

TO BE EMBAROGED UNTIL DELIVERY.
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY.

NUCLEAR ISSUE: CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES FOR PAKISTAN

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Since the nuclear explosions by India and Pakistan in May 1998, many countries are regarding the possibility of introducing an effective restraint regime in South Asia. The continuing conflict over the Kashmir dispute was viewed as the possible source that could cause a nuclear exchange. Kashmir itself was cynically often referred as a possible nuclear flashpoint. Unable to convince India and Pakistan to sign the NPT, many western countries began to describe South Asia as an unstable region, reflecting the likelihood of first nuclear war. May be this was an important element in the long process of pressurization or part of the efforts designed to scare the Indians and the Pakistanis of the impending doomsday. But to insinuate that, both the Indians and the Pakistanis are somewhat irresponsible people was hard to swallow.

However, it is indeed difficult to deny the risks involved in acquiring and maintaining the nuclear weapons. Efforts to minimize the risk involved certainly deserve our devoted attention. Many aspects need to be subjected to academic investigations, in order to suggest ways and means to reduce the accompanying risks. In fact the two countries have not only introduced many confidence building measures (CBM) to improve the atmosphere between them ,but have also been seriously engaged in finding ways and means to reduce the risks associated initially with the acquisition and latter with the maintenance of nuclear weapons. The recently concluded nuclear risk reduction agreement clearly reflects the desire of the two countries to make their nuclear assets and region safer. The paper initially discusses Pakistan's strategy and policy adopted prior to and after acquisition of nuclear weapons, addresses security challenges faced by Pakistan in an uncertain political environment in South Asia, later it focuses on highlighting the new nuclear environment regarding challenges and developments for Pakistan in the current political milieu. It also focuses on future strategic thought of Pakistan to address and counter visualized security challenges for Pakistan and its role to strengthen the international security measurements.

PAKISTAN'S POLICY PRIOR TO WEAPONS ACQUISITION

India tested its first nuclear device in 1974. From then until the second set of nuclear tests, both India and Pakistan maintained an ambiguous nuclear posture. Both nations were not willing to give up on the nuclear option, due to their own individual reasons. To justify this policy, both advanced various supportive arguments. One common factor that had been repeatedly highlighted was the security requirements. No country would admit its insecurity overtly, and would always prefer to have an upper hand in the security balance. A nation always desires to be stronger than its opponents.

Various programs, often contradictory in nature, ranging from absolute deterrence to total disarmament, from complete isolation to world government, from a non alignment to a variety of military alliances, from economic self sufficiency to free trade are put forward in order to be more secure than the others. Security, essentially a negative term, implies the absence of real or perceived threats, whether stemming from external or internal sources or incumbent economic weaknesses, disparities and inequalities, to certain coveted values. To cope with perceived threats, nations tend to seek power hoping that power would generate the desired level of security. One nation's ability to attain an adequate level of level of security may in turn breed insecurity for the other. Insecurity often compels nations to acquire more power in order to tilt the scale in their favor. Such a process often results in the regional arms race but also invariably introduces extra regional actors into the regional conflict. While outsiders enter an area in pursuit of their own strategic interests, they could well find themselves drawn into regional conflicts and may find themselves playing the role of an outsider equalizer.

The strategy of ambiguity was either adopted deliberately or reached by the compulsions generated by the then operative circumstantial forces. Prior to the explosions of 1998 both South Asian states seem to have opted for what is often referred as deliberately contrived strategy of ambiguity. India adopted designed ambiguity after the Chinese nuclear tests of 1964 and Pakistan opted for such a strategy in mid 80s.¹ For years both India and Pakistan played this game of concealment and revelation with considerable mastery and maintained a strategy of contrived ambiguity.

¹ For a detailed analysis see 'Policy Implication' by Stephen Philip Cohen in **Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia: The prospect of Arms Control**, West view Press, 1991, pp.338-58.

Deliberately contrived strategy of ambiguity also implies not to release sensitive information or if it had to be released, it should be released in congruence with a well-planned design. For example despite the existence of regular communication channel of DGMOs, the supply of information to the adversary has been frequently faulty and distorted. Perhaps that's why an impression was generated that, honoring the spirit of an agreement is not as sacrosanct in South Asia as it is in other parts of the world.²

Perhaps the greatest advantages of opting for contrived ambiguity were the retention of the nuclear option and the ability to keep the adversary uncertain. The ambiguity strategy proved to be very useful in terms of buying time and, pacifying both hawks and doves simultaneously within their respective societies. While differences of opinion exist, what influenced the two countries to abandon the ambiguity strategy and go for their nuclear explosions in 1998, there is no doubt that the strategy of ambiguity enabled both the countries to acquire the necessary time in order to master the techniques.

