The US aware of the fact that the computer could be used in nuclear weapons programme was willing to provide an inferior model – Cray XMP-14 instead of Cray XMP-24.[18]

The US and the "1990 Crisis"

It was in 1990, that the US was involved in a major trilateral effort with India and Pakistan, to diffuse the crisis that grew between India and Pakistan. In 1990, the tension between India and Pakistan over Kashmir increased, which led to the movement of troops along the Line of Control. As the crisis mounted, both the sides started massing troops along the border. It was during the building of this crisis, it was claimed that, "a heavily guarded truck convoy moved nuclear weapons from a suspected storage facility in Baluchistan to a nearby air base and the Pakistani Air Force armed with nuclear weapons and placed them on runway alert."[19] This, as the report itself claim, is the "folklore" related to the 1990 crisis, but has been recounted extensively by the journalist Seymour

[18] Dennis Kux, n.15, p.410.

Hersh in *The New Yorker*, in March 1993 titled "On the Nuclear Edge."[20] According to Hersh,

> The Pakistani Air Force, working closely with officials from Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, had stepped up its F-16 training to practice what seemed to be the dropping of a nuclear bomb.[21]

According to the same report

> Some time in the early spring of 1990, intelligence that was described as hundred percent reliable – perhaps an NSA intercept – reached Washington with the ominous news that General Beg had authorized the technicians at Kahuta to put together nuclear weapons.[22]

When the crisis escalated, the US decided to send a team in May 1990, to diffuse the situation. This team, led by Robert M Gates, the then Deputy Secretary of State, met the leadership on both the sides. Robert Gates met the President and the Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan Gates told the President,

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[19] Michael Krepon and Mishi Faruqee, "Conflict prevention and Confidence-Building Measures in South Asia: The 1990 Crisis," The Henry L Stimson Center, Occasional Paper No.17, April 1994. p.vii.

[20] The same article has been reproduced in six parts in *The Muslim*, between April 01 and 07 in 1993.

[21] Seymour M Hersh, "On the nuclear edge-III: 'You move up here – we're going to take out Delhi,' *The Muslim*, (Islamabad) 03 April, 1993.

[22] ibid.

> "...we are certain that it will not be guerilla wafare in Kashmir. It will be conventional warfare the length of the border. And you may find the Indian Navy in Karachi. You may find the Indian Air Force deep into Pakistan territory."

He also warned the President,

> "Yes, we will have to stop providing military support or any kind of support to whichever side might initiate things. And this of course will impact upon you more than it will impact upon the Indian."[23]

In the aftermath of the Gates mission to New Delhi and Islamabad, the crisis got subsided, as both sides decided to escalate. However, the issue assumed prominence, three years later, when Seymour Hersh came with his investigative journalistic article, which has been quoted above.

In the 1990s, the US efforts mainly focussed on making India a part of the global non-proliferation regime – that is making India to sign the NPT, CTBT and other related treaties.

[23] Ambassador Robert Oakely, who went along with Robert Gates to meet the President and the Chief of Army Staff, later explaining what actually happended in 1990 in a Stimson Center Confidence Building Meeting. Michael Krepon and Mishi Faruqee, Michael Krepon and Mishi Faruqee, eds., "Conflict prevention and Confidence-Building Measures in South Asia: The 1990 Crisis," The Henry L Stimson Center, Occasional Paper No.17, April 1994.p.06.

India's Nuclear Tests in 1998

The US Response

The US was totally not aware of India's Prime Minister Vajpayee's decision to go ahead for nuclear tests, as soon as he took power. Hence it was a complete shock for the US administration from its President Bill Clinton to the Central Intelligence Agency, (CIA) that forecasted India's efforts to undertake nuclear tests previously.

The initial remarks of the US towards India's nuclear tests were the outcome of these shocks. The immediate efforts to impose economic and military sanctions were also because of this shock factor. However, once the initial shock got subsided, the US looked at dealing with Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests more pragmatically than through the prism of sanctions. Thus the US reaction and response to the nuclear tests of India and Pakistan could be studied under two aspects. First, the initial reaction, which came more out of shock, anger and anxiety. The US government, in the aftermath of Indian nuclear tests imposed sanctions – both military and economic against India. The immediate objective of the US was to prevent any further testing by India; to force India to sign the CTBT and FMCT and to persuade India to cap its nuclear programme. Secondly, the pragmatic approach, that dawned later in the US strategic thinking, which resulted in engaging India, as the US government later realised, as shall be seen subsequently, that in order to achieve its objectives, it would be better if it has a leverage over India. Many of the reports produced inside the US, such as the Independent Task Force's report on "US

Policy Toward India and Pakistan,"[24] and Asia Society's report on "South Asia After the Tests: Where do we go from here,"[25] recommended the engagement strategy. The US, then started adopting a multi-pronged strategy involving sanctions and engagement.

Not only the Executive wing of the US headed by Clinton reacted sharply immediately after the tests, but also the Legislative wing of the US, including the Senators. Reacting to the India's nuclear tests, Clinton wanted to, "make it very. very clear that I am deeply disturbed" and the tests were "a terrible mistake."[26] Senator Jesse Helms, Chairman of Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called the Indian tests a major mistake and said, " I will never support the lifting of the Glenn Amendment's[27] sanctions on India unless they abandon all nuclear ambitions."[28]

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[24] The Independent Task Force was co-sponsored by the Brookings Institution and the Council on Foreign Relations. The objective of the Task Force was to consider the consequences of the nuclear tests in South Asia and to recommend what measures should the US adopt towards India and Pakistan.

[25] The Asia Society's report was the outcome of a workshop that was conducted in July 1998, with the support from Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership and Rockerfeller Foundation.

[26] "Clinton calls Tests a 'Terrible Mistake' and announces Sanctions against India," *New York Times*, 14 May 1998.

