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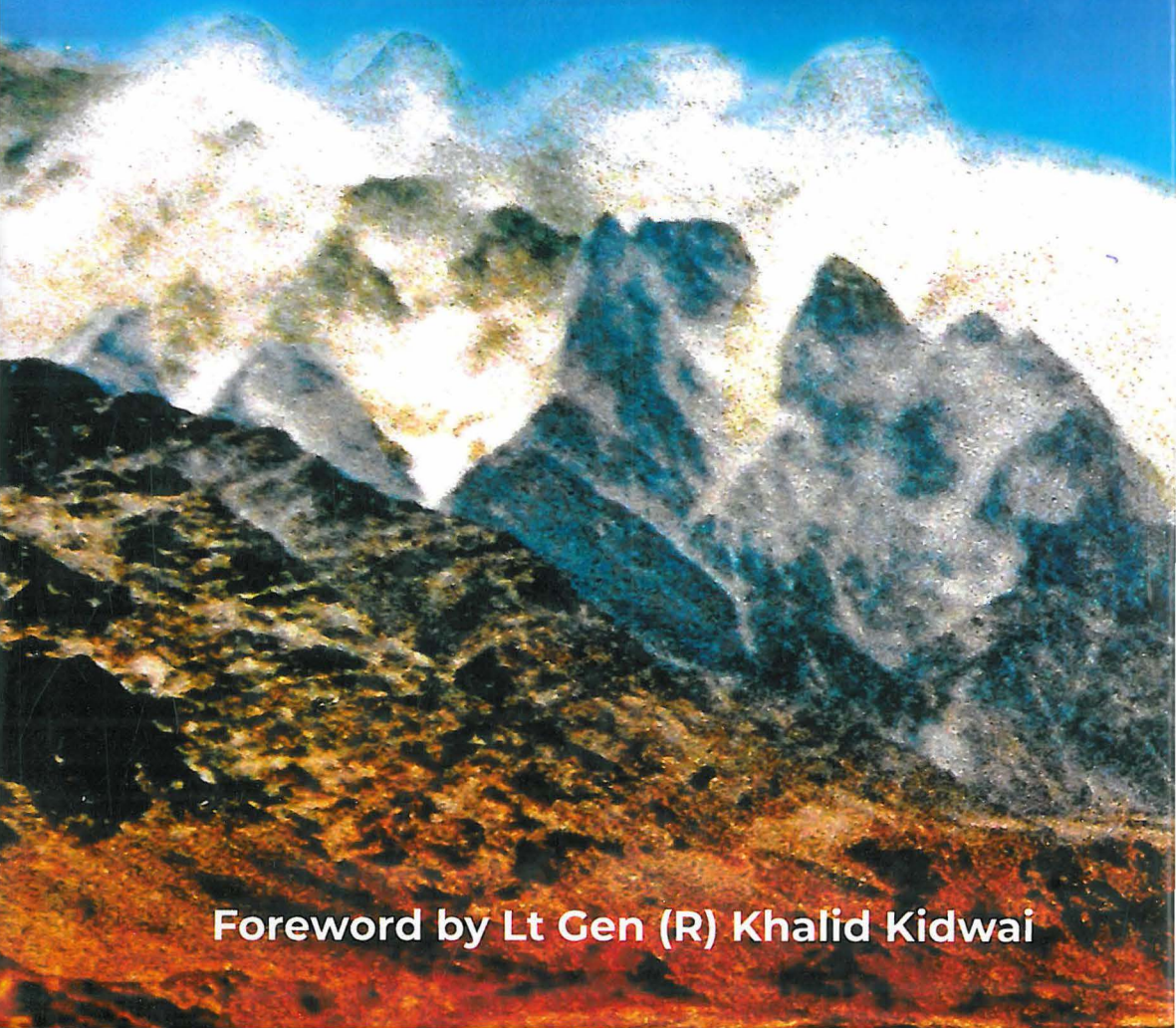
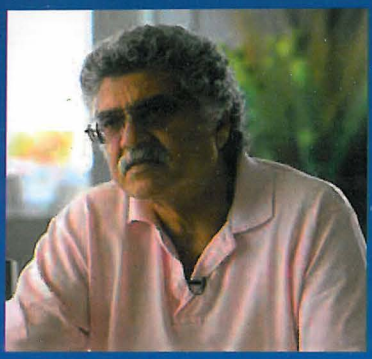
THE SECURITY IMPERATIVE

Pakistan's Nuclear Deterrence and Diplomacy

ZAMIR AKRAM



Foreword by Lt Gen (R) Khalid Kidwai



About the Author

Ambassador Zamir Akram is currently Advisor to the Strategic Plans Division. As Pakistan's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva from 2008 to 2015, he played a leading role in Disarmament, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, among other issues.

In 2015, he was elected as Chair-Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council's Working Group on the Right to Development. In 2017, he was awarded the Star of Merit by the State of Palestine in recognition for his support and solidarity with the Palestinian people while he served as Coordinator of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) group in the Human Rights Council. Prior to this role, he served as Additional Foreign Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, where he was responsible for Pakistan's Foreign and Security policies from 2004 to 2008.

Continued on back flap...

Cover image: Pakistan's first nuclear tests conducted on 28 May 1998 at Ras Koh Hills, Chagai district, Balochistan

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The Security Imperative

Pakistan's Nuclear Deterrence and Diplomacy

by
Zamir Akram

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The Security Imperative
Pakistan's Nuclear Deterrence
and Diplomacy

by Zamir Akram

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First Edition 2023

Paramount Books (Pvt.) Ltd.

152/O, Block-2, P.E.C.H.S., Karachi-75400.
Tel: +92-21-34310030, info@paramountbooks.com.pk
www.paramountbooks.com.pk

Printed in Pakistan
ISBN: 978-969-210-917-8

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Dedication

In loving memory of my mother.
Widowed at a young age,
she struggled against multiple adversities
to enable her four children to fulfill their dreams.

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About the Book

General Zubair Mahmood Hayat:

With exceptional insight and grip on the subject, Ambassador Zamir Akram has written a fascinating account, drawing a clear linkage between Pakistan's security imperative and deterrence; and its linkage with strategic stability. This book is a valuable addition to the complex and tense nature of this often 'obscure world.'

- General Zubair Mahmood Hayat, NI(M), HI(M), (R)
Former Chairman Joint Chief of Staff Committee

Javed Jabbar:

Written by one of Pakistan's most distinguished diplomats who served the country with rare capability at the UN in Geneva, and earlier also in major countries such as the USA and others, 'The Security Imperative' brings together facts and truths on a sensitive issue in an absorbing way for both specialists and lay readers. This book is an unusually distinctive work of research, incisive analysis and fluent narrative on a subject of significance both internationally and for Pakistan.

- Javed Jabbar, Pakistan Senator (r)

Dr. Anatol Lieven:

Zamir Akram's rich and impressively detailed book is an indispensable guide to the development of Pakistan's nuclear deterrent and nuclear rivalry with India, one of the most important relationships in the world today."

- Dr Anatol Lieven,
Author of "Pakistan: A Hard Country"

Dr. Antoine Levesques:

The doyen of Pakistan's arms control diplomats makes a net contribution to the history of Pakistan's nuclear weapons foreign policy, thanks to the vivid mobilisation of personal notes he kept during his years of influential active

and later appointed service. Ambassador Zamir Akram's authoritative, civilian and resolutely unapologetic Pakistani perspective avoids hindsight bias by documenting how Pakistan's diplomacy played outsized problem-solving and facilitation roles supporting the country's whole-of-nation statecraft, which sought to establish Pakistan's status as a secure and responsible nuclear weapon-armed state. This book's perspective will be especially valuable to Pakistan's next generation of diplomats and students of foreign or security policy who have precious few up-to-date, go-to reference practitioners' texts to help them think and address, in the longer national context, the unprecedented demands of major and regional power competition on Pakistan's strategy. Most foreign observers of Pakistan, be they policy-minded or academics, generalists or specialists, detail-focused or not, will find in this thought-provoking read plenty to reward them.

- Dr. Antoine Levesques, Research Fellow for South and Central Asian Defence, Strategy and Diplomacy, The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) and co-author of 'Nuclear deterrence and stability in South Asia: perceptions and realities' (2021).

Riaz H Khokhar :

Since 1947, Pakistan has faced Indian threats. India's illegal military action in 1971 and its nuclear explosion in 1974, created a perilous strategic situation for Pakistan. The then Prime minister Z.A. Bhutto took the visionary decision to acquire nuclear weapons which was an absolute necessity. He forged a formidable consensus among all key institutions and selected top scientists, a few key bureaucrats and military leaders to discreetly implement the project. Bhutto directed the Foreign Ministry to develop policies and strategies to fend off US and western pressures on NPT, CTBT, FMCT and other related issues. Zamir has rightly credited the Foreign Ministry for its immense contribution in conducting sophisticated and effective diplomacy. He has duly recognised the pivotal role of eminent scientists, key civil and military officials and diplomats.

Zamir has given a masterly account of nuclear South Asia, and the pressures and impediments in the evolution of Pakistan's nuclear programme till it became a reality. The programme is India-specific, and no Indian leader

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should take it lightly. A must-read book for all policymakers, strategists and especially the youth of Pakistan.

- Riaz H Khokhar
Former Pakistan Foreign Secretary

Shamshad Ahmad:

This book is a valuable contribution to the objective and realistic study of Pakistan's nuclear programme, a subject that has been mostly viewed through the western prism. It forcefully argues that the compulsions of national security have driven Pakistan's pursuit of nuclear deterrence. Based on personal experience during a foreign service career dealing with China, Russia, India, the US and the UN and using primary sources as well as interviews with key officials, Zamir Akram has highlighted the crucial role played by Pakistani scientists, diplomats and soldiers for the attainment of nuclear deterrence. This book is of immense importance for students and practitioners alike as well as the general public interested in Pakistan's security issues.

- Shamshad Ahmad,
Former Pakistan Foreign Secretary

Zafar Nawaz Jaspal:

Ambassador Akram is a renowned diplomat with exceptional knowledge of regional and global issues. His book is an original conceptualisation of the significance that Pakistan's nuclear programme has for the country's national security, with the use of primary material and new interpretation. The book is a valuable addition to the existing literature which will be attractive nationally and internationally, for the foreign policy-making establishment, nuclear analysts, print and electronic media as well as students of international relations, strategic studies and history.

- Professor Zafar Khan Jaspal,
School of Politics and International Relations,
Quai-e-Azam University, Islamabad

Huma Baqai:

Pakistan's nuclearisation generates considerable debate in international circuits, both academic and policy-making, even today. Zamir Akram brings in a fresh perspective rooted in ground realities. The book is well-researched and backed

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by the author's firsthand experience as an Ambassador and his interaction with relevant people in positions of power. The author builds up Pakistan's case to become a nuclear state in the wake of the security and strategic challenges it faced. He brings in Pakistan's perspective on the controversial topic to the forefront largely embedded in defensive realism. The book is of value to academicians, researchers, journalists, policymakers, anyone, and everyone interested in Pakistan's security matrix. It is historically correct and futuristic in nature.

- Huma Baqai, Associate Professor,
Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi

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Acknowledgements

Several people helped me to write this book. I would like to acknowledge their valuable assistance.

The very fact that this book appears in print is due to the dedication and diligence of my Assistant, Mr. Qasim, who endeavoured above and beyond the call of duty, to type the manuscript from my illegible handwriting (which at times I cannot read myself).

My serving and former colleagues from the Strategic Plans Division (SPD) provided valuable advice and insights. In particular, I would like to thank General Khalid Kidwai, former Director-General SPD, and Air Commodore Khalid Banuri, former Director-General of ACDA at SPD. I am also indebted to General Ausaf, Advisor at SPD and Brigadier Zahir Kazmi, currently Director-General ACDA, both of whom took the trouble and time to read the manuscript and give their valuable inputs.

From the Foreign Office, my senior colleagues, former Foreign Secretaries Shamshad Ahmad, Riaz H. Khokhar and Riaz Muhammad Khan were extremely helpful in sharing their knowledge and experience. Kamran Akhtar, Director General, (Arms Control and Disarmament), Usman Jadoon, Director General, (United Nations), and Zaman Mehdi, Director Foreign Secretary's Office, not only helped with technical details but also refreshed my memory of important developments.

My special gratitude is also owed to General Jehangir Karamat and former Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz for sharing their in-depth knowledge, especially regarding the deliberations over Pakistan's decision to test its nuclear weapons in 1998. Mr Javed Jabbar, who is well known for his many accomplishments, took the time and trouble to read the manuscript and propose changes that have greatly ensriched the text. For this, I am hugely grateful to him.

For making this book appear in print I am greatly indebted to Paramount Publishers, especially to Mr. Iqbal Saleh Muhammad and Ms. Deneb Sumbul, whose cooperation and support have been highly valuable.

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A special source of inspiration and guidance throughout the writing of this book and its publication was my dear friend Salim Ansar, perhaps the most well-read person on Pakistan's history and politics

My wife Sadia played a major role through her consistent encouragement and by being my most objective critic.

Similarly, my daughters, Nazia and Payam as well as Nazia's husband, Khurrum, were a constant source of encouragement and help, especially in the formidable task of dealing with computers and the internet which was a totally alien world for me. Nazia, Khurrum and Salim also helped to design the cover while Payam undertook the onerous task of proof-reading the first draft.

Last but not least, a special thanks to Shahmir, my five-year-old grandson, who was a welcome distraction and a constant source of joy.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABM Treaty	-	Anti Ballistic Missile Treaty
ACDA	-	Arms Control and Disarmament Affairs
AP	-	Additional Protocol
BLA	-	Baluch Liberation Army
BMD	-	Ballistic Missile Defence
BWC	-	Biological Weapons Convention
CAP	-	Combat Air Patrols
CD	-	Conference on Disarmament
CJCSC	-	Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee
COAS	-	Chief of Army Staff
CPPNM	-	Convention on Physical Security of Nuclear Materials
CSI	-	Container Security Initiative
CTBT	-	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
CWC	-	Chemical Weapons Convention
DCC	-	Defence Committee of the Cabinet
ETIM	-	Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement
FATA	-	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FMCT	-	Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty
FMT	-	Fissile Material Treaty
GGE	-	Group of Governmental Experts
GICNT	-	Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism
HEU	-	Highly Enriched Uranium
IAEA	-	International Atomic Energy Agency
IBGs	-	Integrated Battle Groups
ICBM	-	Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile

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ITER	-	International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
KANUPP	-	Karachi Nuclear Power Plant
KP/KPK	-	Khyber Pukhtoon Khawa
KRL	-	Khan/Kahuta Research Laboratories
LAC	-	Line of Actual Control
LEU	-	Low Enriched Uranium
LOC	-	Line of Control
MAD	-	Mutual Assured Destruction
MIRV	-	Multiple Independently-targetable Reentry Vehicle
MPC and A	-	Material Protection Control and Accounting
MQM	-	Muhajir Qaumi Movement
MTCR	-	Missile Technology Control Regime
NATO	-	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCA	-	National Command Authority
ND	-	Nuclear Disarmament
NEMS	-	Nuclear Emergency Management Systems
NESCOM	-	National Engineering and Scientific Commission
NFU	-	No First Use
NISAS	-	National Institute of Safety and Security
NNDA	-	National Nuclear Detection Architecture
NNWS	-	Non Nuclear Weapon State
NPT	-	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSA	-	Negative Security Assurances
NSG	-	Nuclear Suppliers Group
NSS	-	Nuclear Security Summit
NTI	-	Nuclear Threat Initiative
NWS	-	Nuclear Weapon State
PAEC	-	Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission

PALs	-	Permissive Action Links
PAROS	-	Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space
PARR-I	-	Pakistan Atomic Research Reactor-1
PCENS	-	Pakistan Center of Excellence on Nuclear Security
PGs	-	Participating Governments (of the NSG)
PHWRS	-	Pressurised Heavy Water Rectors
PIEAS	-	Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences
PINSTECH	-	Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology
PML-N	-	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)
PNE	-	Peaceful Nuclear Explosion
PNRA	-	Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority
PNRB	-	Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Board
PPP	-	Pakistan Peoples Party
PSI	-	Proliferation Security Initiative
PTI	-	Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf
PWR	-	Pressurised Water Reactor
SAARC	-	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SECDIV	-	Strategic Export Control Division
SFC	-	Strategic Force Command
SLBM	-	Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile
SPD	-	Strategic Plans Division
SSR	-	Strategic Restraint Regime
SSSNP Talks	-	Security, Strategic Stability and Non Proliferation Talks
TEL	-	Transporter Erector Launcher
TTP	-	Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan
UN	-	United Nations
WMD	-	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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Foreword

I was greatly honoured when Ambassador Zamir Akram asked me if I would write the Foreword for his book *The Strategic Imperative – Nuclear Deterence and Diplomancy.* Of course, I would most happily! And therefore, it gives me great personal pleasure indeed to write the Foreword for this outstanding book for two reasons.

One, the subject matter of the book is not only very familiar to me but it is also intricately intertwined with my own lifetime's work of over 15 years as I speedily went about the business of shaping Pakistan's nuclear deterrence into a comprehensive, cohesive, ready and robust force from early 1999 onwards; the critical period immediately following Pakistan's nuclear tests of May 1998 till 2014. It was a unique and challenging task assigned to me and my team at the newly created Strategic Plans Division (SPD) in Chaklala Garrison; a sacred national (blind!) trust with the highest security ramifications for Pakistan, for South Asia, and indeed for the region and the world. As such there were major professional overlaps between my work and Ambassador Zamir Akram's diplomatic responsibilities as Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) at Geneva - as the nuclear programme's first line of defence. Our work required the closest of coordination and synergy in order to get it right - despite the entire world except China lined up against Pakistan. There was no room for errors, and right we got it, much of it because of the smart diplomatic circles that Ambassador Zamir Akram wove around the international hounds preying on Pakistan!

Two, having worked closely with Ambassador Zamir Akram over a number of years (and earlier with his illustrious elder brother Ambassador Munir Akram) in taking on the world at the CD to protect, preserve and further the sacred cause of Pakistan's nuclear programme, we developed a strong mutual friendship, admiration and respect for each other's professional abilities and selfless dedication to Pakistan's security. The synergy worked greatly to Pakistan's advantage.

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The Security Imperative is a fascinating story, professionally told, of how Pakistan's diplomacy and our top-rate diplomats – always the first line of defence – provided Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme with an international protective umbrella - the great wall – from its infancy in 1972 to its dramatic overnight transition from a covert capability to an overtly demonstrated capability on the high noons of 28th and 30th May 1998. The earth-shaking tremors were recorded accurately in real-time at worldwide monitoring sensors including by the intricate network of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) where I was shown the graphic records during a visit; it was a proud day in Vienna!

And then from 1998 onwards, the resultant diplomatic tremors had to be managed by Pakistan's diplomacy and brilliant minds like Ambassador Zamir Akram for over two decades, through the maze of sanctions and denials, up to the full maturity and operationalisation of the programme as a robust, operationalised nuclear deterrent force; a force which has literally outlawed major wars in South Asia and has secured Pakistan from India's kinetic aggressive designs for all times. All through these difficult years, Pakistan's outstanding diplomats were always at the forefront in keeping the wolves away – and Ambassador Zamir Akram, in a variety of appointments whether in Pakistan at the headquarters, at the Prime Minister's Secretariat, or outside Pakistan in Washington or at Geneva, was at the centre stage of events as Pakistan's diplomat-warrior. I hope he would not mind if I use a term for him that is being grudgingly applied by the west for the smartest of Chinese diplomats – Wolf Warriors. I think Ambassador Zamir fits the bill! He gave right back to everything that was thrown at him by Pakistan's international detractors – never compromising on Pakistan's interests. He has seen history closely and narrates it superbly from the advantage of not only enjoying a ringside diplomat's seat but also being a critical player at critical periods of Pakistan's nuclear history.

The effect of Pakistan's nuclear capability articulated through its robust nuclear policy of Full Spectrum Deterrence from 2011 to date – which Ambassador Zamir Akram has so ably explained in his work – on the massive Indian military machine, has been one of being progressively neutered to a point of being rendered quite irrelevant in South Asia's war-fighting paradigm. Consequently, India's military doctrines have been compelled over

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the last four decades to gradually adjust to the ground reality of a Pakistani Full Spectrum Deterrence capability visible over the horizon in support of its strong conventional forces duly integrated into Pakistan's deterrence and security strategies. India's political approach to Pakistan slowly underwent a change because of the new reality as India's politicians reconciled to the futility of attempting to coerce Pakistan through direct strategies. India eventually had to adopt indirect strategies like hybrid warfare and fifth-generation warfare to hurt Pakistan internally and on the western borders, a deflective reaction to Pakistan's nuclear capability. That Pakistan is finding a degree of incohesion and imbalance in responding effectively to the indirect Indian strategies ought to be a matter of serious concern to Pakistan's politico-military leadership.

It was also because of Pakistan's developing nuclear capabilities that India's war-fighting military doctrines, in turn, started to transit and tapering off, in stages, from General K Sundarji's gung-ho "mechanise, mobilise and hit" doctrine, laid out oh so cleverly in 1986-87 in the deserts of Rajasthan under the cover of the infamous Exercise Operation Brasstacks, to General V.P. Malik's and General Padmanabhan's "limited war under a nuclear overhang" as in the failed Operation Parakaram of 2001-02, to the still-born "Cold Start Doctrine" which got neutralised with the first test of Pakistan's Nasr missile as a tactical nuclear weapon in 2011, to the pathetic spectre of General Bipin Rawat's fake "strategic strike" of 2016, and finally reduced to the humiliation of the "IAF's Balakot strategic strike" of 26 February 2019 which was anything but, and the resultant IAF losses when the PAF struck back in full force the next day.

During these critical decades as Pakistan's nuclear capabilities strengthened generating the aforesaid strategic effects on India, Pakistan's outstanding diplomats worked hand in glove with our strategic planners to ensure that the first line of defence would never be breached. They ensured successfully that the international environment would not create any detrimental effect on the progress of Pakistan's nuclear programme. In military terminology, the diplomatic bridgeheads repeatedly launched by Pakistan's scheming detractors were invariably neutralized in good time, well before strategic buildups or breakouts.

My personal experience of closely coordinating Pakistan's positions with the Foreign Office and laying down targets, or strategies, for the diplomacy to

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attain starts from the early years of the development of Pakistan's proposals, enshrined in the Strategic Restraint Regime document in 1999-2000 and the year 2000-2001 when Pakistan was brought under severe pressure to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) – and we deflected the pressure well and for all times.

Then came the A Q Khan proliferation episode of 2003-04 when it seemed for a while that all hell would break lose on Pakistan and its nuclear programme but the SPD and our diplomats handled the fallout smartly in firmly distancing the State of Pakistan from the indiscreet acts of an individual; a difficult balancing act but I think we got it right because the truth was on our side.

In the years from 2005-08 the US conducted a strategic dialogue with India with the clear objective of mainstreaming India into the international nuclear fold, while leaving Pakistan out in the cold, and bulldozed its way to get India an NSG-waiver in quick time. This period exposed a serious lack of understanding, urgency and a cavalier attitude to matters of critical national import in Pakistan's higher political decision-making circles. Pakistan desperately needed to make all efforts to forestall the eventuality of India being granted an NSG-waiver without a similar exemption for Pakistan. In my considered opinion it was within Pakistan's power and grasp, with Chinese support at the IAEA in Vienna in 2008 to scuttle the Indo-US diplomatic blitzkrieg when the late Ambassador Shahbaz, may Allah Bless him forever, circulated the famous letter amongst the member states and about which Ambassador Zamir Akram has elaborated in much detail in the book. Unfortunately, Pakistan's political leadership of the time thoughtlessly and recklessly wilted under US pressure and, displaying a complete lack of understanding of the criticality of the issue, sold away Pakistan's vital national interest by ordering the Foreign Office to withdraw the letter immediately, thereby giving the US and India a free run. The Foreign Office too, most unfortunately, rushed to implement the decision post haste and did not even bother to inform me as DG SPD – till much after the deed of betrayal had been done. I have lived to regret it to this day that if only I had been informed in time I would have asked the Army Chief General Ashfaq Kayani and the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Tariq Majeed to accompany me to intercede forcefully with the President and the Prime Minister. I am certain that we would have prevailed. We could thus

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have prevented India from being granted the NSG-waiver – perhaps for a long long time – only if!!

On the other hand, Pakistan's crowning success has been at the CD in Geneva. The prevention of 'commencement of negotiations on the proposed Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) has been stalled successfully almost single-handedly by Pakistan for over two decades for the straightforward reason that the proposed Treaty is not in Pakistan's security interest – period! And for this Pakistan's superb nuclear diplomacy pioneered most ably by Ambassador Munir Akram, Ambassador Masood Khan and Ambassador Zamir Akram, amongst others, deserves the highest accolades. For a while, in 2010 there was once again a chance of uninformed slippages by the political leadership akin to the Indian NSG-waiver fiasco of 2008. Fortunately, better sense prevailed and President Zardari asked me to travel with him from Islamabad to Karachi on the Presidential plane and make him understand Pakistan's rationale for opposing the FMCT. Up there at 40,000 feet for 2 one-on-one hours, I got my chance to lay out before him the entire gamut of our strategic-cum-operational compulsions viz India's fast maturing Cold Start Doctrine and the linked need to produce adequate stocks of Plutonium for our tactical nuclear weapons in order to plug our inventory gaps at the tactical level – we needed time. The President absorbed the explanation, especially the unacceptable political consequences if Pakistan were to succumb and gave me the go-ahead to keep the FMCT at bay and he would back the policy. Ambassador Zamir Akram's hand was greatly strengthened and diplomacy never looked back from there. This was a major turning point and Pakistan's nuclear deterrent has been that much stronger for that.

All in all, *The Security Imperative – Pakistan's Nuclear Deterrence and Diplomacy* is an excellent account of Pakistan's superb diplomatic manoeuvers of over almost the entire journey of five decades of Pakistan's nuclear programme, linked events and episodes along the way. Ambassador Zamir Akram was fortunate to be invariably there where the action was most of the time throughout his long distinguished career. As such the authenticity and factual accuracy of the diplomatic history of the programme is assured. I think all Pakistanis owe our smartest salute to this diplomat-warrior for not only being there for Pakistan whenever it mattered but also for putting

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this historical account together for the benefit of posterity. It is genuinely a valuable addition to an otherwise barren landscape.

Thank you, Ambassador Zamir Akram.

- Adviser National Command Authority
Chaklala Garrison Rawalpindi
Founding Director General Strategic Plans Division
Lt Gen Khalid Ahmed Kidwai, NI, HI, HI (M),
12 January 2023, Karachi

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Introduction

This book presents a personal perspective on Pakistan's quest for security through credible nuclear deterrence for which Pakistan's diplomacy played a crucial role. This is not meant to be an academic study nor is it an official narrative. It is largely based on my personal experience spanning over 38 years in the Pakistan Foreign Service. The book also relies on de-classified official documents, interviews with key players and publically available material on the subject where necessary. All these sources are mentioned in the end notes.