With the passage of time, the American resolve on strengthening the NPT restraint regime has been considerably weakened. Such an attitude enabled the South Asians to continue perfecting their systems with regard to missiles and improving nuclear arsenal. To keep ambiguity approach rather effective, it was necessary to keep the warheads away from the missiles sites or silos. If the silos or missile sites were maintained considerably away from the adversary's border, it would lengthen the flight time. Thus it could inject ambiguity regarding the operational aspects of the nuclear weapons. It might even create doubts in the minds of observers whether or not a clear operational policy exists. While such a policy could make the verification problem rather acute, it would also keep the adversary uncertain.

Another aspect of ambiguity approach was to keep on stressing the defensive aspect of the Nuclear weapons. The Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee remarked in Lok Sabha on March 15, 1999 that the nuclear weapons are not offensive weapons but are defensive weapons that help in preserving peace.³ To make it credible, the deployment of these weapons must also generate the impression that their deployment was of defensive nature. Besides, a regularly issued

² See Michael Krepon, 'A Time of Trouble, A Time of Need' in **Crisis Prevention, Confidence Building and Reconstruction in South Asia**, edited by Michael Krepon and Amit Sevak, St.Martin's Press, New York, 1995, pp.1-10.

³ See 'Deterrence and other myths' by T. Jayaraman in **Frontline**, Vol.16, and May 8-21, 1999.

statement regarding their desire for moratoria of limited duration could easily accompany such an approach.

SOUTH ASIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS OF MAY 1998

For years both India and Pakistan opted for strategies of ambiguity. Such policies enabled both countries to continue strengthening their scientific momentum. Each incremental improvisation took both countries closer to a status of nuclear weapon state. Once again it was India that conducted series of nuclear explosions, which in turn influenced the Pakistani decision makers to follow the suit. Why did the two South Asian states decide to abandon the adopted strategy of ambiguity and opted for nuclear tests? Many reasons are advanced that seemed to have influenced the Indian and the Pakistani decision makers to give a green light to their respective scientists. Among the factors that influenced India to opt for nuclear weapon status included India's quest for a great power status, operative security environment, the bloody engagement in Kashmir, the existing world order, and BJP's strong commitment to acquire nuclear weapons. Similarly the factors that influenced Pakistan to go nuclear included security considerations, ineffective sanctions imposed on India, mounting internal pressures and the threatening statements issued by BJP leaders.

The immediate reaction of the international community was condemnatory in nature. Most of European countries along with Japan and US were critical of the tests. They saw the tests as a major setback for peace and arms control restraint regime. What is interesting is that while most countries followed the lead of five permanent members of the Security Council in condemning the nuclear tests, only few states followed the Americans and Japanese examples in imposing the sanction. The European Community collectively expressed its dismay and disappointment over the tests and the German foreign minister forcefully stated that it was ridiculous that countries like India and Pakistan which are unable to feed their own people were indulging in the luxury of testing nuclear devices. The EU passed a resolution in Strasbourg calling its members to prevent the export of nuclear materials and technology to India and Pakistan.⁴

Many interpretations of tests were advanced in the west and almost all of them viewed it as an adverse development. Among the specifically mentioned areas that were affected by the South Asian tests included a great blow to then operative international trends, failure of US policies of

⁴ Dawn (Internet edition), June 19, 1998

nuclear restraint, regional instability, likely regional arms race, and increased regional tension etc.

Following the May 1998 explosions many significant developments took place. Among them were the imposition of economic sanctions, moratorium on further testing, internationalization of the Kashmir dispute, adherence to CTBT, resumption of India-Pakistan dialogue, Lahore declaration, Kargil clashes, troops confrontation of 2001-2, successful 12th SAARC Summit and initiation of current peace process etc.

Pakistan's policy after the acquisition: If one reads the western assessment, then one is bound to be disappointed. IISS thought that the nuclear arms race between Indian and Pakistan could lead to devastating political and economic consequences for both. They argued that the 1998's nuclear tests sent shivers of nuclear fear through the international community and had upset the stability of an already unsettled region.⁵ Nothing could have been far from truth. Such statement merely reflected the inability to influence the South Asians to walk on the path chalked out by their former western masters. Both countries have moved away from the strategy of ambiguity to a strategy of deterrence- though both stress the need for minimum deterrence. Both now recognise that they can inflict unacceptable damage on the adversary, which has, in many ways, strengthened the minimum deterrent relationships between them

The inherent dangers of ambiguity strategy have been effectively removed. Both recognise that neither of them is in possession of what is often termed as an impregnable air defence system. Indeed India is equipped with formidable conventional military capabilities but the advent of nuclear weapons has, in many ways, taken a toll of conventional superiority. Compared to India, Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability is small but in nuclear deterrent relationships numbers don't really play any significant role. As a matter of fact the mutual deterrence has been operative even prior to the acquisition of nuclear weapons, though one finds different descriptions. Some called it non-weaponized deterrence while the others looked at it as deterrence based on anticipated capabilities. Dangerously loaded situations of 1986-87 (Brasstacks), the crisis of 90 (Kashmir Crisis), the Kargil clashes, and the troops confrontation of 2002, did not cause an outbreak of a full fledged war primarily because of the knowledge regarding the existence of nuclear capabilities initially and later nuclear weapons of the

⁵ See **Strategic Survey**, 1998-99, International Institute for Strategic Studies, OUP, 199, pp.222-32.

adversary. If deterrence worked with the strategy of ambiguity, it is only logical to assume that with the overt nuclear weaponization, the operative deterrence would further be stabilised.