[27] The Glenn Amendment or the Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act of 1994 was passed with efforts taken by Senator John Glenn, who wanted to augment the then existing non-proliferation sanctions, by the US. (George Perkovich, n.5, p.343.)

According to the Glenn Amendment, "...no funds made available to carryout the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 or this Act may be used for the purpose of providing economic assistance, providing military assistance or grant military education and training...or extending military credit or making guarantees."

The US response since the May 1998 tests towards India is based on the following aspects.

a. Punitive, especially through, economic and military sanctions
b. Persuasive, especially in terms of making India to sign the NPT, CTBT and FMCT
c. Engaging, especially in terms strategic matters
d. Capping (and if possible Roll-backing) India's Nuclear Programme
e. Avoiding a Nuclear War in South Asia

The reports produced by these independent groups and the US governmental reaction were based on how the US perceived the May 1998 tests of India. Hence it is essential to analyse the US perception of the Pokharan II.

The Independent Task Force's report finds the following as the motivation for India's nuclear tests: Orientation of India's new government, the end of the Cold War and the dilution of New Delhi's ties with Moscow, concerns over China and its conventional and nuclear forces, and India's desire to be treated as a great power.[29]

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[28] Statements made by policy makers and analysts during May-June 1998 have been documented in "Chronology of Responses to Pokhran II," *Strategic Digest*, July 1998, vol.28, no.7, pp.1091-1101.

[29] Independent Task Force, "After the Tests: US Policy Toward India and Pakistan"

Secondly, there is a general belief inside the US in all circles that the nuclear tests of India and Pakistan have made South Asia a dangerous place.[30] The reason stated is the presence of nuclear weapons among two adversaries, who share a common border and who continue to have a unresolved territorial dispute between them and were involved in three wars (before the Tests). The Independent task Force presents the American perception very clearly

> India and Pakistan are neighbors, disputing both a border and the status of Kashmir. There is a history of armed conflict between them. Neither side possesses the accurate intelligence and warning systems or assured second strike capabilities that constitute the bedrock of deterrence. As a result, the possibility of a nuclear conflict in South Asia, whether by design or accident cannot be ruled out. No one should be sanguine about the prospects for regional stability.[31]

a. US Punitive Measures Against India

Immediately after the first series of nuclear tests conducted by India on 11 May 1998, Bill Clinton, the then US President imposed economic and military sanctions on India mandated by section 102 of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) on 13 May 1998.[32]

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[30] This view prevails invariably among every spectrum in the US. From the political leaders to academics, media and the common men, every one shares this view. See Independent Task Force, "After the Tests: US Policy Toward India and Pakistan"

[31] Independent Task Force, "After the Tests: US Policy Toward India and Pakistan"

[32] Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report 98-570, *India-Pakistan Nuclear Tests and US Response.*

Though at a later stage, the US realized the futility of sanctions, initially, it went ahead with its sanctions on economic and military fields. The sanctions affected the Indian Economy, Indian Defence, especially the Defence Research and developments in the field of Science and Technology.

There was serious pressure on the Clinton administration to impose strong sanction against India as a punitive measure. Gary Milholin, Director of Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control, was one of the strongest critic of India's test and a stronger opponent for sanctions. According to him the US should

> Enforce rigorous sanctions against India that would effect the country's technological lifeline to such an extent so that in a few years it would be reduced to the technological level of the erstwhile Warsaw pact countries.[33]

US Sanctions: Effects on Defence Research:

The following were some of the effects of the sanctions on the defence research:[34]

a. Scientists who were working on the Flight Control System for India's Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) were sent back to India.

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[33] "'US behind India's nuke, missile capability,'" *The Muslim*, (Islamabad) 12 June 1998.

[34] "Pokhran bomb Indo-US defence deals," *The Asian Age*, (Calcutta) 25 June 1998.

b. A deal to finalise spare parts of 155 mm artillery shells (which were to replace Bofors shells) were cancelled.

c. Supply of Pilotless Target Aircraft that would enhance the capability of India's indigenous *Lakshya* was stopped.

d. Chips and Transistors meant for Bharat Heavy Electronics were stopped.

US Economic Sanctions:

In June 1998, the US announced additional sanctions, especially on economic sphere, that included $ 21 million in economic development assistance and housing guarantee and six million dollars in green house programme. Announcing these economic sanctions, Strobe Talbott, the then Deputy Secretary of State, stated that these sanctions were not to hurt the people of India (and Pakistan) but to show the disappointment of the US government.[35]

The economic sanctions included the following:[36]

a. Postponement of $1.17 billion in international lending to India

b. Termination of new commitments of US government's credits and credit guarantees for export financing. investment guarantees and agricultural credits.

[35] "Softer US sanctions against Pakistan," *The Dawn*, (Islamabad)19 June 1998.

[36] George Perkovich, n.5, pp.436-38.

However, the economic sanctions, though affected India and Pakistan, it did not benefit the US. The US executive branch realised that, the economic sanction would in effect reduce the US leverage over India and Pakistan, hence decided to lift the sanctions in parts. The executive branch, led by the President Bill Clinton, requested the Congress to lift some of the sanctions and the Congress gave him the authority to lift some of the sanctions under the Brownback Amendment.[37] Under this, Bill Clinton restored the programmes of Export-Import bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation and Trade Developemnt Agency.[38]

b. US Measures to Engage in India

The US decided to engage India and Pakistan, at a later stage, once it realised that punitive measure would only alienate the US, which would adversely affect the US strategic interest. Even while imposing sanctions, the US was well aware that sanctions would back fire, if extended too much. Karl Inderfurth, the then US Assistant Secretary for State said, "We do not wish to make international pariahs out of either India or

[37] The Brownback Amendment introduced in the in the US House in September 1998 was passed in October beginning. It provided waiver authority to the US President for one year. ("One year waiver for Pakistan, India okayed," *The Dawn*, (Islamabad)30 September 1998; "Confusion in US over sanctions removal," *The Dawn*, (Islamabad) 03 October 1998.)