The motivation for writing this book was to fill the void which I believe exists because there are comparatively few Pakistani accounts of the country's nuclear policy and virtually none on its nuclear diplomacy. The literature on this issue is dominated by western, especially American studies, which naturally provide their perspective, thereby creating misperceptions within and beyond Pakistan. I was struck by this reality on returning to Pakistan in 2015, after serving as Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN and the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva where I had been closely involved in Pakistan's nuclear diplomacy. While participating in several seminars and conferences on nuclear issues, I was repeatedly questioned by students, academics and journalists among others on Pakistan's nuclear policy which demonstrated that their views were shaped by the western narrative. These questions ranged from why Pakistan opposed Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) negotiations in the CD, how long could Pakistan withstand international pressure for rejecting these negotiations or for how long could Pakistan afford to remain 'isolated'? There were also more fundamental issues on which confusion and doubts existed, for instance on the rationale for Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence posture, its development of so-called tactical nuclear weapons or even the justification for seeking security through nuclear weapons. It became obvious to me that such queries and views were deeply influenced by western accounts which were clearly driven by western interests. When I explained the Pakistani perspective, the response was that there was hardly any literature available giving this point of view. This led me to the conclusion that I could make a small but focused contribution to projecting the Pakistani perspective. The outcome of these efforts is this book.

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From the outset, I felt the book needed to have an overarching framework or context to rationalise Pakistan's pursuit of nuclear weapons. Since the beginning of the nuclear age, states have justified their acquisition of nuclear weapons on the basis of ensuring national security. Even though advocates of nuclear disarmament have always questioned whether nuclear weapons actually enhance security, leading nuclear strategists like Bernard Brodie have argued that nuclear weapons are not meant to fight wars but to prevent them. As such, possession of nuclear weapons ensures deterrence by posing the threat of an unacceptable level of damage to an aggressor, thereby contributing to a nation's security. But possession of nuclear weapons is also seen as adding to a country's 'prestige.' This is certainly true of former colonial powers, like Britain and France, who acquired nuclear weapons even though as members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) their security was guaranteed by the American nuclear umbrella. Similarly, Israel has also developed nuclear weapons despite the American commitment to its security. The Indian case is more complex because they have given varying justifications for their nuclear weapons, often depending on the audience they are addressing. Externally, to the international community, India has argued that its nuclear weapons are meant to deter a nuclear-armed China with which it has territorial disputes. Internally, to their own people, Indian leaders have raised the issue of prestige since Indians aspire to a great power status for their country. Therefore, in India's case, its nuclear weapons programme has been both security and status-driven, wherein nuclear weapons are seen as a necessary qualification for recognition as a great power along with the five nuclear weapon states. This ambition has driven India's nuclear weapons programme since independence despite Indian claims about supporting "universal and complete nuclear disarmament." By contrast, there has been no ambiguity about Pakistan's motives for developing nuclear weapons which has been clearly driven by security considerations, and meant exclusively for deterrence against a nuclear-armed India. Accordingly, the framework of this book attempts to rationalise Pakistan's nuclear weapons possession in the context of its security imperative.

This security imperative is the consequence of Pakistan's history and geography. The inherited legacy of disputes and hostility with India since independence has shaped Pakistan's security paradigm. This became worse

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due to India's larger size and greater military capabilities. Pakistan's initial reliance on external alliances for ensuring its security failed to prevent Indian aggression to dismember the country in 1971. Thereafter, Indian demonstration of its nuclear weapons capability in 1974 accentuated the existential threat to Pakistan. In these circumstances, acquisition of nuclear weapons was seen as the only credible guarantee for security and survival. Pursuit of this capability, however, confronted several obstacles, especially American-led western opposition through sanctions and political pressure. In turn, this denied access to vital technologies for the nuclear weapons programme.

Besides, Pakistan's geographical location in an unstable neighbourhood, the separation of the two wings of the country by hostile Indian territory, a lack of spatial depth in the western part and virtual encirclement in the east by India, all added to the country's security predicament. Even after the separation of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, these geographical challenges continued for the western half of the state, following far-reaching regional changes, especially the Soviet invasion of neighbouring Afghanistan in 1979. Fortunately, however, Pakistan was able to leverage the international opprobrium of the Soviet action by opposing Moscow's aggression, which then provided the strategic space for the pursuit of its nuclear weapons programme.

Once this nuclear capability was developed by 1984, even though it was confirmed by a 'cold test' rather than a hot test with fissle material, it had changed the strategic dynamics of South Asia, based on 'recessed' or 'non-weaponised' deterrence between Pakistan and India. As a consequence, India's numerical superiority in conventional military capabilities over Pakistan was neutralised. This prevented the outbreak of Pakistan-India wars during the Brass-Tacks crisis of 1987 or the confrontation over Kashmir after 1990. Thereafter, the Indian nuclear tests in May 1998 followed by Pakistan, established overt nuclear deterrence based on Mutual Assured Destruction. Since then resorting to a full-scale war ceased to be an option for either country. While limited military engagements still continued to take place such as in 1999, 2001-2002 and 2019, the existence of nuclear deterrence prevented these hostilities from escalating into larger conflicts.

The nuclear doctrines adopted by Pakistan and India after their nuclear tests clearly established the different motivations of the two countries for developing nuclear weapons. Pakistan declared that its 'credible minimum

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deterrence' was meant for deterrence only against India and as such its doctrine was clearly security driven. The Indian doctrine, however, while claiming to pursue 'credible minimum deterrence' as well, envisaged a huge build-up of strategic forces – nuclear weapons, missiles, ballistic missile defence and conventional weapons – all of which indicated its great power ambitions. As such, the Indian nuclear capability was driven not just by security considerations but also by the desire for prestige and status.

This Indian ambition ensured that deterrence based on Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) would not remain stable in the years after 1998. For one, India sought to re-establish the salience of its conventional weapons numerical advantage over Pakistan by seeking space for limited conventional war below the nuclear threshold through its 'Cold Start' or 'Proactive' doctrine after 2004. Another destabilising development after 2005 was the growing strategic partnership between India and the US, mainly to contain China. This alliance enabled India to build up and modernise its strategic and conventional forces, eventually encouraging it to develop the capability for launching a 'disarming' nuclear pre-emptive first strike against Pakistan to neutralise its nuclear arsenal.

With such destabilisation of the regional security environment, Pakistan responded by developing the capability for Full Spectrum Deterrence by 2011 – so as to deter India at the tactical, operational and strategic levels. This involved development of low-yield nuclear weapons and short-range missiles to deter Indian resort to a Cold Start-type offensive, while the Indian temptation to launch a pre-emptive first strike was countered by the development of a credible second-strike capability based on long-range, Cruise and Multiple Independently Targeted Re-entry (MIRV) missile systems.

But strategic stability in the region remains elusive, mainly as a result of India's great power ambitions that have been fuelled by the evolving global confrontation between the US and China. India has been designated by the US as a 'Net Security Provider' to be built up as a counter weight to China. Apart from benefitting from access to the latest American and western military equipment, India has also become a key player in the Quadrilateral Alliance, the Asian equivalent of NATO, which includes the US, Japan, Australia and India. The ostensible purpose of this alliance is to ensure 'freedom of navigation' and a 'rules based-order' in the so-called Indo-Pacific, but in actuality its objective is to contain China by potentially controlling its vital

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lanes of maritime communications. The impact of these developments for Pakistan is that the enhancement of Indian power in the region can not only be used against China but Pakistan as well.

The growing Indo-US strategic partnership underscores the fact that the Pakistan-India nuclear equation has never been a strictly binary relationship. Owing to global and regional geo-political developments from 1947 to the present, there has been a profound impact on strategic stability in South Asia, especially in the context of the nuclear equation between Pakistan and India since the first Indian nuclear test in 1974. For this reason, relevant chapters in this book delve rather extensively into the extraneous factors that have impacted strategic stability in South Asia as well as Pakistan's security concerns.

A related recurring theme throughout this book is the discriminatory nuclear policies of the US and its allies towards Pakistan. This started with access to nuclear technology in the 1950-60s, when India was provided nuclear power plants and associated technologies simply on verbal assurances regarding non-diversion from civilian to military uses, which is exactly what India did, as demonstrated by its nuclear test in 1974. By contrast, Pakistan was required to accept International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards while dual-use capabilities such as heavy water and reprocessing plants were denied. Even after India conducted its 1974 nuclear test, the repercussions on India were minimal and it continued to receive nuclear fuel from the US for its American-Canadian supplied nuclear facilities. But the consequences of the Indian test fell on Pakistan instead. Apart from the creation of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in response to the Indian test by the US and other nuclear-capable states, the US adopted several non-proliferation laws, which came into force after the Indian test, and thereby affected Pakistan but not India. Such discrimination against Pakistan continued with the imposition of Pressler sanctions in 1990. With the strengthening of Indo-US relations, especially during the Bush administration and thereafter, India was also provided a special exemption for bilateral civilian nuclear cooperation as well as the India-specific NSG waiver for nuclear trade with the international community. However, Pakistan was intentionally denied such cooperation. Such discriminatory treatment continues to this day.

This discrimination was not limited to the nuclear domain, as it was also exercised in the development of missile capabilities. For instance, Pakistan and

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China were sanctioned by the US for their missile development cooperation, such as for the M-11 missiles, but Indian acquisition of the cryogenic engines from Russia did not lead to sanctions on India. On the contrary, the Bush and Obama administrations engaged in dual-use space cooperation and ballistic missile defence development with India, enabling the country to modernise and upgrade its missile programme. Moreover, the US went on to facilitate Indian membership of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) while also pushing for Indian membership of the NSG.

The American and western discriminatory approach was also manifest in their demands for nuclear and missile 'restraint' by Pakistan, without similar demands being made to India. While Pakistan rejected any unilateral restraints, such a unifocal approach in fact encouraged India to pursue its strategic build-up without regard to western non-proliferation policies.

It must be acknowledged, however, that at times external developments helped Pakistan as well. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989, when the US needed Pakistan's cooperation against the Soviets, provided vital time and political space for Pakistan to develop its nuclear weapons capability. Similarly, the hostile relations between China and India as well as the growing American confrontation with China with Indian collaboration, encouraged the Chinese to strengthen nuclear and missile cooperation with Pakistan. Most notable in this regard has been the growing civilian nuclear cooperation between Pakistan and China which has been encouraged by the Indo-US nuclear agreement and the NSG waiver for India. As a result, with Chinese assistance, Pakistan has been able to set up additional power reactors in Chasma and Karachi.

Quite distinct from the external factors that influenced Pakistan's nuclear policy was the deleterious impact of the country's internal challenges, especially political instability, economic malaise and above all terrorism, spawned by al-Qaida and its Pakistani supporters as well as ethnic and sectarian groups. These security challenges directly affected Pakistan's credentials as a responsible steward of its nuclear arsenal, apart from creating complications in its relations with the US and the west generally. The terrorism issue further provided an opportunity for India to demonise Pakistan besides becoming an additional factor for its convergence with the US. Accordingly, these internal challenges faced by Pakistan are also considered at some length in the book.

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Throughout Pakistan's quest for security, including the development of nuclear weapons capability, the country's diplomacy has played a vital role. During the Cold War period, Pakistan's diplomatic efforts ensured a close alliance with the US for the country's security. This was achieved even as Pakistan-China relations expanded in all spheres, which was in every respect, a remarkable balancing act between Washington and Beijing.

In the nuclear realm, Pakistani diplomats navigated through the negotiations for the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), protecting Pakistan's future interests by ensuring that Pakistan would not sign this treaty unless India did as well. Following the 1974 Indian nuclear test, Pakistani diplomacy took the offensive with several multi-lateral and bilateral proposals to put the spotlight on India. These included the proposals for a nuclear weapons-free zone in South Asia; assurances by nuclear weapon states not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states; a zero missile zone in South Asia; Five Nation talks on security in South Asia and a No-War pact with India, among others. While there were no illusions that India would accept these proposals, the objective was to place the onus on India for rejecting reasonable offers for non-proliferation and regional stability and to underscore that Pakistan would not accept unilateral concessions. Pakistani diplomatic efforts also contributed largely to the dilution of the Pressler Amendment sanctions which had been imposed in 1990 by working with supporters in the US Congress. This enabled resumption of American economic assistance and the return of some of the military equipment withheld by the US but not the F-16 aircraft. Pakistan also supported the negotiations on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the CD. But it was decided not to sign the treaty after its conclusion in view of India's rejection of the treaty as this would have foreclosed Pakistan's option for conducting nuclear tests if India resumed nuclear testing. Subsequent events proved this decision to be correct as India tested nuclear weapons in May 1998, followed by Pakistan.

After these tests, Pakistan took the diplomatic initiative of proposing a Strategic Restraint Regime in South Asia to ensure regional strategic stability. Even though India rejected this proposal, the initiative established Pakistan's credentials as a responsible nuclear weapon state, apart from holding India responsible for the subsequent destabilisation of regional security. Later, the US sought unilateral restraints by Pakistan in the context of Pakistan's

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Full Spectrum Deterrence policy, even though it surged ahead with nuclear cooperation with India. Nevertheless, Pakistani diplomacy successfully blunted these efforts.

In another vital area, negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), pursued by the US in the CD from 2009, Pakistan proposed an alternative treaty that would not only ban future production of fissile material but also a reduction of existing stocks. Pakistan's concern was that a treaty to only ban future production and not a reduction of existing stocks would permanently freeze the asymmetry in stocks between Pakistan and India. The US and its allies strongly opposed Pakistan's position and applied intense pressure at the bilateral and multilateral levels. Nonetheless, Pakistan stood firm on its position, which still guides its policy on the FMCT.

Another major success was the conclusion of a 'Grandfather' agreement on civilian nuclear cooperation with China before Beijing joined the NSG. It has been due to this agreement that China-Pakistan civilian nuclear cooperation has made major strides in recent years.

Pakistani diplomacy has also had to manage some negative developments. Foremost among these has been the fall-out from the international nuclear proliferation network involving Dr A Q Khan. Another episode was the alleged cooperation between retired Pakistani nuclear scientists with the Taliban and al-Qaida, which was claimed by the US after invading Afghanistan in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Through intensive diplomatic efforts and corrective measures taken domestically, both incidents were managed without a major fallout on Pakistan. Still, it must be acknowledged that the proliferation network issue continues to be used against Pakistan by the US and its partners, especially as a justification for denying civilian nuclear cooperation and membership of the NSG as offered by them to India.

Even so, Pakistan's outreach efforts with members of the NSG, in conjunction with its application for NSG membership along with India in 2016, has at least ensured that a number of countries advocate equitable and non-discriminatory criteria for membership by non-NPT nuclear weapon states. This is in line with Pakistan's position. As a result, the NSG, which makes decisions by consensus, has so far been unable to give exclusive membership to India, as advocated by the US and other Indian supporters.

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While Pakistan's diplomacy was largely successful in protecting and promoting the country's interests in the nuclear domain, there were also some notable setbacks. For instance, after the 1998 nuclear tests, Pakistan was unable to negotiate its eventual recognition as a mainstream responsible nuclear weapon state in talks with the Americans as India managed to do. Later, Pakistan did not use the leverage it had gained by supporting the American 'War on Terror' after 9/11 to obtain the same exemption for nuclear cooperation that the US granted to India. Then, the IAEA's agreement with India and the NSG waiver for India were not actively opposed by Pakistan. However, the truth is that in all these instances, it was not so much the failure of Pakistani diplomats, but the lack of willingness and determination by the Pakistani leadership that stymied Pakistan's diplomatic efforts. This was mainly due to the preference of the leadership at the time for American economic assistance for short-term gains rather than the long-term advantage in the nuclear domain.

This book mainly follows a chronological order but also a thematic approach from 1947 to 2020. Owing to significant developments in 2021 and early 2022 which have an impact on Pakistan's security – an epilogue has been added to cover this period.

The first chapter provides the overarching framework or context of the book, outlining the factors that have contributed to Pakistan's 'security imperative', the efforts to enlist external support for responding to these threats and the eventual reliance on nuclear weapons for national security based on credible nuclear deterrence. The second chapter traces the development of nuclear capability in Pakistan and the domestic debate on moving from purely civilian use of nuclear technology towards a weapons programme. The third chapter deals with the first Indian nuclear test of 1974 and its impact on Pakistan's security as well as an evaluation of the international response to the Indian test, followed by an examination of Pakistan's response. In the fourth chapter on strategic space, developments in Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme are considered which were possible against the backdrop of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the consequent close partnership with the US, as long as Pakistan did not carry out a nuclear test. The fifth chapter entitled 'Roller-Coaster,' covers the period of the 1990s when relations with the US went through several ups and downs as a result of the nuclear

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issue. 'Paradigm Shift', the sixth chapter, covers the developments leading to the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in May 1998 and their impact on Pakistan's security paradigm. Thereafter, chapter seven deals with the post-nuclear test dialogues that Pakistan conducted with the US and India, as well as the evolution of the Pakistani and Indian nuclear doctrines. In chapter eight, it is argued that Pakistan squandered the opportunity for its nuclear 'normalisation' in its dialogue with the US in the manner that this was achieved by India, especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the US which led to an improvement in Pakistan-US relations. Additional factors that contributed to this outcome were the 'de-hyphenation' of US policy towards Pakistan and India, the growing threats of terrorism and religious extremism, the Kargil crisis, the Pakistan-India military confrontation in 2001-2002 and the discovery of the A Q Khan proliferation network. All of these factors damaged Pakistan's efforts to be recognised as a responsible nuclear-weapon state. Still, during this phase, Pakistan made progress toward creating the infrastructure for nuclear Command and Control as well as for the safety and security of its nuclear arsenal.

The ninth chapter on renewed American nuclear discrimination against Pakistan, traces the impact of terrorism on Pakistan-US relations, the emergence of the Indo-US strategic partnership leading to civilian nuclear cooperation between them and the denial of equal treatment to Pakistan. It also examines the changes in Indian strategic policy with the adoption of its Cold Start doctrine for limited war below the nuclear threshold. The tenth chapter, entitled 'Betrayal,' focuses on the Pakistani leadership's decision not to oppose American-sponsored efforts for an India-specific NSG waiver and the related conclusion by India of an Additional Protocol and a Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA. This gravely damaged Pakistan's efforts for equal treatment with India with far-reaching implications that still prevail.

In chapter eleven, the growing Indo-US strategic partnership is considered against the back-drop of global and regional developments, with a focus on Pakistan's response. This involved a policy of defiance through technological developments that led to Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence policy accompanied by diplomatic efforts to help enhance the country's deterrence capability. Chapter twelve covers the most recent phase of global and regional developments that have contributed to further endangering security and

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strategic stability in South Asia. These include the growing confrontation between the US and China and the resultant enhancement of Indo-US strategic cooperation. Most alarmingly, such cooperation has encouraged Indian belligerence in relations with both Pakistan and China, including the Indian temptation to consider a nuclear pre-emptive first strike against Pakistan. These tensions set the stage for the February 2019 crisis between Pakistan and India as well as the Sino-Indian confrontation along their disputed border since June 2020. Nevertheless, the Pakistan-India crisis also demonstrated the continuing relevance of nuclear deterrence. In the final chapter, future trends at the global and regional levels are examined with their likely impact on Pakistan's security. The likely trends in domestic developments are also considered as these too will have consequences for Pakistan's future security.

The chapter concludes by briefly suggesting measures for Pakistan's way forward. However, since the completion of the book but before it could go to the publishers, that is through 2021 and early 2022, a number of internal and external developments took place with a direct bearing on Pakistan's security. This has required adding an Epilogue to update the book till May 2022.

I have tried to ensure that every chapter is self-contained as far as possible. For this reason, there is some repetition from previous chapters. But I believe that this repetition is worthwhile to establish the context and the continuity of the discourse.

Finally, a word about sources. Where available, my personal notes, documents, speeches and statements have been used. Publicly available open source and declassified documents from the Foreign Office archives have been used as well. The wealth of information available in published material, books, articles and speeches by Pakistani, American and Indian officials as well as scholars has also been useful in writing this book. The most valuable information, however, has come from interviews I conducted with several retired and serving Pakistani officials as well as with nuclear experts, academics and journalists.

As stated at the outset, this book is a personal perspective. Its purpose is to contribute to a better understanding of Pakistan's security compulsions that have driven its nuclear policy and diplomacy. Hopefully, it will prove useful for both practitioners and students of this subject, while also generating a more informed public debate in this regard.

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1 | The Security Imperative

Ever since its emergence as an independent state in 1947, Pakistan has been confronted with the imperative of ensuring its security. Both internal and external circumstances, including recurring existential crises over its seven decades old history, have contributed to what former Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad calls Pakistan's 'Perennial Quest for Survival.'[1] For this reason, Pakistan has been described as the 'Crisis State'[2] or even as 'Paraniodistan'[3] with its obsessive search for security that has necessitated a predominant role by its military. This has also led to its description as a 'garrison state.'[4] Even though such deprecating descriptions may all be true for some observers, the fact remains that there were and still are genuine reasons for Pakistan to focus on its security imperative. Indeed, both geography and history have combined to confront Pakistan with a security dilemma. These need to be fully appreciated to comprehend Pakistan's nuclear policy and its continuing emphasis on maintaining credible nuclear deterrence for its security.

Impact of Geography and History

What emerged at the culmination of the struggle for a homeland for the Muslims of British colonial India was a "truncated" Pakistan, deprived of Muslim majority Assam and the partitioning of Punjab and Bengal. The country was also split into two wings – East and West Pakistan – separated by a huge hostile India. East Pakistan was surrounded on three sides by India while West Pakistan lacked "geographic depth" with its East-West road and rail links perilously vulnerable to Indian interdiction. All the main rivers of both wings of the country also flowed from Indian-occupied territory. Moreover, (West) Pakistan, located in a dangerous, unstable and volatile region of the world, with neighbouring Afghanistan, Iran and the Persian Gulf, was and continues to be caught up in the vortex of great power rivalries, at first between the United States and the Soviet Union and now increasingly between the United States and China.

From a historical perspective, the birth of Pakistan was through a baptism of fire. Failure to resolve simmering Muslim-Hindu animosities and refusal by

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the Hindu majority to address Muslim concerns about their rights in a post colonial independent India led to the demand for Pakistan. This demand for a new homeland, however, burst into flames before and after independence. Millions of people were massacred in this transition, grossly mismanaged by the departing British, which the noted American scholar, Stanley Wolpert, has described as a 'Shameful Flight.'[5] The newly created state of Pakistan was thereby overwhelmed by the influx of millions of destitute and homeless refugees for whose care Pakistan neither had the resources nor the infrastructure. The hostile Government of Indian Prime Minister Nehru believed that Pakistan would collapse under its own weight and his Home Minister, Sardar Patel, was "convinced that the new state of Pakistan was not viable and could not last."[6] Even the much-revered Mahatma Gandhi claimed that "the two parts of India would ultimately reunite."[7] To hasten such an eventuality, the Indians delayed and, in some cases, denied Pakistan's share of financial and other assets, including the division of the civil administration and armed forces of British India. The objective of the Indian leaders was to "cripple and thwart the establishment of Pakistan as a viable independent state."[8]

To make matters worse, was the chicanery of the last British Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten. Beholden to his friend Nehru for appointing him as the first Governor-General of India, Mountbatten helped promote Indian occupation of the Muslim majority state of Kashmir through a fraudulent instrument of accession and exerted pressure on the Radcliffe Commission to change the boundary award in Punjab so that India would have a land access to Kashmir. Ever since then the Kashmir dispute has been the source of continuing tensions and two wars between Pakistan and India.

Following the first war over Kashmir, India took the Kashmir dispute to the UN Security Council in 1948 and accepted the UN's decision for a plebiscite in the disputed State. Nehru soon realised, however, that the proposed referendum would go in Pakistan's favour. As a result, India resiled from its commitment to implement the UN's resolutions, leading to continuous friction with Pakistan over this dispute, which continues to this day. Following the acquisition of nuclear weapons by India and then Pakistan in 1998, Kashmir has become a nuclear flashpoint between the two countries.

Despite the Indian occupation of Kashmir for the last seven decades, the Kashmiri freedom struggle has endured decades of massive and brutal

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repression. Even the current Modi government's use of excessive force to bludgeon the Kashmiris into submission, enforce the abrogation of its national autonomy, by revoking Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution impose curfews and lockdowns, arrest and torture thousands of Kashmiris, and enforce ethnic cleansing-have all failed to subdue the Kashmiri freedom movement. The result has been an escalation of tensions between nuclear armed Pakistan and India which most recently, resulted in the military crisis of February 2019.

Relations with India

But the Kashmir dispute, the core issue between Pakistan and India, is more a symptom of the deep-rooted enimity between the two countries. It is the Indian ambition for regional hegemony and great power status which is the real cause of continuing tensions between the two countries as well as between India and its other neighbours. Ever since independence, every Indian government has pursued this objective – the one issue on which there is a national consensus. In his speech on the eve of independence, Nehru spoke about India's "tryst with destiny"[9] and claimed that, "a new star rises, the star of Freedom in Asia."[10] In fact, even before independence, in September 1946, Nehru as the Minister for External Affairs in the Interim Government, had claimed that "there are only four great powers in the world – USA, USSR, China and India."[11] Indeed, Indian leaders visualise their country as the successor of the British colonial empire in the region. As such they have expected all of India's neighbours to accept Indian supremacy and domination and where differences have existed, they believe these must be resolved on India's terms without compromise from the Indian side. According to noted British scholar, Ian Stephens, "a cardinal underlying Indian purpose was to keep her smaller neighbours weak and isolated for eventual re-absorption."[12] Not surprisingly, therefore, even today India has outstanding disputes with all its neighbours, not just Pakistan. Moreover, over the years, India has used its size and greater military power to annex Sikkim, balkanise Bhutan, dominate Nepal and repeatedly interfere in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bangladesh. Even with the more powerful China, New Delhi has laid claim to colonial-era borders which led to the Sino-Indian war of 1962 and continuing territorial disputes that perpetrated border clashes in 2020.

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Given the history and culture of Muslim-Hindu differences before independence, Indian intimidation, belligerence and aggression have been mostly focused towards Pakistan. Apart from undermining Pakistan since its inception, India has occupied Kashmir and consistently refused to resolve the dispute through negotiations while claiming the whole of the erstwhile princely state as Indian territory. Over the years, India has also repeatedly promoted irredentist forces within Pakistan such as in NWFP/KP, Balochistan and Sindh; and was directly involved in the separation of East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh. While it is true that Pakistan mishandled the East Pakistan crisis after the 1970 elections, it is now widely recognised, even by Indians, that India promoted separatist elements in East Pakistan well before the 1970 elections and infiltrated its forces to support the Mukti Bahini, the Bengali liberation force. Prime Minister Modi himself stated on 7 June 2015 that "we fought for Bangladesh's swabhimaan (honour)... along with Mukti Jodhas (Mukti Bahini) for Bangladesh... Indians were fighting side by side with them in a way that helped realise the dream of Bangladesh." On 8th June 2015, Modi further claimed that "Indian soldiers fought alongside Bengali guerrilla and regular armed resistance forces during the nine-month war."[13] An Indian scholar at Oxford University, Sharmila Bose, has further exposed the Indian role in her book, *Dead Reckoning*, in which she has written that Indian activities "from July to October (1971), involved both intensive training of the Mukti Bahini and direct involvement in Mukti Bahini activities by Indian military personnel."[14] She adds that "Indian artillery was used in support,"[15] underscoring the extent of Indian interference even before the war with Pakistan started on 3 December 1971.