Compared to Indian nuclear policy pursuits which announced its draft nuclear doctrine only to be later modified, Pakistan did not formally announce its nuclear doctrine but pursued a policy of minimum nuclear deterrence. Not only Pakistan's security policies are largely determined by Indian threats but also it does not believe in Indian assertions of no first use. Living under the shadow of Indian threats, the main determinant of Pakistan's strategic policy pursuits are directly linked with the Indian policy pursuits. Pakistan does not believe fully in Indian main stance of 'no first use'. Past has clearly taught the Pakistanis that the employment of 'no first use' merely implies that the involved state is working towards the acquisition of second strike capability just as both the Soviets and the Chinese have done it in the past.

While Pakistan has not yet clearly stated its nuclear doctrine specifically outlining the eventuality in which the deployment of nuclear weapon would become imperative, an Italian writer quoting the interview with the Director General of Strategic Plans Division (DGSPD) described certain contingencies in which the use of nuclear weapons could be seriously considered. Among these eventualities included Indian conquest of large part of Pakistani territory, destruction of large part of Pakistan's land and air forces, Indian pursuit of effective economic strangulation, India's successful push for Pakistan's political destabilization and creation of large scale internal subversions etc.⁶ It needs to be mentioned here that the DGSPD later denied the use of the wording of contingencies.⁷

Compared to Indian quest for nuclear weapons, Pakistan's rationale for nuclear weapon program is indeed security driven. Not only Pakistan has consistently faced a looming threat from India, the main determinant for its defence and foreign policies has always been Indian policies. 'Its fundamental objective is deterring, rather than fighting a war with India. Other objectives of Pakistani nuclear doctrine in dealing with perceived threat from India are, to maintain an overall strategic equilibrium, to neutralize conventional military asymmetries against India, and maintain its territorial integrity and political sovereignty'.⁸

⁶ Quoted in Zafar Iqbal Cheema's article 'The Role of Nuclear Weapons in Pakistan's Defense Strategy' in *IPRI Journal*, Vol. iv, No. 2, Summer 2004, pp. 59-80.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

Pakistani decision makers are quite mindful of India's continuous enlargement of its conventional capabilities. Pakistan has repeatedly stated that it is not and does not intend to be involved with any kind of arms race with India. However it does not imply that it would lower its guards. It would do whatever is possible to defend its interests within its own means. For obvious reasons the Pakistanis have to be vigilant about the increasing gap in conventional weapons. Cognizant of the significant role played by the nuclear weapons in some of the past crises such as Brasstacks, Crisis of 90, Kargil episode and troops' confrontation, the Pakistanis are likely to further improve its delivery capabilities. Hence one finds more focus on perfecting the missiles.

It is also imperative that the great powers must always keep in mind the regional sources of insecurity and make concerted efforts to treat the underlying causes in order to make the area stable, safe and peaceful. If some area is experiencing difficulties because of some area-actors locked up in a conflict situation, then efforts should be directed to resolve the conflict on one hand, and avoid all those measures that can cause increased asymmetry. The great powers could play an effective role in resolving Indo-Pak conflicts and reduce the growing arms asymmetry. Without the resolution of ongoing Kashmir dispute, the quest for narrowing the gap is going to remain one of the major preoccupations of the weaker party to continue working towards the removal of insecurity.

Security concerns are country specific and dynamic in nature. Whenever a change in the military balance occurs or those who are prone to using force to achieve their political objectives replaced by moderate leaders, the security environment is altered. Pakistan's threat perceptions are based on its geographical characteristics, an unsettled and lingering dispute over Kashmir, on the capabilities and intentions of a hostile neighbour, and its inability to maintain an acceptable conventional military balance with India due to resource constraints. The subcontinent of South Asia has witnessed a continuous series of tensions, turmoil, conflicts, and wars for the last sixty years. India and Pakistan, by now, had the longest adversarial relationships that this period has ever known. Furthermore, India shocked the world by carrying out three underground atomic tests on 11 May 1998, twenty-four years after its first explosion at Pokhran, 150 kilometers from the Pakistan border. On the other hand Pakistan retaliated on 28 May 1998 with five nuclear tests and also one more on 30th May.

THE NEW NUCLEAR ENVIRONMENT: DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES

With the departure of the Cold War and the tragic events of 9/11, the global environment underwent a radical transformation. Not only the rules of the game changed and a new world order emerged but its impact on various regions also posed challenges and offered opportunities. The post-Cold War New World Order is, however, still in the process of evolution and its definite shape is yet to concretize. The New World Order followed by 9/11 tragedy is marked by uncertainty, confusion and contradictory tendencies. Both integrative and disintegrative forces are at work. The end of dominance of ideologies has given way to the rise of sub-nationalism based on primary loyalties like ethnicity, religion, race and language, making the world much less safe as compared to the past. New threats to the IPS (International Political System) have emerged.