[38] George Perkovich, n.5, p.437.

Pakistan. We believe the purpose of these sanctions should be to influence behavior, not to punish simply for the sake of punishment."[39]

Why did the US decide to engage India (and Pakistan), especially after imposing sanctions? Many factors could be cited, why the US decided to engage India rather than enforcing bilateral and multi-lateral sanctions.

First was the futility of sanctions. There were voices from earlier US administrations advising to exercise restraint on sanctions, as it may not serve the US purpose. There was an increased call from them to understand the security interests of India and Pakistan. Henry Kissinger wrote, "While Clinton has every reason to pursue the objectives he is seeking, the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan are equally reasonable in pursuing their own nuclear objectives. Therefore American policy should move from treating India and Pakistan as the problem to incorporating them into the solution as partners in a non-proliferation regime and in easing tensions in South Asia."[40]

Besides affecting the economic interests of the US in India and Pakistan, it realised later that "broad economic sanctions for an indefinite period as called by the Symington,

[39] "US wont press other nuclear powers to impose curbs: Inderfurth," *The Times of India*, (New Delhi) 05 June 1998.

[40] Henry Kissinger, "Sanctions is not the answer," *The Dawn*, (Islamabad)08 June 1998.

Pressler and Glenn amendments – is almost certain to make the challenge of promoting the full range of American interests more difficult."[41]

The second reason was the strong support for the nuclear weapons inside Pakistan and India, and the decision to go ahead with their nuclear programme despite sanctions. Initially the US thought that through sanctions, it would be able to cap the nuclear programmes of India and Pakistan and also make to sign non-proliferation treaties including the CTBT and FMCT. However, India then seemed prepared to face the sanctions economically and politically.

On the political front, by July 1998, it was clear to the US, that India was ready to face whatever sanctions, be economic or political or diplomatic. Vajpayee, the Prime Minister of India announced in July 1998, that India would not sign the CTBT and that India would continue its nuclear programme and use the experience of the scientists in research and development of nuclear technology.[42] Murli Manohar Joshi, the Union Minister for Science and Technology in July 1998 announced that, the US sanctions would have no impact on Indian space programme and also announced that since the space programme was contributing to communications, security and development, the government had decided to increase its budget.[43] Since the sanctions – economic, military and

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[41] Independent Task Force, "After the Tests: US Policy Toward India and Pakistan"

[42] "India will not reverse n-programme: PM," *The Hindu*, (Chennai) 13 July 1998.

[43] "Sanctions will not affect space programme," *The Hindu*, (Chennai) 30 July 1998.

technological, failed to persuade India from rolling back or capping its nuclear programme, the best policy option for the US was then to engage India in a strategic dialogue, through which India could be pressurised.

The third factor, was the lack of total support for economic sanctions all over the world. The US in the aftermath of the tests believed the whole world would be united in imposing sanctions against India, which did not happen. According to Perkovich, "much of the world did not join the United States in imposing economic sanctions."[44] Besides, the lack of adequate economic sanctions, the US also realised, not all the other nuclear states are willing to share the same concerns as that of the US. In October 1998, at the end of the first round of strategic dialogue with France, Gerard Errera, special emissary of Jacques Chirac, the French President, told that France was against the policy of sanctions, as it was not the right approach and also told that France would not link the enlargement of Security Council with nuclear issue, meaning, it had no problem in dealing with nuclear India.[45]

Hence the US decided to engage India since July 1998. This engagement took place at various levels. One of the measures that the US took very early was to announce that it would nor persuade other major nuclear powers to impose sanctions on India and

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[44] George Perkovich, n.5,, p.435.

[45] "France ready to accept nuclear India," *The Hindu*, (Chennai) 30 October 1998.

Pakistan.[46] The second major measure in engaging India was the strategic dialogue between India led by Jaswant Singh and Strobe Talbott that took place on 12 June 1998 in Washington. Ever since, both met continuously at various places.

The passing of Brownback amendment was another instrument of engagement by the US. As seen earlier in this chapter, this amendment gave the US President a waiver authority for one year. But the US, as stated by the State Department, unless India and Pakistan showed further progress on non-proliferation issues, the sanctions would not be removed or relaxed.[47] The subsequent dialogue between the US and India would prove, how the US used this amendment to pressurise India and Pakistan, to achieve its non-proliferation objectives. The Brownback amendment and the one year waiver was the policy of the US involving Carrot and Stick approach. By providing one year waiver, the US made that sure it was engaged in a dialogue with India and Pakistan and had a leverage too over the talks.

The terrorist attack on the US on September 11, 2001, resulted in US lifting sanctions imposed on India and Pakistan after their nuclear tests. George Bush, the President of the

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[46] "US wont press other nuclear powers to impose curbs: Inderfurth.", *The Times of India*, (New Delhi) 05 June 1998

[47] "One year waiver for Pakistan, India okayed," *The Dawn*, (Islamabad) 30 September 1998.

US removed these sanctions on India and Pakistan, as "maintaining embargoes would not be in the national security interests of the US."[48]

There was not much enthusiasm in India on the removal of sanctions, as it did not mean much, as most of the sanctions, other than dual use of technology and international lending had been lifted by Clinton administration already. Yashwant Sinha, the Union Finance Minister commenting on the sanctions told that it was not "development of earth-shaking importance...it is a minor issue as far as the Indian economy is considered because sanctions have spent themselves out."[49]

[48] "India doesn't stand to gain too much," *The Times of India*, (New Delhi) 24 September 2001.

[49] "India doesn't stand to gain too much," *The Times of India*, (New Delhi) 24 September 2001.

