CHAPTER - 3

INDIA’S NUCLEAR WEAPON OPTION AND NUCLEAR DOCTRINE

The Government of India’s attitude to whether India should have a nuclear bomb or not, and its overall approach to nuclear weapon proliferation had been dominated by the views of India’s first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. As early as in 1946 he said at a public meeting in Bombay that the bomb was to him a ‘symbol of evil’. In 1957, during a visit to Japan and standing in front of the peace memorial, Nehru told the cheering Japanese people: “The world must choose between the path of violence symbolized by the atom bomb and the path of peace symbolized by the Buddha”.¹

Along with being Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Nehru assumed charge of the Department of Atomic Energy which was created as a separate department in 1954. He held all the three portfolios till his death in 1964. During all these years, from the available platforms both national and international, he carried on his crusade against nuclear weapons, and also made it clear that India herself had nothing to do with nuclear weapons and that atomic energy would be developed for peaceful purposes. ‘Ban the bomb’ became a creed with the creed with the Congress party under his leadership. Making Government of India’s position clear on the issue, he categorically stated, on 20th January 1957, while inaugurating India’s nuclear reactor, Apsara, at Trombay:

No man can prediction for the future. But I should like to say on behalf of my government and I think I can say with same assurance on behalf of any future government of India-what ever might happen, whatever the circumstances, we shall never use this atomic energy for evil purposes. These is no condition attached to this assurance, because once a condition is attached, the value of such an assurance does not go very far.

¹ G.G. Mirchandani, India’s Nuclear Dilemma (Popular Book Services, New Delhi, 1968).
Speaking in the Lok Sabha on 24th July 1957 during discussions on the Department of Atomic Energy, he said, “we have declared quite clearly that we are not interested in making atom bombs, even if we have the capacity to do so, and that in no event will we use atomic energy for destructive purposes. I am quite sure that when I say this, I represent every member of this house. I hope that will be the policy of all future governments”.

As early as 1950, during the Korean crisis, he reacted to the possibilities which were being explored by the US Government for the use of the atom bomb. He said in the Indian Parliament on 6th December, 1950. “I am sure no one in this house approves of the idea of using the atom bomb anywhere at any time and much less in the particular context of the war in the Far East”.

After China and the Soviet Union broke off relations in 1959 on the issue of insistence by China of transfer of nuclear weapon technology to it, the Chinese decided to go it alone and launched their nuclear weapon development programme. And as the Chinese moved ahead with their nuclear weapon programme and hard evidence was taking the place of rumours and guess-work, the uneasiness in India started surfacing in early 1959, when China officially claimed about 50000 square miles of Indian territory. The growing concern was reflected in the Lok Sabha when a motion was introduced on 10th March 1959 to discuss the need to enlarge the scope of atomic research “to the field of defence” in addition to the routine debate on the activities of the Department of Atomic Energy. When another motion to increase the allocation for R&D on atomic energy was introduced, Prime Minister Nehru said: I do not obviously more advanced in nuclear matter. The fact is that more advanced and more widespread work has been done in this matter in India, again apart from those half a dozen countries, than in any other country in the world.

Though he had not named China, the obvious reference was to China. On 25th March 1963, while debating grants of the Department of Atomic Energy, a strong suggestion was made that Government’s “no bomb” policy should be reviewed and the issue at least be kept open. Nehru argued that it was entirely wrong to assume

that by producing a bomb India’s defence would be strengthened or that China by conducting a test would become militarily stronger.

I say, then from the most practical point of view, apart from the moral and the ethical which are important, that it is right that we should adhere to our decision not to use atomic energy for the production of any weapons.

India as a member of the 8-member Non-Aligned Group played an important role in the Eighteen Nations Disarmament Committee (ENDC) in the conclusion of the treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, commonly known as Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) which came into force in October 1963. India has all along advocated a comprehensive Test Ban Treaty as the most important disarmament measure. India was one of those ‘third world’ state which in the 1950s and the 1960s had taken initiatives to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and opposed to increasing testing and proliferation of these weapons and pleaded for curbing nuclear arms. India had played an active role in the process of the formulation of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. But refused to sign the treaty because of its various flows. Actually India, along with Ireland and Sweden, was in the forefront of those non-nuclear countries which had strongly advocated the non-dissemination and non-acquisition of nuclear weapons. It has continued to follow the same line of argument and has advanced significant proposals from time to time to get the world free of nuclear weapons. The most important one is the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan presented to the UN Special Session on Disarmament held in 1988 which gave a detailed programme to rid the world of nuclear weapons by the year 2010.

India signed the Partial Test Ban Treaty, while China refused to do so. After China exploded the atomic bomb in 1964, the Indian policy underwent a change. Now India emphasized the question of security and sought to link the nuclear disarmament by nuclear powers with the undertaking by non-nuclear powers not to acquire or manufacture nuclear weapons.³

Suggesting an ‘integrated solution’, the Indian representative proposed in the UN Disarmament Commission in 1965 that nuclear powers should undertake not to transfer nuclear weapons or nuclear weapon technology to others, not to use nuclear weapons against countries which do not possess them, to safeguard the security of the countries threatened by those possessing nuclear weapon capability or about to have nuclear weapon capability, to make tangible progress towards disarmament, including a comprehensive test ban treaty, to freeze production of nuclear weapons and means of delivery as well as work for a sustained reduction in the existing stock, and finally non-nuclear powers should undertake not to acquire or manufacture nuclear weapons.⁴

Before China exploded the atomic bomb in 1964, India was one of the most active and vocal members of the non-nuclear states which had advocated the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In 1965, however, it started linking the renunciation of nuclear weapons by non-nuclear states with the similar renunciation by nuclear states no further production of these weapons with an agreement for the reduction of existing stockpiles. The eight non-aligned members of the ENDC (Brazil, Burma, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Sweden and United Arab Republic (Egypt) in a memorandum, started that the measures to prohibit the spread of nuclear weapons should be “coupled with or followed by tangible steps to halt the nuclear arms race and to limit reduce and eliminate the stocks of nuclear weapons and means of their delivery”.⁵

In the process of negotiations and deliberations on the formulation of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty India sought to use ENDC as forum to project its views on the nuclear disarmament which it considered must be achieved. It restarted to its security-cum-disarmament diplomacy. It tried to convince the ENDC that an agreement ending the nuclear arms race was absolutely essential for global peace and security and in the process supported all such resolutions which were aimed at

achieving this goal, like the Soviet proposals for the slowing down of the arms race and reduction of international tension.

In the 19th session of the UN General Assembly, India’s permanent representative to UN expressed grave concern about the dangers inherent in the spread of nuclear weapons and argued that acquisition of these weapons by more power “is bound to create more complications in regard to general and complete disarmament and aggravate the dangers of a nuclear war.

The Government of India supported all the resolutions brought before the General Assembly which sought general and complete disarmament such as resolution 1980 (XVIII), 1909 (XVIII) which sought prohibition of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons and resolution 1910 (XVIII) which called for an urgent need to suspend nuclear tests. All these resolutions were adopted on 27 November 1963. Resolution 1911 (XVIII) on the denuclearization of Latin America also found India’s favour.

India signed and hailed the conclusion of the PTBT – the important move by nuclear weapon states in the past – World War II to towards nuclear disarmament commenting on the treaty India’s then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru hold that though the treaty did not take the world very far, “it is highly important and significant because after years of discussions and arguments, this has happened and it breaks ice, as it were and gives us an opportunity to go ahead with regard to disarmament and in putting an end, gradually, perhaps, to cold war attitudes of nations to each other”. As the treaty partially prohibited nuclear testing, leaving underground testing of nuclear weapons intact, it was severely criticized by the non-aligned non-nuclear weapon states. But at the same time it did make a major breakthrough toward nuclear disarmament. The Indian representative highlighted its limitations in the UN General Assembly on 10th October 1963, as the underground

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7 USA CDA, Documents on Disarmament 1964 (Washingaton D.C., 1965), pp. 12-17.
9 Prime Minister’s statement in Rajya Sabha’s debate on Foreign Affairs, 2 September 1963; Foreign Affairs Records (New Delhi), Vol. 9, No. 9, September 1963, p. 194
tests still remained to be banned and said that efforts to achieve a comprehensive test ban should not be allowed to relax.

After China’s explosion of 16th October 1964 India’s disarmament diplomacy at the ENDC focused on both the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons and linked the horizontal proliferation with vertical and the ensuring of the security of the non-nuclear weapons states. In its view a solution to the problem should be found at both the levels as it was absolutely imperative for national and international security.

India’s stand on the issue of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons after China went nuclear emanated from the presence of the Chinese nuclear weapons in the vicinity of India and which posed a major security threat. This threat perception was reflected in India’s arguments in the ENDC debates in the course of deliberations for the non-proliferation treaty.

India’s position on the issue of non-proliferation was projected by India’s ambassador to UN in the ENDC, pointing that the ‘Fundamental Problem’ which needed to be considered was that of the ‘proliferation that has already taken place’, and ‘we were talking about the proliferation of nuclear weapons and not about proliferation of the so called closed club’. In his view, no international treaty can be acceptable which issues dictates only to the non-nuclear countries, “while those possessing the nuclear weapons do not assume any prior commitments themselves.” He stressed that “it is unrealistic to assume that the non-nuclear nations and particularly the non-aligned nations which are facing the threat of nuclear weapons, will be enthusiastic about a discriminatory and ineffective treaty which does not add to their security, but in fact increases their insecurity.”

Is was not only the security threat posed by the continued proliferation of nuclear weapons, but the lack of any security guarantees by the nuclear weapon states which made India oppose the draft non-proliferation treaty which imposed limitations on their policy options. Actually, after the first Chinese atomic bomb,

10 ENDC/PV. 223, pp. 15-16.
India, concerned as it was about the security threat, tried to seek, “effective and credible guarantees of its security from the nuclear powers”, but all its efforts were of no avail. Is was after it failed to get any credible security guarantees that India shifted to an indirect approach where by it insisted that all nuclear powers should cease testing and manufacturing nuclear weapons as well as start reducing their nuclear arsenals.

Indian diplomatic efforts at the ENDC thus were also concentrated on securing the credible security guarantees against the nuclear attacks from the nuclear weapon states; particularly it has China in mind. Immediately after the China’s atomic bomb test, the Indian Prime Minister, reacting to its strongly, criticized it. Speaking at a press conference in the UK on 4th December 1964, he said, “It was for the nuclear powers to provide some kind of guarantees which were needed not only by India but by the other non-nuclear countries also”. It would be “verywise” for the nuclear power “to give serious thought to this aspect of the problem”.

Lal Bahadur Shastri, however, left it for the nuclear powers to consider for themselves what should be their attitude when a non-nuclear country is attacked by a nuclear weapon state. He refused to use such a phrase as ‘nuclear shield’, ‘joint shield’ or ‘joint sword’. He fixed the “responsibility on the great powers, particularly the USA and the USSR to think of concrete steps for the elimination of the threat that overhags mankind.” In a statement before the Lok Sabha, Foreign Minister Swaran Singh, commenting on the Chinese test, said, that “in a situation like this unless the main nuclear powers jointly gave an assurance against blackmail, any suggestion made by a country like the UK will not make much difference”. He wanted the non-nuclear powers to be assured by the main nuclear powers that if they forego the programme of going ahead with the acquisition of nuclear weapons, they

13 Foreign Affairs Record, Vol. 10, No. 12, December 1964, p. 329
16 Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. 55, Third Series, 10 May 1966, Col. 15714.
would not be suffer. However, India favoured multilateral guarantees through the UN rather than the bilateral agreements.

However, in view of the fragility of the security guarantees provided by the UN security system, a victim of veto, after M.C. Chagla took over Foreign Affairs, India sought joint guarantees from both the US and the USSR against a nuclear attack. A mere statement by President Johnson that the USA would support a country threatened by China’s use of nuclear weapons was not considered enough. India’s diplomatic efforts to persuade the USA and the USSR to give some credible guarantees were without result. Both the countries refused to commit themselves categorically commenting of India’s failure to wrest any such guarantees, the Prime Minister told the Lok Sabha that instead of universal declarations, what one expected was “guarantees give by the nuclear powers or at least as many of them as would find it possible to do so and belonging to different camps.” The Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri also did not favour the security shield as “any such shield in the field of security would depend not on the spirit in which the protected power accepts such a shield but on the national and vital interest of the giver”. Any shield given to India, thus, would primarily secure the interest of the provider rather than of India’s”. It also meant compromising with India’s long pursued policy of non-alignment.

Earlier, on 4 May 1965, in major policy statement on disarmament at the UN Disarmament Commission on India had sought multilateral guarantees under the UN auspices.

The Soviet Union submitted a proposal to the ENDC on February 1, 1966, known as Kosygin proposal, which offered to include in a non-proliferation treaty a

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17 Rajya Sabha Debates, Vo. 56, No. 7, 1 May 1966, Col. 1043-45.
20 For details US and USSR stand on the issue, See I.T. Poulos, UN and Nuclear Proliferation, and Willam Epstein, The Last Chance, pp. 135-146.
21 Lok Sabha Debates, Vol 7 (Fourth Series), 17 July 1967, Col. 12422.
clause to the treaty’s that the prohibition of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear signatories, which have no nuclear weapons in their territory. This proposal, known as a ‘negative’ type of security was non-acceptable to the Third World Countries, the proposal was subsequently withdrawn.24

India’s Minister for External Affairs, M.C. Changla, on 27 March 1967 told the Indian Parliament that India had a special problem of security against nuclear attack or nuclear blackmail, and that the non-proliferation treaty would put India in a worse position than communist China. If India was not to go nuclear it should have a ‘credible guarantee’ for its security. Great powers had not given any “effective and credible consideration to the security needs of non-nuclear countries, particularly the non-aligned countries.25

Thus having played a crucial role in the diplomatic negotiation on the formulation of the treaty and having failed to get its ideas incorporated in the treaty. India strongly criticized the US-USSR joint draft treaty which was submitted by the ENDC to the General Assembly on March 11, 1968. It was approved on April 24, 1968. India categorically stated that it would not sign the treaty.

Earlier at the ENDC, the Indian representative had taken a critical stand on the treaty, arguing that what was needed was not just to have a treaty but a “treaty which truly prevents the proliferation of nuclear weapons.”26 Though claimed by the nuclear weapon states that the treaty would contribute to the security of the non-nuclear weapon states, the Indian representative exposed this dimension in a statement on 27 February 1968. He said that greater security, could not be achieved by prohibiting those states from acquiring nuclear weapons who did not posses them. The only effective way to control them was to strike at the ‘root of the evil’, namely the state of insecurity caused in the world by the possession of the nuclear weapons of horror and mass destruction by a few powers. This insecurity could be removed only if “we do away with the special status of superiority associated with power and

24 William Epstein, The Last Chance, N. 9, p. 139.
25 China Factor in India’s attitude to Lok Sabha Debates, Fourth Series, 27 March 1967, Col. 955.
26 Statement of India’s Ambassador Trivedi at ENDC. Documents on Disarmament (1968). pp. 235-36.
prestige conferred on these powers by nuclear weapons.”