The tragic events of 9/11 further impacted upon the world system. These events not only focused the spotlight on terrorism and the consequent formation of international coalition against terrorism, but also caused a US led war against Afghanistan initially and later another war against Iraq. Efforts to stamp out Al-Queda led to invasion of Afghanistan and to get rid of Saddam on allegation that he was making WMD caused invasion of Iraq. Neither situation has stabilized so far. A sizable number of forces are engaged in both countries.

Since September 11, debate over what exactly we mean by terrorism, its various categories, the somewhat neglected difference between terrorism and the freedom struggles, and a mechanism to counter terrorism is raging in almost all the countries. The debate has so far remained inconclusive in many ways but the countries interested to initiate some form of action to counter what they perceived as terrorist activities against their interests have not waited for the consensus to develop. They have already undertaken selected punitive actions against the target countries. While the debate rages on, the developments of far reaching consequences have impacted many countries including Pakistan.

CHANGING ENVIRONMENT AND PAKISTAN'S POLICY

The most important development that has changed the strategic environment, particularly in South Asia was the nuclear tests by both India and Pakistan in May 1998. It was India that first detonated a nuclear bomb, closely followed by Pakistan. While India's motive was primarily

status-oriented, that of Pakistan was basically security-driven. In many ways, it was to redress nuclear imbalance and establish deterrence for national security.

In Southwest Asia, Iran, a close neighbor of Pakistan, is trying to develop its nuclear program, ostensibly peaceful at this stage. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has dismissed on December 23, UNSC 2006 sanctions on his country as a mere “scrap of paper.”⁹ He added that “whether the West likes it or not Iran is a nuclear country and it is in their best interest to live alongside Iran.”¹⁰

Besides Israel, which is known to have already acquired nuclear weapons capability, it is anticipated, mostly by western sources, that in few years Iran could also emerge as a new entrant to the nuclear club. Indeed the acquisition of nuclear weapon capability could complicate the security environment and pose new challenges. While Iran’s acquisition of nuclear arsenals could be an indigenous decision, the push factor comes from the US policies as exemplified in the December 2006 Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal. It has provided incentives, has removed inhibitions and has dealt a strong blow to non-proliferation regime — whose major exponent has been the US.

In the Far East, North Korea has claimed to have acquired nuclear device. It is often alleged the Americans mishandled the North Korean situation. In October 1994, the US and North Korea worked out an Agreed Framework under which North Korea agreed to dismantle its reactors, remain in NPT and observe full IAEA safeguards ,in return for US economic oil supplies and construction of two light water reactors and moving towards normalization of economic and political relations. By the year 2002 the Agreed Framework broke down, not only because North Korea was suspected of cheating ,but also that the US did not fulfill its part of the bargain by delaying construction of the light water reactors and utterly failing to start normalization of relationships.¹¹

⁹ See “Tehran refuses to bow to N-plans,” Dawn (Islamabad) 25 December 2006, p.1.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ See ‘How to Keep the Bomb From Iran’ by Scott D. Sagan in Foreign Affairs, Vol.85, September-October 2006, pp.45-59

PAKISTAN'S RELATIONS WITH CHINA

China and Pakistan are close neighboring countries linked by common rivers and mountains. The friendship between the two nations is long standing and has become even stronger with the passage of time. Both have been sympathizing and supporting each other in international affairs and in the cause of national construction.

The cornerstone of Pakistan's strategic policies for the last forty years has been its close relationships with China. The Pakistan-China strategic relationships have withstood the tests of times. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Pakistan's participation in the international coalition to combat war against terrorism could have generated the impression that Pakistan's strategic relationship with China might suffer adversely. However, by the spring of 2002, developments made it absolutely clear that Pakistan's strategic relationship with China remained totally unaffected. Some of the significant developments included;

- Pakistan's signing of a defence pact with China with the focus on joint defence research and production¹².
- Exchange of high-level defence visits¹³.

Friendship between Pakistan and China has always been a positive factor in the South Asian region and has served to advance the cause of peace and stability. It is therefore in the fitness of things that the two should have decided to reinforce and deepen their strategic partnership in a year, which marks the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The two sides signed 13 agreements covering a number of fields, including energy, infrastructure, economic cooperation and defence, with a view to what President Pervez Musharraf called raising the level of economic cooperation between the two countries¹⁴.

China has been associated with Pakistan's economic developments for many decades. The major projects completed with Chinese assistance include the Karakoram Highway, the Chashma-I nuclear power station, the machine tool factory, and many others. The projects now

¹² "Pakistan, China sign historic defense pact", *International Relations and Security Network-Managing Information, Sharing Knowledge*, Available at: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/news/sw/details.cfm?ID=11059> (Accessed on 13 March 2007)

¹³ *China's Foreign Affairs* (Department of Policy Planning Ministry of Foreign Affairs People's Republic of China: World Affairs Press, 2004 Edition), pp. 244-245.