Chapter IV

The US Response to Chagai Tests

The US Response to Chagai Tests

Unlike the US response to India's nuclear programme. which followed an uni-linear path, in terms of non-proliferation, the US response to Pakistan's nuclear programme has always been based on other US security interests either in Pakistan or in the region. That is why, for an outsider and a Pakistani the US nuclear interests in Pakistan seem to be ambiguous and at times even bogus. For an outsider, the US non-proliferation policy towards Pakistan seemed to be wavering, as the US at times ignored Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme and reluctant to act against China-Pakistan nuclear and missile collaboration, on the other hand, passing a number of amendments such as Glenn, Symington and Pressler, which aimed mainly to curb Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme.

The reason for this difference in approach is for the United States, nuclear non-proliferation has always been a secondary interest, when compared to other interest in Pakistan. Whenever the other interest subsided, the non-proliferation interest assumed primary importance. A closer look into US nuclear policy towards Pakistan would reveal the American dilemma. This analysis is essential to understand the US response to Pakistan's nuclear tests in May 1998 and the developments afterwards.

The US-Pak Nuclear Relations since the 1970s

Pakistan's nuclear programme actually started with the US assistance in the mid 1950s, especially after the US President Eisenhower announced the Atoms for Peace proposals, at the UN in September 1954.[1] The US under this programme had a series of exhibitions all over Pakistan explaining the virtues of nuclear energy as an answer to the search for energy, food and medical treatment.[2]

The US concern towards Pakistan's nuclear programme started after 1975-76. Till 1975, the US did not give any special emphasis, as could be seen from a report titled "Pakistan and the Non Proliferation Issue" prepared by the US Department of State in 1975. However, the US was aware of Pakistan's capabilities, which also could be seen from the same report. According to it, "Pakistan's nuclear industry is not particularly worrisome now, but its potential for expansion and the intentions of the Pakistani government once it achieves a significant capacity are causes for concern...assuming nationally produced plutonium is not supplemented by direct purchase of the materials from other sources, the earliest the Pakistanis are likely to be able to produce a weapon would be 1980."[3]

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[1] Ashok Kapur, *Pakistan's Nuclear Development*, (London: Croomhelm, 1987) p.35.

[2] Shirin Tahir-Kheli, "Pakistan's Nuclear Option and US Policy," *Orbis*, Summer 1978, vol.22, no.2, p.358.

[3] "Pakistan and the Non-Proliferation Issue", US Department of State Background paper http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB6/ipn20_2.htm.

Ever since 1975, till the end of 2001, the US non-proliferation objectives in Pakistan could be seen in two different frame-works. The first frame work in which, the US was serious regarding its non-proliferation objectives and took active measures to curb nuclear and missile proliferation in Pakistan. Under this frame-work, the US used economic and military sanctions as a tool in achieving US objectives. Also the US used its diplomatic pressure on Pakistan and those countries which were seen assisting Pakistan directly or indirectly in its nuclear and missile programme.

The second frame-work involved a US policy and programme, in which the non-proliferation objectives were made secondary to other security interests of the United States. During this period, the US used economic and military aid and assistance to Pakistan as a tool in achieving its security interests. Also during this period, despite reports from its own intelligence community and from global pressure, the US ignored Pakistan's nuclear and missile proliferation. The US also ignored outside support to Pakistan's nuclear and missile programme during this phase.

These two phases of US non-proliferation objectives always coincided with larger US security interests either directly in Pakistan or in the region, in which Pakistan was seen as an ally. Since 1975, these two phases occurred simultaneously. The US was serious with its non-proliferation policy during 1975-79; later during 1989-95 and during 1998-September 2001. During this period, as shall be seen subsequently, there none of the American security interests were at stake. The US totally kept its non-proliferation

objectives during 1980-89; 95-98 and since 2001. This phase also coincide with American interests in Afghanistan, for different reasons.

Diffusing the Islamic Bomb

US Non-Proliferation Objectives during 1976-79 and since 1990

As seen earlier, 1975 marked a turning point in US-Pakistan nuclear relations. By then, Bhutto was seen seriously engaged in the pursuit of Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme. As seen in the previous chapters, though Bhutto began the process immediately after he becoming the Prime Minister of Pakistan, 1975 witnessed many concrete steps taken in that effort.

In 1976, Bhutto established the nuclear weapons programme headed by A.Q.Khan, was established independently of the PAEC.[4] According to Maulana K Niazi, one of the Cabinet members of Bhutto's government, A.Q. Khan promised the Prime Minister of making Pakistan an atomic power in seven years. [5] Kahuta Research laboratories came into being in 1976 started working serious on uranium enrichment, with financial and administrative independence.[6]

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[4] Samina Ahmed, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapon's Program: Turning Points and Nuclear Choices," *International Security*, Spring 1999, vol.23, no.4, p.181.

[5] Maulana K Niazi, "Unknown facts about the Reprocessing Plant," reproduced in *Strategic Digest*, May 1987, p.886

[6] ibid, p.886.

The problem between Pakistan and the US started in 1976 over Pakistan's decision to purchase a nuclear power reactor from France. The US viewed the purchase of this nuclear reactor as a part of Pakistan's desire to make nuclear weapons.[7] The US believed that Pakistan then had only one nuclear reactor at Karachi, Karachi Nuclear Power Plant (KANUPP)[8] and it would take at least twenty to twenty five nuclear power stations to justify Pakistan's claim for commercial reprocessing. Whereas Pakistan argued that it has an elaborate plan to acquire more than twenty nuclear reactors. Henry Kissinger tried to persuade Pakistan from not pursuing the power plant and promised that US would supply 110 A-7 attack bombers.[9]

During this period, the Congress adopted amendments proposed by Senators John Glenn and Stuart Symington, to sections 669 and 670 of the Foreign Assistance Act, which came to be known as Glenn-Symington amendments.