India also pointed to the flaws in the Articles I and II of the draft Non-proliferation treaty, which has remained in the NPT, as these two articles of the draft treaty did not “prevent the training for the use of nuclear weapons for the armed personal belonging to non nuclear states”.

The Indian representative criticized the treaty as being discriminatory saying that a “treaty with its far reaching political and economic implications for all the nations of the world must not be based on a discriminatory approach”. “A non-proliferation treaty”, in India’s view, “if it is to be effective, viable and generally acceptable, should prevent both nuclear weapon and non-nuclear weapon powers from proliferation”. In the Government of India’s considered view the draft treaty did not ‘conform to these principles’ and hence India, could not subscribe to such a treaty.

The Indian objection to the NPT were listed in a statement made by Ambassador M.A. Hussain of India at 57th meeting of the first committee of the UN on 14th May 1968. They were:

1. The treaty did not ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons but only stopped the dissemination of weapons to non-nuclear weapons states without imposing any curbs on the continued manufacture, stockpiling and sophistication of nuclear weapons by the existing nuclear weapon states,

2. The treaty did not do away with the special status of superiority associated with power and prestige conferred on those powers which have nuclear weapons,

3. The treaty did not provide for balance of obligations and responsibilities between the nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states; while all the obligations were imposed on non-nuclear weapon states, the nuclear weapon states had not accepted any;

4. The treaty did not constitute a step by step approach towards nuclear disarmament;

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The treaty did not prohibit one nuclear weapon state from assisting another nuclear weapon state by providing technical aid;

Article VI did not create a juridical obligation in regard to cessation of nuclear arms race at an early date,

The treaty imparted a false sense of security to the world;

The treaty was discriminatory in regard to the peaceful benefits of nuclear explosions;

The treaty was discriminatory in regard to the safeguards and controls which were imposed on the non-nuclear weapon states, and

The security assurances to the non-nuclear weapons states could not be quid pro quo for the acceptance of the treaty. This must be obligatory for the nuclear weapon states.\(^{28}\)

India’s argument, thus, fell into three broad categories:

India would not reconcile with a second class status which the treaty sought to impose on the NNWS by virtue of its being discriminatory in nature and divided the world into ‘nuclear haves’ and the ‘nuclear have nots’;

It was concerned about the nuclear capabilities of China, its strong adversary, and whose nuclear weapons status posed a direct security threat to it, and

That NNWS stats must be guaranteed legal security against the use of nuclear weapons by the NWS.

Though India has always stressed the discriminatory nature of the treaty as the primary reason for not signing the treaty, the Chinese threat to its security has been the most decisive factor for non-signing of the treaty. Swaran Singh, India’s Foreign Minister, told the Parliament in May 1966 that the serious danger posed by

Beijing to India’s security was full recognized by India and India had the capability to become an atomic power in a reasonable short time.²⁹

It was pointed out that ever since China had become a nuclear weapon power, India’s ‘self-denying ordinance’ had been “kept under constant review”.³⁰

Like the other threshold countries, particularly Brazil and Argentina, India also strongly supports the contention that the non-proliferation regime perpetuates a nuclear energy technology denial system for peaceful purposes. The NWS states and some other technological advanced countries have sought to preserve monopoly over the civilian uses of nuclear energy. Particularly the NWS, as sponsors of the non-proliferation regime, are also the principal suppliers of nuclear materials and equipment and technology. They along with other nuclear suppliers have evolved mechanisms both at the bilateral and the multilateral level like London Suppliers club to control and monopolise the civilian use of nuclear energy. Their usual policies in this respect are violative of the clause IV of the treaty which “provides each member country the inalienable right to develop, research and produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. And many countries are supposed to have signed the treaty in the hope that they will have wider access to the nuclear technology. The treaty particularly is accused of having failed to provide the right to peaceful nuclear explosives by the NNWS for peaceful purposes on the plea that there was no difference between a peaceful and military nuclear explosions.³¹

India has been critical of IAEA safeguards as an instrument of NPT safeguard system. India’s ambassador to UN, speaking before the first committee of the General Assembly on 26 October 1965, contended that the safeguards should be placed on nuclear weapon production and not on the peaceful use of facilities. These safeguards were actually needed in countries which had nuclear weapons. Their application exclusively on the nuclear activities of the non-nuclear weapon states “would hinder technological development and increase the gap between advanced

²⁹ Lok Sabha Debates, 10 May 1966, Col. 15712-34.
and developing countries”. India, he said, “has maintained that it would submit voluntarily international control as long as they were universally applied.”

One of the arguments put forward by the Indian representative to the first committee of the UN General Assembly on 14 May 1968 stressed that the “NPT further institutionalized discrimination by imposing safeguards on non-nuclear weapon states but not on nuclear weapon states and by prohibiting the autonomous use of nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes by the former and not the latter. The effect of this would be to perpetuate and increase the technical dependence of developing countries on the nuclear weapon states. India was, thus, in principle opposed to the international control of the non-proliferation regime on the indigenous nuclear programmes that did not apply to others.

India has thus consistently maintained that the non-proliferation regime with NPT as its consequences are unequal, discriminatory, fails to provide security of safeguards and denies the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to the NNWS and a regime which perpetuates technical dependence. It has failed to prevent vertical proliferation, has not taken significant steps towards complete nuclear disarmament and general disarmament. Therefore, India cannot agree to abide by the rules, norms and directives of a regime which does not take care of its security concern and instead of providing security creates more insecurity.

Since India’s humiliating debacle in the Sino-Indian border was of 1962, and China’s entry to the ‘number club’ after its Lop Nor nuclear test in 16th October, 1964, the nation has been in the grip of an ongoing debate whether India should also go nuclear. The 1974 Pokharan explosion marked another stage in India’s nuclear policy and for some period it appeared that India would continue with more tests and will be nuclear country. But this didn’t to happened. The Pokharan test remain the solitary test and it has the distinction of the status of nuclear power without teeth. The event also had far-reaching consequences at the global level as it intensified the

32 USACDA Documents on Disarmament 1964, pp. 339-40.
33 Documents on Disarmament 1968, pp. 325-36.
nuclear non-proliferation regime building by the nuclear weapon states under the leadership of the US, through unilateral and multilateral measures like the US nuclear non-proliferation Act 1978 and the creation of London Suppliers’ Group.

Until the early 1960s (till the Sino-Indian War of 1962, and China’s Lop Nor test), India under Nehru had a “stable and coherent nuclear policy of permanent nuclear abstinence”. His policy had origins in Gandhian tradition, ideal of non-violence, his genuine concern about the horrors of nuclear menace over tones emanating from the country’s commitment to non-alignment, and his commitment to nuclear disarmament resulting in high profile and diplomatically active role in disarmament negotiations in the 1950s and the 1960s. Nehru had virtually committed all future governments of India exclusively to peaceful use of nuclear energy.35 The debacle at the hands of China though had given Nehru a shock which virtually took his life, his commitment not to go nuclear remained unshattered. Nine days before he passed away, on 18 May 1964, he declared in an interview, “We are determined not to use weapons for war purposes. We do not make atom bombs. I do not think we will.”36

The most important fallout of the Sino-Indian border war was the radical change in India’s threat perception, making both China and Pakistan as the targets of its defence and foreign policy, in addition to the shift in the focus of its foreign policy from international to regional and real politics, national interest through national power.38 The 1962 Sino-Indian war followed by the Chinese Lop Nor Test made India’s security scenario much more grave, which raised the question of India too opting in favour of a nuclear bomb. Though the Indian government’s specialized departments were not surprised at the Chinese test, as they had been aware of China’s preparations and ambitions. The concern about these developments was expressed in the Indian parliament. The people in general, the media, the scientific community and the political parties, particularly the Bharatiya Jan Sangh all were

36 Cited in G.G. Mirchandani, India’s Nuclear Dilemma, p. 25.
agitated about the security threat to the country. There was strong pressure that India should go nuclear but the government resisted all such demands and continued to pursue a policy of nuclear abstinence.

**CHINESE NUCLEAR THREAT**

China was absolutely clear, unlike India, when it conducted its first nuclear test, it wanted to be a nuclear weapon state and was opposed to the nuclear hegemony of the nuclear weapons states. It had a vision of status in the international power hierarchy and was keen to pursue it relentlessly. It never wanted to remain, like India only a threshold nuclear state. It chalked out its nuclear weapon programme pragmatically and without any vacillations.

A month before China’s nuclear explosion, in the debates in India’s parliament only causal references were made by the opposition to the increasing danger emanating from China’s possession of nuclear weapons. However, the Foreign Minister made no reference to the approaching Chinese bomb in his speech in Parliament.

Thus after 1964, the presence of China-a nuclear weapon state in the vicinity of India was perceived as a major security threat which was reflected in the Government of India’s official policy. It was this security threat from China as well as the discriminatory nature of the NPT which primarily influenced India’s decision to oppose the treaty during the finalization phase, after having played an active role at the earlier stages. It finally refused to sign it.37

Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, however, showed his government’s awareness of the possible threat a nuclear China could pose to India’s security. At the conference of the Non-Aligned Nations held in Cairo on 7 October 1964, he referred to the “disturbing indications” that China was about to explode a nuclear device. Referring to Government of India’s policy he said that “Indian scientists and technicians were under firm orders not to make a single experiment, not to make a single device which is not needed for peaceful uses of atomic energy”.38

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37 Achiv Vanaik and Praful Bidwai, p. 263.
38 G.G. Mirchandani, p. 25.
The Indian government, instead of showing serious concern about the event as a serious threat to India’s security considered it to be a ‘danger to the maintenance of peace’. And at a moral plank, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri called upon peace-loving people in all countries to raise their voice and awaken the world conscience to fight ‘this aggression on peace and security’. Indian Defence Minister comment, now looking back, seemed to be highly unrealistic when he said that “the atomic bomb would not add to China’s military strength and that the short – term threat from across India’s northern borders continued to be from conventional weapons. The comments of the other minister like M.C. Chagla, Education Minister, were more or less on similar lines. And fool-hadrly, most of Indian newspapers seemingly under the official briefings argued that one Chinese bomb was of no military significance and that its main significance was ‘psychological and political, though they conceded that it was a grave provocation to India, but pleased for a more sober, realistic response.

In the wake of the mounting criticism of the government’s policy of continuing with Nehruvian stand on nuclear weapon, his ‘nuclear in activity’ on the bomb issue, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri is supposed to have slightly diluted India’s commitment to the policy of complete nuclear abstinence, when he said, “I cannot say that it would not be changed. An individual may have a certain static policy, but in the political field we cannot do so. Here situations alter, changes take place, and we have to mould our policies accordingly. If there is need to amend what we have said today, then we will say, all right let us go ahead and do so.” At the executive committee of the congress parliamentary party, there was a unanimous view that India must maintain the lead over China in nuclear science and technology and should be in a state of technological preparedness to produce a bomb within a short period if required.

The threat from the Chinese nuclear bomb rocked the Indian Parliament when it took up the issue for debate on 24 November 1964. The Bharatiya Jan Sangh (BJS)

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40 Lok Sabha Debates, 24 November 1964, Col. No. 1570.
was in the forefront of attacking the government’s policy in regard to the nuclear bomb. It strongly argued in favour of India going nuclear after its humiliating defeat at the hands of China in 1962. The opposition parties took the government to task for its failure to reorient its policy in the light of the explosion of an atom bomb by China. Whereas the BJS pleaded for an Indian deterrent bomb, the CPI opposed it. There was a strong opinion in favour of nuclear based defence installations. However, in spite of scathing criticism by the opposition, the congress party stuck to its position and has continued to do so till today. The other political parties too have stuck to their positions and now it seems that perhaps they were right. India should have gone nuclear long back which would have been in its national interest.

The Indian government, however, continued to adhere to the declared policy. Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri cautioned the country not to give way to ‘panic or alarm’. V.K. Krishna Menon, the then Defence Minister, in a most ridiculous way made a strong plea against India going nuclear, arguing that it was a danger to India for “if China takes it into her head to drop a bomb on us in order to create panic, then she can easily tell the world that we dropped it on them just as Pakistan does things to us and then says that we attacked them.”\footnote{Lok Sabha Debates, Series 3, Vol. 35, 24 November 1964, Col. No. 1555.} It is this type of cynicism and lake of perspective and foresight on the part of these leaders that they have landed this country in the most helpless situation. Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, replying to the Jan Sangh motion on 27 November 1964, asking the government to change its policy regarding the bomb said, “The cult of the bomb is a danger to peace and we reject it categorically”. In his view the moral aspect could not be ignored as India had raised its voice at the six week old non aligned conference at Cairo, and pleased how India could change the policy.\footnote{Lok Sabha Debates, 27 November 1964, p. 34.}

At a public meeting V.K. Krishna Menon, supporting the Indian government’s stand, said, “our joining the atomic race will only end our non-alignment and hasten war and world wide destruction. China by her test has invited world wide resentment, whereas India has earned world wide appreciation;”\footnote{J.P. Jain, Nuclear India, Vol. I, p. 80.}
further said, “India would not enter the nuclear arms arce nor accept a nuclear umbrella, both were bad.” The then information Minister, Mrs. Indra Gandhi, in an interview on 22 October 1964, said, “India is in a position to produce the bomb within 18 months but I think we should use atomic energy for peaceful purposes only.”

It is not possible to accept the contention that “the pressure for the Indian bomb was from the beginning political rather than strategic; that is, it did not emanate from a widely Chinese nuclear threat to India’s security.” Rather on the contrary, the threat had been high-lighted from the beginning by politicians and scientists alike. However, as the Chinese moved so fast in developing their nuclear arsenals that it became impossible for India to catch up if it started its own nuclear weapon programme. Consequently, Chinese nuclear threat was underplayed by the Indian government and strategic analysts. Subsequently, the nuclear threat was just perceived to be revolving around Pakistan, though the Chinese nuclear threat remained as potent and intact as ever.

The Chinese nuclear threat to India had been highlighted during the 1960s in a strong manner by Indian political parties, scientists and strategic analysts despite the Government of India not giving it due importance. Dr. Homi Bhabha, the architect of India’s nuclear energy programme, in a paper presented to Pugwash conference in 1 January 1964, about 10 months before China exploded its nuclear weapon device, noted that China was so large that ‘it must always present a threat to its smaller neighbours, a threat they can only meet either by collective security or by recourse to nuclear weapons.’