¹⁴ Dawn (Islamabad), 24 November 2006.

underway with Chinese assistance include the Chashma-II nuclear power, the second phase of the Gwadar port, the Saindak copper mines development, the Gomal Zam dam and several oil and gas exploration schemes. President Hu Jin Tao, during his last visit to Pakistan last year confirmed the future assistance towards Chashma III nuclear power, when he categorically stated, with reference to Chashma I and II that “in the future we will continue to carry out such cooperation”¹⁵.

On the whole, China is involved in many on-going projects in Pakistan. In the defence field, they have jointly developed recently the JF-17, a fighter aircraft, while MiGs, tanks, artillery, frigates and other Chinese arms form a significant part of Pakistan’s armory.

These examples of economic and defence cooperation apart, what characterizes their “all-weather relationship” is a deep and abiding understanding on all matters of geopolitical interests to them. In 2005, during Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao’s visit to Pakistan, the two countries signed 22 agreements, including a friendship treaty, which is unique. The two sides pledged that neither country would take any action that would infringe on the security of the other side, and that neither would enter into a similar agreement with another state. In the wake of 9/11, Pakistan and China have pledged to fight “three forces” — those of terrorism, extremism and separatism. On the question of Pakistan’s relationship with India, the Chinese leadership has welcomed the current normalization process in South Asia and believes in a negotiated settlement of the Kashmir conflict — something which President Hu Jintao repeated during his last year visit to Pakistan¹⁶.

Given China’s transformation into an economic giant, nations of South Asia hope for greater Chinese interest in regional cooperation. Even though South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has not achieved much, it decided to expand by admitting Afghanistan as a member. China’s inclusion in SAARC as an observer should help inject balance into this South Asian grouping and perhaps goad it into making greater efforts for improving their peoples’ standard of living by quickening the pace of economic development.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Tariq Fatemi, “In the wake of Hu’s visit” *Dawn* (Islamabad), 2 December 2006.

PAKISTAN AND THE INDO-US CIVIL NUCLEAR DEAL

The Manmohan-Bush Joint Statement of July 18, 2005 on Indo-US nuclear cooperation resulted in signing of the Agreement in July 2006, and was followed by legislation under which the US would supply nuclear fuel to India. Its no wonder the new US Act has ignited considerable debate within the Indian and Pakistani strategic community.¹⁷

The India-US nuclear agreement was signed in March 2006 in New Delhi, following President Bush's visit to India. After hard lobbying and debate, the bill¹⁸ was overwhelmingly passed by the US Congress and has become a law on December 23, 2006. This is by amending section 123 of US Atomic Energy Act of 1954. It is termed as an historic and unique agreement with a unique country. It reverses the US policy towards India that lasted till July 2005, when the latter opposed nuclear cooperation with that country for developing nuclear weapon in contravention of the Non-proliferation treaty.

Under the US-India Nuclear deal, India will be given access to civilian nuclear technology in return for placing its 16 civilian atomic reactors under global safeguards. The US has rationalized the passage of the Act by terming it as a 'stand alone' agreement. An important State Department official, who played a key role in negotiations observed that, "unlike some of their neighbors, the Indians, have been very responsible" and "have protected their nuclear technology."¹⁹ It needs to be mentioned here that it was India that caused nuclear weapon proliferation in South Asia. Not only Pakistan had repeatedly offered to sign the NPT if the international community is able to convince India to do the same. On another occasion, he said that President Musharraf is "not unhappy" with the Indo-US nuclear deal.²⁰ Moreover, due to India's special needs of energy, it was a US "exemption" and an exception to the laws for India," as it is major contributor to global warming, air pollution and is dependent on the Middle East oil.²¹ It would not be out of order to mention that Pakistan also faces similar energy dilemma, but the US is unwilling to consider helping Pakistan in this regard. Two track approaches towards two allies on similar problem reflects more confusion than clarity.

¹⁷ For a sampling of this debate see The Debate on Indo-U.S. Nuclear Cooperation (New Delhi: New Policy Group, 2006).

¹⁸ This bill was known as Henry Hyden US-India Peaceful Atomic Cooperation Act of 2006, or properly called the "123 Agreement."

¹⁹ As cited in "China not to oppose nuclear deal: US," Dawn, 20 December 2006, p.7.

²⁰ As mentioned in "No N-deal with Pakistan: US," Dawn, 19 March 2006, p. 6.

²¹ Ibid.

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While the agreement still does not recognize India as a nuclear weapon state, the deal will enable its existing 16 nuclear plants and 14 future civil nuclear plants to come under international inspections. The U.S and other nuclear supplier nations will provide fuel and technology to build Indian civil nuclear program. It is believed in some quarters that this reward compensates India for possible strategic role against international terrorism and as a counterweight to China.