Jimmy Carter who became the President in 1976, was serious with his non-proliferation objectives. The Nuclear Non Proliferation Act (NNPA) was passed by the US Congress, in 1978, whose main provision prohibits the export of "source material, special nuclear

[7] Shirin Tahir-Kheli, n.2, p.359.

[8] Karachi Nuclear Power Plant (KANUPP) was a heavy water moderated, heavy water cooled reactor, launched in 1965 with the assistance from Canada, which went critical in 1971.

[9] Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies*, (Washington D.C: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001), p.222.

material, production or utilization facilities and any sensitive nuclear technology" to any country that does not maintain IAEA safeguards on all peaceful nuclear activities within its jurisdiction.[10]

Two events took place during Carter's period, despite which the non-proliferation policy of the US towards Pakistan under went a change and became secondary. First was the coup in Pakistan, which witnessed Zia-ul-Haq overthrowing Bhutto and establishing a military rule. Second event took place in neighboring Afghanistan towards the end 1979, when the Soviet troops entered Afghanistan, which made the US non-proliferation objectives in Pakistan secondary.

Zia continued the nuclear policy of Bhutto and continued with the country's nuclear weapons programme, which resulted in the US suspending its economic assistance programme.[11] However, the subsequent events made the US to turn a blind eye to Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme in the 1980s.

Turning the Other Side

The US Nuclear Reticence 1980-89

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[10] Section 128 of the *Atomic Energy Act* as amended by the NNPA, US Code, vol.42, sec 2157 (1997) quoted in George Perkovich, p.206.

[11] Dennis Kux, n.9, p.235.

The US non-proliferation objectives however became secondary after the Soviet troops entered Afghanistan by the end of 1979. The US knew very well regarding the Pakistani nuclear weapons programme, when it was aiding the Afghan *mujahideens* and providing military assistance to Pakistan.

The US Department of State briefing in 1983 stated that "there is unambiguous evidence that Pakistan is actively pursuing a nuclear weapons development programme. Pakistan's near term goal evidently is to have a nuclear test capability, enabling it to explode a nuclear device."[12]

Besides underlining the objectives, intentions and capabilities of Pakistan's nuclear programme, the briefing also mentioned, "that China has provided assistance to Pakistan's programme to develop a nuclear weapons capability. Over the past several years, China and Pakistan have maintained contacts in the nuclear field."[13]

Despite reports from its own intelligence agencies and criticisms from the US Congress, the Executive branch refused to focus its attention on Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, as it had other interests at stake. During this period, in 1984, Senator Alan Cranston condemned the US Stated Department for, "obscuring, withholding or

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[12] "The Pakistani Nuclear Program", US Department of State Briefing paper, June 23, 1983. "Pakistan and the Non-Proliferation Issue", US Department of State Background paper http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB6/ipn22_1.htm.

[13] ibid.

downright misrepresenting the facts," regarding the Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, which was capable of producing, "several nuclear weapons per year."[14] Facing sever criticism from its own legislature, the White House decided to find a middle path, which resulted in the passage of the Pressler Amendment.

Though the Pressler amendment was used to bail out Pakistan during 1985-89, after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the US imposed sanctions under the same.

1998 Tests

The US Response

The US response towards Pakistan is based on the same aspects as that of India. The US response vis-à-vis Pakistan after its nuclear tests and immediately before the nuclear tests of Pakistan can be studied under the following:

a. Preventing the Nuclear Test by Pakistan
b. Economic and Military Sanctions against Pakistan
c. Engaging Pakistan
d. American interests in Afghanistan in post September 2001 and the Removal of Sanctions.

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[14] "Cranston says Pakistan can make A-Bomb," *New York Times*, 21 June 1984, quoted in Dennis Kux, n.9, p.275.

Since many of the general US efforts and response to the 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, has already been discussed in the previous chapter, this chapter would focus exclusively on the above mentioned issues.

a. US attempts to Prevent Pakistan from Nuclear Testing

The US was aware of Pakistan's intention to go ahead with its nuclear tests, hence tried to pressurise the then Sharif government from not testing. According to Mushahid Hussain, the then Information Minister, Clinton offered five billion dollars if it refrained from carrying out nuclear tests.[15] Clinton sent Strobe Talbott, the Deputy Secretary of State to Pakistan, who, "dangled delivery of the F-16s and resumption of economic and military aid (and) argued Pakistan would gain the moral high ground internationally by not testing – thereby focusing global disapproval on India."[16] Mushahid Hussain, confirming this, also stated, "In order to convince Pakistan to renounce its tests, President Clinton personally committed to the Prime Minister to wipe out Pakistan's debts to the United States and to cancel the law introduced several years ago imposing sanctions against Pakistan because of its nuclear programme."[17] Clinton also promised the halted F-16 fighter planes ordered by Pakistan.[18]

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[15] "Clinton offered Pakistan $5b to forgo N Tests," *The Independent*, 28 June 1998.

[16] Dennis Kux, n.9, pp.344-45.

[17] "Clinton offered Pakistan $5b to forgo N Tests," n.15, 28 June 1998

[18] ibid.

The US carrot extended to Pakistan thus had three incentives – Economic Aid, Removal of Sanctions and Military Aid and Assistance. Besides, the US President himself spoke to Nawaz Sharif four times by telephone.[19]

b. Economic and Military Sanctions Against Pakistan

The 1998 tests of Pakistan brought new sanctions into force by the US. It should be remembered, that Pakistan then was facing sanctions from the US under Pressler, Symington and Glenn amendments.

Besides the existing sanctions, the US announced further sanctions on the economic field. In June 1998, the US halted all new commitments of US government credits and credit guarantees by Export Import Bank (EXIM), Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and Commodities Credit Corporation (CCC).[20] The US also postponed the release of 26 million dollars of which $ 25 million was to be in IMF assistance.[21]

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[19] Dennis Kux, n.9, p.345.

[20] "Softer US sanctions against Pakistan," *The Dawn*, (Islamabad) 19 June 1998.