Shortly after the Chinese test, Bhabha in his All India Radio address on 24th October 1964 indirectly referring to the signing of the PTPT and other disarmament measures which were in progress, highlighted the importance of superpowers progress towards disarmament before more countries emerged as major nuclear

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44 Bhabani Sen Gupta, N. 47, p. 2.
weapon powers. He also stressed that “explosion of a nuclear device by China is a signal that there is no time to be lost,” and that “the only defence against nuclear attack appears to be capability and threat of retaliation”. It was a double track policy—pursue nuclear disarmament but preserve the nuclear defence option. \(^{46}\) Dr. Bhabha by the last 1950s had apparently come to the view that India’s policy of permanent nuclear abstinence was probably not in India’s long-term national interest. In a world without disarmament, he held, the only ‘effective means of countering atomic colonialism’ would be third world bomb.

And Bhabha did follow a policy which was quite divergent from the official Nehruvian policy. He has been credited with ‘hawkish’ position on India’s nuclear weapon options. Even Homi N. Sethna and Raja Ramanna are also believed to be belonging to the same category, though after Bhabha no one has taken a public stand that is explicitly ‘dovish’ or has questioned the wisdom of keeping the nuclear weapon option open”. \(^{47}\)

The second nuclear explosion by China was followed by protests criticizing it severely. Demands were made for a change in the Government’s ‘no bomb’ policy, though it generated less heat and excitement. The second was quickly followed by the third, a ‘thermonuclear’ explosion on 9\(^{th}\) May 1966. It indicated that the explosion had been set off for China’s first hydrogen bomb. The Indian Government denounced China for its hostility to peace and disarmament.

The event was followed by a stormy meeting of the parliament the next day (May 10, 1966). The Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was hard put to defend its nuclear policy. Particularly the moralistic stand of the government on the issue was the target of criticism. The policy was ‘pig-headed’ according to Praj a Socialist Party (PSP) leader H.V. Kamath – it had no relevance to the country’s defence needs in the context of China’s growing nuclear arsenal and rocket delivery vehicles. \(^{48}\)


\(^{47}\) Vinaik and Praful Bidwai, N. 47, p. 262.

\(^{48}\) Lok Sabha Debates, Third Series, May 10, 1966, Col. 15713.
In the midst of scathing criticism from the opposition and even ruling congress party members, the External Affairs Minister made the following statement in the Lok Sabha on 10th May 1966.

We had made a careful assessment of the situation in consultation with service chiefs and atomic energy experts even when the first nuclear device was exploded by China. The mere fact that China was carried its third explosion does not vitiate the earlier conclusion, though at the same time, the policy is kept under constant review. In any serious review, account has to be taken not only of Chinese tests by relevant factors, specially the progress made in the discussions relating to nuclear disarmament in which many countries are participating.49

Intervening in the discussion, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said, “I do not think our policy is at all a negative one; I think it is a very positive policy. We are building our atomic power. Of course, we are using for peaceful purposes; but in the meantime we are increasing our know-how and other competence. I myself fail to understand how our production of one bomb or two will help us. The belief that China can attack any country with nuclear weapons with impunity, I think is a misconceived one.”50

Earlier on 1st March 1966, Mrs. Indira Gandhi who had taken over as the new Prime Ministership after the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri, and in view of the growing friendship between China and Pakistan, clarified her government’s position on the nuclear issue, as well as the possibilities of India making a pact with other nations an alternative to making a nuclear bomb. She said, “The government’s policy in this matter has been clear and it remains the same which is that we believe that making such a pact does not lead to peace but may actually increase tension.” She also did not believe on mere fact that China has exploded a nuclear device was, “sufficient reason for us to change our policy on this matter.” She further said, “we are anxious not to do anything which will precipitate the crisis and lead to the

49 Lok Sabha Debates, 10 May 1966, Col. 15712.
50 Lok Sabha Debates, 10 May 1966, Col. 716.
development of nuclear weapons in many more countries. The policy of restraint which we have adopted must continue.\footnote{Lok Sabha Debates, Third Series, 1 March 1966, Col. 3060.}

The newly appointed Chairman of the Indian Atomic Energy Commission, Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, at his first conference on June 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1966, expressed the official view on the issue by saying that exploding an atom bomb without complete nuclear defence system would amount only to ‘creating a paper tiger’. India’s security needed a complete defence system like atomic warheads, long-range missiles for delivery and radar early warning system in addition to the required commitment to resources. He argued that instead of a bomb, the country should develop grassroot technology and “industrial and economic base”. “Let our emphasis be on reality and not on show. I am opposed to gimmicks”. A report on the evaluation of the impact of the Chinese nuclear explosion on India prepared by the Chiefs of Staff was submitted to the Defence Minister, which was, however, never made public. The Defence Minister, when pressed, said that the assumption of the Chiefs of staff was that “an immediate real threat is the conventional threat and any effort to divert our resources from these preparations would weaken our position.”

The statements of both the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister were interpreted in the media as a shift in the government’s policy of absolute abstinence and more or less continuation of the statement of the late Lal Bahadur Shastri that India’s ‘self-abnegation in relation to nuclear weapons could not be considered a commitment for all times to come’. The statements of both the leaders were interpreted as to have assured Parliament that India was making all efforts to develop its nuclear capacity and technical know how to a maximum extent to be able to meet the country’s defence requirements if needed.\footnote{Lok Sabha Debates, Series 4, Vol. 5, 21 June 1967, Col. 6655.}

However, looking back, one could simply say that many of the things said on the floor of the Lok Sabha were rhetoric and away from reality. An analysis of the whole issue from that time to date simply endorses the contentions of the critics of the government of India’s policy that the leaderships understanding of the situation

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\footnote{Lok Sabha Debates, Third Series, 1 March 1966, Col. 3060.}
\footnote{Lok Sabha Debates, Series 4, Vol. 5, 21 June 1967, Col. 6655.}
was absolutely unrealistic, lacked foresight and was more at a moralistic plank. Had it been otherwise, such unpragmatic statements from the Foreign Affairs Minister and the Prime Minister would not have been made. Their reiteration that the policy was under constant review, makes one wonder what has been this review. Actually some of the statements made by the former Defence Minister, V.K. Krishna Menon, were simply ridiculous. And so were the statements made by Deputy Prime Minister Morarji Desai, who had pleaded in August 1966, “We must not be tempted, bullied and frightened into giving up the most sacred principle of human approach to international affairs. He said, “India had been demanding since 1945 a ban on the atom bomb. That demand would lose force if India herself went in for the atom bomb.” Even after China exploded her fifth atom bomb, Desai remained unshaken and told a reporter: “I do not think we should even think of manufacturing atom bombs. That will not help us in winning the war against China. What will help us in winning our battle against Chinese aggression is strengthening our conventional forces and indomitable courage. By this we will be able to vacate the Chinese aggression. I am quite sure.”

The tragedy with some of the Indian leaders had been that they imposed their whims and eccentricities in understanding the national problems and without having any sense of strategy and defence passed their value judgments on India’s security, otherwise Morarji Desai would not have made such statements.

Too much talk of global disarmament, without understanding the importance of ‘power’ in international politics had led the country to a situation where its talks of nuclear disarmament sounds meaningless and those who have the nuclear weapons are in no mood to pursue disarmament. Look, the way Chinese have responded to the issue of nuclear disarmament. Probably a nuclear India would have made more effective contribution towards nuclear disarmament than as a non-nuclear weapon state. Even India’s bargaining position with China on the territorial dispute would have been much more stronger than it is now.

The Chinese successful launching of a nuclear weapon tipped missile on October 27th, 1966, its conducting of fourth nuclear test, and testing of its first
hydrogen bomb on June 17th, 1967 created further consternation and provided an added impetus to the nuclear debate. However, there was hardly any perceptible shift in India’s policy. In November 1966, while inaugurating the State Governor’s conference, President S. Radha Krishnan expressed the official thinking by saying:

The development by China of a missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead has added further urgency to the need for a comprehensive international agreement, not only to obviate the proliferation of nuclear weapons, but to control and eventually to outlaw the making and testing of such weapons by the nations who at present posses them.

He firmly stuck to ‘no bomb’ line. The testing of a hydrogen bomb was a real scientific feet on the part of China, as it had been conducted just two years and eight months after its first nuclear weapon, whereas the US had taken three years and four months and the USSR an the UK four years and four years seven months respectively. This spread a fresh wave of anger, disquiet and fear, resulting in a strong demand for nuclear deterrent and even for accepting a nuclear umbrella. Both were, however, rejected by the Indian government.

The Chinese nuclear and missile testing had created strong security thereats from China. Now even the Government of India agreed that China had caused ‘grave concern’ to it. Defence Minister Swaran Singh assured the Lok Sabha that the nuclear policy of China and its impact on India’s security had been under study by the ‘concerned authorities from time to time’. All practical ways and means of ensuring our security are constantly under examination. He, however, rejected any proposal of nuclear umbrella by saying, “We should try to stand on our own legs rather than mortgage our freedom and independence to any country, however strong it may be.”

Fears, however, about the possibilities of China helping Pakistan in its nuclear weapon programme were subsequently turned out to be true. The leadership, like an ostrich, kept its eyes closed to such possibilities and did not realize the magnitude and level of Sino-Pak relations and its implications for India’s security.
Defence Minister Swaran Singh told Parliament, “We have the information that Pakistan is planning to manufacture the atom bomb.” Its nuclear knowhow, he said, “is at a very elementary stage”, and they would “take years to manufacture the atom bomb after they took a decision”. To the utter shock of Parliament, he informed the members that China was reported to be working on the production of a medium range ballistic missile, as well as a short-range ballistic missile.

In view of these developments, India felt seriously, concerned about the security of the non-aligned, non-nuclear states. The concern was reflected in India’s position in the Eighteen Nations Disarmament Committee (ENDC) on this issue during the deliberations on the conclusion of a nuclear non-proliferation treaty. India strongly pleaded for the inclusion of the security clause in the treaty which, however, was not acceptable to the US, the USSR and the UK. The Indian insistence was Primarily motivated to ensure its security from nuclear China. India wanted the nuclear weapon states to commit themselves to safeguard the security of countries threatened by a power having nuclear weapon capability.\(^{53}\) One reason why India had not signed the treaty is the absence of security guarantees to NNWS, along with imbalance of obligations between nuclear and non-nuclear states and the discrimination in the development of peaceful nuclear explosives.\(^{54}\) Pakistan, on the contrary, was exceptionally happy about the Chinese nuclear weapon programme and extolled China’s renewed assurance that it would not be the first to use nuclear weapons.

It is strongly believed that India had acquired the capability to assemble a nuclear bomb way back in the 1960s itself. Dr. Bhabha in his famous broadcast to the nation after China’s Lop Nor nuclear test, had warned that the “explosion of nuclear device by China is a signal that there is no time to be lost”. In his opinion, “the only defence against nuclear attack” appears to be a nuclear capability and threat of retaliation. He actually made a strong case during this broadcast, for India to decide to go nuclear. He pointed out that the cost for accumulating stockpiles for

\(^{53}\) See William Epstein, The Last Chance : Nuclear Proliferation and Arms Control, T.T. Pouluse, UN and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation, the free Press, London, 1976, pp. 74-78.

countries possessing the fissile material production facilities would be much smaller than their existing military budgets. In the immediate context, since China’s delivery system was also not well developed he added that it may not cause much hurdle to India.\textsuperscript{55} On 15\textsuperscript{th} December 1959, in a closed door meeting of the Parliamentary consultative committee on Atomic Energy references were overtly made to Chinese nuclear bomb, to which the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission the late Dr. H.J. Bhabha replied that India’s own atomic energy development programme had progressed to a stage where atomic weapons could be produced in the country without external aid if called upon to do so. “However, hastened to add that the development and use of atomic energy for other than peaceful purposes was totally opposed to the policy of Government of India. Thus, there was no intention to go for nuclear weapon production. Dr. Bhabha is also reported to have declared following Chinese nuclear test in 1964 that given a political decision India could manufacture the bomb in just 18 months.\textsuperscript{56} Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Minister of Information and Broadcasting in Lal Bahadur Shastri’s Cabinet, said in an interview to French Television at Paris, on October 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 1964, “India is in a position to produce the bomb within 18 months.”

Since Bhabha was believed to be personally in favour of a nuclear India, he is supposed to have exercised his influence in avoiding the signing of a formal agreement with Canada regarding the safeguards in relation to CIRCUS, which would have restricted India’s control over the reactor and its output, including the spent fuel. It is this spent fuel which became the source of fissile material used for Pokharan explosive device. The nuclear programme, though initially ‘conceived as a purely civilian effort’, acquired a dual character after the 1950s, under a scientific leadership that was keen to preserve the weapons option despite the Nehru ear policy of permanent nuclear abstinence. The dual character of the nuclear device is considered to be a “conscious choice by the programme leadership, to build into it

\textsuperscript{56} Vanaik and Bidwai, p. 261, Defence Minister Swaran Singh told the Lok Sabha on 21 June 1967, that “It is true that a statement was made from the point a decision was taken to manufacture or explode a nuclear device, we would require eighteen months or so”. (Lok Sabha Debates, 21 June 1967, Col. No. 6665). He also said “we have the capability to manufacture one whether we take a decision to do so or not, is separate issue”. (Lok Sabha Debates, 21 June 1967, Col. No. 6667).
the possibility of obtaining progressively greater military spin-offs, or possibilities and to make the transition from civilian to military use of nuclear capabilities, if required as quickly and as smoothly as possible.” In this whole dual character programme, Homi J. Bhabha played the most crucial role. He was supposed to be close to Nehur, but in actual practice he appears to have pursued a different orientation, though was ‘constrained by Nehur’s policy of permanent abstinence’. He could be credited to have organized the Indian nuclear programme in a way which “enabled him to keep the weapons option open indefinitely” and to develop and sustain the programme to an extent to ‘stockpile unsafeguarded weapon grade material”. Subsequently once the decision was taken by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi some time in 1972 to produce a ‘nuclear explosive device’, the scientists succeeded in making it possible with in a short period resulting in the Pokhara test in 1974. Though nuclear scientists are assumed to have pursued a nuclear programme divergent in subtle-ways from the declared policy of the Government of India, there has not been any deviation from the proclaimed policy of the Government of India, despite some of them having strong opinions not in conformity with the stated government policy.

A British nuclear scientist is reported to have told a gathering of the British scientists and academicians at the Royal Institute of Great Britain in London on January 20th, 1967 that after the Chinese nuclear test the Dr. Bhabha had wanted India to make plutonium bombs, while the declared policy of the Government of India was not to develop nuclear weapons.