Not only the deal would upset the strategic balance and make India more obdurate in resolution of disputes with its neighbors. Already, it is seen to be foot-dragging on India-Pakistan peace process, and has been non-responsive to many peace proposals put up by President Musharraf for resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

This could also lead to entering of similar nuclear commerce arrangements and conventional arms deals with other countries, thus drastically tilting the military balance in India's favor. Resultantly, it could spur a new arms race and lead to instability and tension in South Asia. Through this deal, India aspires for a global power status. This seems like a stepping-stone for recognition as a full-fledged nuclear power. Some Indians also see this development that would further strengthen India's case for a UNSC permanent membership. The deal could also help India develop faster.

India happens to be the initiator of nuclear weapons in the subcontinent. It invoked the "China threat" as justification for its nuclear detonation. If India had not done so, Pakistan would not have carried out its nuclear test and the subcontinent might have been spared from nuclearization. Many critics of the deal see it as rewarding proliferators.

Not only is the act discriminatory, it also enables India to divert its indigenous produced fissile material to its military program, while obtaining fuel for its civilian reactors from NSG. It wants to invest \$100 billion for expanding nuclear energy program for the next 10 years in which the US companies shall be getting major contracts. The diversion of military fissile material towards production of greater nuclear weapons will create nuclear imbalance in the region — thus spurring a new arms race and might lead to military adventures by a 'big neighbor.

India's self-imposed moratorium on nuclear testing can be violated at any time on the pleas of national security; it has not defined any upper limits for its deterrence capability and it would lead to vertical proliferation by liberating its existing un-safeguarded fissile material. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has already categorically stated in the upper house of Indian parliament that India is not bound on nuclear testing by a foreign legislature.²² However, in case the proposed FMCT treaty is finalized, and, India becomes a party to it, it would leave no choice for India to produce missile material in future. But the existing un-safeguarded fissile material would remain a cause of concern.²³ Besides, India's commitment to the IAEA safeguards and Additional protocol is 'voluntary' so it can withdraw any time, if it feels that its national interests are threatened. Furthermore, if India is accommodated as an exception by the NSG it would contravene its own guidelines which would not only reduce its effectiveness but would set precedents for future exceptions for other nations.²⁴

Iran's nuclearization and its impact on Pakistan: Iran has responded to UN sanctions by saying that that it will continue to build its nuclear enrichment facilities for peaceful purposes, and, would be installing 3,000 centrifuges at Nantanz nuclear plant immediately at "full speed." President Ahmadinejad stated that "Iran is a *nuclear* country" whether the West likes it or not, and, the nation would celebrate its "nuclearization" by March 2007.²⁵ Meanwhile Iranian *Majlis* has passed a bill demanding a "review" for cooperation with IAEA, and, if possible, curtailment of access and inspections to its nuclear facilities.

Some Pakistani feels that Iran's becoming a nuclear weapon state should not create any major problem for Pakistan. Both are friendly Muslim neighbors with historical and cultural affinities and with no major dispute *per se*. Their relations have been traditionally friendly, albeit with some cooling off during the Taliban period. These relations however have reverted to normalcy since 9/11 when both supported the ouster of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

It is not too far fetched to assume that no nuclear power would like to have another nuclear power as its neighbor. It is bad enough to live under the shadow of a large nuclear country but

²² 'Update on the US-India Nuclear Cooperation Agreement' by Michael Krepon. A stemson center update on the net <http://www.stimson.org/pub.cmf?id=322>

²³ See M. Qasim Mustafa, "Indo-US civilian Nuclear Cooperation Agreement: Implications for International Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime," *Strategic Studies*, Qtly Journal of the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad, Vol.XXVI, No.4, summer 2006, p.150.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *The News*, Dec.25, 2006.

to be sandwiched between two nuclear neighbors is indeed an unenviable situation. No wonder, the nuclear-related US-Iran “war of words” over the last three years were of great interest and concern to Pakistan. The Pakistani government’s reaction to the UN Resolution 1737 imposing sanctions is that trade with Iran and the Iran-Pakistan India (IPI) pipeline plan would remain unaffected.²⁶

In the last three year of the US-Iran standoff, Pakistan could do precious little, except to persuade Iran to follow IAEA rules, and, dissuade the US from resorting to any use of force. At the same time, Pakistan desires that Iran should cooperate with the international community on the nuclear issue.²⁷

Earlier in May 2006, P.M Shaukat Aziz, while attending the D-8 conference in Bali, stated that Iran’s “nuclear issue was very complex issue,” and, while Iran has the right to generate nuclear energy, it should not make nuclear weapons or go for proliferation in the region.²⁸ Further, he stated that Pakistan has already paid a “big price” due to the US-led war in neighboring Afghanistan and did not want instability on its borders with Iran.”²⁹

Pakistan, like the other nuclear powers, would feel quite uncomfortable, but not alarmed, at Iran’s quest for nuclear weaponry. But it will also depend whether Iran remains a status quo or an anti-status quo after acquiring these weapons.