[21] ibid.

In October 1999, after the military coup against Nawaz Sharif government resulted in imposing further "democratic" sanctions by the US. However, these sanctions were removed slowly before the terrorist attack on the US in September 2001, and completely after it. The reasons for the removal of these sanctions shall be discussed subsequently.

c. Efforts to Engage Pakistan

As seen in the previous chapter, the US realised at a later stage, engagement would prove to be more influential regarding the nuclear programme of Pakistan than outright sanctions.

One another reason for the US to engage Pakistan was the fear that the sanctions may result in Pakistan exporting nuclear technology. The US was extremely concerned because of its fear over, what is called as the "Islamic Bomb." The US apprehension was that, Pakistan, the nuclear technology would be used to aid a fellow Muslim country, as there have been a number of Muslim countries from Libya to Iran, who would like to acquire nuclear weapons. The US also had its own reason to be concerned, especially after certain reports appeared in the Pakistani press. These reports – both Editorials and Opinion articles asked for the support of Islamic world, in helping Pakistan. One of the article titled, "Islamic World must support its bomb," argues that the Gulf Cooperation Council members should help

> Pakistan, "a poor but *proud nation of Mussalmans* (which) has refused to be either bought or intimidated...The cause of the Arabs has always been close to the heart of people of Pakistan and their government irrespective of political divide. In this hour of dire need, the people of Pakistan look to their GCC brothers not for any rewards, but for genuine assistance"[22] (Emphasis added)

Not only there was an attempt to gain the support of Muslim countries to assist Pakistan, but there was also a systematic effort on the part of writers in Pakistan to portray Pakistan's bomb as an "Islamic Bomb" which could protect the Muslim nations against any nuclear attack from Israel. Another article, "Islamic Bomb – Myth turns into reality," claimed that

> The explosion has brought a Muslim Country – Pakistan in the group of nuclear nations...The so-called 'Islamic Bomb,' which is India specific, it now has new strategic dimensions – it will serve as an effective dual deterrence. *The Ghauri missile has in its range all the important military and nuclear installations of India, and with an added range could also reach Tel Aviv.*" [23](Emphasis added)

Immediately after Pakistan's nuclear tests, Kamal Kharrazai, Foreign Minister of Iran, claimed that Pakistan's nuclear capability would *serve as a deterrent to Israel* and made

[22] "Islamic World must support its bomb," *The Muslim*, (Islamabad), 6 June 1998.

it very clear that Iran would not endorse international sanctions against Pakistan.[24] King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, congratulating Pakistan for acquiring nuclear capability said, "these tests (of Pakistan) have *strengthened the defence of the Islamic world.*"[25] (Emphasis added)

While comparing the profits and losses of Pakistan's claim, it was written, "one aspect in which substantive change may have occurred in Pakistan's favor is its standing in the Middle East. The region's governments and people are living under the frightening shadow of Israel's nuclear arms."[26]

The fear among the Americans is well explained as follows: "Pakistani leaders are right now going to the Islamic world with a bowl in their hand and a bomb in their pocket. But if the bowl is not sufficiently filled, they may soon go out with the bomb in one hand and the bowl in the other."[27]

The second reason for the US decision to engage Pakistan stemmed out from the fact that was overwhelming support inside Pakistan for the nuclear tests. According to a survey conducted by the Pakistan Institute for Public Opinion, 97 percent of the respondents

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[23] "Islamic Bomb – Myth turns into reality," *The Muslim*, (Islamabad), 11 June 1998

[24] "Iran backs Pakistan on nuclear issue," *The Dawn*, (Karachi), 02 June 1998.

[25] "Fahd says sanctions unjust," *The Dawn*, (Karachi), 09 June 1998.

[26] Eqbal Ahmad, "Nuclear gains and the losses," *The Dawn*, (Karachi), 14 June 1998

favored Pakistan's tests.[28] It was also seen in the previous chapter that, there existed popular support for Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, even before the test. According to a survey conducted in 1996 for the Joan B Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at Notre Dame and the Fourth Freedom Forum during 1996, 61 percent supported Pakistan's policy then of keeping the nuclear option open; 32 percent supported acquisition of nuclear weapons and only six percent favored renunciation of nuclear weapons.[29]

The popular support for nuclear weapons of Pakistan meant that there would be no popular outrage against the Pakistani government for conducting the tests and also popular support for Pakistan's stand not to sign the CTBT, NPT and the FMCT. The US realised that since there was popular support for the government inside Pakistan, it would be under no pressure to sign those treaties, despite facing economic pressure.

Besides, the sanctions have made the US very unpopular inside Pakistan. One of the opinion articles appeared in *The Muslim* noted

> If Pakistan insists on facing India with all its might and nuclear dictates, it should not be difficult for Islamabad to undo the US influence in the region and to follow a policy that goes at complete variance with the US

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[27] "Sanctions may backfire, fears Albright," *The Dawn*, (Islamabad)16 June 1998.

[28] Dennis Kux, n.9, p.346.

[29] Samina Ahmed and David Cortright, *Pakistan's Nuclear Choices*, August 1996, p.5.

> national interest regionally, Islamically and globally. If Pakistan is hit by the United States, it can retaliate by creating a parallel economy, promoting anti-Islamism and encourage all forms of Jihad, genuine or otherwise.[30]

The third reason for the US to engage Pakistan and lifting sanctions partially was the commercial interests of the US in Pakistan. The sanctions were to cost the US farmers a possible sale of 3,50,000 tons of wheat.[31] This was one of the main reasons for exempting agricultural credits in the Brownback amendment.

When the US realised that Pakistan cannot be forced to roll back its nuclear programme and with the threat from Pakistan exporting its nuclear technology, especially to the Muslim countries, the US, like in the case of India, decided to engage Pakistan.