NUCLEAR WEAPON OPTION AFTER POKHARAN EXPLOSION

The origins of India’s policy of nuclear weapons option, (the freedom of choice) goes back to 1964 when in the wake of first Chinese nuclear test, the country was engulfed in a debate whether India should go nuclear, involving the Indian elite, political parties, journalists, retired military officials and strategic analysts. Consequently, on 23nd November 1964, India’s then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, taking cognizance of the proponents of the atomic bomb, declared on the
floor of the Lok Sabha his government’s policy, as, that though the country has the capability to make a bomb, the government was not keen to exercise this option. He also expressed his government’s willingness to sanction a plan for ‘peaceful nuclear explosion’ for the Future. The successive governments have continued to adhere to the same policy. Consequently it has not signed the NPT, which, if done, would mean surrendering the option to go nuclear now or at a future date.

The Chinese attack on India in 1962, its nuclear explosion in 1964, the Bangladesh crisis of 1971 and Indo-Pak War, and the Nixon’s gunboat diplomacy to pressurize India probably hardened India’s attitude to NPT. So far its decision is not to forsake its right to develop 8 nuclear weapon if and when required. The Indian scientists were supposed to have proposed an underground nuclear explosion and the government, it is assumed, had approved of it as far back as in January 1965. The 1974 nuclear explosion which established India’s capability to make a nuclear bomb and its policy since then not to go nuclear provided a concrete shape to its nuclear policy called ‘nuclear option approach’, i.e. keeping the option open of going nuclear, to reserve the right to go nuclear when required. A position which has been termed as ‘ambivalent policy’. The ambivalent approach, or the ‘nuclear option approach’ has been considered and defended by the Indian decision – makers as the best available option so far to respond to India’s security requirement and the nurture of military strategic needs.

The Government of India and the other supporters of the ‘nuclear option approach’ have not lacked in showering praise on the ‘nuclear option strategy’ as the most prudent policy to have access to the nuclear technology having nuclear weapon capability, keeping the option of acquiring the nuclear weapons with itself and not signing the NPT, and at the same time not to compromise with its commitment to nuclear disarmament.

Looking back, this so-called cautious and prudent diplomacy ‘nuclear option’ somehow seems to have turned out to be self-defeating and not served the national

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57 Girilal Jain, ‘India’ in Jozef Goldblat, N. 65, p. 92.
58 Ashok Kapur, India’s Nuclear Option : Atomic Diplomacy and Decision Making, p. 194.
interest. As the pressure on India to surrender the ‘nuclear option’ is mounting – either to sign the NPT or to agree to some regional non-proliferation regime – the question which now is being addressed to the architects of this policy is to what extent this policy has enhanced India’s security.

India’s peaceful nuclear explosion in 1974 at Pokharan is the most crucial landmark not only in India’s nuclear policy but also for the intensification of the nuclear non-proliferation regime building by the nuclear weapon states, as the process of establishment of formal and informal structures to control the horizontal proliferation was launched by the NWS with renewed zeal. But Mrs. Gandhi’s nuclear policy after 1974, i.e. keeping the nuclear option open, and also not conducting any nuclear weapon tests, has really perplexed the analysts, as the 1974 PNE hardly achieved anything for India’s national interest. Rather, it had all the negative effects.

What really prompted Mrs. Gandhi to decide in favour of the peaceful nuclear explosion, and what objectives she intended to achieve by this one time event, one cannot really figure out any satisfactory justification for it as the losses far outweighed the gains, if there were any. There were hardly any domestic compulsion; nor were there any immediate external security compulsions, as India had emerged as a predominant regional power after Pakistan’s dismemberment and the emergence of Bangladesh. Moreover, India still was in control of Pakistani territory and about 90000 prisoners of war, and even bilateral relations between India and Pakistan had stabilized, consequent upon the signing of the Shimla agreement.

Though Pakistan had already embarked on its nuclear weapon programme, India’s 1974 PNE did provide an alibi to Islamabad to intensify its nuclear weapon programme. Though India described it as a peaceful nuclear explosion, to the rest of the world it was nothing but a nuclear weapon explosion. Thus, without in any way enhancing its national security, India through its PNE made Pakistan frantically pursue its nuclear weapon programme. It ultimately succeeded in clandestinely acquiring the nuclear weapon capability. India’s PNE is assumed to have led Zulfiquar Ali Bhutto to plunge his country in pursuit of a bomb at any cost, even if
the country had to eat grass. Diplomatically also it strengthened Pakistan’s position vis-à-vis India, as now it appealed to its mentors to protect it from nuclear India. Since then it has succeeded in getting its resolution to declare South Asia as a nuclear weapons free zone passed with overwhelming majority in the successive UN General Assembly session. However, since then, all successive Pakistan governments have declared their commitment to pursue nuclear weapon programme as a national policy and match India’s nuclear capability.

Thus, the ill-conceived nuclear explosion hardly increased India’s security or prestige around the world. On the contrary India had to bear the brunt of the punitive policies of the supporters of the non-proliferation regime.

There is a strong opinion within the country that India should have followed up the 1974 PNE. Because, despite all its diplomatic maneuvering to convince the world of the peaceful nature of the explosion, the world simply refused to accept it and considered it a nuclear weapon test. India should have followed it up. In any case it had to bear the wrath and punishment. India’s decision not to go nuclear after the PNE has been interpreted as that either the government realized that India lacked the technological base to pursue a regular nuclear weapon programme or it was compelled to abandon it under international pressure.\(^{59}\)

The Government of India, however, stuck to its policy, that it is committed to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, thus, disappointing the high hopes of those who thought that India now would go nuclear. It decided to retain the status that it could make a bomb but would not do so and now is being “treated as a nuclear power with no nuclear teeth.”

In the early 1970s the debate about India acquiring the bomb huffed up as the Chinese launched their first satellite. A strong demand for India to go nuclear to meet the Chinese threat was made on many occasions. The option among defence experts economists, political, scientists and members of Parliament was coming around the conclusion that India had no other option except to go nuclear.

\(^{59}\) Bhabani Sen Gupta, p. 8.
However, around the same time, perhaps an opinion was also getting selected that there was no apprehension of threat to India’s security from Chinese nuclear arsenals, as the superpower deterrent was sufficient to meet the Chinese threat, and India need not “devise specific arrangements with either of the two superpowers or to go in for its own deterrent.” K. Subramanyam the then Director of IDSA wrote in the July 1970 IDSA journal. “There are few people who today look at Chinese threat in terms of China using its ballistic missiles to destroy Indian cities. Even the most ardent advocate of an Indian weapon programme does not visualize the Chinese threat in such crude terms.”

There were however, others who maintained that Chinese could use tactical nuclear weapons in a limited Himalayan confrontation. The government spokesman maintained that the Chinese possession of nuclear weapons had been fully taken into account in assessing the threat to India’s security and sustaining India’s decision not to go in for nuclear weapons. The statements of the Prime Minister and Defence Minister indicated that in case India was threatened by China it would not remain a bilateral affair. However, at the same time it was denied that India was under nuclear umbrella of any power or would prefer to have such a nuclear umbrella.

The Hindu’s political correspondent also felt that now “few in formatted people in India” perceived a real Chinese threat, though he himself was quite clear about the Chinese threat when he wrote on 2nd June 1970, “but the very proximity and enormity of Chinese power leaves no alternative for India except to go in for an adequate nuclear deterrent of its own and is only a question of time before Indian is obliged to enter the race by the sheer force of circumstances”.

However, despite this dimension of the Chinese threat the debate on the bomb continued and those who favoured it argued that it was essential for India’s power projection profile in the corridors of global power, as it would ensure dominant regional power status after the Bangladesh war, and might quicken the normalisation of relations with China.

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The Government of India, under the leadership of Mrs. Indira Gandhi strongly favoured keeping the nuclear weapon option open. However, the government’s response to the mounting pressure to develop a deterrent to China was an impressive nuclear power programme for the next ten years to provide the country a balanced nuclear infrastructure along with a space programme. The whole programme was termed as Sarabhai profile announced in 1970 but adopted next year after Mrs. Gandhi’s electoral victory in the general election.61

The programme also had envisaged one or more nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, as the government was convinced about the utility of the underground storages and hydroelectric dams. And since there is no difference between a peaceful and non-peaceful nuclear explosion, it could possibly serve the political purpose as well that India could demonstrate that it could make the bomb. The Prime Minister, however, rejected all speculations that India was interested in making a bomb, particularly for economic reasons, as the launching of a nuclear weapon programme would mean earmarking heavy amounts both for the nuclear and the conventional weapons, which India could not afford. The preparations for a ‘peaceful explosion’ continued and this had a decisive influence on the nuclear bomb debate, where an overwhelming section of the elite population favoured India going nuclear as per a sample survey conducted by the Indian Institute of Public opinion.62 The West, however, considered any ‘peaceful explosion’ India’s ‘nuclear plunge’.

A climate had been created by the public debate on the issue where it was expected that the government, as it boasted of its technical capabilities should take a decision in favour of the bomb. However, doubts were also expressed about relevancy to mobilise the material strengths intellectual integrity and manpower resources needed for a comprehensive nuclear weapon programme.63 Both Sarabhai Profile and the Pokharan had given birth to widespread speculations that ultimately the government would take a decision in favour of the nuclear bomb. The doubts proved correct and the leadership buckled, under what pressures, one does not know.

61 Vikram Sarabhai was then Chairman of Atmoic Energy Commission.
62 Bhabanisen Gupta, p. 6.
and continued to stick to the policy of nuclear ambivalence even after the Pokharan explosion.

The Janata government under Morarji Desai’s Prime Ministership declared its commitment to the Nehruvian policy of never making a nuclear bomb. Morarji Desai, an ardent opponent of the nuclear option, considered the Pokharan explosion a mistake and also decided not to conduct any more nuclear explosion. However, Morarji Desai had to modify Nehur’s nuclear policy since a number of developments had taken place since his death which included, relatively sophisticated level of India’s nuclear technology and the momentum it had acquired, the autonomy of India’s nuclear programme, India’s nuclear option; its non-signing of the NPT, and the Pokharan explosion with its adverse international reaction. Consequently, what emerged was a policy based on five negatives: India would not manufacture nuclear weapons; would not carry out any more nuclear explosions unless absolutely necessary; would not sign the NPT unless there was convincing progress towards nuclear disarmament; would not open its nuclear facilities to international inspection except on a reciprocal basis; and would not submit to international pressure in respect of its nuclear policy which would hurt the country’s national interest. India’s nuclear policy now had to be tailored to meet the new government’s foreign policy towards its neighbours which emphasized regional cooperation in South Asia, and since Pakistan was agitated by Pokharan and had committed itself towards mobilizing resources to match India’s nuclear capability, India decided to soft play its nuclear policy and hence the new posture. It even reversed Mrs. Gandhi’s stand and did not vote against Pakistan’s proposal to make South Asia nuclear weapons freezone at the UN General Assembly in 1977 and 1978.

As Morarji’s policy, particularly his displeasure with the Pokharan, and his decision regarding renunciation of further nuclear explosive experiments for peaceful purposes disappointed those who had expected a realistic response from the Indian government in view of the emerging Pakistan nuclear threat. Thus, on the one hand,

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he was positively hostile to PNEs, but the same time “accepted the broad parameters of the Indian posture of refusing to foreclose the nuclear weapon option”. Morarji Desai’s nuclear policy, however, became a target of severe criticism and one analyst went to the extent of terming it as a ‘nuclear Minich’.

The Pokharan explosion, it may be mentioned, is supposed to have caused serious setbacks to India’s nuclear power programme as all the external cooperation was withdrawn. Particularly Canada withdrew the nuclear cooperation, resulting in the cutting off supplies of heavy water, which India was compelled to import from the Soviet Union under stringent IAEA safeguard agreements including the ‘pursuit clause’.

The interim government of Charan Singh abandoned the flexibility of Desai’s government. The revelations of Pakistan’s nuclear weapon programme – its efforts to build uranium enrichment and reprocessing facilities, and the fast progress towards acquisition of nuclear explosive capability – was perceived as a serious threat to India. The Indian Government’s attitude now seemed to be becoming more ‘hawkish’. The emerging Pakistan nuclear threat made Indian government adopt a more active defence in support of its nuclear option C. Subramaniam, the Defence Minister in Charan Singh Government, hinted at the prospects that India might be compelled to go nuclear before long and identified Pakistan as the most likely stimulant in India’s defence strategy in the next decade. He said this is an address to the National Defence College, New Delhi, in October 1979.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi, after she returned to power in 1980, continued with policy of nuclear ambiguity. But a major development in the region-Soviet invasion of Afghanistan – had resulted in US overtures to Pakistan to restore bilateral security relationship with a view to converting Pakistan into a frontline state. This

66 Vanaik and Bidwai, p. 267.
obviously provided Pakistan an opportunity to intensify its nuclear weapon programme clandestinely. The US overlooked Pakistan’s nuclear weapon programme despite the definite evidence that it was engaged in building nuclear weapon capabilities. The Reagan Administration followed by the Bush Administration, continued to certify till October 1990 that Pakistan was not building nuclear weapon capability. Consequently, the Indian government was faced with a situation where supporters of the Indian nuclear bomb could argue convincingly for a change in policy.

However, Mrs. Gandhi stuck to the earlier position. But it was also made clear that a change or even a resumption of nuclear tests could be undertaken if India’s national security demanded. However, Mrs. Gandhi’s nuclear policy, had three fundamental components:

1. A dual character of nuclear programme developing simultaneously civilian and military capabilities,

2. Keeping the weapon option open and sustaining it at progressively higher levels, and

3. Deliberately sending conflicting signals on whether and how India would go nuclear.

During Rajiv Gandhi’s period the same policy continued: the policy of nuclear ambivalence, criticism of the non-proliferation regime on almost the same lines. However, the nuclear warnings became more frequent, and amongst the positive steps, India under Rajiv Gandhi suggested a time-bound Action Plan to rid the world of nuclear weapons by the first decade of the twenty-first century. Governments following Rajiv Gandhi also have continued with the same policy of keeping the weapon option open, except that consequent upon the changes at the global level, the pressure on India to close this option forever, either by signing the NPT or by reaching a regional non-proliferation arrangement has been mounting.

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70 Rodney Jones, p. 115.
71 Vanaik and Praful Bidwai, p. 267.
The present government of Narasimha Roa is in a predicament following pressures of the US on the issue of finding some regional solution to the problem of nuclear proliferation in South Asia. India’s growing dependence on the US and the international financial institutions has raised the government’s vulnerability level to abandon nuclear weapon option.

The justification for India’s retention of its policy of nuclear ambiguity since the 1960s has varied depending upon the threat perception. During the 60s it was the growing Chinese nuclear arsenals, which provided the main consideration. And subsequently, particularly since the early 1980s, it has been Pakistan’s systematic march towards the acquisition of the nuclear weapon capability, which has fuelled the Indian nuclear threat perceptions.