One school of thought says that nuclear Iran would lead to some kind of strategic parity in the Middle East, presently dominated by a hegemonic nuclear Israel. According to this line of thinking Iran’s acquiring of nuclear weapons could usher normalcy in the region by inducing counter-deterrence towards Israel.³⁰ Also, the Palestinian issue could get resolved with new configuration of balance of power in the ME.³¹

²⁶ “IPI pipeline to be...” op.cit.; also see PML chief’s remarks on the pipeline as quoted in Ahmed Hassan, “Shujaat met Benazir in Dubai, says Mushahid,” Dawn, 27 December 2006, p.16.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ As cited in “More Co-operation among D-8 urged,” Dawn, 13 May 2006, p.1,3.

²⁹ As reported in Daily Times(Islamabad), 21 April 2006.

³⁰ M.P. Bhandhara articulates this view. See his “Nuclear option for peace in Mid-east,” Dawn, 24 December 2006, p.6.

³¹ Ibid.

However, should Iran become aggressive and act as a strong competitor, it could be perceived as a threat in the region. Pakistan has had traditionally friendly ties with the Arab world, which it would not like to be disturbed. In the event of Iran's belligerent policies, some deterioration in Pakistan-Iran relations could follow. However, the Iranians have tried to allay these fears by offers of sharing technologies with its Arab neighbors. There are also fears in some quarters that Pakistan's alleged connections with Iran's nuclear program³² could be resurrected by the US to put pressure on Pakistan. Pakistan, on its part, has always made strong denials.

In the event of US or Israel's military strikes against Iran, albeit a decreasing possibility, strong domestic backlash could occur in Pakistan as it is a multi-sect society and prone to sectarian conflicts.

In the event of strikes against Iran's nuclear installations, environmental effects could travel along with inflow of refugees into Pakistan's bordering areas. Notwithstanding Pakistan government's assurances, the prospect of Iran-Pakistan and Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline could be jeopardized further, if not abandoned. Above all, Pakistan would be placed in a difficult situation whether to support its immediate neighbor, Iran, or go along with the US and close Arab friends such as Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states.

The acquired nuclear clout by Iran could tempt it to exert pressures on smaller Gulf neighbors. Its support for Islamic groups, such as Hezbollah, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad is well-known, and, could possibly increase. Besides, Iran's nuclear preponderance may make many Arab states that are friendly to Pakistan, quite vulnerable. Pakistan's economic interests in the Gulf and the broader Middle East could also suffer, if Iran exports its brand of ideology and influence. The Shiite populations of Iraq, Bahrain, and, to some extent, of Kuwait, UAE and eastern Saudi Arabia, could turn more militant. In short, an ideological Iran, laced with nuclear weapons, could become a difficult actor to deal with in the region.

While Pakistan's relations with the U.S, as a major non-NATO ally, and "front line state" are generally durable, its relations with a post-nuclear Iran might take time to settle down, as the latter's nuclear doctrine matures. For, in a period of nuclear transition, there are greater chances

³² For a factual denial see "Pakistan, Iran Blast Nuclear Cooperation Accusations," The AFP, 29 August 2003; also see Iran's admission of European help in its nuclear enrichment program in Joby Warrick, "Iran admits foreign help in nuclear facility," The Washington Post, 17 August, 2003.

of nuclear powers undertaking risks, which could be avoided through risk reduction measures and CBMs.

Pakistan desires that the US, through a policy of deterrence and incentives, should engage with Iran.³³ Sanctions can only delay, but not prevent Iran from going nuclear. Meanwhile, any contemplated military strikes by the US or Israel would have minimum chances of success. In the meantime, the US could only keep Iran under pressure while the Gulf States opt for nuclear options to develop energy.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Despite radically altered environment, Pakistan is deeply committed to NPT regime and maintaining what is known as the minimum deterrence. In fact Pakistan was not at all keen to become a nuclear weapon state, but the regional environment more or less forced it to take cognizance of the changed realities in the region. To avoid proliferation, Pakistan consistently offered India different proposals to avoid the advent of nuclear weapons in the region. This vouches Islamabad's non-proliferation credentials. The delicate conventional balance between India and Pakistan received a serious setback in May 1974, when India conducted its first nuclear test. Since 1974, different Pakistani governments had floated the idea of the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ). India not only opposed these proposals but also even refused to talk to Pakistan on the subject. In addition to the NWFZ concept, Pakistan had also forwarded other proposals in various national and international platforms with a view to check the horizontal nuclear proliferation in South Asia.

Some of these proposals were:

- In 1974, Pakistan suggested the setting up of a NWFZ. It also repeated the NWFZ proposals to India in 1976, 1987, 1990, and on May 4, 2003.
- Pakistan asked India to jointly sign the NPT and bilateral/joint agreements to full-scoop safeguards or inspections, in Nov-Dec 1984, June 1985, and July 1987. India rejected all these overtures and continued to call for a universal general and complete nuclear disarmament and non-discriminatory NPT.
- Renunciation of 'acquisition and development of nuclear weapons', in 1978.
- Accession by both India and Pakistan to the NPT, in 1979.

³³ George Perkovich, "Why Engaging Iran is a good idea," Daily Times, 15 December 2006, p.12.