The Indian animus towards Pakistan was further amply exposed in a statement by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 30 November 1971, in which she stated that "India has never reconciled with the existence of Pakistan... Indian leaders have always believed that Pakistan should not have been created and that the Pakistani nation has no right to exist."[16] Soon after the 1971 war, she went on to boast that "we have taken the revenge of a thousand years and we have drowned the Two Nation theory in the Bay of Bengal."[17] Present-day Indian leaders like Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, despite belonging to the BJP, a party opposed to Mrs Gandhi's Congress, have echoed much of the same sentiments. In fact, as their Hindu chauvinist and fascist

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policies indicate, the demonisation of Pakistan and Indian Muslims in general, has become a winning formula for Indian electoral politics. The only difference is that this mass hysteria against Pakistan is now backed up by nuclear weapons.

The military asymmetry between Pakistan and India has existed from the very beginning, a numerical advantage in conventional weapons over Pakistan of around three to one in land forces and much more in terms of air and naval power. This has enabled India to try and impose its will upon Pakistan while consistently refusing to resolve any of the differences with Pakistan through compromise and dialogue. Former Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar, with his vast experience of dealing with India, has aptly written: "Exploiting power disparity, India dismissed reason and equity in negotiations, spurned resort to impartial peaceful means of resolving differences, and did not hesitate to use force or threat of force to impose its own preferences."[18] This was most forcefully demonstrated by the 1971 war.

This power disparity grew even further in 1974 when India exploded its first nuclear device – thereby confronting Pakistan with an accentuated existential threat while also leading to the nuclearisation of South Asia. To ensure its security, Pakistan had no option but to develop its own nuclear weapons capability, especially since the major powers were not willing to compel India to roll back its nuclear weapons programme. When India tested nuclear weapons again in May 1998, Pakistan was ready with its matching response to ensure credible nuclear deterrence. This became vital in view of threats hurled against Pakistan by Indian leaders. Prime Minister Vajpayee asserted that since India had now become a nuclear power, it would not hesitate to use nuclear weapons if attacked.[19] Home Minister Advani threatened that India would now be able to retake Pakistani-controlled Kashmir (Azad Kashmir).[20] The emergence of nuclear deterrence between Pakistan and India after the May 1998 tests based on Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) stabilised the regional strategic environment while also neutralising Indian numerical superiority in conventional weapons over Pakistan. Unwilling to accept this strategic development, India sought space for conducting conventional war below the nuclear threshold by pursuing its "Cold Start" doctrine since 2004. Meanwhile, global geo-political changes dominated by the emerging rivalry between the US and China, leading to the Indo-US strategic partnership to contain China, also facilitated the Indian conventional and strategic military

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build-up. This build-up, in turn, has now once again undermined strategic stability in South Asia and heightened Pakistan's security concerns in a highly dangerous nuclear environment. In these circumstances, a new strategic paradigm has emerged between Pakistan and India, which is far more dangerous than ever in the past.

Afghanistan

While Pakistan's primary security focus has been on India, the security challenges emanating from its western neighbour, Afghanistan, have been no less daunting. From a geopolitical perspective, for a country like Pakistan which lacks geographic or spatial depth, the worst-case security scenario is the possibility of being confronted simultaneously by security threats from India on its eastern borders and Afghanistan on its western flank, especially in an environment where both India and Afghanistan are aligned against Pakistan. For this reason, Pakistan's Afghan policy has always been a function of its relations with India.

From the outset, India has played the "Afghan card" to exploit Pakistan's vulnerability of being confronted by a hostile two front threat to its security. Even before independence and Partition, Indian leaders like Gandhi and Nehru stoked the bogey of "Pushtunistan" through Pushtun allies of the Indian Congress Party, like Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. They also encouraged Afghan leaders to question the legitimacy of the Durand Line, the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan as the successor state of British India. Even though the Afghans share multiple ties of geography, history, language, ethnicity and culture with Pakistan, while also being dependent on Pakistan for access to the sea for their hand-locked country, their governments preferred to be aligned with India. In May 1947, the Afghan Foreign Minister argued that "as long as the British government remained responsible for the control of the frontier, the Afghans had nothing to say," but expressed "concern at the possible fate of the people of NWFP and demanded that they be given an opportunity to decide whether they wished to re-join Afghanistan or form a separate independent state."[21] Then in September 1948, Afghanistan became the only country in the United Nations to vote against Pakistan's membership in the international body, though it withdrew its negative vote twenty days later. But the official Afghan position on the validity of the border with Pakistan

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has remained to this day, despite the change of several governments in Kabul and in violation of the stipulation in the Vienna Convention on Succession of States of 1978, which formally confirmed the existing principle of law that "the change of sovereignty does not affect boundaries established by a treaty."[22] Even in more recent times, as Indo-Afghan relations have grown closer with the conclusion of a strategic partnership agreement, Afghan refusal to accept the international border with Pakistan has become more strident. Kabul has forcefully opposed Islamabad's fencing of the border on its side to prevent the movement of terrorists, while also collaborating with New Delhi to support Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) terrorists based on Afghan soil. These challenges have continued even after the Taliban take over in Afghanistan in August 2021.

Terrorism

The most dangerous threat to Pakistan's security from its western neighbour has emanated from the past forty years of war and instability in Afghanistan. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1978 brought the Red Army to the borders of Pakistan. Since the Soviet Union and India were strategic partners at that time, Pakistan was confronted with the worst-case two-front security challenge. It chose to help the Afghan opponents of the Soviet-installed regime, the Mujahideen, to fight back with the assistance of the US, China and other countries. After ten years of military stalemate and international criticism, Moscow eventually agreed to withdraw from Afghanistan. Following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, the country's victorious Mujahideen leaders were unable to form a national government based on power sharing though several short-lived agreements were concluded between them with Pakistan's assistance. A brutal civil war ensued for another decade, in which regional states-Pakistan, India and Iran-supported different Afghan factions. Afghanistan was also abandoned by the US and other western powers after their objective of defeating the Soviets had been achieved. Consequently, the Afghans were abandoned to deal with the destruction caused by the war with the Soviets.

For Pakistan, the security implications of the instability in Afghanistan coupled with the presence of over five million Afghan refugees on its soil were severe. Added to this was the pernicious role of the "Arab" Mujahideen who had been recruited by America's CIA to fight against the Soviets, and later,

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under Osama bin Laden's leadership set up the al-Qaida terrorist organisation. Following the success of the 'ihad' against the Soviets, Al-Qaida turned it sights on the US and its allies.

Seeking to ensure stability in Afghanistan, Pakistan viewed the emergence of the Pushtun Taliban as a means of restoring order in the neighbouring country. Even though the Taliban managed to gain control over vast areas, their harsh policies and continuing confrontation with the non-Pushtun and mostly Tajik Northern alliance, supported by India and Iran, failed to restore order in Afghanistan. In this power vacuum, the al-Qaida thrived, and on 11 September 2001, its supporters carried out terrorist attacks on the US, leading to the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan by the US and its NATO allies.

In this next phase of the Afghan war, Pakistan supported the US "War on Terror" in which the Taliban were removed from power, but were not defeated even as al-Qaida members were either killed or apprehended, including Osama bin Laden. However, the American war with the Taliban dragged on for twenty 20 years, eventually leading to an American-Taliban dialogue supported by Pakistan, which ultimately culminated in an agreement on 29 February 2020. This agreement envisaged a phased withdrawal of US and allied troops in return for a Taliban commitment not to allow any terrorist group on their soil that threaten US interests. It also called for an `intra-Afghan' dialogue with the American-supported Afghan government and other Afghan groups so as to evolve a future political set-up in the country. However, there still remain multiple problems with the implementation of this agreement as a result of which peace and stability in Afghanistan cannot be taken for granted at present.

Forty years of warfare in Afghanistan has not only posed an external security threat for Pakistan but has also given rise to several internal challenges. Apart from the continuing burden of the Afghan refugees, the war has promoted arms and drug trafficking across the border as well as the spread of religious extremism and terrorism within Pakistan, such as by the TTP. These developments have been termed as the "Klashnikov culture" and the "Talibanisation" of Pakistan.[23] While in recent years, these threats have been mitigated to some extent by counter-terrorism operations, they have not yet been fully neutralised and continue to pose a security problem for Pakistan.

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Search for Security—Relations with the US

The combination of the foregoing security threats due to Pakistan's geo-political compulsions and the legacy of history, forced the country from its very emergence to seek external assistance. In the words of former Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar, "Pakistan's response to the objective problems posed by the tyranny of power imbalance," compelled Pakistan to seek "friends and allies, and strengthen the sinews of statehood and preserve its sovereignty and security."[24] This placed Pakistan at the centre of the Cold War then raging between the United States and the Soviet Union.

At the time, Moscow had already shown a preference for cultivating India as the larger power in South Asia and sought its partnership against western post-colonial powers such as the United States and Britain. The Soviets also viewed Pakistan as an artificial creation by the British to prolong its influence in the region, even though after World War II, Britain was a spent force. The Americans would have also preferred a partnership with India as it could be used as a bulwark against the expansion of Soviet and Chinese communism. But Prime Minister Nehru, recognising that India was in a position to play off both superpowers against each other, claimed to follow the path of ostensible "non-alignment". The American partnership with Pakistan was, therefore, the second-best option, and the United States was consistently careful to ensure that its relations with Pakistan did not completely antagonise India.

The Pakistan-US partnership that emerged since the 1950s was framed by four alliances – the Mutual Defence Agreement of 1954; the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) of 1954; The Central Asia Treaty Organization (CENTO) or the Baghdad Pact of 1955; and the Bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement of 1959. As a result, Pakistan received crucial economic assistance from the US and American-dominated Bretton Woods institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF, which subsequently enabled the country to make enormous progress in national development, especially during the 1960s. The military support from the US was, however, much below Pakistan's expectations, and certainly did not enable the country to come at par with India militarily. This was due to the fundamental divergence in the objectives of the two sides. Pakistan viewed defence cooperation with the US as a means of enhancing its security against India, whereas for the US, the defence

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partnership with Pakistan was a part of the larger alliance system that was meant to contain Soviet and Chinese communism, especially before and after the Korean War. As the American diplomat and South Asia scholar, Dennis Kux, has written, "Pakistan remained at heart concerned about the threat from India rather than any menace from the Communists. In contrast, the United States saw the security accord as directed strictly against the communist threat and was wary of becoming entangled in Pakistan's dispute with India."[25]

While the leaderships on both sides largely papered over these differences, subsequent developments had a major impact on the Pakistan-US relationship. The first was the Sino-Indian war in 1962, when the US came to India's military assistance and pressurised Pakistan not to take advantage of the situation in Indian-occupied Kashmir. Then, during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war, the US curtailed military supplies to both countries. Since India did not depend on American weapons as Pakistan did, this embargo did not affect Indian military capabilities but had a major impact on Pakistan. The third and most serious development was the absence of an active American role to ensure Pakistan's territorial integrity following the Indian attack on East Pakistan in December 1971, and its machinations to create Bangladesh, which had been enabled to a large extent by the Indo-Soviet treaty signed in August that year. Even though the US claimed a "tilt" towards Pakistan, American inaction was perceived as a "betrayal" in Pakistan. These developments eventually led to the dismantling of the Pakistan-US alliance, with Pakistan pulling out of the defence pacts with the US, joining the Non-Aligned Movement and, more importantly, establishing a closer partnership with China, which was already at an advanced stage.

The Nuclear Issue

Perhaps the most enduring divergence between Pakistan and the United States emerged after the Indian nuclear test of May 1974. This had a far-reaching impact on Pakistan-US relations and more broadly on Pakistan's security concerns. This test was a flagrant defiance of American nuclear non-proliferation policy and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1970, crafted by the US and other nuclear weapon states. It was also a violation of the Indo-US agreement on civilian nuclear cooperation under which the US provided nuclear fuel to the Canadian-supplied civilian nuclear reactor to

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India, from which the Indians had clandestinely diverted fissile material for their nuclear weapon test. Even so, the American reaction was muted, to say the least. The then Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, stated that "public scolding would not undo the event, but only add to US-Indian bilateral problems and reduce the influence Washington might have on India's future nuclear policy."[26] Moreover, as noted by George Perkovich, an American scholar, "the United States in June 1974 proceeded to ship an installment of previously approved uranium fuel to India's Tarapur reactor,"[27] the same reactor from where India had diverted fissile material for its nuclear bomb. The US also increased economic aid to India by 200 million dollars and rescheduled Indian debt amounting to more than 29 million dollars.[28]

By contrast, the weight of the American reaction to the Indian test fell on Pakistan, with Washington remaining quite oblivious to the increased security threat for Pakistan. Through a series of legislative measures such as the Glenn, Symington and Solarz amendments, the US effort was essentially to prevent Pakistan from pursuing its own nuclear weapons capabilities. Even Pakistan's civilian nuclear cooperation agreements were scuttled under American pressure, first with Canada for the KANUPP reactor and then the Reprocessing Plant agreement with France. Pakistan was thereby forced to pursue its nuclear weapons programme covertly. However, the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989 revived Pakistan-US relations since Washington needed Islamabad's cooperation to roll back Moscow's intervention. Pakistan used this opportunity to build up its nuclear weapons capability. Once the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, American pressure was revived on the nuclear issue, which eventually led to the imposition of the Pressler sanctions in 1990, along with the denial of military equipment for which Pakistan had already paid. These sanctions were further intensified after Pakistan rejected American pressure not to conduct nuclear tests following the Indian tests in May 1998.

Later these sanctions were withdrawn after the terrorist attacks on the US in September 2001 because Washington again needed Islamabad's cooperation in its "War on Terror." Nonetheless, American discriminatory policies towards India and Pakistan over the nuclear issue continued. Even as the US was asking Pakistan to "freeze" if not "roll-back" its nuclear weapons capability, it was engaging with India to bring it into the nuclear "mainstream"

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and thereby legitimise its nuclear weapon status. By changing its domestic laws, the US signed a civilian nuclear cooperation agreement with India in 2008, while also ensuring that India was granted a waiver for civilian nuclear cooperation by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) countries – a cartel that had ironically been set up in response to the 1974 Indian nuclear test. Such nuclear exceptionalism for India was, however, denied to Pakistan, a position that the US still pursues today. Once again, this American policy demonstrates the discrimination against Pakistan as well as its indifference to the impact that this policy has had on Pakistan's security, given that the NSG waiver enables India to continue enhancing its nuclear weapons arsenal.

This distinction in US policy towards India and Pakistan on the nuclear issue, especially after the end of the Cold war in 1991, is driven by the American objective of containing China through its strategic partnership with India. Since this partnership is now a part of the emerging global American rivalry with China, the US views India as a "Net Security Provider"[29] especially in the so-called Indo-Pacific region. Within South Asia, the US is willing to accept Indian hegemony and has through several political and military agreements facilitated Indian conventional and strategic military build-up. In short, there is now a strategic convergence between the US and India, and even if it is meant to contain China, growing Indian military capabilities can also be used against Pakistan. Pakistan's security concerns have, therefore, been accentuated as a result of this Indo-US alliance.

By comparison, Pakistan-US relations have steadily deteriorated due to the American failure to defeat the Afghan Taliban, and the Taliban victory in 2021,for which Washington has blamed Islamabad. An added factor is regional terrorism for which the US accuses Pakistan. As a result, all assistance to Pakistan has been curtailed since 2017. There was a slight improvement in relations during 2020 but only for America's tactical reasons – the assistance that Pakistan provided to facilitate the American-Taliban agreement after the US finally recognised the need to abandon the military option and seek an honourable exit from Afghanistan. But this tactical short-term American objective cannot compare with the strategic long-term American partnership with India against China.

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Pakistan—China Relations

Given the fluctuating nature of Pakistan-US relations, and more importantly the unreliability of American commitments, Pakistan sought and secured a more reliable security partnership from China. This was strengthened by a growing strategic convergence from the 1960s onwards as the initially friendly relations between India and China deteriorated given Nehru's arrogant and expansionist designs that led to the Sino-Indian war in 1962. Over the years, Chinese assistance to Pakistan in the security and economic areas has been crucial for Pakistan's defence as well as development. Unlike the US, Chinese support has been consistent and reliable. Pakistan also proved to be a valuable asset to China as it provided access to the rest of the world at a time when China was isolated due to American policies. Later in the 1970s, when the US sought to rebalance its global relations following its defeat in Vietnam, Pakistan provided the means for the rapprochement between the US and China.

In the prevailing post-Cold War world, where the US is pursuing a zero-sum approach to global relations, its efforts to contain a rising China through alliances with countries like India, has added further significance to the Pakistan-China partnership. The American Indo-Pacific strategy, involving the US, Japan, Australia and India, is aimed at dominating the sea lanes in this vast region, which are crucial for Chinese access to the rest of the world. To prevent such containment, China has started pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), in which the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has become a key flagship project. This not only enables economic development for Pakistan, but also, for the first time, an opportunity to use its geographic location as an asset rather than a liability. Equally important, this new strategic dimension to the Pakistan-China relationship provides Pakistan with an opportunity to counter-balance the growing strategic partnership between the US and India. This would greatly enhance Pakistan's ability to overcome its growing security challenges in the future.

Internal Security Challenges

The ability of any country to protect and promote its security interests depends upon its human and natural resources, size, location and above all the quality of its leadership. While not a small country, Pakistan has had to contend

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with a very large and hostile neighbour. In terms of location, Pakistan was at first split in to two distant parts which created its own logistical, infrastructure and administrative problems. Even after the separation of East Pakistan, the challenges of being located in a volatile and unstable region continued to confront Pakistan as considered above. To overcome these factors Pakistan needed, at the very least, political stability and rapid economic growth.

While Pakistan has always been rich in its human resources, with a hardworking and resilient population that has successfully overcome several natural and man-made disasters, it lacks vital resources such as fossil fuels to meet its growing energy needs. Also, while Pakistan has ample mineral resources, including precious metals and coal, it has not been fully able to exploit these assets. Despite having an elaborate irrigation system, Pakistan's potential for agricultural output has not been fully leveraged either. At the time of its creation, Pakistan lacked an industrial base but made impressive strides in this sector during the 1960s, only to squander its growth during the 1970s as a result of misguided nationalisation policies that also affected its financial and services sectors. Even so, the fact remains that Pakistan's economic fundamentals remain strong, and under the right leadership conditions has repeatedly registered impressive growth.

Pakistan's paramount weakness has remained its political instability, which has undermined both its internal and external policies and resulted in a detrimental impact on its security. This political instability started when the new state was orphaned shortly after its birth with the death of its founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, on 11 September, 1948. His chosen successor, Liaquat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister, was then assassinated soon after on 16 October, 1951. In the absence of these stalwarts of the Pakistan freedom movement, a power vacuum ensued within which no other leader emerged who could command unqualified national support. In the words of Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi, "the mantle of Jinnah's towering figure was inherited by a succession of squabbling political lightweights who increasingly sought the support of the civil-military bureaucracy to prop them up," and "bickered over issues of identity, provincial autonomy and the role of religion in the state," as a result of which they "encouraged the military's creeping entry and eventual control of the political system."[30] Consequently, "Pakistan's tangled history reveals an unedifying record of governance failures and missed opportunities. Political

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instability has been endemic, as the country has shuttled between ineffectual civilian governments and military rule in an unbroken cycle punctuated by outbreaks of public protests, demanding change and better governance."[31]

This political instability has also given rise to corruption, failing institutions, falling standards of education and health, while generating the emergence of a rent-seeking elite that has grossly squandered the nation's wealth for its own enrichment. As a result, the country's development has suffered while its debt burden has multiplied.

Political opportunism has also given rise to dissensions within the state, the worst example of which was the separation of East Pakistan. Yet another outcome has been the use of religion, language and ethnicity for political gain, which has given way to the emergence of extremism and terrorism in the country. Apart from wreaking havoc within the country, some of these groups became active in Indian-occupied Kashmir while others either joined al-Qaida or set up their own Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. These terrorist activities undermined not only Pakistan's internal security but its reputation and standing in the international community. Only now, after several military operations and administrative measures, have incidents of terrorism been reduced and these terrorist groups brought under control.

In these circumstances, maintaining steady economic growth in the country has been extremely difficult. More than 50 per cent of the budget is spent on debt repayment, with precious little left for social sector development. Alarmingly, this situation has further undermined Pakistan's ability to meet its security needs, thereby amplifying the reliance on external support for ensuring national security.

For all the reasons considered in this chapter, it is clear that ensuring national security is a crucial imperative of Pakistan's national policy. It is not a choice but a compulsion. Sustainable security will require enhancement of both economic and military capabilities. After 75 years of existence, Pakistan may not now be confronted with the 'quest for survival' largely due to its nuclear weapons. However, there is still no denying that the country continues to face daunting challenges to its security. Overcoming these challenges requires Pakistan to focus on enhancing all its elements of national power. One aspect of this power, albeit a crucial one, is the country's nuclear deterrence capability, which it must ensure remains credible and effective in the future for upholding its security and strategic stability.

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Security, Deterrence and Strategic Stability

From the foregoing, it is clear that Pakistan has indeed been confronted by threats to its security and thereby overcoming these threats has been one of its primary national objectives. This has shaped Pakistan's foreign and defence policies as well as its domestic politics to a large extent. Reliance on military alliances to ensure its security against a much larger and more powerful hostile neighbour proved futile as demonstrated by the 1971 war with India and the break-up of the country. The asymmetry in conventional weapons capabilities between Pakistan and India was further compounded by the demonstration of Indian nuclear weapons capability following its nuclear test in 1974. As long as deterrence between Pakistan and India was based on unequal conventional capabilities, it proved to be unstable, and ultimately resulted in two major wars and several limited conflicts. Upon recognising that reliance on external support against a larger conventional military force would not suffice, especially one which was backed up with nuclear weapons after 1974, the Pakistani leadership was compelled to develop an indigenous matching nuclear weapons capability to ensure credible and reliable deterrence. Once this was achieved, albeit with great difficulty, a comparatively greater degree of strategic stability ensued by the mid-1980s, preventing the outbreak of a major Pakistan-India conflict thereafter. The succeeding chapters examine how this was achieved and the impact this has had on Pakistan's security imperative.

Notes

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[27] Ibid. pp. 184.
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2 | The Beginning – Pakistan's Acquisition of Nuclear Technology

Nuclear science has dual uses – it can be used for peaceful purposes such as generating energy, enhancing agricultural production or for medical treatment but also for weapons to cause massive destruction.

As the Second World War was raging across the world, German nuclear scientists were working to create a nuclear bomb. Alarmed by this development, the Americans and the British worked jointly on the Manhattan Project to develop their own nuclear bombs, and conducted the world's first nuclear bomb test, called the Trinity Test, in New Mexico, on 16 July 1945. The first nuclear bomb was used by the Americans on the Japanese town of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 and a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki three days later to force the Japanese to surrender after the Germans had already been defeated two months earlier. More than 120,000 people were killed instantly while tens of thousands more died later due to radiation. Both were fission bombs, the first, "Little-Boy" being uranium-based and the second, "Fat Man" which was plutonium-based, releasing energy of more than 15 kilotons of TNT. These nuclear weapons dwarfed conventional weapons and other means of mass destruction such as biological or chemical weapons. Thus began the ` nuclear age', changing the nature of war and deterrence forever.

Nuclear Proliferation

Over the next two decades, these weapons proliferated both horizontally and vertically against the backdrop of the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union. The Soviets tested their nuclear bomb on 29 August 1949, followed by the British on 3 October 1952 and the French on 13 February 1960, while the People's Republic of China joined the nuclear club on 16 October 1964. Since then these countries have increased their nuclear arsenals both qualitatively and quantitatively. Between the US and the Soviet Union/Russia alone there are over 12,600 nuclear weapons today of which each side has actually deployed 1,600 nuclear warheads. They also now possess numerous fusion or hydrogen/thermonuclear bombs, each of which has a destructive capacity ten

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times greater than the fission nuclear bombs dropped on Japan. Each of these countries has also developed multiple means of delivery platforms for their nuclear weapons including short, medium and long-range ballistic missiles, long-range aircraft and naval vessels, especially nuclear-powered submarines.

Nuclear Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation

In a world bristling with nuclear weapons, with the most destructive of all weapons ever invented, there was an obvious concern, especially among countries that did not possess them, to eliminate such weapons. Not surprisingly, the very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the newly formed United Nations soon after the Second World war in 1946 called for nuclear disarmament as the primary goal of the global body. Thereafter, the newly independent post-colonial countries also stressed the need for international cooperation to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear technology for their development. But the nuclear weapon states, while accepting nuclear disarmament as a desirable goal, were unwilling to abandon their nuclear weapons capabilities which had become central to their security calculations based on nuclear deterrence. Instead, the nuclear weapon states, especially the US and the USSR, despite their ideological and great power rivalry, were unified in their objective of ensuring further nuclear proliferation rather than universal and complete nuclear disarmament. On the contrary, they engaged in vertical proliferation by developing ever more powerful nuclear weapons and more effective delivery systems. It was only when these two competing world powers, already engaged in the Cold War, came close to nuclear disaster during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, that they undertook some partial measures for nuclear arms control. These included the adoption of the Limited Test Ban Treaty (1963) and the Outer Space Treaty (1967). But the essential characteristic of these and other treaties that followed, such as the Treaties Banning Biological Weapons (1972), Chemical Weapons (1993) and even the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (1996), did not in any respect diminish the nuclear weapons capabilities of the nuclear powers since they only renounced capabilities that were already redundant for them. Their focus remained instead on ensuring against further horizontal proliferation for which they jointly pushed for the adoption of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) which was concluded in 1968 and came into effect in March 1970.

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But at the bilateral level, the US and the Soviet Union/Russia continuously refrained from renouncing nuclear weapons, undertaking only agreements for limiting or reducing nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. The agreements to limit nuclear weapons include the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) I of 1972; the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty of 1972; and the SALT II signed in 1979. Those treaties envisaging the reduction of nuclear weapons are the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) I signed in 1991 and START II concluded in 1993. Then in 2010, the US and Russia signed the New START agreement which has been renewed in 2021. Another treaty to limit intermediate-range ballistic missiles, the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) agreement was finalised in 1987. However, even these modest achievements have faced setbacks such as when the Bush administration withdrew from the ABM treaty in 2002 and the Trump administration rejected the INF treaty in 2019.

Despite the potential for massive destruction posed by nuclear weapons and the consequent efforts for nuclear disarmament pursued especially by the non-nuclear weapon states, such weapons also provided the ultimate guarantee for national security, besides an element of prestige. As a result, an increasing number of countries, apart from the five nuclear weapon states, either started active nuclear weapons programmes or at least retained the option of acquiring them. Among these countries were Israel, South Africa, India, Brazil, Argentina, South Korea and even Japan. Nevertheless, while the existing nuclear weapon states were unwilling to renounce their nuclear weapons, they were opposed to other states acquiring them, citing the dangers of nuclear proliferation. The US and the Soviet Union in particular became the strongest proponents of non-proliferation.