Pusillanimously, the elite, strategic analysts, the media men, and the think tanks advising the Government of India on nuclear policy, have systematically and erroneously downplayed the threat from the expanding Chinese nuclear arsenals and their delivery system by giving meaningless and unrealistic justifications in favour of such contention. They have been like: complete absence of any Chinese attempt at nuclear blackmail, the historical experience of living with the Chinese bomb,’ and progress towards the normalization of Sino-Indian relations, particularly the Sino-Indian border dispute.\textsuperscript{72}

But realistically, the most justifiable and reasonable argument for India’s retention of nuclear ambiguity, or keeping the nuclear weapon option open is the Chinese nuclear threat. It is unfortunate that the successive Indian governments have underplayed this threat to Indian security, particularly in view of the fact that the Chinese have been colluding with and supporting Pakistan’s nuclear weapon programme. India’s position on NPT and its opposition to declaration of South Asia as nuclear weapons free zone would be more convincing if it openly pinpoints to the security threat emanating from the Chinese nuclear weapons and the nuclear tipped missiles deployed in Tibet than either hammering the discriminatory character of the treaty, need for global disarmament and Pakistan’s nuclear weapon programme.

\textsuperscript{72} Vanaik and Bidwai, p. 26.
Unless the Chinese threat to India is taken care of no regional solution of the proliferation problem would be worth any meaning from India’s security perspective. It is equally flawed to overplay the Pakistan nuclear weapon threat. There is no guarantee that China would not indulge in nuclear blackmail in future. It probably was deterred to do so in the 1965 and 1971 conflicts because of implicit Soviet nuclear umbrella as well as the overall Soviet-US nuclear deterrence.

India does not seem to have a locus standi to criticize Pakistan or raise alarms about its nuclear weapon capability a sit acquired its threshold status because India had done it earlier. Given the state of relations between the two regional rivals who already have fought three wars, it was inevitable for Pakistan to intensify its nuclear weapon programme after India achieved its threshold status in 1974 as a result of the Pokharan PNE.

Pakistan’s nuclear threat now is a reality must occupy due weightage in India’s defence strategy. Thus, India’s security threat perception now must include both the Chinese nuclear weapons and Pakistan’s nuclear capability. It seems unrealistic to underplay Chinese nuclear threat potential because it is more remote and of long term in nature. It is a reality to which India just cannot close its eyes. The position in which India has landed itself now, it must own the full responsibility. It is a case of miserable failure of chalking out a right strategy, right diplomacy and right perspective.

It equally seems exaggerated, and not appreciative of India’s position and security interest when too much credence is given to Pakistan’s coillingness to explore the possibilities of regional denuclearisation, and India’s failure to counter Pakistan’s ‘peace offensive’. However, it is true that Pakistan has ‘less difficulty in defining its insecurities and fears’ than India, and it is for that reason that Pakistan shows its enthusiasm for denuclearisation which can be related to its insecurities. Moreover, the reason why now China is not perceived as a major nuclear threat by the government and the strategic analysts is the fact that the gap between the Chinese nuclear power and what India can develop if it so decides has become so wide that

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India cannot ‘accumulate an adequate nuclear arsenal as a counter deterrent to China’ and not that the threat in any way has disappeared.

It is a position where India has accepted an inferior position and is not in a position to challenge as equal counter deterrent. However, the supporters of the Indian bomb feel that though India cannot match the Chinese nuclear arsenals, it could still develop a ‘minimum deterrence’ which could be effective both for China and Pakistan. K. Subramanyan, Former Director of the IDSA, and General K. Sundarji, too subscribe to the same view. They have strongly argued in favour of ‘minimum deterrent’. Though their contentions have been contested and countered on strategic and technical grounds.

India’s posture of nuclear ambiguity is also credited for the emergence of a ‘nuclear equation between India and Pakistan’, though India has been opposing outsiders’ efforts to create a situation of parity between two. Because of constant reference to Pakistan’s nuclear preparation in justifying its own status as a threshold power. India has been endorsing the validity of the equation. Actually, India either should not have indulged in the 1974 PNE, or otherwise it should have carried it to a logical end and thereby achieving a position of nuclear dominance vis-à-vis Pakistan. They tragedy of Indian defence planning and strategy is that it has been primarily Pakistan centric.

A major blunder of India’s nuclear diplomacy vis-à-vis Pakistan is assumed to be Rajiv Gandhi government’s efforts to convince the US ‘to exert pressure on Pakistan to prevent the latter from pursuing its nuclear goals’. This “became the only active component of India’s strategy to counter Pakistani and international pressure to take some action in preventing the outbreak of a regional arms race. This was not only humiliating but spoke of Indian diplomatic impotence, that we had to plead with the same country to exercise influence over Pakistan to restrain its nuclear weapon programme, which all these years had “demonstrated little determination to curb Pakistan’s activities in any significant way,” and has on the contrary been encouraging its clandestine nuclear weapon programme indirectly by regularly waiving the symington, Solarz, Glenn and Pressler amendments, “the violation of
which would have otherwise resulted in US sanctions and aid cutoffs to Pakistan.\textsuperscript{74} India must understand that “even if the US was to change its behaviour in this regard in the future, its primary motivation is unlikely to be a simple concern about or receptivity to Indian interests”. The US duplicity and softness towards Pakistan’s nuclear programme has recently been reflected in the way commercial sales of arms to Pakistan continued even after economic and military aid to Pakistan was cut off from October 1990, for lack of certification by the President as required by the Pressler amendment to the US Economic Aid Act 1961.

\textbf{INDIA’S SECURITY ENVIRONMENT AND NUCLEAR WEAPON OPTION}

The nuclear debate (whether India should go nuclear or not) which began in the mid sixties after China’s attack on India in 1962 and afterwards its first nuclear test at Lop Nor in 1964 in which political parties, scientists and the intelligentsia have been involved has revolved around the following strands of ideas:

1. Unequivocal support for a nuclear weapon programme;
2. Preference for nuclear option, and
3. Opposition to nuclear weapons under most circumstances.

As the 1995 NPT Review/extension conference is approaching the pressure on India is increasing to solve the problem of nuclear proliferation in South Asia. Some suggestions to cope with the new situation are being advanced like that India should sign the treaty but only as a nuclear weapon state which means that either its status should be accepted as a nuclear weapon state, which is technically not possible, or India should declare itself as nuclear with all the incumbent consequences and join the Treaty. A number of other ideas are in circulation which will be discussed under the section on nuclear option open to India.

Any decision relating to the ‘nuclear weapon option’, in the ultimate analysis must gear to India’s security and national interest. A look at India’s security

\textsuperscript{74} Vanaik, p. 269.
environment amply bears out that there has been no let up in security threats to India. As mentioned earlier, there are differences of opinion regarding the threat to India’s security from the growing nuclear and missile capabilities of China, and the possible acquisition nuclear capability by Pakistan, which by now has officially announced that it has acquired the capability to assemble a nuclear and delivery capability as well as Pakistan’s nuclear capability and the nuclear collusion between the two.

A position paper written for the National Seminar on India’s Security held in New Delhi, in 1982, visioned a scenario of nuclear asymmetry in the early 90’s when Pakistan will have a bomb and India will not, wherein, India’s conventional superiority would be neutralized and Pakistan would make a bid for Kashmir by effectively deterring a counter-attack by holding out a nuclear threat. Stephen Cohen, whose visit to Pakistan and his discussions with them, had influenced the position, was reportedly told by the Pakistanis that the possession of nuclear weapons would enable Pakistan to reopen the Kashmir issue under the umbrella provided by the nuclear weapons and Pakistan’s nuclear capability would ‘paralyse not only the Indian nuclear decision but also Indian conventional forces and a brash Pakistani strike to liberate Kashmir might go unchallenged if the Indian leadership was weak of indecisive.’ The same paper had argued that ‘unlike nuclear China, a nuclear Pakistan might have a disintegrating impact on the Indian politic body.’

The National Seminar on Security concluded that India faced nuclear threat from three quarters: the superpowers, great powers like China and regional powers like Pakistan. Whereas the “Superpower nuclear threat was not taken seriously by the strategists, the Chinese nuclear weapon capability was taken seriously in the sixties but there is no evidence that India is contemplating steps to match the Chinese nuclear capability”. The main thrust of the Indian strategists is at present directed at neutralizing the consequences of Pakistan’s nuclear programme.

The Pakistani nuclear threat was not perceived as per traditional nuclear strategy in terms of first or second strike capability, but more in “terms of nuclear

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blackmail with a limited number of low yield war heads delivered by aircraft,” which may be used by Pakistan to gain politico-military advantages in certain areas like Kashmir. There is almost a consensus that Pakistan is capable of resorting to nuclear blackmail to coerce India if and when possible and acquisition of a few nuclear weapons would provide it parity with India, which it has always sought.\(^\text{76}\)

The recent declaration by Pakistan Foreign Secretary and followed by other official statements that Pakistan has acquired the capability to manufacture a nuclear bomb but has no intention to make a bomb, that is would use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, has brought it on par with India, in terms of its nuclear status, though for outsiders Pakistan had acquired this capability much earlier. The present turmoil in Kashmir, the training of J&K militants across the border in Pakistan, and Pakistan’s continued support to those militants with money and weapons and its interest in carrying out the low intensity all seem to vindicate the projections made in early 1980’s that once Pakistan acquires the nuclear weapon capability it would try to intensify its involvement in Kashmir and try to seek a solution to the problem under the overall umbrella of its nuclear capability. It now appears to be confident that it has succeeded in neutralizing India’s conventional superiority. India responded to Pakistan’s declaration on the same lines, i.e. that it would keep the nuclear weapon option open. Pakistan’s diplomatic move to declare its capabilities to produce a nuclear bomb has earned it handsome payoffs. Now, it can strongly bargain for any denuclearisation proposal in South Asia from a position of equality. It can exploit its proposals for south Asia nuclear weapons free zone, to make major diplomatic gains in the international forces. It is already showing off its non-proliferation credentials by reiterating its position on the NPT. It has put India on the defensive. It knows that India is not likely to accept any of the proposals favoured by it. It can thus diplomatically accuse India of being responsible for nuclear arms race in South Asia.

Indian decision makers with their ostrich-like responses to Chinese nuclear weapon programme since the mid-sixties should by now have realized that China

\(^\text{76}\) Bhabani Sengupta, p. 40, V.S. Bajpai, pp. 133-34.
means business and has all the intentions and capability to become one of the powerful nuclear weapon states, and has scant concern for nuclear disarmament. It finds no contradictions in its own possession of nuclear weapons and its commitment to the cause of disarmament. While the other nuclear weapon states, are engaged in disarmament negotiations, China has conducted a mighty one megaton nuclear weapon test, and interestingly this happened when the President of India was on an official visit to China. India should have no illusions about China, and any optimism consequent upon improved relations between the two countries should not blur Indian vision to the nuclear threat which China poses to India. Chinese nuclear threat to India, particularly its deployment of medium range missiles at Gormu, north-east of Lhasa in Tibet has by now been well established. These missiles posses the capability to attack targets in some parts of India. Over the years Chinese nuclear weapon and missile capabilities have increased tremendously. It now possesses ICBMs, IRBM, MRBMs and SLBMs.  

As discussed earlier, India had all along shown serious concern emanating from the Chinese nuclear weapons. The tragedy is that it never took it so seriously that it felt the needs mobilize whatever resources it had and provide an appropriate response. It always showed concern and look shelter under the phase, ‘the situation is under constant review’, till it reached a stage where it had no answer to the Chinese capabilities. In the 1960s, it had highlighted particularly the ‘special problem of security against nuclear attack or nuclear blackmail’, obviously hinting to China.

It may be mentioned that as early as 17 August 1959, India’s Permanent representative to the UN, C.S. Jha, while requesting for the inclusion of suspension of nuclear and thermonuclear test on the agenda of 1959 session of the UN General

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Assembly, observed, “The Government of India has noted with concern that the number of countries possessing nuclear weapons may soon be increased and thus considerably add to the current dangerous possibilities”. It seems both China and France was being indirectly referred to.\textsuperscript{79}

India showed serious concern about Chinese nuclear threat to Indian security at various platforms and press conferences.\textsuperscript{80} The Government of India through its statement at the ENDC, UN Disarmament commission and other forums, had tried to make it clear that it would be difficult for India to “accept a treaty that failed to constrain Chinese nuclear weapon development, let alone that gave China a privileged status as a nuclear weapon power.”\textsuperscript{81} India’s representative to UN, B.N. Chakravarty, said on 4 May 1965, six months after Chinese went nuclear, “I must point out the danger that some countries may find necessary, in the interest of their own country, to acquire nuclear weapons, if proliferation is allowed to go on. We must, therefore, stop proliferation urgently.”\textsuperscript{82}

Despite these warnings, concern and threat perception, the Indian response was confined to words, idealistic rhetorics, and moralism. India had no strategic answer to it.

One wonders why, when India was so much concerned about its security from China, did not think of an adequate nuclear response when that status would have been justifiably accepted by the nuclear weapon states. Moreover, then the Chinese nuclear arsenals were also modest. The only logical explanation then can be that either the claims which had been made that India could go nuclear within 18 months after a decision was made were empty or the leadership was absolutely shortsighted. Instead India kept on harping unrealistically that nuclear weapons states should abolish their nuclear weapons when in reality they were piling up more sophisticated weapons.

\textsuperscript{79} Mirchandani, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{80} News Conference of India on Disarmament, p. 178; V.C. Trivedi’s statement to ENDC, 23 May 1967, Document on Disarmament 1967, p. 237.
\textsuperscript{82} USACDA, Documents on Disarmament, 1965, p. 149.
But Indian leadership has always lived in a world of make believe, never coming out of the idealist would and hypocritical postures. Going nuclear at that time and keeping pace with the Chinese would have lessened its security threat from China, and would have automatically taken care of Pakistan. Probably the most opportune time for India to go nuclear was in 1964 immediately after the Chinese acquisition of an atomic weapon. It supposedly had the capability at the time and firstly there was no justification for any wrath and punishment from the NWS, and even if there was, that would have been within the sustainable limits.

It let the opportunity go wasted on the second occasion when it conducted its so called PNE in 1974. Instead of hiding under the cover of hypocrisy India should have declared itself as nuclear. In any case it had to suffer in its nuclear programme consequent upon the non-proliferation policies of Canada and USA, as the rest of the would never considered it a peaceful explosion, as from their point of view there is hardly any difference between the peaceful and military explosion.

The Indian opposition to NPT should primarily emanate from the Chinese nuclear weapons threat and the failure of NWS to provide any security guarantees to the non-nuclear weapons states from threats or attacks from the nuclear weapon states along with its discriminatory character. And this should be stated in categorical and unequivocal terms. Making too much of Pakistan’s nuclear weapon programme rather than highlighting the Chinese nuclear weapons and its missile development programme is simply to undermine the real nature of nuclear threat. It is the projection of Chinese nuclear threat which would find supporters amongst the staunch advocates of nuclear non-proliferations regime in the nuclear weapon states. It is interesting to note that now even the US has started appreciating Indian security dilemma because of presence of Chinese missiles in Tibet. Thus, any Indian response to the pressure for signing NPT or regioned non-proliferation settlement should keep this aspect in mind.