- Bilateral acceptance of full IAEA safeguards, in 1979.
- A mutual inspection of each other's nuclear facilities, in 1979.
- In 1981, Pakistan offered a No War Pact to India that was not accepted by New Delhi.
- Bilateral signing of a treaty banning all types of nuclear tests, in 1987.³⁴
- Pakistan proposed to India not to manufacture and to explode nuclear weapons, in 1987 and 1991. India did not reply to Pakistan's proposals.
- Convening of a conference on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia, which should be attended by Russia, USA, China, India and Pakistan, in 1992.
- An idea of South Asian Zero-Missile Zone was again suggested in 1994.

Even after becoming a nuclear weapon state, Pakistan not only imposed moratorium on further testing, but continued to support the operative NPT regime. In recent times Pakistan accepted the United Nations Security Council Resolution (on April 28, 2004) 1540 to prevent the proliferation of WMD to the non-state actors and terrorist groups.³⁵ Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN Munir Akram, once again recounted the latest Pakistani efforts in this regard, during deliberations on the issue reiterated that,

Historically, the proliferation of WMD had occurred when states sought to obtain them. But non-state actors had often been the instruments used for proliferation by states seeking WMD. Recently, Pakistan had dismantled such a proliferation network involving its own nationals and others...Pakistan, a nuclear weapon state, had established effective command and control of its assets, sites and materials³⁶.

The Pakistani envoy also rightly apprehended that the Resolution might overpower the national legislatures. "The concerns that arose from the Resolution were with regard to the role of the Security Council, to the ability of the Security Council to legislate for other states, and the fear that the Council wished to impose measures on states that they had not freely accepted". Munir

³⁴ Niaz A. Naik, 'Towards a Nuclear-Safe South Asia', in Colonel David O. Smith (ed.), *From Containment to Stability: Pakistan-United States Relations in the Post-Cold War Era* (Washington DC: National Defense University, November 1993), pp. 45-46.

³⁵ Peter Heinlein, 'UN Security Council Adopts Resolution to Prevent WMD Transfer to Terrorists', www.payvand.com/news/04/apr/1191.html, p.1.

³⁶ *UN Security Council Press Release SC/8070*, p.7. www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/sc8070.doc.htm.

Akram had further dilated that Pakistan would not to accept any demand for access, much less inspections, of our nuclear and strategic assets, materials and facilities³⁷.

In South Asia, Pakistan-India rapprochement has come about due to a configuration of forces: series of crises, role of US as an intermediary, risk reduction measures and track-two diplomacy efforts. Pakistan need not be alarmed over India's nuclear deal as Pakistan follows the policy of "minimum credible deterrence." The India-Pakistan peace process is proceeding well, although with some problems. In order to address its energy needs, China is already involved in Pakistan's nuclear plants such as Chashma I (which is operational) and Chashma II is under construction.

It is likely that China may not oppose the Indo-US nuclear deal when it goes to the 45-nation Nuclear Suppliers' Group for approval. Should China enter into a nuclear deal with the US, it would also do likewise with India and Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistan is committed to completion of IPI gas pipeline project with Iran, even if India is reluctant. Given the recent pricing agreement and the recent encouraging statements of both Pakistani and India leaders at the time of 14th SAARC Summit at New Delhi, the chances materialization of IPI has certainly brightened.

Pakistan is a major non-NATO ally, a "front line" state allied with the US in the war against global terrorism. It occupies a strategic location, lying at the tri-junction of South, Southwest and Central Asia. After 1998, South Asia crossed the nuclear Rubicon and Iran might do the same in the years ahead, if the present US policy continues to threaten it. Most Pakistanis have expressed their concerns over the Indo-US nuclear deal in the context on American intensions in South Asia. Many questions are frequently raised. Is India being made a regional hegemon? Why are the Americans putting all their cards in the Indian basket? What about Indian assertion that to conduct another explosion would be a national decision and no foreigner has any right to question it? The prevalent belief is that India will squeeze much out American association but would never allow itself to be exploited by the Americans whenever the eventuality turn out to be.

Examples of weapon states, such as North Korea, India Pakistan and Israel show that despite being nuclear, they are facing domestic problems. Nuclearization is not a panacea to problems of historical underdevelopment and poverty. While nuclear weapons have some positive value

³⁷ *ibid.*

to act as a deterrent against some 'predatory' and 'hegemonic' neighbors, nation state system is redefining its paradigm of security, with greater emphasis on human security. Greater threats now seem to emanate from within countries than from without. Globalization is adding to internal and external pressures. Nuclear weapons can address only a specific nature and type of military threat in preventing nuclear blackmail and pre-emptive strikes.

In terms of its security requirements, Pakistan is likely to continue with its current policy of maintaining the minimum credible deterrence. Given its increasing energy needs, it is likely that Pakistan may establish more nuclear power plant. However it needs to be comprehended that nuclear energy is not the major focus. Instead the efforts to secure IPI or TAP or electricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan may accelerate whereas Iran has already agreed to supply 1000MW to Pakistan.³⁸

³⁸ Dawn, April 9, 2007.