Pakistan and Nuclear Technology

Soon after Independence, Pakistan, along with other developing countries, adamantly advocated nuclear disarmament while calling for the peaceful use of nuclear technology. But access to these peaceful uses of nuclear technology was beyond the means of the impoverished new state which not only lacked the financial and human resources for such an endeavour but was also more preoccupied with ensuring political stability and its survival against a hostile India. Among the resources denied to Pakistan were British India's scientific

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assets such as those of the Indian Council for Scientific and Industrial Research which was set up in 1942.[1]

Despite these limitations, it was largely due to the initial efforts of three scientists from Cambridge University who laid the foundations of Pakistan's nuclear institutions and trained a generation of Pakistani scientists who made nuclear learning possible. The first was Dr Rafi Chaudhary who set up the 1.2 megavolt nuclear particle accelerator in 1952 and High-Tension Laboratory in the Physics department of Lahore's Government College in 1954 to conduct nuclear research. He was appointed to this position by Mr Jinnah himself in 1948 on the recommendation of an Australian scientist who had worked with Chaudhary in Cambridge. Another Cambridge graduate was Dr Abdus Salam, later to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics (in 1979), who served as Scientific Advisor to several Pakistani governments and trained hundreds of nuclear scientists. The third was Dr Nazir Ahmad who became the first Chairman of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) when it was founded in 1956 to plan and develop the nuclear infrastructure and train personnel for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As a result, "the availability of nuclear education expanded dramatically,"[2] just as the opportunity for external assistance for the peaceful uses of nuclear technology became available through the American 'Atoms for Peace' programme.

On 8 December 1953, US President Eisenhower announced his 'Atoms for Peace' initiative in a speech at the UN, according to which the US would transfer nuclear technology and materials as well as provide training to scientists and technicians for the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in the areas of energy generation, medicine and agriculture. In return, the recipient countries would need to pledge not to use the technology for nuclear weapons development. The President's purpose was twofold – to ensure against nuclear proliferation and to promote American interests at the height of the Cold War with the Soviet Union. By then Pakistan was already seeking a close partnership with the US and was, therefore, keen to benefit from the 'Atoms for Peace' programme. As a result, Foreign Minister Zafarullah Khan "lobbied for the new technology by reassuring the west that Pakistan was not interested in developing an atomic bomb."[3] This was perhaps the first high-level official articulation of Pakistan's policy not to seek the nuclear weapons option but acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

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Pakistan and India were among the forty countries that benefitted from the Atoms for Peace programme with the supply of nuclear reactors and the highly enriched uranium needed to fuel them. By the end of the 1950s, Pakistan had signed several agreements with American nuclear institutions for the study of nuclear science and engineering. In August 1957, Pakistani and American governments concluded an agreement for the supply of a research reactor to Pakistan along with assistance for the design, construction and operation of this research reactor. But the PAEC was not satisfied as it was really interested in acquiring a power generation reactor which Pakistan could not afford, despite efforts by PAEC Chairman Nazir Ahmad to raise the funds through external borrowing. But the Finance Ministry had other priorities.[4] The US was also unwilling to sell a power generation reactor to Pakistan due to concerns that the by-product of such a heavy water reactor could be diverted towards weapons production. The PAEC then turned towards Canada which had already offered a heavy water reactor (CANDU-type) to India. But the price tag of seven million dollars was beyond Pakistani means.

By the 1960s, national priorities changed with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's appointment as Minister for Fuel, Power and Natural Resources which included responsibility for the PAEC. He was an enthusiastic supporter of acquiring nuclear technology. Also, President Ayub's scientific advisor, Professor Abdus Salam, persuaded the President to appoint Dr I H Usmani as Chairman of the PAEC which provided a new impetus to the organisation. The emphasis of Bhutto and Usmani was not only on creating and expanding the cadre of nuclear scientists and engineers through vigorous training abroad and within the country, but also to acquire the country's first power reactor. By 1965, the government approved the conclusion of an agreement with Canada for the 137-megawatt CANDU power reactor to be built in Karachi with Canadian funding, subsequently called KANUPP. The PAEC also set up a 5 MW Atomic Research Reactor called PINSTECH near Islamabad which reached criticality in December 1965, with two key objectives – research and development and the production of a large skilled force of scientists and engineers that proved to be essential for the growth of the nuclear programme in the future.[5]

However, the agreement with Canada on KANUPP was not without controversy from the start. Since the reactor was funded by the Canadian government, they insisted on the conditionality that it be placed under the

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full scope of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections. This was not acceptable to the Pakistan Foreign Office which argued that a similar reactor supplied to the Indians by Canada (CIRUS) in 1954 did not require such full scope safeguards. The Canadians responded that the Indians had paid for their reactor in full and if Pakistan did the same, it too would not have to accept the full scope of IAEA inspections.[6]

In retrospect, this controversy was important for two reasons. First, it underscored the growing divergence between nuclear proponents and opponents within Pakistan. The Pakistan Foreign Office, by now led by Bhutto, who along with then Foreign Secretary Aziz Ahmad and then Additional Secretary Agha Shahi, were staunch nuclear proponents together with the nuclear scientists. Among the opponents were the Finance Ministry led by Mr M Shoaib, and the Planning Commission headed by President Ayub himself, whose priority was access to external assistance for economic development. This divergence continued to persist within the government over the nuclear programme until Bhutto became President in December1971.

The second important aspect of this controversy was that Canadian Prime Minister Pearson overruled his bureaucracy's demand for Indian acceptance of IAEA inspections for the CIRUS reactor on a verbal assurance given by Indian Prime Minister Nehru that India would not divert fissile material for weapons purposes,[7] which is exactly what India did by 1974. George Perkovich, an American scholar on India's nuclear programme has mentioned that the Canadians received a commitment from India in a secret annex to the agreement that the reactor and the resulting fissile material would be used only for peaceful purposes. Also, that the Indians paid for the deal in Indian rupees and not in foreign exchange,[8] an option not extended to Pakistan. In this sense, the Pakistan Foreign Office was justified in opposing Canadian discriminatory behaviour between Pakistan and India. This issue of discrimination would emerge as a major feature of Western policy towards nuclear relations with Pakistan in the future.

The differences between the nuclear lobby in the country led by the Foreign Office and the nuclear scientists on the one hand and the nuclear sceptics consisting of the Finance Ministry and the Planning Commission on the other, were further intensified as a result of external developments. The

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main reason was India's rather transparent nuclear weapons ambitions which became even more menacing after the Chinese nuclear test in 1964.

Indian Nuclear Policy

While India strongly supported nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation as its declaratory policy, in fact Nehru, even as Prime Minister of the Interim government in 1946, made his intentions clear when he appointed Homi Bhaba to head the newly established Atomic Energy Research Committee and stated that "I hope India will use the atomic force for constructive purposes. But if India is threatened, she will inevitably try to defend herself by all means at her disposal."[9] Two years later, Nehru informed the Indian parliament that "I think we must develop atomic energy for peaceful purposes... Of course, if we are compelled as a nation to use it for other purposes, possibly no pious sentiment of any of us will stop the nation from using it that way."[10] While Nehru was mostly ambivalent and duplicitous in his statements about India's nuclear ambitions, his nuclear advisor, Homi Bhaba, was far more outspoken and candid in his private and public comments which have been thoroughly researched by George Perkovich.[11] Therefore, since its independence, India had kept the nuclear weapons option open.

Under Bhaba's direction and with Nehru's support, India made full use of the favourable international environment to acquire the full range of the nuclear fuel cycle. Under the Atoms for Peace programme, over a thousand Indian scientists and engineers were trained in the USA between 1955 to 1974. India's first research reactor, ASPARA, was built in 1955 with assistance from the UK, which also provided heavy water, an essential ingredient for nuclear weapons. With Canadian cooperation, the CIRUS 40-megawatt power generation reactor was built without full scope safeguards that could be used for producing bomb-grade plutonium merely on an Indian verbal commitment that it would not divert the fuel for weapons production (as discussed above). The US, on similar terms, provided the heavy water for this reactor. In 1961, India started construction of the Phoenix Plutonium Reprocessing Plant with assistance from the British Atomic Energy Commission. This Phoenix Plant was designed to extract plutonium from spent fuel and was paired with the CIRUS reactor to provide India with its first-weapons grade plutonium stocks by 1964.

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Despite growing American concerns about nuclear proliferation which led to the creation of the IAEA in 1957 to ensure international safeguards and monitoring, Homi Bhaba successfully led efforts to ensure that these measures would not retard India's nuclear ambitions. Moreover, India signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with the Soviet Union in October 1961, to mainly "motivate" western suppliers by asserting that the Soviets would not insist on safeguards.[12] As a result, the US signed agreements for two additional reactors for the Tarapur power plant in 1963 without safeguards.

Also, unlike in Pakistan, the Indian nuclear programme was not constrained by financial limitations. As noted by Perkovich, just within two years (1954-1956) the nuclear programme budget increased twelve-fold.[13] Such sizeable budgetary allocations have continued since then.

This determined Indian pursuit of their nuclear programme in keeping with Bhaba's scheme to acquire nuclear weapons capability under the guise of a "peaceful" programme,[14] predated the Chinese nuclear test in 1964. It also preceded India's crushing defeat in the 1962 border war with China. This exposes the Indian claim made subsequently that its 1974 nuclear test was motivated by the threat from China or the Chinese nuclear test. In fact, even before the Chinese test, Nehru stated in a Lok Sabha debate on China's nuclear programme in March 1959 that "India's nuclear research was more advanced and more widespread" than that of all but the advanced powers. In other words, according to Nehru, India was ahead of China.[15] Moreover, in December 1959, Bhaba told the Parliamentary Consultative Committee on Atomic Energy, when it convened to consider China's acquisition of nuclear weapons, that India's nuclear programme had itself progressed to the point where it could produce nuclear weapons indigenously if required.[16]

Pakistan's Response to Indian Nuclear Policy

These developments in India were being closely followed in Pakistan, especially by the Foreign Office and the nuclear community. Pakistani diplomats and scientists were under no illusions about Indian declaratory statements about their 'peaceful' nuclear programme and were seriously concerned about the ground realities that clearly indicated that India was pursuing a nuclear weapons capability behind the façade of a peaceful programme.

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In February 1961, Foreign Minister Manzur Qadir, when questioned by journalists in a press conference about an Indian government statement that India could manufacture nuclear weapons within two years once a decision was taken to do so, stated that "we too shall have to match it." He added that if India acquired nuclear weapons, the whole complexion of the relationship would change. In response, Pakistan would make "any conceivable effort and explore every possible avenue" to have nuclear weapons. Continuing, he stated that the balance of power in the subcontinent would be "maintained at all costs" as any attempt to alter it would be "fraught with dangerous and serious consequences."[17]

In October 1965, Dr Munir Ahmad Khan, then serving in IAEA headquarters in Vienna (and later to become Chairman of PAEC), informed Foreign Minister Bhutto (who had replaced Manzur Qadir), that when he had visited India's CIRUS facility in 1964 he had seen for himself that India was well on its way to making the bomb.[18] Bhutto, who was himself convinced of this, asked Munir Ahmad Khan to convey his assessment to President Ayub. While doing so, Khan also conveyed to the President that so far access to dual-use nuclear technology was easily available, which was being acquired by India and Israel, but that this would soon change. He suggested that Pakistan ought to allocate around 150 million dollars to acquire the necessary capabilities. According to Feroz Hassan Khan's record of his conversation with Munir Ahmad Khan years later, the President reportedly replied that Pakistan is too poor to spend that much money and that in any case, "if we ever need the bomb, we will buy it off the shelf."[19]

Foreign Minister Bhutto and the Foreign Office also realised that with the beginning of international negotiations on a Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as envisaged in an Irish resolution at the UN in 1958, the space for acquiring nuclear technology was quickly shrinking. As Mr Shahi later conveyed to Feroz Hassan Khan, the Foreign Ministry viewed that situation as "now or never."[20] He further recalled that the Foreign Ministry was "suspicious that India, while talking of nuclear disarmament and fighting for nuclear guarantees to non-nuclear states against the threat of attack – was heading towards development of the bomb."[21]

In this environment, Bhutto urgently sought 300 million dollars for the nuclear programme, including a reprocessing plant from France in order to

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match the similar plant installed in India in 1964. The PAEC was also interested in acquiring a fuel fabrication facility and a heavy water plant from France. Both the PAEC Chair, Dr Usmani and the Science Advisor to the President, Dr Abdus Salam, underscored this opportunity to get the reprocessing plant for 25 million dollars without stringent safeguards, an opportunity which would not last for long.[22] Shahi recalled conveying to President Ayub through an intermediary that "India is going to develop nuclear weapons, and it is happening. We should close the deal with France and get the reprocessing plant."[23] But the President remained unconvinced.

Another senior official, Ambassador Iqbal Akhund, recalls that in 1966, Bhutto directed the Foreign Office to set up a Working Group that included the PAEC Chairman along with senior military and intelligence officials to consider the nuclear question. The group unanimously recommended setting up a plutonium separation plant that would match India's. But this proposal was also shot down by the President.[24]

Despite President Ayub's cautious approach and the scepticism of his economic managers, Bhutto remained committed to the nuclear weapons option for Pakistan. In an interview with the Manchester Guardian in 1965, he made the famous statement that if India built the bomb "we (Pakistanis) will eat grass, even go hungry, but we will get one of our own."[25] This was as much a warning to India and the countries assisting its weapons programme as it was to his detractors within Pakistan. Bhutto redeemed his pledge when he became President and then Prime Minister in December 1971. But at the time, his strident advocacy of the nuclear weapons option proved to be one of the reasons for his removal as Foreign Minister in 1966, apart from differences with President Ayub over the acceptance of the Soviet-sponsored Tashkent Declaration following the Pakistan-India 1965 war.

Pakistan and the NPT

By this time, at the international level, negotiations on the NPT were at an advanced stage. The nuclear weapon states, especially the US and the Soviet Union were determined to ensure their monopoly over possession of nuclear weapons. While they accepted the UK, France and China as nuclear weapon states as well because they had already crossed the nuclear weapons threshold by then, their intention was to not allow any further nuclear weapons

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proliferation. They proposed a "grand bargain" in which they accepted the eventual objective of nuclear disarmament by the five Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) as advocated by the Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS) through a step-by-step incremental approach, in return for a commitment by the NNWS that they would not acquire nuclear weapons. As an incentive, the NWS undertook to provide assistance to the NNWS for the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. At the time, France and China refused to accept the NPT. More importantly, India rejected the treaty as "nuclear apartheid". Israel also rejected the treaty, as did Brazil, Argentina and South Africa.

At first, Pakistan viewed the proposed treaty as a means of ensuring against Indian acquisition of nuclear weapons and as facilitating access for peaceful uses of nuclear technology. It had earlier supported the Irish resolution in the UN in 1958 which became the basis of the NPT negotiations. Also, in the negotiations being conducted by the Eighteen Nations Disarmament Committee (the fore-runner of the present Conference on Disarmament), Pakistani diplomats called for 'positive' and 'negative' security guarantees from the NWS to the effect that NNWS would not be subjected to threat or use of nuclear weapons and that their security would be guaranteed against the use of such weapons. At a UN debate, therefore, the new Pakistani Foreign Minister, Sharifuddin Pirzada, (who had replaced Bhutto), stated in 1966 that Pakistan would support the NPT process, provided Pakistan along with other non-nuclear weapon states received guarantees for their security from the nuclear weapon states."[26]

For Pakistan, the need for such guarantees was of course against India which was not only hedging against the NPT as being discriminatory but also proceeding rapidly towards its own nuclear weapons capability. Its intentions were implicit in its demand that the NPT recognise the right of states to conduct 'peaceful nuclear tests' which in reality would be no different from nuclear weapon tests. Therefore, in its statements before the UN and the Disarmament Committee Pakistan repeatedly referred to the "crux of the problem" before the NPT being the emergence of a "sixth nuclear power".[27] These statements, such as the one to the Disarmament Committee in July 1966, categorically referred to Indian claims, including by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 11 May 1966, that India's nuclear policy was under constant review and that the defence needs of the country would be paramount. It also argued that the

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latest Indian nuclear developments, such as the construction of a chemical separation plant to extract plutonium as well as plans for additional plutonium separation facilities, "unmistakably point to only one conclusion.....to build nuclear weapons." Rather presciently the statement added that India would conduct an underground nuclear test in the near future which would be described as a peaceful nuclear test.[28]

Within Pakistan, the debate on whether or not to join the NPT proceeded along familiar lines between the economic managers and the security establishment joined by the scientific community. As before, the former argued that going against the advice of the US and other major powers to sign the NPT could hurt Pakistan's economy while being part of the Treaty could also open opportunities for access to civilian nuclear technology for development purposes. The contrary view was that as long as India opposed the treaty, Pakistan should not foreclose its options. An even more extreme position was that Pakistan should not join the treaty even if India did because India would still be able to retain the nuclear weapons capabilities that it had already developed and could opt out of the agreement at a time of its choosing. The final decision was, of course, with President Ayub whose inclination was to endorse his economic team. But by this time, in early 1968, he was under pressure from his political opponents, especially former Foreign Minister Z.A. Bhutto, who strongly opposed the NPT. As such, Ayub was not in a position to go against popular opinion.

In these circumstances, an interim assessment by the Foreign Office of April 1968 weighed the pros and cons of the draft NPT. It noted that the US and UK, as well as the USSR, had urged Pakistan to precede India in endorsing the Treaty, which according to them, would enable Pakistan to take the high moral ground and bring moral pressure on India. But the paper recognised that having developed significant nuclear capabilities, India would be able to withstand pressure from any quarter including from the two superpowers. Moreover, even if India decided to adhere to the Treaty, its nuclear capabilities would remain unimpaired. For Pakistan, the study maintained, the Indian attitude towards the Treaty was of crucial importance and should serve as a determining factor. It, therefore, recommended that until India disclosed its final position on the NPT, Pakistan should: i) express general sympathy with the objectives of the Treaty; ii) stress the importance of all near nuclear weapon

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capable states joining the Treaty; iii) make Pakistan's signature of the Treaty contingent upon India signing it; and iv) not to prematurely declare Pakistan's position.[29] In retrospect it was fortunate that these recommendations were accepted and Pakistan's policy henceforth made its acceptance of the NPT contingent upon Indian adherence.

India did not take long to reject the Treaty. In a statement to the UN General Assembly when it adopted the NPT on 12 June 1968, India rejected the Treaty on the grounds that it was discriminatory, lacked commitments by the nuclear powers for nuclear disarmament and failed to provide security guarantees to non-nuclear weapon states.

Pakistan, which had also sought negative and positive security guarantees from the nuclear weapon states as a hedge against India, was disappointed by the assurances given by the US, UK and USSR since these commitments were severely flawed. As was pointed out by Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN in June 1968, these assurances were in case of aggression and not the use or threat of use of force; the protection offered was within the framework of the UN Charter where the decision for action could be vetoed by one of the permanent Security Council members; the declarations were only statements of intent and not binding obligations; and that the nuclear weapon states had not undertaken to renounce use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states. [30]

Post-NPT Developments

Even as the NPT came into effect in March 1970, India's strident opposition to the treaty did not lead to the termination of its nuclear cooperation with NPT members such as the US, UK and Canada. Moreover, while Indian arguments about the discriminatory nature of the NPT were valid in themselves and were endorsed by Pakistan, the more important fact was that Indian rejection of the NPT clearly underscored India's determination to acquire nuclear weapons capability in future. This had repeatedly been highlighted by Pakistani diplomats during the NPT negotiations but to no avail.

Meanwhile, as the NPT negotiations were underway, India was laying the groundwork for a nuclear test following approval by Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1964, who had succeeded Nehru after the latter's death. The war with Pakistan in September 1965 did not distract work on this project. Preparations began in late 1967 and were continued by the Purnima research

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reactor set up in 1970 with the purpose of designing nuclear explosives. On 31 August 1970, Mrs Indira Gandhi, who had succeeded Shastri, informed Parliament that her government was studying the economic and technical issues surrounding "peaceful nuclear explosions."[31] Use of the term "peaceful nuclear explosions' became the Indian description of their later nuclear weapon test in 1974 and was no doubt adopted to deflect international criticism and mislead countries into believing the Indian claim of pursuing a "peaceful" nuclear programme. By this time, the notion of using nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes such as digging canals and earth moving had already been discarded by the nuclear weapon states. In reality, there could be no such thing as a 'peaceful' nuclear test as this was no different from a nuclear weapons test. The stage was, therefore, set for the nuclearisation of South Asia.

Impact of the 1971 War on Nuclear Policy

During the early 1970s, Pakistan-India relations were rapidly deteriorating. Following the 1970 elections in Pakistan, Indian interference in East Pakistan was being used to incite violence by separatist forces. When Pakistani military action was taken to put down the uprising, Indian forces invaded East Pakistan leading to the December 1971 war. The separation of the Eastern wing of the country and the creation of Bangladesh had far-reaching strategic implications for Pakistan. Most importantly, it demonstrated that Pakistan's reliance on external support for its security through alliances with the US in particular was misplaced and could not be relied upon in the future. Consequently, Pakistan had to find its own means for its security. More than any other option, Pakistan needed nuclear weapons for credible deterrence. There was no longer any room for further debate or procrastination on this issue. India, as the more powerful country had not only used its military advantage to break up Pakistan but was also firmly on the path to acquiring nuclear weapons capability.

Not surprisingly, Mr Bhutto, soon after assuming the position of President (and subsequently Prime Minister) of the 'new' Pakistan, set forth on the path to ultimately acquire nuclear weapons. In January 1972, Bhutto convened a meeting of nuclear scientists in Multan. In the public gathering and in a private meeting with a smaller group, he tasked the scientists to speed up the nuclear

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programme – both in the civilian and military domains. He also promised to provide the necessary funding for it.

The new Chairman of the PAEC, Munir Ahmad Khan, who was recalled from the IAEA in Vienna by Bhutto to replace I H Usmani, presented his plan to Bhutto in April 1972. The plan was approved within a few hours. It envisaged acquisition of the complete 'nuclear fuel cycle' by building upon Pakistan's limited existing facilities: PINSTECH, Pakistan Atomic Research Reactor (PARR), KANUPP and the Atomic Energy Mineral Center in Lahore; as well as building new plants and facilities, within safeguards if possible, without them, if necessary, and by exploiting the legitimate and the "grey areas" of international nuclear commerce. The programme had a dual objective – to make progress in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and thereby acquire the capability to make nuclear weapons. For the weapons purpose, the plan would pursue two routes – plutonium and highly enriched uranium.[32]

The first task was to find uranium deposits in Pakistan and master the technology for mining and refining the uranium to produce nuclear fuel. Fortunately for Pakistan, large deposits of uranium were discovered in the south of the country, providing the critical fuel for the nuclear programme. But this only addressed the 'front end' of the nuclear fuel cycle. For the 'back end' of the cycle, and development of technical knowledge, the country's existing capacity in terms of nuclear facilities had to be increased. This required external financial and technical assistance which had become difficult for Pakistan as it was not a signatory of the NPT and, at a minimum, required acceptance of IAEA safeguards. Munir Ahmad Khan and his colleagues decided to pursue a two-pronged strategy: to acquire the necessary plants, facilities and equipment from foreign sources under safeguards while developing parallel indigenous facilities outside safeguards.[33] The intention was not to misuse the spent fuel from any foreign supplied reactors or to divert it from a safeguarded reactor to a military programme, but to obtain experience and learning and to use it for indigenous development of parallel unsafeguarded capabilities that could enable the production of nuclear weapons.[34]

Thereafter, Pakistan entered into several agreements with foreign countries/ suppliers for the acquisition of fuel cycle facilities, including a fuel fabrication plant and nuclear fuel reprocessing plant from France and a Heavy Water Plant from Germany which were all under IAEA safeguards. Where possible,

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instead of entire plants, PAEC acquired separate parts and components and itself assembled the plants. The PAEC also started an indigenous programme for production of uranium oxide fuel in 1973 for KANUPP, correctly anticipating that foreign suppliers could not be relied upon in future. Such concerns proved to be correct as in the aftermath of the Indian nuclear test in May 1974, the agreements with countries like Canada, Germany and France were unilaterally cancelled, mainly under American pressure. Nevertheless, in hindsight, such obstacles only strengthened Pakistan's collective resolve to acquire nuclear weapons in order to ensure its security.

Notes

[1] Feroz Hassan Khan, *Eating Grass - The Making of the Pakistani Bomb*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2013, pp. 25-26.
[2] Ibid. pp. 28.
[3] Lenard Weiss, Atoms for Peace, Bulletin of Atomic Scientists (November-December 2003), pp. 34-44, quoted by Feroz Hassan Khan, Ibid, pp. 25.
[4] Feroz Hassan Khan, op.cit. pp.29.
[5] Ibid. pp. 57.
[6] Ibid. pp. 54.
[7] Ibid. footnotes 100 of chapter 3.
[8] George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2000. pp. 27 referred to by Feroz Hassan Khan, Ibid, footnotes 100 of chapter 3.
[9] Ibid. George Perkovich quoting from Dorothy Newman, *Nehru: The First Sixty Years.*
[10] Abdul Sattar, *Pakistan' Foreign Policy*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2006, pp. 171, quoting Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works, Second Series, Vol. 5, pp. 27.
[11] George Perkovich, op.cit. pp. 13-59.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid. pp. 33.
[14] Ibid. Pp. 35.
[15] Ibid. quoting Mirchandani, *India's Nuclear Dilemma.*
[16] Ibid.
[17] Manzur Qadir, Pakistan Times, 14 February,1961
[18] Feroz Hassan Khan, op.cit. pp. 61.
[19] Ibid. pp. 62.
[20] Ibid. pp. 61.
[21] Ibid. pp. 61.
[22] Ibid. pp. 64.
[23] Ibid. pp. 65.
[24] Iqbal Akhund, *Memoirs of a Bystander*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1197. pp. 262.
[25] Quoted in Feroz Hassan Khan, op.cit. pp. 59.
[26] Feroz Hassan Khan, Ibid, quoting Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His Life and Times*, Oxford University Press, New York, pp. 110.
[27] Statement by the Pakistan Delegation to the Committee on Disarmament, 10 July, 1966.
[28] Ibid
[29] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Assessment of Draft NPT, 5 April, 1968.
[30] Statement by Ambassador Agha Shahi, Permanent Representative to the UN, 19 June, 1968.
[31] George Perkovich, op.cit, quoting Bhabhani Sen Gupta, *Nuclear Weapons? Policy Options for India*, pp. 155.
[32] Munir Ahmad Khan, Medal Award Ceremony, Shahid Ur Rehman, *Long Road to Chagai*, pp. 104.
[33] Ibid. pp. 105.
[34] Ibid. Quoting George Perkovich, Could Anything be Done to Stop Them: Lessons from Pakistan's Proliferation Past, in Henry Sokolski, ed, *Pakistan is Nuclear Future: Worries Beyond War*, Carlesu Barracks, PA, Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College, 2008.

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3 | Smiling Buddha

It has been claimed that "Smiling Buddha" was the codename given to India's first nuclear weapons test on the morning of 18 May 1974. But the impact of the test on Pakistan's security and on the nuclearisation of South Asia was such that it should more aptly be remembered as the "Scowling" Buddha. Even though India described the test as a "Peaceful Nuclear Explosion" (PNE), in reality, it was no different from a test of a nuclear weapon. This was considered an essential first step on the path towards achieving the Indian ambition of becoming a regional hegemon and acquiring great power status. In his comprehensive book on the Indian nuclear programme, George Perkovich quotes noted Indian scholar and strategic analyst, Bhabani Sen Gupta, that the test was not so much in response to the Chinese nuclear test nor to any threat from Pakistan but the "arguments for the bomb now were: that without it India could not expect to be admitted to the corridors of global power, nor enjoy the status of the regional dominant power."[1]

Build-up to the Indian Test

According to Perkovich, planning and preparations for a peaceful nuclear explosion had been explicitly discussed and undertaken from late 1964 through 1974." During this period small amounts of weapons-grade plutonium were separated in 1964 and continued to be accumulated thereafter. The design of a nuclear explosive device began in 1965. Perkovich recounts that Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram claimed in May 1974 that the decision to test was made "three years ago," which would be sometime in 1971.[2] As such this was prior to the war with Pakistan in December 1971.