However, now India’s emphasis on Pakistan’s nuclear capability is justified weapon technology where in Beijing has reportedly helped Pakistan by providing a
nuclear weapon design, as well as is supposed to have supplied M-11 missiles.\(^8\) The asymmetrical relationship assumes a threatening character only when the relationship is adverbial. However, it is argued that asymmetrical nuclear relationship should not be taken lightly, as the nuclear weapon have been used only in such a scenario and if used again with in all likelihood be against a state that cannot retaliate\(^8\). Moreover, probably the use of these weapons in a limited number will not worry the rest of world unduly, as the use of Chemical weapons by Iraq against Iran in which about 50,000 persons died. Moreover, the historical experience also shows that a nation’s friendship and policies change sometimes at a fairly short notice though capabilities alter only over a much longer period. It is argued strongly that discussions to improve mutual relations and settle border dispute must be taken with all sincerity but while evaluating its security environment India must take into account the growing Chinese nuclear capability and ambitions and other military modernizations.

However, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and of cold war and the emergence of the US as the single superpower, Chinese joining the NPT and its fast normalization of relations with Russia, and its close economic and political contacts with the US, all have added new dimensions to India’s security environment where India possibly cannot depend on a general deterrent and has to evolve its own strategy to ensure its security against any possible nuclear attack or blackmail either from China or from Pakistan.

In addition, India’s security scenario has also undergone changes with the break-up of the former Soviet Union and the emergence of independent states, three of them in possession of nuclear weapons. They have yet to sign the NPT. Some of the new states have strong Islamic roots. Almost all of them have declared themselves against any kind of fundamentalism and Pakistan so far has not been able to make any breakthrough into these central Asian states despite its initiatives and persistent efforts. India, however, cannot and should not be oblivious to Pakistan’s

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\(^8\) For details on Sino-Pak nuclear relations. R.R. Subramanian, India, Pakistan, China : Defence and Nuclear Tangle in South Asia. (ABC Publishing House, 1989).

links with West Asia as an Islamic country and its pursuit of Islamic bomb. Now all the Central Asian republics have joined the organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), which on many occasions has taken anti-Indian stand purely on religious grounds. Pakistan has already activated its diplomacy to win over these republics, which till now was not possible as the relations outside the framework of the USSR were unthinkable. It is a new factor in India’s security, which would be quite decisive for its future security planning.

India also cannot ignore the developments in the middle East, particularly in the Gulf, where even after the defeat of Iraq, massive US army is deployed in the region. In addition to the earlier involvement of Saudi Arabia and Libya in Pakistan’s Islamic bomb, Pakistan now, because of its military support during the Gulf war, has made a position for itself, which is more favourable. The Saudi Arabians have been involved in Pakistan’s nuclear weapon programme by providing finances and now have reportedly transferred hundreds of USSR supplied Iraqi tanks captured by Saudi Arabia and the Allied forces during the war.

Pakistan’s linkage with the Islamic world has another dimension which seriously impinges on India’s security. Since India has a sizeable chunk of Muslim population, the Islamic factor in the Indo-Pak relations would always have an important role to play. The Middle Eastern countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran have on so many occasions reacted on the internal problems of India involving Muslim population even at the cost of being accused of intervening in India’s domestic affairs. A new actor in this drama is Afghanistan with an Islamic fundamentalist government in the saddle. Recently, both Iran and Afghanistan have made statements, which not only are gross interference in India’s internal affairs but also should be viewed with all seriousness while evaluating India’s security environment.

During his recent visit to Pakistan, the Iranian President Rafsanjani’ listed Kashmir as an ‘Islamic problem’ about which Tehran was as much concerned as Pakistan. Addressing the joint sitting of the Pakistan Parliament he said, “Kashmir is your problem and also our problem because it is an Islamic problem’. He favoured the “implementation of the UN resolution on Kashmir”. Expressing solidarity with
Pakistan he said, “we have a common destiny” adding that anything which harms Pakistan generally speaking ‘harms Iran’. Apart from his being unhappy for the non-implementation of UN resolution on Kashmir, he observed, “that barring geographical consideration, Pakistan being closer to Kashmir and Iran a trifle away, his country shared Islamabad’s concern on the issue.”

Terming Kashmir problem as an Islamic problem is nothing but gross distortion, travesty of facts and crude fundamentalism.

The responses from Afghanistan are disturbing as well. President Mojaddidiin an interview is reported to have said, that the treatment of Indian muslims would determine his governments attitude to India and Indian’s. In September 1992, during his official visit to Pakistan, Afghanistan President Burhauudin Rabbaniat a banquet in his honour made harsh remarks on alleged Indian oppression in Kashmi Vally. Subsequently at the press conference he said, “we condemn the oppression of muslims wherever they may be,” He also endorsed Pakistan’s stand that the issue be resolved in accordance with the UN resolution.

In the changed security environment of India, it would be suicidal to ignore or underplay these developments as they have a direct impact on India’s security. Any decision on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation must take cognizance of Pakistan’s linkages with Islamic fundamentalist countries. Whatever, the Indian concern about such responses, the fact remains that this will continue to remain a problem for India as Pakistan will not stop interfering in India’s internal affairs. Pakistan’s continued involvement in providing arms and training to secessionist forces in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab also cannot be excluded from any security appreciation of India.

A doctrine is something taught. To the degree that a state is implicitly threatening to use nuclear weapons in the future, even nuclear weapons that have not yet been built or are in a military inventory (the nuclear “option”), this intent must be communicated in some way to a potential adversary. In that sense, doctrine differs

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85 The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, September 8, 1992.
86 The Pioneer, New Delhi, August 27, 1992.
from strategy, which is essentially the science of planning and directing large-scale military operations that must remain largely secret.

Here, clearly two problems present themselves in defining and elaborating India’s nuclear doctrine. First, it has never been publicly articulated. Second, most doctrines have been articulated in the wake of the overt development and deployment of nuclear weapons. The Indian case is different because there is no overt weaponization, but only an “option.” This may explain the absence of a well-articulated doctrine because the existence of one could lead to the assumption that the country has indeed weaponized.

Furthermore, there is the problem of secrecy. Were a doctrine to be elaborated, either it would have to be discussed openly, thus giving away some military advantage, or the government might have to opt for the cumbersome American way where the doctrine is elaborated officially, but is kept vague and has very little in common with the actual but classified operational strategy of the services.

Given these limitations, why should we hunt for an Indian nuclear doctrine? Because it is essential if we are to examine the credibility and capability of the nuclear weapon option and the ability to communicate the possibilities inherent in this option to the other side. It is also imperative to assess the doctrine so as to evaluate the stability of nuclear deterrence in South Asia.

DEFINING THE DOCTRINE

How would one go about defining India’s nuclear doctrine and determining its various elements? Clearly, there are two ways to do this: first, by looking at official statements and, second, by assessing the doctrine’s physical capability in terms of the weapons and delivery system or the absence thereof.

Taking the latter point first, it is evident that from the late 1970s and early 1980s India acquired a nuclear, biological, and chemical defense (NBCD) capability and the ability to fight in this hostile scenario—well before it acquired the capability
of missile-based nuclear strikes. By the late 1980s India may also have acquired the ability to launch nuclear attacks using short- and long-range missiles.

Was this capability created by accident or by design? Evidence shows that the NBCD capability was more a product of chance than deliberate policy, the result of acquiring equipment from the Soviet Union that was inherently NBCD capable. However, it is noteworthy that the military, especially the navy and the mechanized infantry, was quick to adopt this capability in their syllabus. In fact, in the mid-1980s the Indian navy set up a special NBCD school, and the mechanized infantry regularly trained under mock NBC conditions, including the decontamination process.

What of the capability to launch missile-based nuclear strikes? Were these weapons without a strategy? Again, the indications are that these weapons were created around a nascent strategy of deterrence. Indeed, one might argue that the decision to go in for these missiles in the early 1980s was belated because army officers had argued in favor of tactical nuclear weapons capability from the mid-1960s (soon after the Chinese atomic test), essentially to deter the possibility of a Chinese nuclear attack along the Himalayan border. The navy, which was originally indifferent to nuclear weapons until the 1970s, also appears to have changed its position dramatically, especially after the presence of Task Force 74 led by the USS Enterprise in the Bay of Bengal at the height of the 1971 war for Bangladesh. This single incident seems to have made a deep impression on naval planners, who subsequently spoke of acquiring the ability to deter such superpower intervention in the future. The air force, which till the early 1980s lacked deep-strike capability, also indicated its willingness to keep its nuclear option open.

India’s nuclear strategy has evolved from complete rejection to an increasing but invisible factor in the military equation. While adhering to the basic principle of “keeping the weapon option open,” the strategy has moved from one of no clear articulation of nuclear capability in the strategic calculus to one of recessed deterrence or non-weaponized deterrence.
This evolution coincided with the expansion of both the internal and external roles of the Indian military. Externally, there was a dramatic increase in military activity from 1984 onwards when India began Operation Meghdoot to wrest the Siachen Glacier from Pakistan. By February 1987, the armed forces were engaged in two confrontations with Pakistan (one on the Siachen Glacier and the other in Punjab and Rajasthan, during Exercise Brasstacks) while simultaneously challenging the Chinese army in the northeast and planning an airlift of troops to the beleaguered northern region of Sri Lanka. Subsequently, Indian forces intervened in the Maldives in 1988. Around the same time, the nation had acquired state-of-the-art MIG-29s and Mirage-2000s, deployed a nuclear-powered submarine, and had acquired a second aircraft carrier.

Domestically, the army witnessed its most extensive deployment since independence. It was used in Punjab to flush out terrorists from the Golden Temple; deployed in Assam to tackle the insurgency and then countered the Kashmiri insurgency that had begun around 1989. In fact, since 1985 the army had been on permanent deployment for internal security duties in Punjab, Assam, and later Kashmir.

This expansion was also indicated in the growth of the defense budget through the 1980s. Significantly, defense spending for 1983–84 stood at 3.8 percent of the GNP, a level matched only during the Sino–Indian and the Bangladesh wars. In 1986–87, the defense outlay rose by 27 percent.

The enhanced regional military role was conducted under the aegis of the Indira Doctrine. This policy was first enunciated in July 1983 by Indira Gandhi, who asserted that India would neither intervene in the domestic affairs of any states in the region, nor tolerate such intervention by an outside power. If external assistance was needed to meet an internal crisis, states should first look within the region for help. This policy, described by Indian analysts as the Indian version of the Monroe Doctrine, would have been toothless without an effective military machine.

Clearly, then, the 1980s was the crucial decade that witnessed the significant marriage between the availability of new conventional and nuclear-capable weapons
and the evolution of a doctrine that “used” them. What were the factors that led to this tremendous rise in the role of the armed forces, the growth of the nuclear war fighting and strike capability, and the enunciation of the Indira Doctrine in the 1980s? The key to the answers lies in the background in which this evolution took place.

OLD CONFLICTS AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

While the 1970s and 1980s were a period of intense superpower rivalry, the only such conflict that directly affected India’s policy was the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The subsequent American decision to arm Pakistan led to a $1.6 billion military package, including weaponry ranging from the F-16s to the seaborne Harpoon missiles. Further, the presence of the Soviets in Afghanistan enabled Pakistan to carry out a nuclear program under the noses of the Americans. In contrast, Indo–U.S. relations were marked by irritants over the sale of parts for the Tarapur nuclear plant, the sale of a Cray supercomputer, and even the reciprocal exchange of military officers to the defense college of each country. During this period, there was also close cooperation between China and Pakistan, including joint defense production programs and perhaps the supply of fissile material and nuclear weapons designs. Finally, there were differences between India and several other states, especially the United States, over the law of the sea negotiations and the status of Antarctica.

On the other hand, Indian–Soviet ties grew stronger, and Moscow responded favorably to the Indian request for a new generation of fighters, tanks, infantry vehicles, and even a nuclear-powered submarine. By the end of the decade, India was perceived as very dependent on the Soviet Union for both political support and military equipment.

REGIONAL FACTORS AND NEW CONFLICTS

The close proximity between India and the smaller states of the region has always bred conflict. First, cultural and ethnic interdependencies defy artificial border demarcation. Second, several of the smaller states in the region are poor even
by sub-continental standards, and consequently there is a flow of illegal economic refugees into India. Finally, conflict is inherent in the variance between India’s secularism, democracy, and federal structure (and linguistic autonomy) and the practices of several of her smaller neighbors—several of which were under military rule and undemocratic monarchies during the 1980s.

Over the years, two broad Indian regional policies became visible. In one, India’s policies were pacific cooperation, characterized by a readiness to solve mutual problems within a regional framework. The Nehruvian approach, Janata policies from 1977 to 1979, and Rajiv Gandhi's first year in office followed this pattern. In the second, India pursued a more status-conscious policy with the objective of enhancing its power. This occurred during Mrs. Gandhi’s tenure and for most of Rajiv Gandhi’s years.

The various changes in Indian policy, including the promulgation of the Indira Doctrine, may have contributed to the deterioration of relations with Pakistan in the early 1980s. Confrontation rose in new areas, such as the Siachen Glacier, and in a series of provocative military exercises. But there was also a growing concern with Pakistan’s expanding nuclear weapons capability. This led to a rethinking of the traditional “option” policy. Before the 1974 Indian atomic test, India’s nuclear option was directed at the perceived nuclear threat from China. By the early to the mid 1980s, Indian analysts were convinced that Pakistan had put together an effective nuclear weapon. Thereafter, India had to consider the possibility of a nuclear threat from two fronts.

This perception of a dual nuclear threat is evident in India’s military missile program, launched sometime in 1983. Instead of concentrating merely on Pakistan and building a single missile capable of a range from 250 to about 1,000 kilometers, India opted for two separate nuclear-capable missiles, the short-range Prithvi and the longer range (1,500 to 2,000 kilometers) Agni, capable of striking targets as far as Beijing in the east and Tehran in the west.

It is in the context of this emerging deterrence relationship that most of the overt military operations—an era of violent peace—can be best explained. India and
Pakistan have not been involved in a conflict since the 1971 war—the longest period of peace in the 45-year troubled history of the two nations. Yet while there have been no wars, declared or undeclared, limited military confrontations have regularly erupted. These have taken the following forms: supporting indigenous militant movements in Punjab, Kashmir and Sindh; low-intensity conflicts and skirmishes along the disputed border; and a full-blown war in Siachen, confined to a very specific and limited area and conducted only with limited weapons.