This engagement as seen in the previous chapter with India, took place at two levels. First at political level, in which Pakistan was involved in a strategic dialogue with the US. The second at economic level, in which the US showed its willingness to lift some of the sanctions, provided that there is a significant movement in the first.

By July 1998, there were three rounds of talks between Pakistan and the US, in which issues such as regional security, global security, CTBT and situation in Kashmir were

[30] Dr. Jassim Taqui, "US sanctions unjustified," *The Muslim*, 14 July 1998.

discussed.[32] During these talks in July 1998, the US asked Pakistan to sign the CTBT, not to deploy nuclear weapons and not to export nuclear technology. From Pakistan's side, it wanted the US to reinforce Pakistan's conventional capacity; to exempt Pakistan's current nuclear capability from the CTBT purview and to bail out on the economic front.[33]

When Nawaz Sharif visited the US to attend the UN General Assembly meeting in December 1998, as a part of this engagement process, the American President met the Pakistani Prime Minister. During this meeting, the US resolved the F-16 crisis[34] with Pakistan, after prolonging the case for more than one decade. As a result of it, Pakistan received $ 324.6 million back from the US and the reaming amount was to be adjusted against wheat purchases from the US.[35]

The visit of Bill Clinton, though postponed twice, was also a part of the US engagement strategy. Clinton visited Pakistan despite it being ruled by a military regime, as he

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[31] Dennis Kux, n.9, p.347.

[32] "Pakistan links CTBT with security concerns," *The Muslim*, (Islamabad) 24 July 1998.

[33] "Challenges and options," *The Dawn*, (Islamabad) 25 July 1998.

[34] Pakistan paid $ 658 million during Zia's period to the US for the purchase of 28 F-16 fighter aircrafts. The US under the Pressler amendment refused to supply the aircrafts and also refused to return the money that they have received from Pakistan.

[35] "Pak receives $ 324.6 m from US as payment for F-16s," *The Hindu*, (Chennai) 30 December 1998; "Pak – F-16s settled amicably: Sharif," *The Hindu*, (Chennai) 20 December 1998.

believed that engagement is a better policy than estrangement, especially when Pakistan is in possession of nuclear weapons.

Just before the terrorist attacks on the US on 11 September 2001, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in its semi annual report to the Congress had reported that China had supplied missile related technology to Pakistan. According to the report, during July-December 2000, "Chinese entities provided Pakistan with missile related technical assistance. Pakistan has been moving towards domestic serial production of solid propellant (short range missiles) with Chinese help."[36] The US had decided to impose sanctions against Chinese[37] and a Pakistani entity for their partnership over missile proliferation. The sanctions were imposed against the China Metallurgical Equipment Corp and the National Development Complex of Pakistan.[38] The sanctions were imposed on thee two firms as they were involved in the transfer of MTCR category 2 items.[39]

However, as seen in the previous chapter, the terrorist attack on the US on September 2001, resulted in the US lifting the sanctions that it had imposed on India and Pakistan.

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[36] "China supplied missile technology to Pak: CIA," *The Hindu*, (Chennai) 09 September 2001.

[37] The US during Bill Clinton's period had signed an agreement with China in November 2000, according to which China had promised the US that it would stop proliferation of missile and nuclear technology.

[38] "Fresh sanctions against China and Pak." *The Times of India*, (New Delhi) 02 September 2001.

[39] "New curbs unwarranted, unjustified says Pakistan," *The Times of India*, (New Delhi) 03 September 2001.

However, more than India, Pakistan had benefited in the US lifting the sanctions. Unlike the sanctions on India, there were additional US sanctions on Pakistan for the nuclear and missile partnership between Pakistan and China and also those sanctions that the US had imposed on the military regime of Pakistan, when it took over power in October 1999.

Conclusion

Conclusion

The nuclear programme of India and Pakistan, when began aimed at utlising nuclear power for peaceful purposes. But events that took place in the 1960s and 70s both inside and outside the region, created an impact on the nuclear policy and the programmes of both India and Pakistan.

The nuclear tests conducted by China in 1964 marked the turning point in India's nuclear programme. However, India did not initiate a nuclear weapons programme after the Chinese tests. India looked for a nuclear guarantee, from the nuclear powers against any possible nuclear attack from China. When India could not receive any such guarantee, the nuclear programme under Indira Gandhi was aimed to meet any challenge. In 1974 India conducted its first nuclear test at Pokharan.

The Pokharan nuclear test conducted by India and the earlier defeat in the Indo-Pak war which resulted in the break up of Pakistan, resulted in Pakistan pursuing a serious nuclear weapons programme since the 1970s. In 1976, Bhutto signed an agreement with China, which started China-Pakistan cooperation in missile and nuclear weapons technology.

Both India and Pakistan have been pursuing their Nuclear programme in the 198o, as a result of which, both the countries were said to have possess crude nuclear weapons by the beginning of 1990s.

India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in May 1998. There were a number of imperatives for the Indian nuclear tests in 1998.

First, the indefinite extension of the NPT and the failure of the CTBT to address India's concerns played a significant role in the India's government's decision to undertake nuclear tests in May 1998. Both the treaties – NPT and CTBT do not meet the concerns of India. India, from the beginning has been arguing for nuclear free world, in which there would be no nuclear threat for India but also for the entire humanity. The indefinite extension of the NPT and the narrow focus of the CTBT mean that the nuclear weapons would not be abolished and are to stay. What these treaties aim are to perpetuate the nuclear hegemony of the five nuclear weapons states over the rest of non-nuclear states, which India rightly considers as "nuclear apartheid."

Of the five nuclear states, China, has unresolved boundary dispute with India and actively aiding Pakistan over nuclear and missile technology. The US, another nuclear state, has never been objective in its nuclear policy vis-à-vis Pakistan and India, and has always been guided by its own national interests. India's problems with two nuclear powers and

the failure of the two above-mentioned treaties to assuage India's nuclear concerns resulted in India conducting nuclear tests to strengthen its nuclear capabilities.