It follows, therefore, that the 'justification' for the test that India was threatened by the Chinese test or the deployment of an American aircraft carrier in the Bay of Bengal towards the end of the 1971 war; or due to the collaboration between the US and China in support of Pakistan at the time, lacks credibility. Actually, the decision had been made much earlier and the preparations for the test had started nearly seven to eight years before the war with Pakistan. Similarly fallacious is the Indian argument that their test was in response to the first Chinese nuclear test in 1964 because the question arises

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as to why India waited ten years to respond. Moreover, the nuclear test did not contribute to Indian security. It had no effect on China, while also hardening Pakistan's resolve to acquire nuclear weapons.

The Indian test also vindicated Pakistan's position that New Delhi was surreptitiously pursuing a nuclear weapons programme even as it preached nuclear disarmament while also rejecting the NPT in order to acquire nuclear weapons capability under the guise of a 'peaceful nuclear explosion.' More importantly, India effectively cheated on its commitments to Canada and America by clandestinely diverting nuclear fuel from its civilian facilities supplied by these countries towards weapons production.

Considerable controversy still surrounds the results of the 1974 test which raises questions about its success. The Chairman of the Indian Atomic Energy Commission, Homi Sethna, claimed that the test yield was between 12 to 15 kilotons. Years later, in 1981, according to Perkovich, the *Sunday Observer* of Bombay reported based on information by Indian scientists that the yield was as low as 2 kilotons.[3] The Americans estimated that the yield was between 4 to 6 kilotons.[4] It seems likely that Indian scientists at the time of the test deliberately covered up the inefficiency of the device as the truth would have been most embarrassing for them. Besides, it would have hurt Indian pride and undermined the claim to nuclear power status. Such poor performance also explains the need to conduct more nuclear tests in 1998 to confirm that the design of the devices had been improved.

Pakistan's Response

For Pakistan, which had since its independence been apprehensive about India's hegemonic designs and had been subjected to their enforcement in the 1971 war to break-up Pakistan, the attainment of Indian nuclear weapons capability accentuated the asymmetry in power capabilities between the two countries. Pakistan was now confronted not only by India's numerical advantage in conventional weapons but also potentially with nuclear weapons. Moreover, the 1971 war had made it painfully clear to Pakistan that its reliance on external support for its security was futile. Henceforth, Pakistan could only rely on its own ability to ensure its security and the most effective means of doing so would be through achieving nuclear deterrence. Prime Minister

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Bhutto's government had already embarked on the course to achieve this objective and the Indian nuclear test was proof that this was the only way forward to ensure national security.

The most immediate task before Bhutto was to shore up national morale and restore confidence after the Indian test. He made his intentions clear in his very first press conference the day after the test, on 19 May, stating that "We will never let Pakistan be a victim of nuclear blackmail." He added that "We will not compromise on the right of self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Nor will we accept Indian hegemony and domination over the subcontinent."[5]

On 15 June, a meeting of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet was convened by Bhutto, which was attended by the three Service Chiefs, which concluded that the only viable option for Pakistan was to develop nuclear weapons in response to the Indian test. From then on the nuclear programme officially shifted from acquiring nuclear capability for civilian uses to pursuing nuclear weapons.[6]

Bhutto also responded firmly to Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's letter to him some days later in which she claimed that the Indian test was a "peaceful nuclear explosion" by retorting that "it is well established that the testing of a nuclear device is no different from the detonation of a nuclear weapon."[7]

Indeed, the Indian description of their test was spurious and disingenuous. Both the major nuclear powers, the US and the Soviet Union, had already discounted the use of "nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes" such as earth moving or dam building. But more to the point, if India had in fact been pursuing the capability for actual 'peaceful' purposes, it would not have done so surreptitiously. As mentioned above, small amounts of weapons-grade plutonium were separated in 1964 and continued to be accumulated thereafter," according to Perkovich,[8] from the CIRUS civilian nuclear reactor built with Canadian cooperation for which the nuclear fuel was supplied by the US. He also discloses that "the design of the nuclear explosive device began in 1965.[9] This exposes the extent of Indian deception and flagrant violation of the commitments given by India to Canada and the US. It also highlights Indian hypocrisy that while India projected itself as a champion of nuclear disarmament and rejected the NPT on the grounds of being a discriminatory treaty, it was working all the while to join the nuclear club. Describing the test as a peaceful nuclear explosion was, therefore, a part

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of this Indian deception and hypocrisy. Years later, after the 1998 nuclear tests, the architect of the 1974 explosion, Indian scientist Raja Ramana, acknowledged that this explosion was indeed a nuclear weapon test.[10]

International Reaction

Pakistan, which had repeatedly expressed its concerns about India's nuclear intentions to the international community in multilateral forums and bilateral contacts, especially with the major powers and the countries engaged in nuclear cooperation with India, expected that there would be strong criticism of the Indian test. However, the luke-warm international reaction to the development was deeply disappointing for Pakistan. It also proved to be an additional factor in strengthening Pakistan's determination to pursue its own nuclear weapons programme.

The US, as the major proponent of nuclear non-proliferation and supplier of nuclear fuel to India which had been diverted towards nuclear weapons development by New Delhi, did not call for a roll-back of the Indian capability but rather eschewed any criticism. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger rejected the "harsh" language of an American statement drafted by his State Department colleagues on the grounds that "Public scolding would not undo the event, but only add to US-India bilateral problems and reduce the influence Washington might have on India's future nuclear policy"[11] Even worse, "the US in June 1974 proceeded to ship an instalment of previously approved uranium fuel to India's Tarapur reactor[12] – the very same from where India had diverted fissile material for its nuclear test. The French went a step further with the French Atomic Energy Commission sending a congratulatory message to its Indian counterpart.[13] Western countries, led by the US, also increased assistance to India-despite the test-by roughly 200 million dollars less than a month after the test.[14] During a visit to India in October 1974, just a few months after the test, Kissinger referred to the Indian nuclear capability and remarked, "India and the USA now share another common tradition."[15] He also declared the hope that the US and India could develop a "mature" relationship based on American recognition of India's preeminence in the region.[16] More substantially, Kissinger reaffirmed that the US would continue to supply nuclear fuel to India's two General Electric Tarapur reactors despite the Indian detonation using US-supplied heavy water in the CIRUS reactor

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to produce the fuel for its nuclear bomb. The Canadians, for their part, terminated their cooperation on the CIRUS reactor which they had supplied to India without any safeguards commitment but also now asked Pakistan for additional safeguards commitments, not just for the Canadian-supplied KANUPP reactor but also on all other existing nuclear facilities as well as those to be acquired in future. As noted by Rabia Akhtar "Canada, betrayed by India and publicly acknowledging its inability to influence her..... sought to bill all that to Pakistan with interest."[17]

Pakistan's Nuclear Policy

Itwas, therefore, in such a crass hypocritical and discriminatory international environment that Pakistan sought to respond to the Indian nuclear test in order to protect its security interests. Prime Minister Bhutto decided to pursue a multi-pronged diplomatic offensive while simultaneously pursuing efforts to enhance the country's nuclear programme through internal developments and external assistance, elements of which were already underway in keeping with the 1972 PAEC plan. (As mentioned in the previous chapter)

The diplomatic initiative involved highlighting the Indian nuclear threat with the aim of seeking international assistance from oil-rich Muslim countries for Pakistan's nuclear programme; strengthening bilateral relations with the major powers, especially with China, with emphasis on defence cooperation and technical assistance; and outreach to countries like France, Germany, China among others, for cooperation in the nuclear field. Success in this diplomatic outreach was considered vital for success in the nuclear domain.

At the multi lateral level, Pakistan initiated several nuclear-related proposals. Beginning in 1974 at the UN and then later in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), Pakistan proposed the creation of a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in South Asia along the lines of such a zone in the Latin American and Caribbean region, the Treaty of Tlatelolco of 1968, which prohibits developing or deploying nuclear weapons on the territory of member states. Initiated by Foreign Secretary Agha Shahi and his colleagues in the Foreign Office and pursued by Pakistan's Missions to the UN in New York and Geneva for the next several years, the proposal received overwhelming support from non-nuclear weapon states. The purpose was to ensure that under international opprobrium, India would not proceed further to enhance its nuclear weapons capability or at least would face

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censure for using or threatening to use nuclear weapons. Despite the majority support for Pakistan's resolutions over the years, it continued to be opposed by India while the nuclear weapon states, with the exception of China, consistently abstained on the resolution. (Pakistan withdrew this resolution after conducting its nuclear tests in May 1998).

A second initiative was a resolution on Negative Security Assurances (NSAs) which called upon all nuclear weapon states to extend assurances that they would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states. While this resolution was supported by the majority of UN members and members of the CD, including India, the French voted against it and the other nuclear weapon states, with the exception of China, voiced their reservations. (This resolution continues to be sponsored by Pakistan despite becoming a nuclear weapon state itself in 1998).

Pakistan also joined an initiative with other regional countries to declare the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, an initiative that was launched by Sri Lanka in 1971.

While these efforts were successful in highlighting Pakistan's concerns about the introduction of nuclear weapons in South Asia and the impact on Pakistan's security, they were obviously not successful in practical terms to mitigate the growing security threat to Pakistan from India.

More important in the long term was Pakistan's outreach to the oil-rich Muslim countries for financial assistance which, apart from helping Pakistan economically, was crucial to raise funding for its nuclear programme. In this context, the relations developed with Saudi Arabia and Libya were especially useful. While no public record exists about the amounts received by Pakistan nor about any quid pro involved, the assistance did generate allegations about Pakistan's "Islamic bomb", a term also used occasionally by Bhutto himself. This led to speculation later that Pakistan provided guarantees about a nuclear umbrella for its Arab friends such as Saudi Arabia. However, these allegations have consistently been denied by Pakistan and after it became a nuclear weapon state, Pakistan stated officially that its nuclear weapons capability was only meant for its own deterrence against India.

Pakistan's relations with China had already progressed substantially by 1974. In May 1976, Bhutto signed a far-reaching strategic agreement with China, apart from procuring economic assistance and conventional weapons. China also

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shared its expertise in reverse engineering which helped Pakistan enormously in its nuclear learning and technical substitution to replicate designs and equipment for its strategic programme,[18] both in nuclear weapons and missile development in later years. It also led to Chinese cooperation in nuclear power plants for energy generation. Moreover, Pakistan's growing strategic partnership with China was helpful in restraining Indian hostility towards Pakistan.

Pakistan had been exploring nuclear cooperation with France since the 1960s but due to financial constraints had been unable to move forward. Under President Charles de Gaulle and his successors, France had followed an independent nuclear policy, developing its own nuclear deterrent and strategic policy despite being a part of NATO. It refused to sign the NPT though it was recognised by the treaty as a nuclear weapon state. It also did not initially join the London Suppliers Group (later to become the Nuclear Suppliers Group-NSG), a cartel of technologically advanced western countries formed to control nuclear commerce after the Indian test. France was, therefore, willing to engage in nuclear cooperation with Pakistan despite NPT restrictions and guidelines of the London Group. After the 1972 Multan meeting of nuclear scientists convened by Bhutto, Pakistan established a pilot scale reprocessing facility at PINSTECH and signed a contract with a French Company, Saint Gobain Techniques Nouvelles (SGN) in March 1973 for the basic design of a large-scale reprocessing plant. In October 1974, a second contract was signed with SGN for a "detailed design" of the industrial scale reprocessing plant at Chashma which involved the delivery of blueprints, designs and specifications as well as a commitment by SGN to procure equipment from suppliers and to make the plant operational. France also agreed to provide three to four 600-MW power reactors.[19] All these facilities were to be under IAEA safeguards.

An agreement with another western country, the then Federal Republic of Germany, was signed in 1975 for the sale of a heavy water plant to produce about 10,000 kg of heavy water per year.[20] This agreement was also under IAEA safeguards.

The most difficult part of Prime Minister Bhutto's external initiative was dealing with the US. After the Indian nuclear test, Washington was instrumental in creating the London Group of nuclear supplier states, the NSG. At the same time, the nuclear non-proliferation lobby in the US Congress was gaining strength and was highly critical of the Ford administration's non-proliferation policies. In 1976, Congress adopted the Symington Amendment

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to the Foreign Assistance Bill stipulating denial of all military and economic assistance to any non-nuclear weapon state that built a uranium enrichment or reprocessing plant and did not accept full-scope safeguards on its entire nuclear programme. Next year, in August 1977, the Glenn Amendment was adopted requiring a ban on all security assistance to any non-nuclear weapon state that exploded a nuclear device.[21] Ironically, since both these laws were adopted after the Indian nuclear test, they essentially targeted Pakistan and not India even though it had been India which had violated US non-proliferation policy. As noted above, in a shameful demonstration of double standards, the US continued with its nuclear cooperation with India through the supply of fuel to its reactors while also providing substantial economic assistance.

It was against this background of deepening American restrictions on nuclear cooperation that Bhutto visited the US in February 1975 to meet President Ford and Secretary of State Henary Kissinger. While both were sympathetic to Pakistan's defence needs and lifted the arms embargo that had been placed on Pakistan since the 1965 Pakistan-India war (the embargo was also lifted for India), they expressed deep concern over Pakistan's nuclear programme. American intelligence had also briefed the Administration about Pakistan's pursuit of its nuclear fuel cycle and claimed there was "considerable evidence that Pakistan was embarking on a programme that could in time give it the capability of duplicating India's nuclear explosion."[22] At the time, Kissinger, however, argued that it would be difficult for Bhutto to accept full-scope safeguards on all of Pakistan's existing and future nuclear installations and, therefore, US policy should not be to seek such a commitment as a quid pro quo for lifting the arms embargo.

But, with increasing pressure from Congress demonstrated by the Symington and Glenn amendments launched by the Democrats who were in control of Congress, Ford's Republican administration became increasingly defensive about its Pakistan policy. The US intelligence agencies as well as the State Department also kept up their alarming assessments about Pakistan's nuclear activities. More importantly, as the American presidential election campaign gathered momentum, Jimmy Carter, the Democrat candidate, made nuclear proliferation his key campaign issue to berate the Republicans. These debates and their impact on the administration's policy led the spot light to be focused on the Pakistan-France nuclear reprocessing agreement and the

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heavy water plant agreement with Germany. As a result, from 1977 onwards, the US asked both Pakistan and France to cancel the deal on the grounds that reprocessing technology was "not consistent" with Pakistan's civilian nuclear energy needs but could be used for nuclear weapons development purposes. Similar American demarches were made to Germany.

By then, the Canadians had also jumped into this controversy. The Canadian-supplied power reactor, KANUPP, had been inaugurated in November 1972 for which Canada provided nuclear fuel, technical information and spare parts. Pakistan had negotiated another agreement with Canada in 1973 for the purchase of a fuel fabrication plant. However, following the Indian test, Canada conveyed that it would not negotiate a new contract for the operation of KANUPP unless Pakistan agreed to strengthen safeguards to preclude a nuclear test by Pakistan similar to the Indian test. Pakistan's refusal led to the cancellation of the agreements for spare parts for KANUPP and the fuel fabrication plant.[23] During 1975 negotiations with Canada resumed. But the Canadian position was even more demanding than before – they asked "to retain a veto over KANUPP's spent fuel being reprocessed and have that veto extended to Pakistan's entire nuclear programme," including the French reprocessing plant and the Chashma reactor being obtained from China.[24]

Through direct correspondence with President Ford, Prime Minister Bhutto conveyed that both the agreements with France and Germany were under IAEA safeguards and these facilities were crucial to address Pakistan's growing energy needs, especially after the 1973 energy crisis. He charged that the Americans were pursuing double standards on non-proliferation where they were targeting Pakistan for its safeguarded nuclear cooperation agreements while rewarding India with uninterrupted nuclear fuel supply even after its nuclear weapon test. Pakistan's Ambassador in Washington Sahibzada Yaqub Khan made the same arguments in several meetings with Kissinger and other State Department officials as well key Congressional leaders.[25]

The Americans were also exerting intense pressure on France to cancel the reprocessing deal. The agreement had been signed when the Gaullist leader, Jacques Chirac was the Prime Minister in the coalition government of President Giscard d'Estaing, who had full knowledge of and had given his approval for the contract. As long as the Gaullists were part of the government, they remained faithful to the independent course for France charted out by

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Charles de Gaulle and refused American dictation. But by 1977, when Chirac left the government and was no longer the Prime Minister, changes started to take place in the French attitude. At first, there were delays in the supply of related equipment and demands for renegotiating parts of the deal, especially relating to safeguards. There was also the proposal of providing a 'co-processing' instead of a reprocessing plant that would require external control of the spent plutonium fuel. The formal change in the French position first came, as recalled by Ambassador Iqbal Akhund in his book *Memoirs of a Bystander,* when he presented his credentials as Pakistan's Ambassador to France on 31 July 1977 to President Giscard d' Estaing. The President himself referred to the "very delicate problem" that had arisen between Pakistan and France. Giscard maintained that due to French support for non-proliferation, his government could not go through with the deal. The next day, the French Foreign Minister informed the Ambassador that the French decision was "irrevocable."[26] Secretary General Souton of the French Foreign Office spoke to Ambassador Akhund with "disarming candour", accepting that "France had indeed broken its contract with Pakistan" and that "France was clearly to blame." He also admitted that France was under intense pressure from the US-Canada-Australia combine which provided crucial uranium ore to the French nuclear industry and was, therefore, in a position to make its pressure felt.[27] Accordingly, after an honourable pause, the French officially announced cancellation of the agreement on 23 August 1978.

About the same time, Germany also withdrew from the Heavy Water agreement with Pakistan under American pressure.

Even as President Giscard d' Estaing was back peddaling on the reprocessing plant deal under Washington's dictation, owing to which it had also joined the NSG, Bhutto held firm and refused to succumb to American pressure. During his visit to Pakistan in August 1976, Secretary of State Kissinger warned Bhutto that Jimmy Carter was likely to win the coming US Presidential elections and combined with the influence of the non-proliferation lobby in Congress, they would "make an example of Pakistan."[28] This was viewed in Pakistan as an ultimatum and by Bhutto as a personal threat which he described as making a "horrible example" of him.

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Pakistan's Internal Crisis and the Nuclear Programme

By March 1977, Pakistan descended into political chaos following disputed results of the general elections. As political opposition against Bhutto increased with violent nation wide protests, Bhutto accused the Americans of instigating the movement against him. A tapped telephone conversation between American embassy officials in which one official said "the party is over" was projected by Bhutto as an admission of American involvement. Speaking to the National Assembly on 28 April 1977, he accused the US of "a vast, colossal, huge international conspiracy" to oust him from power and claimed that Washington was punishing him for refusing to bow to American pressure on the nuclear issue.[29] Even though the US denied this accusation, Bhutto continued to make this charge after being removed from power by a military coup staged by Army Chief General Zia ul Haq. While there is no reliable evidence to prove Bhutto's charge of American involvement in the political uprising against him, it is no secret that the US has repeatedly resorted to regime change in several countries before and after Bhutto's ouster.

But if the Americans were expecting a change in Pakistan's nuclear policy under General Zia ul Haq they were sorely disappointed. As Army Chief, he had been closely associated with and fully supportive of the programme. Besides, whatever differences that existed between Bhutto and his political opponents, there was no divergence between them on the nuclear issue which by then enjoyed national consensus.

Therefore, in September 1977, when the newly elected President Carter sent his adviser on nuclear policy, Joseph Nye, to demand that General Zia cancel the reprocessing agreement with France and Pakistan's nuclear programme, otherwise the US would apply sanctions under the Glenn Amendment, Zia flatly refused. Consequently, nuclear-related sanctions were soon imposed on Pakistan to suspend economic assistance. Later, when France backed out of the reprocessing agreement in August 1978, these were partially lifted as there was no further need for them. Nevertheless, this proved to be a temporary reprieve as the nuclear issue continued to overshadow Pakistan-US relations.

Soon after the removal of sanctions, American intelligence reports, some deliberately leaked to the western media, claimed that Pakistan was also pursuing the enriched uranium route to the bomb in addition to the

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reprocessing plutonium alternative which Washington believed had been shut down following the French cancellation of their agreement with Pakistan. As a result, Carter's Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, conveyed to Adviser on Foreign Affairs Agha Shahi that while the US was willing to resume economic assistance and consider military sales, it would be compelled to impose US laws such as Glenn or Symington, if Pakistan proceeded to acquire technology for nuclear weapons or conducted a nuclear explosive test.[30] Again, Pakistan refused to be intimidated. Eventually, on 6 April 1979, the US re-imposed sanctions on Pakistan, this time under the Symington amendment.

Threat to Nuclear Installations

Even more alarming than the sanctions for Pakistan were American plans to neutralise Pakistan's nuclear facilities through armed attacks. *The New York Times* of 12 August 1979 reported that one of the options being considered by an inter-agency task force set up by the Carter administration led by Ambassador at Large, Gerard C Smith, was to "use paramilitary forces to disable the Pakistan uranium enrichment facility."[31] Ambassador Akhund also refers in his book to his conversation in 1978 with a US Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs and member of the task force headed by Gerard C Smith, as asking whether Pakistan did not fear that India might use pre-emptive methods to "take out" Pakistan's nuclear options before they developed any further. Ambassador Akhund replied that Pakistan had to reckon with this possibility – not only from India but others as well including the US. He also recalls that though the US Ambassador in Pakistan had given a categorical assurance that the US did not intend to use military force or any other illegal means against Pakistan's nuclear projects, it could still use others like India or Israel to do the job.[32] In their book *Deception,* Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clark, give a further indication of such a possibility by providing a detailed account of Indo-Israeli collaboration to attack Pakistan's nuclear facilities during 1983-84.[33]

Pakistan was fully aware of this threat from the beginning of its nuclear programme and had taken extensive security precautions. In June 1978, the French Ambassador in Pakistan and his Counsellor had been apprehended and roughed up while on an unlikely "picnic" near Kahuta in the mid-summer heat.[34] This security issue was also discussed during the Envoys Conference

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convened by General Zia in July 1979. The US, he said was "jittery" and would go to any lengths to stop Pakistan's nuclear programme. But they could do "damn all" to knock out its installations from the air. Sabotage was another matter, he said, and "we had to fear and guard against it."[35]

There were several reasons for such discriminatory behaviour by the US and other western countries against Pakistan which continue to prevail. As considered in the preceding pages, India has always been far more important than Pakistan for American and western strategic objectives and has, therefore, been given preferential and exceptional treatment. An equally persuasive argument is given by Ambassador Akhund. In his words: "for the United States the most important consideration was that Pakistan was a case sui generis which had to be stopped regardless of what happened elsewhere, of regional factors, Pakistan's own security concerns, and all other considerations."[36] Most Pakistanis would agree with his reasoning that "of all the various factors that determined US policy on the subject, no doubt the decisive one was the Israel factor, the fear that Pakistan.....could be the conduit for supplying nuclear know–how to Israel's enemies in the Middle East."[37] A related consideration is that due to Israeli security, the US has always been paranoid about Pakistan's 'Islamic Bomb' but not about the Hindu, Jewish or Christian bombs. Not surprisingly, Indian and Israeli leaders as well as pro-Israel members of the American Congress and media have repeatedly raised this bogey of the Islamic bomb. Yet another reason is that because Pakistan is more dependent on foreign assistance, it is more vulnerable to external pressure. Lastly, following the Indian test, the American intention was to make an "example" of Pakistan as a lesson to other nuclear-threshold states, the very same threat that was conveyed to its Prime Minister in 1977.

Nuclear Progress Despite Pressure

However, these multiple challenges did not prevent Pakistan from moving forward on its nuclear weapons programme. While Bhutto did not live to see the outcome of his efforts, the plan that he set in motion in 1972 continued to advance and expand. Even as Pakistan's diplomacy sought to create strategic space internationally, Pakistani scientists and engineers worked fervently to carry the nuclear programme forward. As a result, considerable progress was made from 1972 till the end of the 1980s.

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As considered in the previous chapter, the objective was to attain control of the complete nuclear fuel cycle – from the front end of uranium prospection, mining, milling, processing and commissioning into nuclear fuel to the back end of the cycle involving heavy water production, fuel reprocessing, power generation and production of weapons-grade fissile material. With the discovery of uranium deposits in several parts of the country by 1973, the Baghalchur or BC-1 facility was set up for uranium mining and conversion. The PAEC also began work in 1975 on a Chemical Production Complex (CPC) to produce natural uranium dioxide for fabricating fuel for KANUPP which replaced the Canadian-supplied fuel after its supply was terminated; and more importantly, the production of natural uranium hexafluoride gas (UF6) which was used in the gas centrifuges for uranium enrichment at Kahuta. Therefore, the CPC was a critical part of the front end of the nuclear fuel cycle leading to the fabrication of indigenous nuclear fuel and was fundamental to the uranium enrichment programme at the back end. According to PAEC scientist, Dr Samar Mubarakmand, "at least half the steps leading to the development of a nuclear device were completed and mastered in the two PAEC facilities located at BC-1 and CPC."[38] For the manufacture of indigenous nuclear fuel, a full-fledged nuclear fuel fabrication facility was established at Kundian and PAEC succeeded in producing the first nuclear fuel element for KANUPP in 1978. By August 1980, PAEC announced that Pakistan had achieved self-reliance in the manufacture of nuclear fuel from natural uranium and Pakistani scientists had built a fuel manufacturing plant at Chashma.[39] Thus, by 1980, Pakistan had successfully mastered the front end of the nuclear fuel cycle.

As for the back end of the cycle, the focus had been on the French reprocessing plant to learn the technology for producing plutonium – which, in conjunction with additional nuclear power plants that were planned, could be used for energy generation. While the planned French facility was not large enough in output to provide weapons-grade plutonium for weapons purposes, its essential significance was to provide the technical knowledge and scientific learning. The intention, therefore, from the beginning was not to misuse and misdirect the safeguarded plutonium as India had done, but to gain knowledge and expertise. In fact, this was indeed acquired during the long process from signing of the contract with the French till its termination in 1978. During

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this period, the French had shared the designs and the blueprints of the plant which proved to be of extreme value to Pakistan even though the setting up of the actual plant was cancelled. Largely as a result of this learning process, the PAEC secretly commenced work on a pilot-scale indigenous reprocessing facility which could produce enough weapons-grade plutonium for one to three bombs per year. This facility was known as New Laboratories or New Labs.[40]

Concurrently, with the pursuit of the French contract involving the plutonium route to weapons-grade fissile material, Bhutto had also taken the precaution of launching a second route by pursuing a parallel uranium enrichment programme which was headed by Dr A Q Khan, codenamed Project 706.[41] Working as a metallurgist in a Dutch nuclear company, URENCO, Dr Khan had approached Bhutto after the 1972 Multan meeting and suggested the uranium gas centrifuge route to nuclear weapons. He initially provided plans and designs for the gas centrifuge plant to produce highly enriched weapons grade uranium. Thereafter, he came to Pakistan and was given charge of the project.