Sino–Indian relations also deteriorated during the late 1980s. Ever since 1978 when China and Pakistan announced the opening of the strategic Karakoram Pass to the north of Kashmir, the Indians have been wary of the possibility of a joint Sino–Pakistan front. In 1986 India protested against an armed Chinese incursion in the Sumdorong Chu Valley of Arunachal Pradesh. Although the Indians began to push more troops into the area, the Chinese buildup continued. Around the same time, China began to deploy tactical nuclear missiles around the Lanzhou–Chengdu regions. According to one estimate, by 1988 the Chinese had deployed three missile divisions in the area.

NATIONAL EVENTS: A SPATE OF CRISES

Even by the standards of India’s troubled history since independence, the domestic situation in the 1980s was grim. As the center concentrated more and more power, relations with the states became warlike. During these years, the increased use of the army was a measure of the civilian bureaucracy’s failure to redress genuine grievances. Although some of the domestic crises were inevitable, others were created by the poor relationship between New Delhi and the state capitals.

The army has been increasingly employed for long periods to counter various separatist and insurrectionary movements. The seriousness of the threat is revealed by the number of people killed—16,000 since the Punjab movement began in the 1980s, 5,000 in Assam since 1979. This has led to the deployment of the army from the borders to within the country for internal security duties. According to one estimate, three and a half divisions had to be withdrawn from the border with China. In Punjab, 120,000 troops have been used for internal security; some of these troops
were previously part of the strike corps and had to trade their armor for rifles and machine guns.

Where does all this leave the Indian armed forces and nuclear doctrine? Three trends became evident within the armed forces during the 1980s. First, the issue of nuclear weapons, long considered a taboo, was openly discussed. Second, some services began to pave the way to the possible future induction of nuclear weapons into their arsenals. Third, several military operations clearly had a nuclear rationale, even if nuclear weapons were not in sight.

Taking the lead in the early 1980s, the army began to articulate how nuclear weapons could be fitted into their inventory and debated the concept of deterrence and the possible doctrine for their deployment. This was compiled in 1981 by the army’s own College of Combat at Mhow, then headed by Lieutenant General K. Sundarji.

Subsequently, the army pushed the Siachen issue and occupied the glacier in 1984. Although this particular battle had nothing to do with nuclear weapons, it is interesting that both sides have fought the battle as if they were typical nuclear weapons states indulging in limited war. The war for Siachen was not allowed to escalate, either in terms of space or weapons. Both sides pitched exactly the same type of weapons, and neither used the air force for bombardment. Moreover, neither side has attempted to extend the hostilities to other areas—a typical limited war scenario. And this pattern has been replicated in other skirmishes along the Line of Control in Kashmir.

Another possible indication of the “nuclearization” of the army was the high profile, aggressive, large-scale exercises, especially Exercise Brasstacks held in late 1986 and early 1987. Although some dimensions of this exercise are not clear, it appears that there was an operational aspect called Operation Trident, which involved mobilization for a war with Pakistan. If that was the case, then one possible rationale for this fourth round of war could have been the growing nuclear weapons capability of Pakistan and India’s military attempt to dictate its will before the nuclearization was complete. In that sense, Brasstacks provided the last opportunity
for a conventional war between India and Pakistan. This argument gains weight in
the wake of revelations that Brasstacks-Trident actually planned to capture the
Sukkar Barrage deep in Pakistan, thus virtually carving the country in two.

If there was any doubt that the army was seriously contemplating the nuclear
option, it was dissipated in the late 1980s after the first launch of the Prithvi, the
short-range nuclear-capable missile. The army claimed that the missile was
developed against a GSQR (General Staff Quality Requirement). After a series of
flight tests, the army top brass also announced that they were willing to induct the
missile into their arsenal. They even identified a regiment (the 60 Heavy Artillery
Regiment) as the first recipient of this weapons system.

Interestingly, only the army appears to have made a bid for the Prithvi, which
ties in with the logic of their being the force with tactical nuclear capability. This
was evident soon after the first flight of the Agni IRBM, when Sundarji, now the
army chief, categorically stated that this class of missile should be deployed and
operated by the air force.

The air force, which is intrinsically reluctant to accept untested weapons, did
not immediately endorse Sundarji’s contention. But significantly, they did not deny it
either. In fact, as early as 1982, just on the eve of the launch of the Agni program,
the then chief of air staff, Air Marshal Dilbagh Singh, stated that “deterrence will
have to be an important factor in our planning,” and while endorsing the ability to
absorb the developments in the technological fields, he asserted that “no option can
be foreclosed.”

It is no coincidence that, ever since the early 1980s and especially around
1984, there was a spate of reports of the Indian air force launching strikes against
Pakistan’s Kahuta nuclear facility, similar to the Israelis strike against Iraq’s nuclear
reactor. The induction of the Jaguar deep-strike aircraft in the early 1980s gave the
air force exactly that capability.

The Indian navy concentrated on building up a sea denial capability in
response to its inability to prevent a degree of American gunboat diplomacy during
the 1971 war for Bangladesh. To that extent, the availability of a submerged nuclear-powered platform was seen as the ideal solution, and senior Indian navy officers spoke regularly about the need for such a high-quality capability, one that could deter a putative nuclear weapons state from again intervening in a regional dispute against Indian interests. In the long term, some navy officers argued for the construction of a nuclear-powered but also nuclear-weapons-capable submarine, a ship that could not only defend against threats by others, but could deter such threats by threatening the homeland of intruding powers. In fact, India leased a nuclear-powered submarine from the Soviet Union for several years, but eventually returned it.

Thus it is evident that during the 1980s all three services contemplated the nuclearization of their forces. The army and the air force saw “nuclearization” in terms of acquiring nuclear weapons, and the navy saw it in terms of a nuclear-powered platform, initially for defensive purposes and ultimately for deterrence by punishment. Although subsequently there has been a visible rollback, in terms of both equipment and doctrine, the ground broken in the 1980s will be essential for the future development and evolution of an Indian nuclear doctrine.

The most important of nuclear doctrine is the character and capability of the force structure that a nuclear regime creates. Force structure planning flows from nuclear strategy objectives, prevailing environmental factors, the vulnerability of the force structure, the desired military-technological capability and so on. All of these have been analysed in previous chapters.

Having derived possible policy objectives, it now remains to evolve a credible employment policy to achieve the strategic aims. The substratum of the nuclear weapons employment policy is Targeting Philosophy which would aim at meting out the desired levels of assured punitive response to a nuclear initiative by the adversary, thereby contributing to the attainment of policy objective – deterrence. This in turn dictates the weapons capability, i.e. the minimum inescapable quality and quantity of weapon systems that would guarantee strikes on selected targets in the existing technological and security environment, and the deployment policy.
“Nuclear war planners spend most of their time selecting, examining, and ranking the potential targets, then matching the individual weapons to each.” This entails identifying: the targets to be threatened; analysing their vulnerabilities and force requirements to achieve the desired levels of punishment; the qualitative imperative that would guarantee that the required strikes actually materialise at the target; and the need to conform to the political contingencies that may arise.

This chapter will be devoted to formulating a possible targeting philosophy to meet a nuclear India’s strategic imperatives. It is intended to identify the targets that need to be threatened and make an assessment of damage to be inflicted. This would provide the basis to analyse the probabilities of arrival at target and, therefore, the weapons capability that must be created to support the employment policy.

**IMPERATIVES FOR A VIABLE NUCLEAR DETERRENT**

The Strategic Objectives derived in the previous chapter presage the creation of a nuclear weapons capability that would deter Pakistan, in the short term, from being tempted to launch a pre-emptive nuclear offensive; and China, in the long term, from indulging in any form of nuclear coercion. Therefore, it would be in order to analyse what would constitute the minimum deterrent in each case.

“Military deterrence simply means the process of convincing a potential enemy, by threat of force, that he is better off if he does not use military force against you.” The critical question here lies in the ‘psychological’ requirement of convincing the adversary without actual use of force. This is further exacerbated by the ambiguity in which States shroud their nuclear strategies and the complexities of ensuring a psychological balance in a world influenced by dynamic perceptonal changes. Deterrence can only be achieved by activating a negative mechanism in the adversary. “The enemy has to be persuaded that the deteror has the capacity to act; that in acting [he] could inflict costs greater than the advantages to be won from attaining the objective; and that [he] really would act as specified in the stated

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contingency”\textsuperscript{90}. There is, therefore, “...... a need to develop forces capable of inflicting some level of ‘unacceptable damage’ in a second strike mode against selected targets which might include military targets as well as industry and population centres”\textsuperscript{91}. Before deducing the precise force structure, the first step would be to identify the levels of ‘unacceptable damage’ that lie within the capability of the deterror which would constitute an assured deterrent to the deterree.

Volumes have been compiled on deterrence along with attempts to evolve nuclear strategies in keeping with : norms of moral acceptability; necessity to allay the heightened fears of annihilation amongst both policy makers and the people; efforts at reducing the gap between declaratory and employment policies and weapons capabilities; endeavours at damage limitation by virtue of evolving war fighting doctrines to obviate the possibilities of countervalue targeting; and so on. A close examination of the myriad theories reveals an underlying fallacy wherein the quantifiable destructive potential of nuclear weapons is interpolated in an equation rife with highly ambiguous and chimerical variables. The specious resultant has been used as data to create more palatable and flexible strategies. This is a dangerous exercise in self deception where the stakes are critical to the survival of the nation.

As cited by Colin Gray, James Schlesinger stated, that, “doctrines control the minds of men only in periods of non-emergency. They do not necessarily control the minds of men during periods of emergency. In the moment of truth, when the possibility of major devastation occurs, one is likely to discover sudden changes in doctrine.\textsuperscript{92}”. This line of thought makes it imperative for nuclear strategies to be unpretentious, having a certain logic and explicit employment objectives so that they lend themselves to stability of the decision making process at the time of crisis.

A study of nuclear strategies, be they as perceived by the United States, the Soviet Union. France, the United Kingdom, China or Israel, have one common


\textsuperscript{92} Colin S. Gray. ‘Targeting Problems for Central War’. Desmond Ball [Ed]. Issues In Strategic Targeting. p. 179.
denominator – that is the centrality of deterrence. This factor is pivotal to all established and emerging strategic options designed by the NWS. Deterrence flows from the intuited consequences of punitive action that could be meted out to specific targets or target sets and the resultant levels of disincentive to indulge in a policy that would bring about such action. Therefore, the Indian policy maker has to objectively analyse what constitutes deterrence in its individual context. Then evolve employment and targeting policies to engender the required level of deterrence, and support the same with matching strategies and weapons capabilities.

The wide range of possible nuclear targeting options that have been extensively analysed are economic structure, population centres, nuclear forces, other military targets, political control centres and communication centres. Debate has generally centred around American strategic options. In so far as other NWS are concerned, targeting options have been constant – countervalue objectives:

- Britian while being exceptionally reticent about its employment policy has created a weapons capability whose deterrence potential is restricted to population centres or concentrations of economic activities. Both of these are expected to provide adequate deterrence.

- France’s declared policy of proportional deterrence essentially follows an anti-cities strategy. “We aim at the adversary’s cities because these targets are easy to reach, without great accuracy in the missiles required, and especially because one can thus cause important damage with a limited number of weapons ….. It is only in the framework of anti-cities strategy that the desirable level of damage can be guaranteed with the means that remain in proportion to scientific, industrial, and economic possibilities of France. Any other strategy would necessitate much more important means, without doubt beyond our reach, and could not but weaken deterrence.93

A Third World country that wishes to exercise the prerogative of going nuclear cannot afford the luxury of indulging in flights of fancy. Target sets that will

provide assured deterrence must be selected in keeping with simplicity and weapons capability. This would be dependent on weapons capability with a reasonably good chance of survival, ability to penetrate through hostile air space to reach the desired target, adequate range and sufficient accuracy; comprehensive target analysis supported by reliable intelligence to ensure that its value to the deterree is paramount; adequate command and control means suitably enhanced by providing for guaranteed release by predelegation of authority in certain specifically identified instances.

DETERRENCE AGAINST PAKISTAN

The question that arises is, “What would be ‘unacceptable’ to the leadership in Pakistan that would deter them from overtly hostile acts?” This factor will have a certain amount of fluidity depending on the prevailing internal and external situation. However, it is a country which: lacks strategic depth that is critical to give it credence under nuclear conditions; has an indifferent economic infrastructure; limited indigenous raw materials to support its domestic needs; singularly vulnerable lines of communications; and, where levels of political cohesion in the provinces is suspect; has considerable sensitive vulnerabilities which must be taken into account. Under the circumstances it is not difficult to identify targets, which, if threatened of assured destruction, could stimulate the psyche of the leadership sufficiently to deter them from ‘first use’ of their nuclear arsenal.

The core of India’s deterrent strategy, to counter the possibility of a pre-emptive nuclear strike by Pakistan, must rest on an assured ability to administer retribution of a magnitude that would demolish the national fabric of that country – the deterree should perceive a threat to its ability to continue to exist as a viable socioeconomic system. Therefore, an assured second strike capability of a minimal nature could be designed to create an adequate threat to her very existence as a state. Such a threat would be tantamount to a viable deterrent. Such a strategy should leave Pakistan with a marginal cushion.
The entire range of possible employment policy options and their effects have been analysed in detail by S. Rashid Naim\textsuperscript{94}. Considering the sensitivity of nuclear employment policies, this author has selected the model published by Naim as the basis to develop targeting alternatives for India. From Naim’s analysis it follows that conceivable targeting requirements could be a suitable mix of the following options:

- An assured threat to six to ten metropolitan centres irrespective of a pre-emptive strike against India. Each to be designated retaliatory targets with an assured kill probability. The fixed nature of targets, availability of intelligence, concentration of industrial infrastructure, technological simplicity of delivery systems to meet minimal accuracy imperatives, and their susceptibility to low yield weapon systems, all go towards making this a viable option for a first generation nuclear force.

- The capability to destroy a minimum of one corps sized offensive formation in its concentration area or while it is debauching. The general areas from which a threat can develop can be easily appreciated. However, India needs to generate a far more sophisticated real time intelligence acquisition system as she has a wide area to cover to ascertain the exact details of the target as the situation develops, to facilitate a worthwhile strike. Yet another disadvantage lies in the fact that Pakistan has substantial and sophisticated air defence systems providing cover to the field force. Assured penetration would require high technology penetration aids and a larger force level to cater for casualties. Collateral civilian will be unavoidable, except possibly South of Sukkur.

- Neutralisation of up to three sets of communication centres which would critically limit war potential, civilian industrial activities, and seriously hamper any damage limitation and recovery plans that may have been instituted. Once again target data is easily accessible and of a permanent nature. The possible targets could be.

With the existing technological and nuclear industrial infrastructure, all the targeting options are within India’s reach without over extending herself, less the targeting of the field force poised for an offensive. It leaves the Indian strategist a wide choice of targeting options. Essentially, Pakistan would cease to exist as a viable socio-political entity if six of its major metropolitan cum industrial centres were destroyed, the national strategic communications grid disrupted, 50 percent of her energy resources destroyed and Southern Punjab. If India can pose a credible threat of this nature, the political leadership in Pakistan will be suitably deterred.