Secondly, the development of nuclear weapons capability by Pakistan and the continued China-Pakistan nuclear and missile cooperation and their implications for India's security was a major factor in India's 1998 tests. Since the mid 1970s, Pakistan has been vigorously pursuing a nuclear weapons programme, directly against India. The nuclear weapons programme of Pakistan had succeeded, as seen in the previous chapters to produce enough uranium to have a nuclear arsenal, (the size not known), sufficient enough to attack India. Besides, Pakistan has also succeeded in its missile programme, whether original or borrowed in manufacturing short-range missiles (Hatf series) and long range missiles (Ghauri missiles) and testing them. These missiles are capable of carrying a nuclear warhead and are capable of attacking most of the cities in India.

The maturation of Pakistan's nuclear and missile programme was the second major factor in India deciding to strengthen its own nuclear weapons programme, for which the nuclear tests were conducted.

Thirdly, the Chinese missile and nuclear capabilities and the unresolved boundary dispute form the third factor that shaped India's nuclear tests. India's nuclear programme was greatly shaped by the India-China War of 1962 and the 1964 Chinese nuclear tests. Ever

since, China had always been a main factor in India's security calculus, which also got reflected in its nuclear weapons programme. The failure of India to get any assurances in case of a nuclear attack from China, also was a factor. However, though these factors existed for the last three or more decades, what exacerbated the Chinese threat was the nuclear and missile cooperation between China and Pakistan.

China-Pakistan nuclear cooperation, which started in 1976, grew rapidly in the 1980s and strengthened in the1990s. India believes the success that Pakistan had achieved in its nuclear and missile programme would not have happened without active assistance from China. The immediate reason, which shaped the China-Pak factor in its security calculus was the Ghauri missile, which India believes, Pakistan received from China. The range of Ghauri missile and its capability mainly led to the nuclear tests of India.

The objectives and motivations of Pakistan's nuclear tests are as also many. First, India's nuclear tests of May 1998 were the main factor for Pakistan to conduct the nuclear test in the same month. As analysed in the previous chapters. the main reason for Pakistan to under take nuclear tests in May 1998 was the nuclear tests conducted by India, earlier during the same month. Pakistan's nuclear programme. from the beginning has been India specific, so were it nuclear policy.

Despite pressure from external forces, especially the US. Pakistan then led by Nawaz Shariff decided to under take nuclear tests, due to the pressure from inside. Majority of

the population wanted Pakistan to test and also build credible nuclear weapons against India to protect its security. Secondly, the popular pressure inside Pakistan besides the security reasons factored a great role in Pakistan's tests.

Thirdly, the continuing tensions between India and Pakistan, especially the break up of Pakistan in 1971 after its war with India and India's nuclear test of 1974 were the factors, that led Pakistan to develop a strong nuclear weapons programme, which resulted in testing in 1998. Three factors mainly contributed in Pakistan's decision to have a nuclear weapons programme. First, the Indo-Pak war and the break up of Pakistan. Pakistan believed and continues to believe that India's main objective is to de-stablise Pakistan, or such an idea suited the bureaucratic-military hold over Pakistani polity. The 1974 nuclear test by India only added this anxiety among the common population and the rulers – whether democratic or otherwise, exploited this anti-Indian feeling to develop a powerful nuclear weapons programme for Pakistan.

Besides, the doubtful US support for Pakistan during critical period also factored/factors in Pakistan's security calculus. The US relations and support to Pakistan has always been guided by narrow American security interests, as a result, the US involvement or non-involvement worked against Pakistan's security perceptions, as could be seen from US sanctions during and after the 1965 War, the controversy over French nuclear reactor to Pakistan and the leading amendments especially, the Pressler amendment. The selective

use of Pressler amendment by the US was also a factor in Pakistan's security frame-work, which include its nuclear weapons programme.

The US response to the nuclear tests of India and Pakistan were based on the following. Firstly, in the immediate aftermath, the US imposed economic and military sanctions on India and Pakistan, with the belief that economic pressure would result in both the countries signing the CTBT and rolling back their nuclear weapons programme. The immediate response of the US was to impose economic and military sanctions on both India and Pakistan. A series of sanctions were imposed at bilateral level and also efforts were made at multi lateral level to impose sanctions on both the countries. Other countries, mainly Japan and the UK also imposed sanctions on India and Pakistan. The P-5 countries condemned the attack, the IMF and the World Bank were used as tools to achieve the US sanctions objectives.

The objectives of the sanctions are three folds. First, as a punishment, for not listening to the US and not adhering to its non-proliferation objectives. Second, the US wanted to use these sanctions to cap, rollback and eliminate nuclear weapons and the programmes in India and Pakistan. Third, the US wanted both India and Pakistan to sign the NPT and the CTBT and effectively participate in the FMCT negotiations.

However, these sanctions efforts did not produce the desired results, for many reasons. First was the resolve of both the government not to yield to the sanctions threat.

Secondly, there was a popular a support for the government's policy in both the countries and the US efforts were seen as against their sovereign rights. Third, there was no unanimity in the sanctions among the P-5 countries. China, Russia and France, three nuclear states have their own reasons not to support such a sanction regime against India and Pakistan.

When the sanctions strategy did not work, the US strategy engaging India and Pakistan, in which it used the lifting of sanctions as a tool to achieve its nuclear objectives in India and Pakistan. This engagement process was undertaken at three levels. First, the US engaged both India and Pakistan, politically in a strategic dialogue. Talbott, under the Clinton administration was leading the strategic dialogue separately with both the countries. Secondly, the US continued its pressure on Pakistan and India to sign the CTBT and rollback their nuclear programme. Thirdly, the sanctions were selectively lifted as a part of the engagement strategy, so that the US continues to have leverage over both the countries.

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