This uranium route for producing nuclear weapons was largely untested, complex and highly technical. No other country had so far used this process for producing nuclear weapons. Gas centrifuge enrichment had been used only for producing low-enriched uranium for use in power plants. Those countries using uranium as the fissile material for weapons had employed the Gaseous Diffusion process for enriching the uranium to weapons-grade. But the Gas Centrifuge Enrichment technology had never been used to produce weapons grade fissile material. For this reason, a number of Pakistani scientists were sceptical about this process and had expressed doubts about the prospects of achieving nuclear weapons capability through this route.[42] But, even though the technical requirements were formidable, Dr Khan eventually succeeded in his efforts and for this reason, can be considered a pioneer in using the gas centrifuge enrichment method to produce nuclear weapons using uranium as the fissile material.

Owing to the difficulties involved, American intelligence agencies and experts were at first also sceptical that Pakistan could succeed. Besides, as Bhutto had intended, they remained focused on the plutonium option and did their best to have the French reprocessing deal terminated. This diversionary tactic succeeded in providing the time and space to put the uranium option in place.

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This project, located at Kahuta, was launched in October 1974, around the same time that the reprocessing plant deal was signed with France. As such, by 1978, the Kahuta uranium enrichment project, along with the fuel cycle facilities comprising the uranium processing, conversion and nuclear fuel fabrication facilities, and the New Laboratories pilot reprocessing plant, had all been successfully launched and were nearing completion. Moreover, by this time, work had also started on the bomb design and preparations for a testing site.

It goes to Bhutto's credit and to Pakistani scientists that all the while that the Americans and their allies were focused on terminating the French reprocessing deal, Pakistan had moved forward on the alternative uranium route. When they finally came to realise that the French plutonium route was really a "ruse" or a "decoy,"[43] it was already too late to stop it. With Bhutto's fore sight and the hard work of Pakistani scientists, Pakistan had managed to remain ahead of the curve.

Official western statements and comments by experts as well as their media have projected Pakistan's efforts to acquire technology and equipment for the nuclear programme as being illegal and subversive. However, the Pakistani perspective is vastly different. Pakistan was being singled out for punishment for India's act of proliferation and perhaps because the West did not want a Muslim country to acquire nuclear weapons. The West was also indifferent to Pakistan's security concerns, having ignored its initiatives to obtain international security guarantees. Even worse, while Pakistan was being denied access to nuclear technology, India continued to receive cooperation in the nuclear field. Such obvious discrimination was unacceptable to all Pakistanis, and spurred the scientists on towards their goal with even greater zeal.

To avoid scrutiny and sanctions, Pakistan deliberately refrained from acquiring complete nuclear plants or built up facilities. Instead, Pakistan purchased equipment in parts and components from the open market to be assembled in the country. But when the rules were tightened, it relied on the grey areas of legal interpretations.[44] Another important feature was to stay ahead of the expanding non-proliferation regime. The European companies also cooperated by finding ingenious ways to keep the Pakistani procurement pipeline flowing. In these efforts, Pakistani embassies, especially in Europe and North America, played a crucial role as well by ensuring the diplomatic space and the damage limitation needed for this operation[45] But the fact

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remains that at the time these procurements were not illegal though they were clandestine. More important for Pakistan was the fact that these activities were not contrary to any Pakistani national or international commitment.

Notes

[1] George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, University of California Press, Berkey, 1999, quoting Bhabani Sen Gupta Nuclear Weapons? Policy Options for India, pp. 176.
[2] Ibid ,pp. 171
[3] Ibid, pp.182
[4] Ibid, pp. 182.
[5] Feroz Hassan Khan, *Eating Grass – The Making of the Pakistani Bomb*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2013, pp. 118 Quoting from the *Pakistan Times*, 20 May 1974.
[6] Ibid. pp. 123.
[7] George Perkovich, op. lit., Pakistan Horizon 27, 3, Third Quarter, 1974.
[8] Ibid. pp. 171.
[9] Ibid. pp. 171.
[10] Amitabh Mattoo, Editor, *India's Nuclear Deterrent-Pokhran II and Beyond*, Har Anand Publications, New Delhi,1999, pp.17
[11] Dennis Kux, *India and the United States: Estranged Democracies*, quoted by George Perkovich. Ibid pp. 184.
[12] George Perkovich, op.cit. pp. 120.
[13] Ibid. pp. 184.
[14] Ibid. pp. 184.
[15] Feroz Hassan Khan, op.cit. pp.120.
[16] George Perkovich, op.cit. pp. 184.
[17] Rabia Akhtar, *The Blind Eye: US Non-Proliferation Policy Towards Pakistan from Ford to Clinton*, University of Lahore Press, Lahore, 2018, pp. 48. Quoting Duane Bratt, The Politics of CANDU Exports, Toronto University Press Toronto, 2006. pp. 145.
[18] Feroz Hassan Khan, op.cit. pp. 129.
[19] Ibid. pp. 54-55, also Rabia Akhtar, op.cit. pp. 47.
[20] Rabia Akhtar, Ibid. pp. 60.
[21] Munir Ahmad Khan, *Nuclearization of South Asia and its Regional and Global Imlications*, Regional Studies, Islamabad, 26, 4 (Autumn 1998).
[22] Rabia Akhtar, op.cit. pp. 38.
[23] Ibid. pp. 46. Quoting from Duane Bratt, op.cit. pp. 145.
[24] Ibid. pp. 47-48.
[25] Ibid. pp. 51.
[26] Iqbal Akhund, *Memoirs of a Bystander: A Life in Diplomacy*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1997, pp. 273-274.
[27] Ibid. pp. 275-276.
[28] Dennis Kux, op.cit. pp. 222.
[29] Ibid. pp. 230.
[30] Rabia Akhtar, op.cit. pp. 131-132.
[31] Ibid. pp. 133.
[32] Iqbal Akhund, op.cit. pp. 290.
[33] Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clark, *Deception*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2007, pp. 104-105.
[34] Iqbal Akhund, op.cit. pp. 280.
[35] Ibid. pp. 290.
[36] Ibid. pp. 269.
[37] Ibid. pp. 270.
[38] Mansoor Ahmad, Naeem Salik, ed, *Nuclear Pakistan: Seeking Security and Stability*, University of Lahore Press, Lahore, 2018, pp. 15.
[39] Ibid. pp. 23.
[40] Feroz Hassan Khan, op.cit. pp. 134.
[41] Rabia Akhtar, op.cit. pp. 48.

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[42] Naeem Salik, *The Genesis of South Asian Nuclear Detrerrence,* Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2009, pp.99
[43] Mansoor Ahmad, op.cit. pp. 33 and Rabia Akhtar, op.cit. pp. 129.
[44] Feroz Hassan Khan, op.cit. pp. 165.
[45] Ibid. pp. 72.

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4 | Strategic Space

As the decade of the 1970s came to an end, Pakistan was confronted with multiple challenges. On the domestic front, the political movement against Prime Minister Bhutto had led to his ouster and imposition of martial law by General Zia ul Haq which derailed democracy and was also a blow to Pakistan's international reputation. Then followed Bhutto's controversial trial and his hanging that not only gave rise to domestic unrest but also widespread international condemnation. The American imposition of Symington sanctions over the nuclear issue added to the country's difficulties. Relations with the US further deteriorated with the burning of the American embassy in Islamabad on 21 November 1979 by enraged students who accused the US for involvement in the takeover of the Kaaba a few days earlier. Pakistan-US relations reached a breaking point.

These were ideal conditions for Mrs Gandhi who had been reelected as Indian Prime Minister, to vilify Pakistan and fish in troubled waters. To make matters worse, on 25 December 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. Since India and the Soviet Union were close allies, the presence of the Red Army on Pakistan's western border with Afghanistan confronted Pakistan with a two-front situation, the worst-case scenario from Islamabad's security perspective. But as events unfolded thereafter, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan for the next ten years also provided the strategic space for Pakistan to pursue its nuclear weapons programme.

Impact of the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan

While the nuclear issue did not disappear from the American agenda, Washington's increasing reliance on Pakistan to bleed the Soviets and avenge their defeat in Vietnam provided an opportunity to Islamabad to make critical progress in the nuclear domain, as long as it did not cross the red line of conducting a nuclear test.

Behind General Zia's obsequious demeanour and ingratiating manners, was a shrewd mind and nerves of steel. He recognised from the outset that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan would provide him with the leverage with the

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Americans to further Pakistan's security interests – not just against the threat from Moscow or New Delhi but also, more importantly, to pursue Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, despite Washington's non-proliferation goals. The key to doing this would be plausible deniability and use of diplomatic persuasion to placate the Americans whenever necessary. In retrospect, it can be said that Zia's tactics worked with great success, at least while the Soviets remained in Afghanistan. But, by then, Pakistan had crossed the nuclear Rubicon.

Carter's Peanuts

It was not entirely surprising for Pakistan that the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. It was already concerned about growing Soviet influence across the border after the Afghan Communist "Saur Revolution" in April 1978 deposed and executed President Daud. The new PDPA government, with close links to Moscow and New Delhi, had also raised the Pushtoonistan bogey and questioned the Durand Line as the border with Pakistan. Islamabad conveyed its growing misgivings about the developments in Afghanistan to Washington in the hope that the Carter administration would re-evaluate relations with Pakistan, remove proliferation-related sanctions and provide military assistance. General Zia asked Carter to upgrade the still-existing but dormant Pakistan-US bilateral cooperation agreement into a treaty involving the removal of sanctions and the extension of military assistance. But Carter's priorities were different. He was already pursuing "detente" with the Soviet Union through the SALT arms control process; according greater significance to relations with India as a "regional influential"; and determined to reverse Pakistan's nuclear programme.

According to Robert Gates, then a staff member in the National Security Council, the State Department advised the Administration "to wait for the Pakistanis to react to a recent US approach on their nuclear programme before pursuing consultations with them on Afghanistan."[1] This myopic and indeed arrogant attitude towards Pakistan is further exposed by Feroz Hassan Khan in his interview with then-Foreign Affairs Adviser, Agha Shahi. Mr Shahi, who met Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and other American officials during a visit to Washington in October 1979, was told by Gerard Smith (the same who had advised attacking Pakistan's nuclear facilities – see previous chapter) that Pakistan is "entering the valley of death" because the "Indians are far

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ahead of you" and can "utterly destroy you." Shahi responded by reminding the Americans of the Cuban missile crisis which demonstrated that "the value of nuclear capability is in its possession as a deterrent, not in its use, because it is a doomsday weapon."[2] Gerard Smith's disingenuous argument exposed by Agha Shahi underscored American arrogance in assuming that Pakistanis were incapable of recognising the value of nuclear deterrence, apart from highlighting American double standards towards the nuclear programmes of Pakistan and India.

This discriminatory approach of the Carter administration was further exposed by its continued supply of enriched uranium for India's Tarapur reactor despite the adoption of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act (NNPA) in 1978 which required that all non-nuclear weapon states place their nuclear facilities under full-scope safeguards to receive nuclear fuel, which India had not done. Even so, Carter made an exemption for India.[3]

It was against the backdrop of these developments that the Carter administration was truly shocked when the Soviets actually invaded Afghanistan in December 1979. Carter immediately telephoned General Zia and "his tone and message differed drastically from those of the conversation the two had a month earlier." Carter reaffirmed the 1959 bilateral security agreement against communist aggression and offered to bolster Pakistan's security.[4]

To do this required, first of all, a waiver of the legislation barring economic and military aid to Pakistan due to its nuclear programme. A meeting of the National Security Council was held on 28 December to discuss the reaction to the Soviet invasion and it was recognised that Pakistan would have to be a key part of this policy. Options in this regard were worked out before the visit by Shahi to Washington in January 1980. Administration officials evaluated Pakistan's concerns as: "Whether the credibility and magnitude of US support is sufficient to offset the real danger of Soviet intimidation as well as the potential damage of close association with the US to their non-aligned and Islamic credentials."[5]

On the Pakistan side, General Zia was fully aware of his improved bargaining position and was unwilling to agree to vague promises, seeking specific American commitments.[6] Pakistan also wanted to use its nuclear programme as a bargaining chip to negotiate lucrative military and economic aid packages while retaining its nuclear option.[7] Specifically,

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Pakistan wanted a concrete defence agreement with the US by converting the 1959 agreement on defence cooperation into a treaty along with military and economic assistance "commensurate with the size of the threat" as articulated by Shahi.[8]

The package offered to Shahi in his meetings with Carter and Secretary Vance included: i) 400 million dollars of military and economic aid (which did not include the F-16 aircraft sought by Pakistan which Carter specifically rejected in order not to upset the Indians); ii) to maintain in place the 1959 agreement (but no to convert it into a treaty as proposed by Pakistan); and iii) to seek authority from Congress to waive sanctions imposed on Pakistan. In this context, Vance conveyed that willingness to resume assistance to Pakistan "should not be construed to mean any lessening of the importance the US attaches to nuclear non-proliferation."[9]

Such a package was certainly not up to Pakistan's expectations in terms of what Shahi termed as being "commensurate with the size of the threat."[10] President Zia was less diplomatic when he dismissed the offer as "peanuts" while speaking to the media on 18 January.[11] He was playing for higher stakes in the knowledge that he had leverage to obtain better terms from the US. Zia was also put-off by Carter's decision to give higher priority to Indian concerns over the supply of the latest military equipment to Pakistan such as the F-16 aircraft, in spite of the threat to Pakistan's security by the Soviets and their Indian allies, which was certainly how Zia perceived the situation (correctly as later events demonstrated). Moreover, Carter was judged by Zia to be weak, especially after the failed attempt to rescue American hostages from the embassy in Tehran, and, therefore, unlikely to win the next US elections due in 1980. Accordingly, when Zia met Carter in the Whitehouse on 3 October 1980 in connection with his role in the OIC over the ongoing Iran-Iraq war, Zia did not bring up the US assistance issue. This was a calculated rebuff to Carter which demonstrated that his administration had no quid pro quo to offer including over the nuclear issue.

Partnership with Reagan

Zia's gamble paid off with the election of Republican President Ronald Reagan in November 1980 who was far more willing than Carter to align with Pakistan against the Soviets. As a Republican "Cold Warrior", Reagan

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had been a staunch opponent of the Soviet Union and as President would go on to describe the USSR as the "Evil Empire". He was, therefore, determined to use the opportunity provided by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to extract the maximum benefit for the US. Reagan was also largely sympathetic to Pakistan which had been a valuable ally during the height of the Cold War. Accordingly, he did not share Carter's sanctimonious approach towards either the Soviet Union or towards Pakistan. He was determined to work with Pakistan to make the Soviets pay a heavy price for their aggression in Afghanistan despite the military dictatorship in Pakistan or the country's nuclear programme.

In March 1981, US Ambassador Hummel shared the Reagan administration's assistance package with General Zia. It involved 3.2 billion dollars in economic and military assistance spread over 5 years.[12] But Zia was careful not to commit before he knew the terms of engagement, especially over the nuclear issue. He dispatched Foreign Affairs Adviser Shahi and his Chief of Staff, General K M Arif, to Washington so as to convey Pakistan's priorities. In their meeting with the new Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, the Pakistani officials focused first of all, on the nuclear problem and bluntly conveyed that Pakistan "would not compromise on its nuclear programme. Haig responded that this issue need not become the centrepiece of the US-Pakistan relationship, "as long as Pakistan did not detonate a nuclear device" which would generate a negative reaction in Congress, making it difficult for the administration to cooperate with Pakistan in the way Reagan wanted.[13] This became the subsequent basis for the tacit understanding that the Reagan administration could live with Pakistan's nuclear programme as long as Islamabad did not explode a bomb.[14] President Zia stuck to his part of this bargain throughout his tenure as did succeeding Pakistani governments till 1998.

The second important issue for Zia was to maintain Pakistan's control over the covert assistance from the US to the Afghan Mujahideen resistance against the Soviets and their allied Afghan government. The administration agreed that this assistance to the Mujahideen, which had already started in 1979 under Carter, would continue to be channelled through Pakistan's ISI which would also determine to whom and how much would be provided.

Confident in Reagan's commitment to confront the Soviets, Zia did not press for upgrading the 1959 bilateral agreement into a treaty, as earlier

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suggested by Pakistan. He was also persuaded in this regard by Mr Shahi, who did not want the relationship with the US to compromise Pakistan's newly acquired non-aligned status. Later, Shahi would write that the Pakistan-US relationship was "redefined" on Pakistan's terms.[15]

While the Pakistani and American governments had reached a tacit understanding on the nuclear issue, non-proliferation proponents in the US Congress were as yet not fully on board. Most importantly, the Reagan administration needed Congressional approval for the waiver of the Symington amendment sanctions imposed on Pakistan by the previous Carter administration. Among the non-proliferation advocates in Congress, both in the Senate and the House of Representatives, were individuals who genuinely believed in non-proliferation such as Senator Glenn. But others, like Representative Solarz, were motivated not so much by non-proliferation objectives but by their pro-India leanings. Opposed to the re-alignment in Pakistan-US relations due to the Afghanistan issue, India was expending all its influence through the large and affluent Indian-American community on members of Congress, especially those with large numbers of Indian-American voters in their constituencies. India continuously used this influence over the coming years to derail Pakistan-US relations, highlighting the nuclear issue to allege an "Islamic bomb" threatening India and Israel. Even the supply of conventional weapons such as F-16 aircraft and AWACS was opposed.

It was against this background that the Reagan administration approached Congress for a waiver on the Symington sanctions to resume assistance to Pakistan. The issue was extensively debated in both the Senate and the House. In the Senate, an amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 was proposed by Senator Glenn and adopted by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as section 620E. According to this amendment, a Pakistan-specific waiver to the Symington amendment was approved for six years on the condition that the President must certify to Congress for the next six years that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear explosive device and that the proposed US assistance will reduce significantly the risk that Pakistan will possess a nuclear explosive device. The President was also required to provide an annual report to Congress on Pakistan's nuclear activities in order for the Congress to ensure that aid to Pakistan was keeping Pakistan non-proliferation compliant.[16] In addition to this Senate decision, the House approved an amendment moved by Solarz

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whereby assistance was to be cut off to any country that exploded a nuclear device. A similar decision was also adopted by the Senate. As a result, the "tacit" understanding about Pakistan not testing a nuclear device (while continuing its nuclear programme) became a legal requirement for American assistance.[17]

Nuclear Progress

As the partnership with the US moved forward, President Zia was conscious of the need to ensure that progress in Pakistan's nuclear programme abided by the "tacit understanding" given to the US so as not to embarrass the Reagan administration. For its part, the US administration hoped that closer security links with Pakistan would influence Pakistani leaders to desist from or at least go slow on the nuclear programme.[18]

In meetings with Reagan during his Washington visit in December 1982 and in his subsequent meetings with American Congressional leaders and officials that visited Pakistan, such as Vice President George-Bush, Defence Secretary Casper Weinberger and Secretary of State George Shultz, Zia repeated the assurances about the nuclear programme when the issue was raised with him. To ensure compliance with this understanding, Zia issued a secret directive to the Pakistani nuclear establishment with included; i) not to further produce highly enriched-uranium (HEU); ii) not to machine the already produced HEU, if any, into a weapon core; iii) not to conduct "hot" tests; and iv) not to share technology or knowledge in the nuclear field with another country or entity. He also instructed the PAEC to strengthen the IAEA safeguards on KANUPP.[19]

Operating within these parameters, the nuclear establishment was tasked to move forward on building its capabilities further. Relying on indigenous human and material resources and acquiring necessary components from the international market and assembling them within the country, as outlined in the previous chapter, enabled Pakistan to make remarkable progress. The Chemical Plants Complex (CPC) had already started producing UF6 from the mined uranium to be fed into the completed cascades of the centrifuges. From cascading to enrichment was undertaken in different facilities despite the difficulties encountered such as the earthquake in September 1981 due to which some 4,000 centrifuges crashed at the Kahuta plant. But within two years these were replaced by 5,000 centrifuges which were capable of producing

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weapons-grade uranium.[20] In January 1984, Dr A Q Khan, first publicly announced in an interview with Urdu magazine *Qaumi Digest* that Pakistan had acquired the capability to enrich uranium to weapons grade. This claim was repeated by him in interviews in two more Urdu papers, *Nawai-i-Waqt* and *Jang* in February 1984.[21]

Over the same period since the late 1970s, work was also taking place on bomb designing and a conceptual design was completed in 1978. Similarly, work was progressing on developing explosive lenses, the weapon's trigger mechanism, and on conducting "hot" or "cold" tests so as to measure the expected yield, apart from other aspects of the various bomb designs. The scientists were ready by the early 1980s to conduct either type of test – a cold or hot test. The difference being that a cold test, which is the actual detonation of a complete nuclear bomb but with natural uranium in the core instead of highly enriched or weapons grade uranium (HEU), owing to which no fission reaction takes place as is the case in a 'hot' test or nuclear weapon explosion.

In 1974, Bhutto had also initiated work on selecting and preparing test sites for use whenever Pakistan would achieve the capability to conduct a nuclear test. The ideal site for a hot test was selected in the Ras Koh hills of Chagai division in Balochistan while the site for a cold test was prepared in the Kirana Hills near Sargodha.[22] By the time all this preparatory work was completed, President Zia had given an assurance to the Americans that he would not embarrass them by conducting a nuclear weapons test. But it was also essential to test whether the device actually worked and accordingly he gave the clearance for a cold test. This test, conducted by PAEC, took place on 11 March 1983, demonstrating for the first time, Pakistan's possession of a working nuclear weapon device. If the natural uranium had been replaced by HEU, it would have created fission – a nuclear bomb. On that day, Pakistan became a nuclear power though the veil of secrecy could not be lifted from this achievement due to prevailing political considerations.[23]

But the work did not end here as the scientists then began the task of miniaturising the bomb design but without the advantage of conducting hot tests. Work was also undertaken from 1983 onwards to develop designs for bombs that could be carried on fighter planes or missiles as the delivery vehicles. These developments were underway simultaneously at the PAEC

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and the Kahuta facility, now called Khan Research Laboratories (KRL). A year after the PAEC cold test, the KRL also conducted its own cold test.

While considerable progress had been made on the uranium route to the bomb, the plutonium route was also making progress in the 1980s, despite the cancellation of the French Reprocessing plant agreement. President Zia was concerned about an attack on Kahuta by the Americans, Indians or Israelis or all of them together, so he wanted a backup option, just as Bhutto had wanted. According to a CIA assessment referred to by Feroz Khan, the KANUPP reactor had by the mid-1980s accumulated approximately 200 kg of reactor-grade plutonium which was enough material for 30 to 40 bombs.[24] But the decision was not to divert this fissile material from the KANUPP safeguarded facility like the Indians had done, thereby violating the commitment made to the IAEA. Instead, only indigenously developed facilities would be used for military purposes. Among the IAEA safeguarded reactors were the Pakistan Atomic Research Reactor (PARR-1), KANUPP, PINSTECH and the Chashma Plant, a 325 MW power reactor that was under construction with Chinese assistance following the agreement with China in September 1986. As part of this agreement, three more power reactors with the same capacity each would go on to be built over the next two decades. All of these facilities were and continue to be under IAEA safeguards.

Therefore, additional un-safeguarded facilities had to be developed. Using the technology and experience acquired from operating these safeguarded reactors, and possession of almost 95 per cent of the French reprocessing plant blueprints that had been transferred to the PAEC, (see previous chapter), Pakistani scientists and engineers undertook the task of indigenously developing plutonium-based facilities for weapons purposes outside safeguards. A smaller reprocessing facility was started at the New Labs located near PINSCECH in the mid-1970s even as negotiations were proceeding with France for the reprocessing plant as a backup option. Work on this secret pilot-scale reprocessing facility was pushed forward after the French cancelled the agreement and by 1983 scientists claimed that they were ready to begin reprocessing. Similarly, when the West Germans cancelled the heavy water agreement, which was essential for the production of plutonium because it used heavy water as a moderator for reactors that use natural uranium, Pakistan constructed a 13 MT heavy water facility near

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Multan by 1980. To increase the amount of heavy water production, another plant was constructed, the Khushab Chemical Plant (KCP-1), which began in 1987. The necessary components for this new facility were acquired from various European companies.[25] These developments were necessary for the 40-50 MWT Khushab plutonium production reactor on which work began in 1985. This project relied heavily on Pakistan's local industries for which a consortium of 20 Pakistani companies was established.[26] This reactor, called KCP-II was completed in 1997 (and three more reactors were constructed by 2014). To boost the fission chain-reaction in a weapon to increase its yield two to three times, the production of tritium was also launched in 1987 at the Khushab nuclear complex. This gave Pakistan the option to produce smaller and more compact plutonium-based nuclear weapons in addition to the larger highly enriched-uranium (HEU) based weapons.[27] Taken together these achievements marked the completion of the front and back ends of the nuclear cycle. This capability would go on to become crucial for Pakistan to maintain credible deterrence against India in the decades ahead.

The China Connection

Several western reports have alleged that Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme would not have succeeded without Chinese assistance and that such assistance was provided in violation of global non-proliferation norms. Both assertions are incorrect. As in all such matters in every country, the details of Pakistan-China nuclear cooperation are official secrets but publicly available reports by officials and scholars demonstrate that neither country violated any of their international commitments. What is more – the Chinese and US governments frequently discussed Pakistan's nuclear programme and agreed that for strategic reasons at the time in the 1980s, American non-proliferation concerns did not take precedence over their strategic cooperation with Pakistan against the Soviets. As the then US National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski had famously told President Carter "our security policy cannot be dictated by our non-proliferation policy."[28] As noted by Andrew Small, this stance was also conveyed to the Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping by US Defence Secretary Harold Brown in January 1980 to which Deng replied, "that is a very good approach.....we applaud this decision."[29] Moreover, western critics of Chinese nuclear cooperation with Pakistan should also recognise

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China's strategic interests in engaging with Pakistan in the nuclear domain. Besides, neither China nor Pakistan were at the time signatories of the NPT and were, accordingly, not violating any of their international commitments.

As noted in the previous chapter, Pakistan approached China for nuclear cooperation in 1972 when Prime Minister Bhutto met Chairman Mao. In the aftermath of the Indian nuclear test in 1974, which posed a security threat to both countries, the quantum of nuclear cooperation steadily increased. As written by Feroz Khan, Bhutto signed a strategic agreement with China in May 1976 which included civilian nuclear cooperation.[30] Since both countries faced denial of access to western technologies, their agreement was mutually beneficial. Whatever technology that Pakistan managed to acquire through the "grey market" was available to China for reverse engineering. China also taught Pakistani scientists the technique for reverse engineering.[31]

According to some unverified reports, when Pakistan's centrifuges crashed due to an earthquake in 1981, the Chinese "provided around fifty Kg of HEU on loan and even a crude bomb design."[32] However, this assertion can be challenged by the statement made by Dr A Q Khan that "within two years... we had installed five thousand machines and were producing weapons-grade enriched-uranium."[33] Confirming this achievement, former Director-General, Strategic Plans Division, Lt. General Khalid Kidwai, told the author that, "while earthquakes do cause machine crashes, but in our case the damage has always been minimal and well within our indigenous capabilities to replace from our reserve stocks." He added that "Outside help has neither been necessary nor sought at any stage."[34]

Later, the US also alleged that China had provided forty tons of heavy water and five thousand ring magnets to Pakistan in 1994-95.[35] Even if this were true, and Pakistan has denied such claims, the fact remains that none of this assistance would have mattered if Pakistan had not developed its own indigenous capabilities to use such material. According to Feroz Khan, "Pakistan's acquisition of the bomb certainly relied on its own scientific and technical prowess."[36] As also noted by Andrew Small, a Pakistani scientist maintained that "it is quite likely that the development of nuclear weapons by Pakistan would have succeeded, but without Chinese assistance this would have taken longer."[37]

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Emergence of Challenges with the US

As President Reagan began his second tenure in office in 1984, multiple challenges emerged to confront Pakistan-US relations. While President Zia kept up his side of the bargain not to "embarrass" the Reagan administration by conducting a nuclear weapon test, the US Congress was increasingly raising concerns about Pakistan's nuclear developments. These were based on American intelligence reports which were also being selectively leaked to the media, apart from "sting operations" to ensnare Pakistani nationals in "illegal" nuclear-related procurement activities. These problems were compounded by irresponsible statements made to the media by Dr A Q Khan about Pakistan's nuclear achievements.