DETERRENCE VIS-A-VIS CHINA

The geo-strategic situation vis-a-vis China is fundamentally different from that of Pakistan. Her phenomenal depth, nuclear superiority, widely dispersed industrial structure and so on, give her greater resilience. However, her demographic structure is the “Achilles’ heel” that has to be analysed to arrive at a possible deterrent plan. China has a population of 1133.7 million; an average population density of 118 per square kilometre; 16 metropolitan centres where the population exceeds one million. China’s critical industrial capacities are located in Peking, Shanghai, Sheng-yang, Tientsin, Lanchou, T’Ai-Yuan, Hsi-An and Ch’ung-Ch’-ing.

While China has considerable advantages in the power equation vis-a-vis India, her primary vulnerabilities flow from the threat posed by the United States, the Soviets [the newly formed Commonwealth of Independent States] and Japan. If nuclear adventurism against India can be assured response that could, with some degree of assurance, pull out four to five of her metropolitan centres and an equal number of strategic industries, China would find herself unequivocally imbalanced situation vis-a-vis her primary global imperatives. Added to that are the repercussions of the unexceptionally high casualties that would create major administrative and political problems. If at the same time, she is made aware that the nuclear capacity with India cannot be used in the counterforce role and therefore,

96 Ibid.
does not threaten her nuclear potential, a psychological balance can be attained, to deter her suitably. Under the circumstances, India needs to pursue a counter value strategy by generating a second strike capability [inspite of a first strike from China] to threaten assured destruction of:

- Four to five of her metropolitan centres which can be decided by an analysis of the assets listed.
- Nine to ten of her strategic industrial centres thereby radically degrading China’s economic growth.

**UNITED STATES**

In January 2002, the US Administration completed a Nuclear Posture Review. In many respects the NPR continues policies outlined in more detail in the 1996 US Joint Chiefs of Staff Doctrine for Joint Theater Nuclear Operations. Key points in the document included:

- A strong US nuclear capability is necessary to deter aggression
- Nuclear weapons could be used for political or military reasons
- Nuclear weapons are not just to deter a nuclear strike, but have a role in deterring, or pre-emptively destroying, any weapons of mass destruction.
- The US requires a wide range of nuclear systems tailored for a variety of military and political objectives.

The 1996 Doctrine includes detailed plans for nuclear strikes and describes targets for such strikes including: WMD, their delivery systems and support units; ground combat units; air defense faculties; naval installations and vessels; on-state actors that possess WMD; and underground faculties. In order to be capable of delivering such strikes at a moment's notice, the US maintains over 2000 nuclear weapons on high alert status.

In May 2001, US President George Bush outlined "new concepts of deterrence that rely on both offensive and defensive forces." The new policy was an
admission that nuclear deterrence was not infallible, but the solution was not to abandon the current nuclear policy but supplement it with missile defence and conventional forces. The 2002 Nuclear Policy Review confirmed this "New Triad" of capabilities, as well as the intention of the US to modernise nuclear delivery systems and maintain a strong nuclear stockpile indefinitely. Thus the contradiction between US policy and its NPT commitments remains.

RUSSIA

In January 2000, the Russian Government released its new nuclear policy in a document entitled Concept of National Security. The document updates policy statements made in 1993 and 1997, and indicates a heightened sense of conflict with NATO and the US on nuclear issues, and an increased reliance on nuclear weapons. It affirms a strengthened Russian policy for the use of nuclear weapons, not only in response to a nuclear attack, but also to a conventional attack.

Cooperation between the US and Russia, including the Cooperative Threat Reduction Programs to secure Russian nuclear weapons and fissile materials, have come under strain in the wake of NATO expansion, the NATO attacks on Serbia and the decision by the US to move ahead with National Missile Defense. Russia no longer maintains a 'no-first-use' policy, and is considering re-deployment of tactical nuclear weapons. The Russian Duma (Parliament) ratified START II on the basis that the ABM Treaty be maintained. Thus US plans to withdraw from the ABM are prompting Russia to maintain a number of START II missiles, and possibly even increase the numbers of warheads on some of them.

NATO

The US deploys tactical nuclear weapons in seven NATO countries (Greece, Italy, Germany, Turkey, Belgium, UK, Netherlands), and has agreements with these countries allowing them to take control of the weapons and use them in a state of war. These agreements are somewhat controversial with some NPT members claiming they are in violation of NPT Articles I and II.
NATO policy, like that of the US, UK, France and Russia, allows for the possible 'first-use' of nuclear weapons. In the 1980s NATO Military Command maintained detailed plans for the use of nuclear weapons in specific scenarios. However, in recent years it has developed "adaptive targeting capability" designed to allow NATO commanders to develop target plans and nuclear weapons employment plans on short notice.

NATO reliance on nuclear weapons was reaffirmed in the 1999 Strategic Concept released on NATO's 50th anniversary. Attempts by Canada, Germany and the Netherlands to initiate a wide debate on NATO nuclear doctrine were rebuffed by the US, UK and France. However, they did agree to an ongoing review of NATO nuclear policy.

UNITED KINGDOM

In July 1998 Britain's Labour government announced several changes to its nuclear forces following a Strategic Defense.

CHINA

China joined the "nuclear club" in 1964 with a nuclear test at Lop Nor. At the same time China announced a 'no-first-use' policy. It joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1984 and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1992. In comparison to Russia and the USA, China maintains a limited nuclear capability, emphasising the deterrent effect of retaliation rather than flexible use strategies. However, US development of ABM systems are perceived by China to be eroding the retaliation capabilities and thus the deterrence value of their nuclear arsenal. In response, China may increase its arsenal. China has opposed NMD and called for negotiations to prevent an arms race in outer space. It has a policy of nuclear disarmament, and supports negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention, but calls on the US and Russia to bring their stockpiles down to numbers commensurate with those of the other nuclear powers as the first step.
FRANCE

On February 13, 1960, France became the fourth country to test a nuclear device by detonating its first atomic bomb in Reggane (Sahara). The decision to go nuclear was prompted by WWII experience of occupation by Germany and the differences with allies post World War II, especially in the Suez Canal crisis. Since then, nuclear weapons have been integral to France's international political status as well as to military doctrine. At the International Court of Justice hearing on nuclear weapons, France argued that it had a special right and duty, as a responsible nuclear weapon state, to maintain nuclear weapons for the purpose of international peace and security.

France has developed both tactical and strategic weapons. However, the military purpose for its tactical weapons is to serve primarily as warning shots in a strategic conflict and not as battlefield weapons.

The most comprehensive statement on French nuclear doctrine was contained in the 1994 Livre Blanc (White Paper) on Defence. It re-affirmed existing doctrine on the possible threat or use of nuclear weapons in international or regional conflicts, but did not adopt the US doctrine of counter-proliferation roles for nuclear weapons.

INDIA

In 1998 India openly tested nuclear weapons and declared that it had achieved a nuclear capability. It had been widely suspected that India had an undisclosed nuclear capability since the early 1970s. The decision to openly declare nuclear capability has been attributed to a combination of reasons including domestic popularity, an attempt to gain greater international consideration and frustration at the lack of progress towards nuclear disarmament by the nuclear weapon states.

The government followed its tests with policy announcements including the report on "Indian nuclear doctrine" released by India's National Security Advisory Board in August 1999. These hold that:
India would not be the first to use nuclear weapons and would be willing to enter into negotiations on a treaty on non use of nuclear weapons;

India supports negotiations on a nuclear weapons abolition convention;

India supports the inclusion of the threat or use of nuclear weapons as a crime in the Statute of the International Criminal Court.

India had initially proposed negotiations for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, but in 1996 opposed its conclusion on the grounds that it allowed sub-critical explosions and other high-tech nuclear weapons experiments and was no longer a step towards nuclear disarmament.

ISRAEL

Israel does not officially acknowledge that it has nuclear weapons but is believed to have been developing a nuclear weapons program since the mid 1950s, with technical support from France and possibly the US. In October 1986, the Sunday Times published details of Israel's undeclared nuclear programme, based on information and photographs supplied by Mordechai Vanunu, who had worked as a nuclear technician at Israel's secret Dimona complex.

Israel's nuclear policy is related to its relationships with its Arab neighbours. It includes policies of deterrence to prevent conventional attacks or those with weapons of mass destruction, as well as the "Samson option" of nuclear use following outbreak of war in order to ensure the survival of the state.

Israel has joined the CTBT but not the NPT. It is not opposed to negotiations on nuclear disarmament, but links its participation to these with progress on peace in the Middle East.

Israel also has concerns about verification provisions of arms control treaties, believing that these can be too intrusive and detrimental to intelligence security particularly in geographically small states.
Prepared by Alyn Ware, coordinator of the Parliamentary Network for Nuclear Disarmament, a project of the Middle Powers Initiative.

Two key questions confront India's political leadership. First, where are India's nuclear and ballistic missile programs headed? Unfortunately, few scholars or security analysts have devoted much thought to the development of a strategic doctrine for India.98 Only now, in the wake of the abrupt decision by the BJP government to test, have India's strategic minds begun to grapple with this difficult issue. In the absence of a clear-cut strategic doctrine, domestic scientific and technological capabilities and bureaucratic pressures are likely to drive the Indian nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Thus far, the political leadership and most sections of India's strategic community have eschewed any interest in developing a second-strike capability. Instead they have argued that a "minimum deterrent" of some thirty to forty bombs that can be delivered by air would constitute a sufficient deterrent.

Second, would such a deterrent suffice against potential Chinese and Pakistani threats and contribute to stability in the region? Despite U.S. and other international pressures, for now neither India nor Pakistan is likely to eschew its nuclear weapons program. Consequently, instead of focusing upon unrealistic and chimerical goals, it may be more useful for all parties to discuss ways to bring some stability to the region. Three distinct forms of stability--strategic stability, crisis stability, and arms race stability--deserve discussion.

Strategic stability occurs when both sides are assured that each has a secure second-strike capability--that is, adequate numbers of invulnerable nuclear weapons to inflict unacceptable damage after sustaining a nuclear attack. Crisis stability exists when neither side fears a preemptive strike. And finally, arms race stability reigns when neither side has concerns that its adversaries are trying to build weapons that undermine either strategic or crisis stability.99


To what extent do these conditions now obtain on the subcontinent? India's concerns in these three realms involve two potential adversaries, China and Pakistan. Strategic stability does exist between India and Pakistan. Neither side can be certain that its extant capabilities will enable it to carry out a decapitating first strike. Consequently, a condition of mutual vulnerability will exist. Similarly, crisis stability is also likely to endure because neither side would be confident of destroying a substantial portion of the other's forces in a preemptive strike. The question of arms race stability is more vexing. The growth of ballistic missile capabilities on both sides may endanger strategic or crisis stability. Consequently, one of the principal priorities of the proponents of nuclear nonproliferation should be the development of measures to ensure arms race stability. To this end, India and Pakistan need to discuss missile production and deployment issues and move toward the creation of an arms control regime.

India's conventional forces are more than a match for China's capabilities. China's substantial nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities present problems for Indian defense planners, however. The current Sino-Indian relationship fails to meet the demands of strategic stability. India also have Agni-5000 ballistic missile capabilities to target significant Chinese military or civilian assets. China, on the other hand, can inflict unacceptable damage on India. Crisis stability may be a bit stronger in this relationship, however. Given the acute secrecy surrounding the Indian nuclear weapons program and its dispersed assets, few Chinese decision makers would contemplate a disarming preemptive strike. India, on the other hand, lacks the capability to similarly strike China. Finally, arms race stability between India and China is also problematic. The Chinese already possess intermediate-range ballistic missiles that can target portions of the Indian heartland. India, in turn, is developing the Agni II, which would be able to reach targets in southern China. The extant Chinese capabilities and incipient Indian capabilities threaten arms race stability. Thus, once mutual recriminations about the nuclear tests subside, it is

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100 I am grateful to Ashley Tellis of RAND for suggesting the application of these categories to the subcontinenal nuclear context. The particular interpretations developed in this article are mine, however.
imperative that India and China start discussions in conjunction with Pakistan about future force levels, deployments, and acquisitions. Now that the nuclear genie has escaped the bottle in South Asia, an arms control regime that involves China may offer the best hope of containing the genie's reach.\textsuperscript{102}

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Targeting lies at the core of the employment policy. However, nuclear strategies are a political function and not a military strategy. “Strategy is supposed to relate military assets to political purpose.”\textsuperscript{103} Therefore, while the military would be required to carry out the detailed analysis of targets, it is the political leadership that is responsible to finally decide on and select option to meet the political contingencies at hand. This function would include approving target lists to be incorporated and the weapons capability to achieve strategic targeting objectives. If however, delegation of authority underscores the nuclear strategy, then these options would need to have been evaluated and necessary employment decisions taken before hand, so that those on whom authority would devolve, carry out policy as decided in keeping with political expediency.

The purpose of this chapter has been to evaluate the level of damage that would deter the antagonistic political system sufficiently in nuclear circumstances so that a relatively stable equation can be established. This exercise has to be carried out in relation to the extant political, military and socioeconomic conditions prevailing in the concerned countries and not on the basis of nuclear strategies in the developed world. Issues related to central nuclear wars, nuclear war fighting, flexible responses to hold down thresholds etc. are unrealistic in the Indian security context.\textsuperscript{104}

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The deductions drawn from this analysis are indicative of: a counter value targeting philosophy as being the only true means of achieving the type of deterrence that India must develop; revocation of any designs at achieving a counter force capability; and selecting a targeting policy within the technological and economic grasp of the country. In keeping with these parameters, a broad analysis of targets in Pakistan and China has been carried out and certain possibilities identified.

From the above target analysis, the following issues emerge which will form the basis for development of weapons capability that must be created to make India a viable nuclear regime:

- Indian nuclear forces must have the resilience to ride out a first strike by either China or Pakistan and still retain an adequate residual capacity to inflict politically unacceptable punishment on the aggressor, in keeping with the deterrent philosophy enunciated in these pages.

- Against Pakistan the strategy would rely on threatening to inflict damage to the extent of degrading that country’s capability of continuing as a socioeconomic entity. Targets should include: six metropolitan centres including port facilities; one corps sized offensive formation in its concentration area; three sets of bottle necks in the strategic communication network; five nuclear capable military airfields; two hydroelectric water storage dams. A total of 17 nuclear engagements.

- Against China, targeting philosophy would hinge around threatening to generate dangerous imbalances between that country and her primary adversaries, and to seriously retard her economic growth to further aggravate global imbalances. Initially, India needs to create a weapons capability to pull out five to six major industrial centres plus two ports designed to service China’s SSBN fleet. This makes a total of eight nuclear strikes.