By early 1984, just as the non-proliferation lobby in Congress became more vociferous about Pakistan's nuclear activities based on US intelligence reports focused on Pakistan, the Reagan administration was gearing up for the next 6-year assistance package for Pakistan worth four billion dollars. In these circumstances, Dr A Q Khan's interviews with the *Urdu Digest, Nawa-i-Waqt* and *Jang* which appeared in June 1984 (referred to above), claiming nuclear weapons capability, were badly timed. Senator Alan Cranston asserted on 20 June 1984 that "Pakistan was pressing ahead with a programme that would soon be capable of producing several nuclear weapons per year." He also accused the Reagan administration of "obscuring, withholding or downright misrepresenting the facts about the Pakistan nuclear programme."[38] These concerns increased in July 1984 when three Pakistani nationals were charged in Houston, Texas, for trying to illegally export nuclear equipment to Pakistan. This incident closely followed the conviction in Canada of two other Pakistanis for seeking to illegally export US-origin nuclear-related equipment.[39] In this context, Rabia Akhtar points out that "Pakistan's attempts to illegally procure equipment and technology from North America began in the early 1980s."[40] Such alleged activities were also highlighted in a book published in 1981 by Steve Weissman and Herbert Krosney, titled "*The Islamic Bomb*."[41] Based on such disclosures, Secretary of State Alexander Haig had written to Foreign Affairs Adviser Agha Shahi in 1981 to express the administration's concerns.

It was against this background that on 28 March 1984, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee adopted an amendment tabled by Senators Glenn and

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Cranston calling for denial of assistance to Pakistan unless the President issued an annual certification that "Pakistan does not possess a nuclear explosive device, is not developing a nuclear device and is not acquiring, overtly or covertly, technology, materials or equipment for the purpose of manufacturing or detonating a nuclear explosive device."[42] Such language significantly raised the bar for continuing assistance to Pakistan from the "understanding" that Pakistan does not "possess" a nuclear weapon to certifying that it is not "developing" a nuclear weapon or "acquiring" the technology or equipment to develop nuclear weapons. The administration realised that such requirements were beyond the commitment given by Pakistan and it was unlikely that it would accept such a change. Accordingly, the administration persuaded three Republican Senators, Larry Pressler, Charles Percy and Charles Mathias, to propose a revised amendment which was adopted and became Section 620E(e) to the Foreign Assistance Act, according to which the President was required to annually certify that "Pakistan does not possess a nuclear explosive device and that the proposed United States assistance programme will reduce significantly the risk that Pakistan will possess a nuclear explosive device."[43] Thus, the infamous "Pressler Amendment" came into being.

But at the time, when the issue was discussed with Pakistani officials, the administration "characterised the Pressler Amendment as a way to avert more damaging legislation, not as a device for cutting off assistance.[44] Rabia Akhtar quotes Ambassador Najamuddin Sheikh, who served as Ambassador to the US from 1990 to 1991, as maintaining that "when the Pressler amendment was first passed in 1985, we (Pakistani) were told that without this Congress would not approve the continuance of the aid package and it was adopted with our consent on the clear understanding that certification would not be a problem for the duration of the aid package."[45] Ambassador Jamsheed Marker, who also served as Ambassador to Washington (1986-89) similarly wrote later that the "Pressler amendment, drafted entirely by the administration, was designed to help Pakistan, not punish it."[46] Even so, it was acknowledged in Pakistan's decision-making circles that such help from the administration would last only so long as the reliance on Pakistan for the campaign against the Soviets in Afghanistan existed.

Just as the governments in Islamabad and Washington were coming to terms with the requirements of the Pressler amendment, *The New York Times* of 25 February

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1985 carried a story by investigative journalist Seymour Hersh about the arrest of Nazir Ahmad Vaid, a Pakistani national, accused of trying to illegally obtain timing devices to trigger a nuclear bomb, known as Krytrons. According to Hersh, Vaid had been monitored for two years by US Customs agents.[47] Even though Pakistan's Ambassador, Ejaz Azim, denied any official involvement, the damage was done because it gave Congressman Solarz a reason to move another amendment against Pakistan. While Pakistan was not specifically named, as in Pressler, the new law called for the suspension of US economic and military assistance to any non-nuclear weapon state whose entities illegally imported nuclear technology from the United States.[48] Also, unlike the Pressler amendment, the Solarz amendment included a Presidential waiver clause.

According to a memorandum written by the Director Arms Control and Disarmament Agency of the US, Kenneth Adelman, dated 16 June 1986, quoted by Rabia Akhtar, Reagan wrote to Zia cautioning that "enrichment of uranium above five per cent would be of the same significance as those nuclear activities such as un-safeguarded reprocessing and would have the same implications for our security programme and relationship."[49] While it is claimed that Zia gave such an assurance to Reagan, it does not seem likely because when Zia met Reagan and National Security Advisor McFarlane later in November 1985, he made no reference to the five per cent enrichment issue nor did Reagan or McFarlane. In fact, according to Dennis Kux, McFarlane said that he could "understand" why Pakistan felt it needed a nuclear deterrent but warned about growing congressional pressures for sanctions that had resulted in the Pressler amendment. Whatever Pakistan did in its programme, McFarlane cautioned, it should not achieve a nuclear weapon or test a device.[50] This was consistent with the earlier American line which Pakistan had accepted. Zia responded with his usual phrase that he would not embarrass the Reagan administration. But, significantly, he added that no Pakistani leader could shut down the nuclear programme without compromising the country's security.[51] Giving his own assessment of the situation, Kux writes in his book: "a shrewd judge of how far he could push the Americans on the nuclear issue, Zia calculated that occasional trouble over clandestine procurement of nuclear-related equipment.... could be denied" and even enriching uranium to weapons-grade would not breach the "embarrassment barrier." Zia "assumed correctly

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that Washington would give the struggle against the Soviets in Afghanistan a higher priority than his country's nuclear programme. As long as Pakistan did not explode a device, Zia believed, the Reagan administration would find some way to avoid undercutting the struggle against the Red Army by imposing nuclear sanctions against Pakistan."[52]

In a major political transformation, General Zia lifted martial law on 31 December 1985 and restored the 1973 Constitution. Muhammad Khan Junejo became Prime Minister and Zia became President. In July 1986, Junejo visited the US and met President Reagan. The most tangible outcome was the administration's decision to renew the assistance package to Pakistan for the next six years (1987-1993) worth over four billion dollars. In October 1986, President Reagan certified for the first time under the Pressler amendment that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear device.[53]

But the nuclear controversy continued, reflecting the dissonance within the Administration as well as between the Administration and Congress. On 4 November 1986 famous *Washington Post* columnist, Robert Woodward, broke a story based on intelligence leaks that Pakistan had tested a triggering device for a nuclear weapon and had enriched uranium to weapons grade. It also quoted an unnamed US official as claiming that Pakistan was only "two screwdriver turns" away from possessing a fully assembled nuclear weapon.[54] Despite the sensation caused, especially in Congress, the administration claimed there was "no smoking gun" evidence since there was enough doubt in the intelligence community to compel the imposition of sanctions.[55] Then, in January 1987, another controversy broke out when Dr A Q Khan, in an interview with the Indian journalist, Kuldip Nayar, claimed that Pakistan had achieved nuclear weapons capability. When this report by Nayar appeared in the London paper, *The Observer*, on 1 March 1987, there was widespread alarm in the US. While A Q Khan was suitably admonished by the Pakistani President, he himself in an interview with *Time Magazine* a month later stated that "you can write today that Pakistan can build a bomb whenever it wishes."[56] While both these claims were alarming for the Americans, they were strictly within the parameters of the commitment given by Pakistan not to test a nuclear weapon. Perhaps a more important consideration for President Zia was the need to send a nuclear signal to India at that time

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in view of the threatening military exercises, Brass Tacks, that India was conducting close to Pakistan's borders at the time (outlined below).

Thereafter, yet another controversy broke out on 15 July 1987, when a sting operation by the American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) led to the arrest of Pakistani-born Canadian citizen, Arshad Pervez, in Philadelphia on charges of trying to illegally export maraging steel to Pakistan, a material used for making nuclear bomb casings.[57] To make matters worse, a few days later, two Americans and a Hong Kong national were indicted in California for illegally exporting instruments and advanced computer equipment used in making nuclear weapons to Pakistan.[58] Senator Glenn immediately condemned Pakistan and strongly criticized the Reagan administration for its "feckless non-proliferation efforts in South Asia," while calling for the imposition of Solarz amendment sanctions on Pakistan.[59] According to Rabia Akhtar, US Ambassador in Islamabad, Arnold Raphael, who met President Zia regarding the Arshad Pervez case, reported back that Zia was "genuinely taken aback" and promised that "heads would roll" if a connection emerged between Arshad Pervez and Pakistan's nuclear establishment following an inquiry.[60] She also writes that Prime Minister Junejo was working closely with the Reagan administration and had (already) ordered cessation of procurement activities after the Vaid case.[61] Eventually, Pakistan described the Arshad Pervez incident as a "rogue affair", while pointing out that there were anomalies in the case, such as the availability of maraging steel in western Europe without restrictions, which raised the question of why Pakistan would risk its relations with the US by violating its laws. It was also argued, in a meeting between Foreign Secretary Abdul Sattar and the US Ambassador, that in the South Asian context, non-proliferation must be "regional in character", and Pakistan should not be expected to take "unilateral steps."[62] Pakistan also turned down the American request made at the time to inspect the Kahuta and other nuclear facilities.[63]

It was under these difficult circumstances that during the remainder of 1987, the Reagan administration needed Congressional approval for three important decisions – a Presidential waiver under Pressler, renewal of the six-year waiver of the Symington amendment which was due to expire, and waiver of the Solarz amendment once Arshad Pervez was found guilty by a US Court in December 1987. Once again it was the strategic space provided to Pakistan by the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, that ensured continuing

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support by the Reagan administration. Ambassador Marker recalls the difficult meeting between Prime Minister Junejo and President Reagan in New York on 21 September 1987 on the side lines of the annual United Nations General Assembly meeting. American officials initially took a very tough line, implying that US tolerance of Pakistan's nuclear activities was almost at an end. In this acrimonious atmosphere, Reagan himself eased the tension by smilingly telling Junejo "Mr Prime Minister, you know that I have to certify to your activities. Please help me and make it easier for me to do so."[64] While Junejo made the usual reply that Pakistan would not cross the nuclear weapon test threshold, it was perhaps Reagan's own commitment to support Pakistan that served to help Pakistan.

Ambassador Marker also recalls that in the wake of the Arshad Pervez affair, Pakistan decided to "vigorously present the nuclear issue in the regional context, stressing that if the US was serious about non-proliferation then it should address the whole issue in the South Asian context."[65] To do this, Ambassador Marker set out with the support of Pakistan's friends in Congress. The first issue to be tackled was the extension of the waiver on the Symington amendment. As expected, Congressmen Solarz presented draft legislation requiring Pakistan to retreat from its nuclear programme for the waiver. A competing language was proposed by Congressman Charles Wilson, a staunch supporter of Pakistan, which linked the nuclear programmes of Pakistan and India, requiring the President to waive the Symington amendment in either country's case if the other continued its nuclear programme.[66] This linkage was totally unacceptable to Solarz who was a great friend of India, but it had the desired effect. Solarz dropped his demands against Pakistan and accepted compromise language which extended the waiver without conditionalities, but for two and a half years and not the full six years that the administration had sought. It was adopted on 17 December 1987.[67] The same day, President Reagan issued the Pressler certification for the second time. This cleared the way for Congress to approve the second six-year aid package to Pakistan of four billion dollars in December 1987.

The remaining issue was that of the Arshad Pervez case and the court found him guilty as charged within days of the Congressional approval of the aid package. Since this involved sanctions against Pakistan under the Solarz

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amendment, President Reagan used his waiver authority, citing US national interests as the reason for not imposing sanctions against Pakistan.[68]

Tensions with India

It was truly ironic that as relations between Pakistan and the US deteriorated over the nuclear issue after Carter became President, the same nuclear issue did not prevent the strengthening of American relations with India, despite the fact that it was India that had conducted a nuclear test in 1974, thereby unleashing nuclear proliferation in South Asia. Carter not only continued the Ford administrations supply of nuclear fuel to India in contravention of his professed pursuit of non-proliferation goals, he also sought closer relations with India under the leadership of Moraji Desai, whose Janata government had won the elections against Mrs Gandhi in March 1977. As a self-proclaimed pacifist who renounced the Indian acquisition of nuclear weapons, Desai developed a close affinity with Carter.

The American President visited India in January 1978 while deliberately avoiding a visit to Pakistan to underscore his preference for relations with India. The two leaders agreed, among other issues, on "a reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons."[69] However, Carter, who was on the verge of getting his Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act (NNPA) approved by Congress, had hoped to receive a commitment on safeguards from Desai for the continued American supply of nuclear fuel. But Desai did not oblige Carter.[70] Nevertheless, Carter decided to increase American assistance to India and also cleared the supply of nuclear fuel. When Desai visited the US to attend the UN Special Session on Disarmament, he pledged "not to manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons even if the rest of the world did so." He even went to the extent of saying that India "abjured nuclear explosions even for peaceful purposes."[71] No doubt such sanctimonious protestations endeared Desai to Carter and other American non-proliferation ideologues. But when it came to translating words into action, Desai demurred, responding to Carter's advocacy of Pakistan's South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone proposal with the argument that "we have declared that we will not develop (nuclear) weapons. If the Pakistanis are concerned, let them declare that they will not have any weapons."[72]

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Even if Desai was personally opposed to nuclear weapons development, his policy was by no means aimed at rolling back the Indian nuclear weapons capability that had already been demonstrated. More correctly, the Indians were trying to focus the spotlight on Pakistan's nascent nuclear programme while duplicitously retaining their own capability. But Carter was so enamoured with India that this glaring reality either escaped him, or he chose to ignore it. Even after the Indians soft-pedalled on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and abstained on the UN General Assembly's resolution condemning the invasion, Carter remained committed to his romance with India.

After the Reagan administration came into office and changed the dynamics of the relations with Pakistan, India, now once again under Mrs Gandhi, berated the Americans for their arms sales to Pakistan and made it a common cause with the American non-proliferation lobby against Pakistan.

More dangerously, India began colluding with Israel for joint air attacks on Pakistan's nuclear installations. In fact, the Israelis had started planning such an operation around 1980 in addition to launching a campaign of threats and bomb attacks by Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency, against European suppliers of nuclear equipment to Pakistan. India and Israel planned to conduct an attack similar to the Israeli attack on Iraq's Osiraq reactor in 1981. Mrs Gandhi approved the plan and appointed Air Marshall Dilbagh Singh, Chief of Air Staff, to implement the plan. He ordered Indian Air Force Jaguar Squadrons to practice low level flying, simulating runs with 2000lb bombs. In February 1983, with the strike plans at an advanced stage, Indian military officials travelled secretly to Israel. At this point, Pakistan's ISI got wind of these developments. Chairman PAEC, Munir Ahmad Khan soon thereafter met Raja Rammana, Director of India's Bhabha Atomic Research Center, in Vienna and conveyed Pakistan's threat that if India were to attack Kahuta, Pakistan would surely hit India's nuclear facilities. Thereafter, India seemed to back off. But the Israelis still wanted to go ahead with the plan on their own, using the Indian air force base in Jamnagar and a second base in northern India to refuel. They intended to enter Pakistan below the radar from the Kashmir side to bomb Kahuta and PINSTECH. But the Americans found out about the plan and forced Israel to call it off, apart from alerting Pakistan.[73] George Perkovich provides another reason for the Indians deciding to scuttle the attack: the fact

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that since Pakistan's Kahuta plant was uranium based, any damage would cause less radioactive contamination as compared to India's plutonium reactors since plutonium is far more toxic and would cause widespread nuclear fallout in India.[74] Perhaps it was this realisation that India faced a greater threat from a Pakistani attack on its nuclear installations that compelled India to conclude an agreement with Pakistan in 1985 not to attack each other's nuclear facilities. This agreement was formally signed in December 1988.

The Indians also exploited Pakistan's two front dilemma after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan by occupying the Siachen Glacier in April 1984. This area in disputed Jammu and Kashmir had been left vacant by both Pakistan and India beyond map reference NJ9842 along the ceasefire line/Line of Control (LoC). Since the Simla agreement committed both sides not to unilaterally change the ground situation, this Indian incursion violated the Simla accord. But Pakistan could not react militarily against the Indians in the Siachen area owing to its pressing security concerns on the western border with Soviet occupied Afghanistan. Since then Siachen has remained an outstanding dispute between Pakistan and India.

Another Pakistan-India crisis with nuclear implications broke out from July 1986 to February 1987 when India carried out its "Brass Tacks" military "exercises close to Pakistan's borders. Opinion varies among officials and scholars as to who in India was responsible for this exercise and what was its purpose. According to the commonly accepted narrative, the person responsible was the ambitious and adventurous Indian Army Chief, General Sunderji, who wanted to leave his legacy by restructuring the Indian army and test his plans for a debilitating offensive against Pakistan. According to Perkovich, however, the driving force was Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (who had succeeded his mother after her assassination in 1984) along with Sunderji to demonstrate India's growing conventional military capabilities at a time when Rajiv Gandhi had put India's nuclear programme on hold. They "conceived the idea of holding the largest, most ambitious military exercise in the sub-continent's history to develop, test and demonstrate India's capacity to conduct mobile armoured warfare, with close air support, integrated by new communication, command and control systems."[75] The exercise was "predicated on a scenario wherein an insurgency in Kashmir had become unmanageable and Sikh militants in Indian Punjab were declaring an independent state of Khalistan.....(encouraging)

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Pakistan to intervene."[76] As opposed to this 'defensive' scenario presented by Perkovich as the purpose of the exercise, American scholars Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz argue that "these were plans to conduct a fourth war, which would have been India's one last chance to lead an attack on Pakistan's nuclear facilities to remove the potential for a Pakistani nuclear riposte."[77] An Indian defence analyst, Ravi Rikhe, claims that embedded in the Brass tacks plan was "Operation Trident" aimed at provoking Pakistan into a war by deploying a giant concentration of Indian forces in the South along the Sindh-Rajasthan border, and then launching the real offensive in the north across the LoC in Kashmir, with the ultimate aim being "destruction of Pakistan's enrichment facility at Kahuta."[78]

While the real purpose of the Brass Tacks operation remains a subject of debate and the truth may never be known, the fact remains that Pakistan was confronted with massive Indian military deployments in the South along the Sindh border. It was assumed that in the worst-case scenario Sunderji's plan envisaged the Indian strike corps to penetrate deep into Pakistan, potentially destroying Pakistan Army's reserve strike corps and cutting the country into two by exploiting its lack of depth. Simultaneously, the Indian air force would gain air superiority while the navy would blockade the Karachi port. By late 1986, as Pakistan monitored the mobilisation, it sought clarification from India but Sunderji's office rebuffed the Pakistani Defence Attaché in New Delhi, conveying that "India is not obliged to tell you in advance about our exercises or manoeuvers."[79] Consequently, as a precautionary measure, Pakistan counter-mobilised. But in contrast to Indian expectations, the bulk of Pakistan's mobilization was not against the Indian concentration in the South but in the north across Punjab. In December, Pakistan's Army Reserve North moved closer to the border above Amritsar. Then in the second week of January 1987, Pakistan moved its Army Reserve South northwards across the Sutlej river, thereby being positioned to conduct a pincer movement with the already positioned northern group into Indian Punjab or Indian occupied Kashmir. According to Perkovich the Indians did not detect this movement until two weeks later.[80] Gandhi was reportedly alarmed when he was told about this and blamed Sunderji and Defence Minister Arun Singh for this lapse. Fearing a preemptive attack by Pakistan, Perkovich writes, Gandhi considered "beating Pakistan to the draw" by launching a preemptive attack (of his own) on Pakistan's Army Reserve South.

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This would have included an attack on Pakistan's nuclear facilities to remove the potential for a Pakistani nuclear riposte to India's attack.[81] While Sunderji was in favour of pressing ahead, he could not provide a convincing plan to defend Indian cities, especially from a Pakistani nuclear attack. In this situation, according to Perkovich, an Indian defence ministry official argued that "India and Pakistan have already fought their last war, and there is too much to lose in contemplating another one."[82] This view ultimately prevailed. In retrospect, this was perhaps the first time that what later came to be known as "virtual" or "recessed" nuclear deterrence came into existence between Pakistan and India and would continue until the two countries became overt nuclear weapon states following their nuclear tests in 1998.

Following the military stalemate by January 1987, diplomacy took over with talks starting on 28 January and concluding with an agreement to de-escalate and pull back troop deployments on 4 February.

One of the lingering questions about the Brass-tacks episode is whether an interview given by Dr A Q Khan to Indian journalist Kuldip Nayar on 28 January, in which he claimed that Pakistan had acquired nuclear weapons capability (referred above), had any impact on the Indian decision to de-escalate? While the interview was published in the *London Observer* newspaper on 1 March 1987 long after the Brass Tacks crisis had subsided, it is known that Nayar had reported the outcome of his interview to the Indian embassy in Islamabad on the same day. So, Khan's disclosure could have been a factor in the Indian decision. Still, by the 28 of January, India had already started talks with Pakistan to contain the situation. In any event, the introduction of the nuclear dimension into the vortex of Pakistan-India relations, "affected subsequent perceptions of the role of nuclear weapons in Indo-Pak security relations".[83] Nuclear deterrence, even though in a recessed form, had come into play for the first time to prevent a larger Pakistan-India conflict.

Soviet Exit From Afghanistan

If the Soviets had planned to install their puppet regime in Afghanistan and make a quick exit, their calculations were badly derailed by the stiff resistance of the Afghan Mujahideen, supported by Pakistan with financial and military help from the US, China, and Saudi Arabia among several other countries. While the Soviets and their Afghan allies controlled the urban areas, the Afghan

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countryside became a highly contested zone with unrelenting attacks by the Mujahideen on Soviet and Afghan troops. Even as this stalemate continued, UN-sponsored "Proximity Talks", proposed by Pakistan, began in Geneva in June 1982. Since Pakistan did not recognise the Babrak Karmal regime in Kabul, there were no direct talks between the two sides. Instead, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Diego Cordovez, conducted "shuttle" diplomacy by engaging with the two sides in separate rooms of Geneva's Palais du Nations. At first, the Kabul side refused to discuss the central issue for Pakistan and its allies – the withdrawal of Soviet forces – on the grounds that this was a bilateral issue between Kabul and Moscow. But, following leadership changes in the Kremlin which brought Mikhail Gorbachev to power in 1985, the Soviet position began to change with Gorbachev describing the Soviet's Afghan war as a "bleeding wound" while addressing the 27th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party on 26 February 1986, and declared that Soviet troops would be withdrawn in the "nearest future."[84] Gorbachev had also moved towards improving relations with the US, signified by the US-Soviet Sumit meeting in November 1985 in Geneva and subsequent progress in their relations including on arms control issues. Thereafter, the Geneva talks moved swiftly towards a time frame for Soviet withdrawal which was eventually reduced to nine months by mutual agreement.

But from President Zia's perspective that were two more issues of equal importance – the transition to a neutral "broad-based" Afghan government in place of the Soviet-installed Kabul regime which would end the fighting in Afghanistan and create conditions for the return of over three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan and around two million refugees in Iran. The other issue was about continuing assistance to the Afghan Mujahideen in case there was no agreement on a broad-based transitional government. Despite initial efforts by Cordovez to promote agreement on such a government, the Soviets refused to engage in this exercise which could delay their withdrawal. Soviet Special Envoy, Yuli Vorontsov, during his visit to Islamabad in February 1988, told Pakistani officials that the Soviets were determined to leave, saying "this train is leaving the station and you have to decide whether you are on it."[85] In an even tougher message to President Zia, he warned of "unpredictable consequences if a unilateral withdrawal is forced upon us."[86] Zia also had difficulty persuading the Afghan Mujahideen leaders, especially Gulbuddin

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Hekmatyar and Burhanuddin Rabbani, to even engage in an intra-Afghan dialogue let alone be part of a power-sharing agreement that would include elements of the Kabul regime.[87] Most significantly, both the US and China advised President Zia not to delay the Soviet withdrawal over this issue.[88]

Internally as well, Prime Minister Junejo opposed holding up the Soviet exit and in defiance of President Zia convened an All Parties meeting in March 1988 which endorsed his approach.[89] Even so, Zia delayed conclusion of the Geneva Accords for several weeks. But the issue on which he did not relent was an arrangement to continue arming the Mujahideen, especially since the Soviets had made clear that even after their withdrawal they would continue to support their Afghan allies in Kabul. The US eventually relented and as guarantors of the Geneva Accords, the US and the Soviet Union came to a separate understanding on "Positive Symmetry" according to which both sides would continue to arm their respective Afghan allies.[90] On 14 April 1988, the Geneva Accords were signed with the Soviet commitment to complete their withdrawal from Afghanistan within nine months. In retrospect, Zia was perhaps correct in insisting upon a peaceful change of government in Afghanistan where peace continues to be elusive.

Momentous Changes

With the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and the completion of its troop withdrawal by February 1989, popular movements in Eastern Europe against Soviet backed governments started, symbolised by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany in November 1989. By December 1991, the Soviet Union itself disintegrated, formally ending the Cold War. George H W Bush, who had succeeded Reagan as US President, now presided over a unipolar world dominated by the US.

Recognising the changed global realities with the collapse of its Soviet ally, New Delhi quickly realigned its relations with Washington, a move that was fully reciprocated. These changes also eroded Pakistan's role as a key American ally in the last battle of the Cold War in Afghanistan. After having achieved more than its objective of securing a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the US quickly interest in Afghanistan and after the fall of the Kabul regime of President Najibullah and the start of in-fighting among the Afghan Mujahideen, virtually abandoned the country. More importantly for Pakistan,

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the loss of its importance for the US after the Soviet withdrawal significantly constricted the strategic space for the pursuit of its nuclear programme.

Within Pakistan itself, far-reaching changes started to take place. Prime Minister Junejo's government was dismissed by President Zia for "corruption and bad governance" on 29 May 1988. But one of the major reasons was that Junejo had defied Zia and obliged him to accept the Geneva Agreement. Zia himself died in a mysterious plane crash along with the American Ambassador on 17 August 1988. The report of the joint Pakistani-American inquiry into the incident came up with a split verdict – the Pakistanis concluded sabotage was the cause of the crash while the Americans believed it was due to mechanical failure. Since then many in Pakistan blame the US for eliminating Zia as he had become "expendable" and a "liability" after the defeat of the Soviets. But this mystery has never been solved. In any event, the US put its weight behind the restoration of democracy in Pakistan and fully supported the newly elected Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, daughter of hanged Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, after her election in November 1988.

End of Strategic Space

Shortly before ending his second term in office on 18 November 1988, President Reagan certified for the third time as required under the Pressler amendment that Pakistan did not possess nuclear weapons. But in his letter to Congress conveying the certification he warned that the status of the Pakistani programme might make it difficult to issue another certification.[91] As Ambassador Marker recalls, the certification was issued after "intense debate" among various branches of the Administration. In previous years, there had been some difference of opinion between the intelligence agencies on the current state of Pakistan's nuclear capability but in 1988, they were "unanimous" that over the past year Pakistan had made major strides in its pursuit of nuclear weapons. This made it difficult for Reagan to issue the certification. Yet, "Reagan took a bold initiative, overrode the negative findings of the intelligence community and issued the requisite certificate."[92] Perhaps this was due to Reagan's personal commitment to support Pakistan. But this was also a crucial time as the Soviets were withdrawing from

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Afghanistan and the US did not want to send a negative signal to both Islamabad and Moscow by imposing sanctions on Pakistan.

Despite these lingering difficulties on the nuclear issue, the year 1989 began on a positive note between the new leaderships of Pakistan and the US. There was "no shortage of goodwill"[93] for the newly elected Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in the George Bush administration that had come into the White House in January 1989. There was also tremendous support for the Pakistani leader in Congress which had fully supported her struggle for restoration of democracy in the country. She was immediately invited to visit the US in June the same year. Several American friends and advisors were given access to the Prime Minister to prepare for her visit and were even involved in discussions on sensitive matters such as the nuclear issue.[94] Perhaps the Americans felt that she would be more receptive to their concerns in this regard.

After President Zia's death, the Chairman Senate, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, a close associate of Zia, had become President in keeping with the constitutional provisions. Together with the Army Chief, General Mirza Aslam Beg, the President had custody of the nuclear programme. Initially at least, the Prime Minister was kept out of the loop. But according to Dennis Kux, she was able to "push her way" into the policy circle with the other two members of the" troika." This followed a briefing to her by a visiting CIA team on the nuclear programme in December 1988.[95]

In January 1989, President Ishaq Khan wrote to President Bush in reply to the latter's communication in which he reiterated a statement by Prime Minister Bhutto that "Pakistan has no intention to acquire nuclear weapons" which "augurs well as an earnest reflection of nuclear restraint."[96] A few weeks later, General Beg visited Washington and met General Colin Powell, the outgoing National Security Advisor, and his successor, Brent Scowcroft. Both raised the nuclear issue with him. Scowcroft reportedly conveyed that "you have to realise that the administration's hands are tied on the nuclear issue. President Bush (will) certify as long as (he) can under the Pressler amendment, but he will not lie. Pakistan (stands) very close to the line."[97] A similar message was conveyed to Prime Minister Bhutto by President Bush in Tokyo where both were attending the funeral of Emperor Hirohito in February 1989.[98] According to Scowcroft who was present in this meeting, Bhutto assured Bush that she understood US concerns.[99]

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According to Kux, through these messages at the highest levels to Pakistani leaders, the Bush administration was "making clear that, with the departure of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan and the winding down of the Cold War, the policy dynamic on the nuclear issue had changed."[100] In other words, the strategic space that Pakistan had utilised to pursue its nuclear programme due to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was no longer going to be available.

Following her exchanges with the Americans, Prime Minister Bhutto later claimed that Pakistan had reached an informal understanding with the US in which Pakistan could keep its existing nuclear capabilities and continue to receive American assistance.[101] General Beg, however, denied any "understanding" with the US but maintained that Pakistan could safely suspend production of enriched uranium because it already had enough for a nuclear deterrent.[102] Moreover, as elaborated by Rabia Akhtar based on her interview with General Beg, the "troika" members, in their meeting of January 1989 had decided not to enrich more uranium to weapons-grade as Pakistan already had nuclear weapons that were regarded as enough to deter India. Also, to maintain nuclear ambiguity, it was decided that no nuclear tests shall be conducted. This policy of "restraint" had five aspects: 1) maintain the minimum force posture necessary for a credible deterrent; 2) refrain from conducting hot nuclear tests; 3) freeze fissile material stocks at the current level; 4) reduce uranium enrichment to below 5 per cent; and 5) affirm that nuclear weapons do not replace conventional force capabilities.[103] As a result, the US intelligence community reported that Pakistan had stopped production of weapons-grade uranium.[104]

It was against this background that Prime Minister Bhutto visited the US in June 1989 where she was given a tremendous welcome including a Guard of Honour, a White House banquet and an address to a Joint Sitting of the Congress. Even so, the nuclear issue remained very much on the American agenda. As recounted by Ambassador Marker, even on the short 30-minute helicopter flight from Andrews Air Force Base to central Washington, the CIA Chief, William Webster, provided a detailed briefing to the Prime Minister on the CIA's assessment of Pakistan's nuclear programme. Later, in a restricted White House meeting, National Security Advisor Scowcroft claimed that Pakistan had already exceeded the threshold on uranium enrichment and suggested a freeze if not a

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roll-back of these activities.[105] In retrospect, the purpose of these intelligence briefings to the Prime Minister was clear. The Americans were convinced that Benazir Bhutto was not being kept fully informed by the other troika members on the nuclear developments. These briefings were also ploys to sow dissension and mistrust within the Pakistani leadership.

Even so, Pakistan's policy of restraint and its acknowledgement by US intelligence enabled President Bush to issue the required annual Pressler amendment certification in October 1989 and also announce an economic and military assistance package worth 600 million dollars annually, including the sale of 60 additional F-16 aircraft. Kux quotes then National Security Council staff member, Richard Haass, as stating that the certification "was a close-run thing". Even if evidence about whether Pakistan actually "possessed" a nuclear weapon remained ambiguous, the status of the programme did not appear to have changed since the Pressler amendment certification of a year before.[106]

Renewed Tensions with India

At first Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's assumption of power led to an improvement in relations with India. She chaired the fourth SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Summit in Islamabad on 29-31 December 1988 during which she also held bilateral talks with Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. During this meeting, the two countries formally signed the earlier understanding not to attack each other's nuclear facilities, in implementation of which they would annually exchange lists of their nuclear facilities. An informal understanding was also reached between the Foreign and Defence Secretaries of the two sides to initiate talks for the redeployment of troops by both sides from the Siachen Glacier. But this understanding proved to be short-lived. It was claimed in New Delhi later by knowledgeable persons that Rajiv Gandhi believed that the Indian Foreign Secretary had overstepped his mandate in this regard and subsequently removed him.[107] But worse was yet to come.

In May 1989 elections had been held in Indian-occupied Kashmir (IOK). The incumbent "Chief Minister", Farooq Abdullah, of the pro-Indian National Conference, was accused of rigging the state elections with the connivance of the central government by the Muslim United Front (MUF), a coalition of opposition parties, mostly opposed to the "union" with India. Reports

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abounded of stolen ballot boxes and detention of MUF supporters including its returning officers. Protests broke out in Srinagar and quickly spread to the rest of the valley. By January 1990, there were massive demonstrations all over IOK against the Indian occupation. New Delhi responded by dismissing Farooq Abdullah's government and imposing Governor's rule under Jagmohan Malhotra, who unleashed a wave of violent repression against the protesting Kashmiris. Political protests quickly became an armed liberation struggle for Azadi (freedom) which still continues in IOK. The V P Singh government, a weak coalition that had won the November 1989 elections against Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party, frustrated by its failure to put down the popular uprising, blamed Pakistan for stoking this insurgency.[108]

By early 1990, the armies of both Pakistan and India were on annual exercises and hence partially mobilised near each other's borders. V P Singh made matters worse by publicly raising the danger of a Pakistan-India war resulting from the uprising in Kashmir. Another threatening development claimed by Army Chief Aslam Beg was about an intended Indian attack on Pakistan's nuclear installations. According to Feroz Hassan Khan, he was told by Army Chief Beg years later that Pakistan had credible intelligence at the time of the Kashmiri uprising about a probable Indo-Israeli attack on Pakistan's nuclear facilities at Kahuta with the knowledge of the Americans. Beg also claimed that Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan was sent to New Delhi to warn the Indians about a Pakistani response.[109] But in a separate interview with Yaqub Khan, Feroz Khan reports that the then Foreign Minister denied that he had been tasked to convey a threat – least of all a nuclear threat.[110] According to Feroz Khan's version, Yaqub Khan in his meeting with Indian External Affairs Minister, I K Gujral on 21 January conveyed that the entire world at that time was "inflamed" and called for Pakistan-India cooperation to save the sub-continent from the crisis.[111] According to the Indian version recorded by then Foreign Secretary J N Dixit and quoted by George Perkovich, Yaqub, Khan warned of "war clouds hovering over the subcontinent" which was misinterpreted by the Indians as having nuclear connotations. In a subsequent meeting with the Indians, Yaqub Khan clarified that he had not conveyed a nuclear threat.[112] In the author's own recollection, (I was the note taker in these meetings), the word that probably scared the Indians was Yaqub Khan's description of the prevailing situation between Pakistan and India as

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"perilous."[113] But at no stage did Yaqub Khan explicitly or implicitly threaten the Indians, least of all with nuclear weapons.

It is quite likely that the Indians deliberately chose to misinterpret the Pakistani Foreign Minister in order to alarm the Americans, knowing fully well that the US was hostile to Pakistan's nuclear programme. If this was indeed the Indian purpose, then it succeeded. An alarmed Bush administration sent Deputy National Security Advisor, Robert Gates, to Pakistan and India in May 1990 to de-escalate tensions, which soon led to the start of Pakistan-India talks on all issues, including Kashmir. However, these talks, as several succeeding bilateral negotiations, proved sterile even as the Kashmiri uprising continues to rage on up to this day.

In retrospect, it can be stated with conviction on the basis of personal experience, since I was posted in New Delhi at the time, that there was no nuclear crisis in the spring of 1990 and that Pakistan had made no such threat to India. Even so, this episode has since been used by some western analysts to refer to Pakistan's nuclear "signalling" which prevented a Pakistan-India war. The most sensational account in this context is the article by Seymour Hersh in *The New Yorker* of 29 March 1993 "On the Nuclear Edge" that Pakistan was preparing for a nuclear strike which is simply false. The most that can be said with hindsight is that nuclear deterrence, even recessed at the time, had come into play in the Pakistan-India strategic equation as had already been demonstrated during the earlier Brass Tacks crisis.

Pressler Sanctions

During his May 1990 visit to Pakistan (and India) Robert Gates conveyed that the US intelligence community had concluded that Pakistan had taken the final step towards the production of a nuclear weapon by machining uranium metal into bomb cores. Washington, he said, no longer had any doubts that Pakistan had crossed the line. Gates also asked Pakistan to melt down the bomb cores that it had produced, failing which President Bush would not be able to issue the Pressler certification.[114] President Ishaq Khan and General Beg strongly disagreed, stating that Pakistan's nuclear capability had not changed since the last certification and the earlier policy of nuclear restraint was still in place.

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Then in September, Bush wrote to President Ishaq Khan, who had by then invoked his powers under the Eighth amendment to the Constitution to dismiss Benazir Bhutto's government for "corruption and nepotism", to convey that he would not be able to issue the Pressler certification. Bush claimed that he had "obtained information giving us reason to believe that the status of your nuclear programme has changed" and that "under the present circumstances, it is not possible for me to certify Pakistan's compliance with the law."[115] Ambassador Oakley, who delivered the letter to President Ishaq Khan further elaborated on the actions that Pakistan needed to take for certification which included: cease production of highly enriched uranium; refrain from the production of highly enriched uranium metal; and ensure that Pakistan does not possess any highly enriched uranium metal in the form of nuclear device components.[116] Oakley underscored that not refraining from the production of uranium metal clearly suggested that there was an intention to fabricate nuclear weapon components.[117] In effect what the Americans conveyed was that "for the Pressler law to take effect, final assembly of a nuclear explosive device was not a requirement to meet the Pressler amendment definition of possession of a nuclear device.[118] Just the possession of the components was sufficient to trigger sanctions. In fact, this interpretation of the Pressler law had not been elaborated ever before to Pakistan. Up to this point the Americans had stated that under the Pressler law Pakistan should not possess a nuclear explosive device. Now it was being told that just possession of the components and not the actual assembly of the device violated American law. For its part, Pakistan continued to maintain that it had not assembled a nuclear device in accordance with its understanding of the Pressler amendment and had, as such, not gone beyond the level of nuclear development on the basis of which the certification had been issued in the previous years. From Pakistan's perspective, therefore, the US had deliberately moved the goal post and the real reason for doing so was that it no longer needed Pakistan's cooperation after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.

On the date that the Pressler certification was required to be issued, 1 October 1990, the Bush administration did not do so. Automatically, the law came into effect, freezing over 300 million dollars in economic and military equipment including 28 F-16 aircraft for which Pakistan had already paid for.

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Yet, in a desperate effort to salvage the situation, Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan, who had been retained in his position after the dismissal of Benazir Bhutto's government, travelled to the US to meet Secretary of State James Baker. He conveyed that Pakistan was willing to freeze the uranium enrichment programme. Baker replied that for the Pressler certification, Pakistan had to destroy its nuclear bomb cores and roll back its nuclear capability. This seemed to be a further escalation in American demands. Yaqub Khan answered that a roll back was not possible.[119]

Dennis Kux comments that given the secrecy surrounding Pakistan's nuclear programme and the American intelligence efforts to assess its status make it difficult to know with certainty what actually happened in 1990. He notes that "Americans admit that Pakistan may have had the capability earlier than 1990" and that Pakistanis consistently maintained that the "bomb capability had been achieved by 1988" and that, therefore, they had "not violated any understanding with the US or crossed any new lines in 1990."[120] In the only defence of their position, the Americans claimed, as mentioned by Kux, that the "intelligence community reached a definitive conclusion only in 1990."[121] As such, according to this logic, it was the failure of American intelligence before 1990 and not any escalatory step taken by Pakistan that triggered the sanctions.

Rabia Akhtar, however, writes that according to a recently declassified document of the US Department of Energy, a report to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in April 1990, which was also shown to Senator Glenn, the US had knowledge of Pakistan "possessing" nuclear weapons since 1986, despite which certification continued to be issued by the US administration so as to continue economic and military assistance till 1990."[122] This disclosure confirms Pakistan's view that it was only after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 when the US did not need Pakistan's cooperation, that Pressler sanctions were applied against it.

To add insult to injury, the US "advised" Pakistan to continue payments for the withheld F-16 aircraft as well as for their parking charges at an American base. The reason given for this was that the issue would be eventually resolved. But the real American purpose was to help the financially troubled manufacturer of the F-16s, General Dynamics, otherwise the Defence Department would have had to pay for the planes. Foolishly, Pakistan agreed.

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To make matters worse, the US also impounded a large number of tanks that Pakistan had paid for earlier and had sent for retrofitting to the US along with substantial quantities of other military equipment which was off-loaded from ships and confiscated.

With the imposition of the Pressler sanctions in 1990, Pakistan-US relations had gone round a full circle since President Carter had imposed the Symington sanctions almost ten years ago. This underscored the transactional nature of the relationship, at least from the American side. With the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War and the emergence of the US as the "sole" superpower, the global strategic dynamics had changed. Pakistan was slow to recognise this transformation. India, on the other hand, quickly took advantage of the changed realities and projected itself not only as an economic partner with a vast market for American investments and trade but also as an ally in the emerging American competition with a rising China. In this environment, the US continued to focus on Pakistan's nuclear programme while tolerating Indian nuclear developments, until it was once again caught unawares by the Indian nuclear tests in May 1998. Fortunately, this time Pakistan would be ready to make a matching response.

Notes

[1] Rabia Akhtar, *The Blind Eye*, The University of Lahore Press, Lahore, 2018, pp. 134, quoting Robert Gates, *From the Shadows*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 2006.
[2] Feroz Hassan Khan, *Eating Grass: The Making of the Pakistani Bomb*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi,2013, pp. 212, quoting his interview with Mr. Agha Shahi.
[3] Rabia Akhtar, op.cit. pp. 149.
[4] Dennis Kux, *Disenchanted Allies: – The United States and Pakistan*, 1947-2000, Johns Hopkin's University Press, Baltimore, 2001, pp. 245.
[5] Ibid. pp. 248. Quoting from State Department Scope Paper for Shahi visit.
[6] Ibid. pp. 248.
[7] Rabia Akhtar, op.cit. pp. 143.
[8] Dennis Kux, op.cit. pp. 249.
[9] Ibid. pp. 249.
[10] Ibid. pp. 249, quoting Shahi's interview to *the Washington Post*, 23 January 1980.
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5 | Roller-Coaster

The breakdown in Pakistan's strategic partnership with the US after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, exemplified by the imposition of the Pressler sanctions in 1990, revived and intensified its regional security challenges as well as the differences with Washington over the nuclear issue. The end of the Cold War, with the US emerging as the sole superpower, also brought about a dramatic transformation in the global and regional security environment, much to Pakistan's detriment. Domestically, the country faced recurring political instability and violence. But, remarkably, Pakistan still managed to make progress in its strategic programme, closely supported by its proactive diplomacy. The last decade of the 1990s was in this sense a roller-coaster ride with significant highs and lows.

Domestic Instability

The decade of the 1990s was a period of continuous political turmoil in the country. Differences between Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and other members of the Troika – President Ishaq Khan and Army Chief Aslam Beg – always difficult, reached a breaking point on 6 August 1990 when the President used his authority under the Eighth Amendment to dismiss the Prime Minister, dissolve the National Assembly and call for new elections. The immediate reason cited by the President was incompetence and corruption but relations had actually soured when the Prime Minister sought to interfere with appointments and postings within the armed forces without consulting the President who viewed this as a breach of his prerogative. As required under the Constitution at the time, an interim government was appointed which conducted the elections within three months that brought the Pakistan Muslim League leader, Nawaz Sharif, to power. Even though he was close to the military and the civilian "establishment", Nawaz Sharif did not last long. For the second time in five years, the President dismissed the elected Prime Minister for "corruption, inefficiency and nepotism" in April 1993. Sharif gained a short-live reprieve when the Supreme Court upheld his challenge of the President's decision which restored him to power. This open confrontation

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between the President and Prime Minister was resolved only after the new Army Chief, General Abdul Waheed Kakar, forced both to resign. The next election once again brought Benazir Bhutto to power in October 1993. In order to secure her position in future, Bhutto tried to repeal the Eighth Amendment but failed. She managed to succeed, however, in ensuring the election of her Peoples Party candidate, Farooq Leghari, as the President. Even so, recurring charges of incompetence and corruption, especially against her husband, Asif Zardari, compounded by the mysterious murder of her brother but a political rival, Murtaza Bhutto, in a shoot-out with the police in Karachi on 20 September 1996, sealed her fate. Her handpicked President dismissed Bhutto's government shortly thereafter. This led to the repetition of the cycle bringing back Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister for the second time with a thumping majority in the National Assembly. Using this majority, Sharif repealed the Eighth Amendment and forced President Leghari to resign, bringing in his place a pliant figure head President, Rafiq Tarar. Once confident of his position, the Prime Minister first sought to contain the power of the Judiciary and then, following differences over his lacklustier governance, enforced the resignation of the Army Chief, General Jehangir Karamat. But his choice of Army Chief, General Pervez Musharraf, proved to be a mistake for him. After the Kargil episode in 1999, differences developed between the Prime Minister and the Army Chief. Sharif feared a military coup and tried to remove General Musharraf while he was travelling abroad. But the army, true to its discipline and chain of command, stood by General Musharraf, who, on return to Pakistan removed Sharif and took over power in the country on 12 October 1999.

In addition to this political instability, the country also experienced convulsions of ethnic violence in the 1990s at the hands of the Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), claiming to represent the interests of Urdu-speaking immigrants from India, mainly in Karachi but also in other urban areas in Sindh. In this violence between the MQM and other ethnic and linguistic groups, such as the Sindhis, Pathans and Punjabis, India also found a convenient opportunity to create mayhem, in retaliation for Pakistan's alleged support to the Kashmiri freedom movement then still raging in Indian-occupied Kashmir. At the same time, sectarian violence between Sunnis and Shias spread over some parts of the country, stoked by fanatical religious

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groups on both sides, aided and abetted by Saudi Arabia and Iran as part of their proxy war for regional dominance. Meanwhile, the continuing instability in Afghanistan, with a profusion of arms, drugs and religious radicalism, permeated into Pakistan through the virtually ungoverned and porous borders in the tribal areas. This lethal cocktail of religious extremism, ethnic strife, Kalashnikov culture and narco-terrorism enflamed the entire country, turning it into a toxic inferno.

External Challenges

Despite the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in February 1989, the Soviet-backed regime of President Najibullah survived till April 1992. After its eventual fall, the victorious Mujahideen leaders started fighting among themselves for ruling Afghanistan. Initially, they agreed on a transitional power-sharing agreement brokered by Pakistan, called the Peshawar agreement, signed on 24 April 1992, but failed to honour the understanding. Subsequently, another agreement was reached in March 1993, known as the Islamabad Accord, with the joint efforts of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. But this agreement collapsed as well, even though the signatories (Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Burhanuddin Rabbani) took a solemn oath in Mecca to implement this power-sharing agreement. Essentially, the differences were between the main ethnic protagonists – Pashtun leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Tajik warlord, Ahmad Shah Masood who backed Hekmatyar's traditional rival, the Tajik leader Burhanuddin Rabbani. Apart from their mutual distrust, the two leaders represented the traditional rivalry between ethnic Pashtuns and the Tajiks. Then there were diverse warlords and ethnic group leaders with shifting loyalties. Eventually, the Pashtun-dominated Taliban emerged under Mullah Umar in 1994 and gained control over most of the Pashtun dominated areas but became locked in a war to gain supremacy with Ahmad Shah Masood's Northern Alliance of mostly non-Pashtuns; the Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks as well as Shia groups that opposed the Sunni Pashtuns. Eventually, the Taliban were able to establish a government in Kabul with control over most of Afghanistan by 1994.

Pakistan's objective since the departure of the Soviets was to have a friendly government in Afghanistan thereby neutralising the threat from its western border while also ensuring a stable Afghanistan that could provide linkages

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with the newly independent states of Central Asia that emerged after the break-up of the Soviet Union. Given the affinity between Pakistani and Afghan Pashtuns, Islamabad focused its support for Afghan Pashtun leaders who also represented the majority ethnic group. Even so, Islamabad recognised the need for a broad-based Afghan set-up involving the other ethnic and sectarian groups in order to ensure stability in Afghanistan. As such, it had supported the Peshawar and Islamabad power-sharing agreements. However, other regional players, most notably India and Iran, also wanted to extend their influence in Afghanistan by supporting the Northern Alliance against the Taliban. As a result, peace in Afghanistan remained elusive throughout the 1990s.

To make matter worse, the Taliban imposed their obscurantist version of an Islamic government that was brutal, intolerant and repressive, especially regarding the treatment of women and minorities. They also allowed the presence of radical Arabs who had been recruited by the CIA to help in the Afghan "Jihad" against the Soviets, such as Osama bin Laden, who later set up al-Qaida which resorted to terrorist activities against the US. This eventually led to disastrous consequences for the Taliban and Afghanistan as well as for Pakistan, making terrorism and Pakistan's relations with the Taliban yet another issue of confrontation with the US from the 1990s onwards.

Pakistan's security concerns on the eastern border with India also continued to increase throughout the 1990s mainly as a result of the repression in Indian-occupied Kashmir that had started in January 1990. As discussed in the previous chapter, this required the US to send Deputy National Security Adviser Robert Gates in May 1990, to de-escalate the situation. As a result of these efforts, Foreign Secretary-level talks between the two sides were held soon thereafter in New Delhi.

While the talks covered the entire range of outstanding issues including Kashmir, no progress could be achieved on any subject.[1] The Indians refused to recognise the indigenous nature of the Kashmiri uprising and blamed Pakistan for supporting "terrorism" in Kashmir as well as in Indian Punjab which had also been aflame after the Indian troops had stormed the Golden Temple, one of the holiest Sikh shrines, in June 1984. Despite the lack of progress on substantive issues, bilateral talks continued sporadically with some agreements on confidence-building measures such as ratification of the earlier agreement not to attack each other's nuclear facilities and exchange of lists

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of these facilities; establishment of hotlines between the Foreign Secretaries and the Director-Generals of Military Operations; not to conduct military exercises near each other's borders and to provide advance notification of these exercises as well as to ease travel restrictions, grant of visas and promote bilateral trade relations.[2] These so-called 'promotion of people-to-people contacts' actually served the Indian purpose to deflect international attention from the Kashmir issue while also sending a message to the Kashmiris about "betrayal" by Pakistan. Even the talks on the Siachen issue, to which the Indians agreed only after American persuasion, were eventually scuttled by hardliners in the Indian military establishment.[3]

Another attempt to resume the dialogue process was made in June 1997 when it was agreed to resume talks at the level of Secretaries covering eight issues: Kashmir; Peace and Security (including nuclear issues); Siachen; Wullar Barrage; Sir Creek; Terrorism and Drug Trafficking; Trade; and Promotion of Friendly Exchanges. But even as these diplomatic efforts continued, India sought to maintain its international pressure on Pakistan over the terrorism issue. Other developments further undermined bilateral relations such as the destruction of the historic Babri Masjid on 6 December 1992, leading to Hindu violence against Muslims, bomb explosions in Bombay for which Pakistan was blamed, testing and deployment of Prithvi missiles near Pakistan's borders in 1994 and preparations for carrying out additional nuclear tests by the Vajpayee government which eventually took place in 1998.

Post-Cold War Indo-US Relations

To a large extent, India's hostility towards Pakistan was encouraged by the rapid improvement in its relations with the US during the 1990s. After losing its traditional security anchor following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, India was quick to realign its relations with the US, in a transformed unipolar world. By contrast, the end of the Cold War diminished Pakistan's importance for the US as demonstrated by the imposition of American sanctions on Pakistan. A shrewd Indian move to garner American support was to quickly establish diplomatic relations with Israel and jettison its traditional support for the Palestinians and other Arab countries. This earned India the valuable backing of the powerful Israeli lobby in the US, especially in Congress. The Americans fully reciprocated these Indian overtures, in line

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with their shared "democratic and secular" values. India also provided a large market for American trade and investment. Moreover, perceptive strategic analysts in the US as well as the established 'Indophiles' in the American system recognised the potential role that India could play in the future 'clash of civilisations' between the American-led west and the Islamic world as well as Chinese communism, as was famously espoused by Samuel Huntington.[4] Indian support for the Bush administration's invasion of Iraq in August 1990 and betrayal of their close ally, Saddam Hussain, was a forerunner of the strategic cooperation with the US, the parameters of which were conveyed to India by General Claude Kicklighter, head of the US Pacific Command, during his visit to India in April 1991. The relationship received a further boost when President Clinton included India among the world's Large Emerging Markets to promote economic and commercial relations. Most importantly for Pakistan, the US accepted India's allegations about Pakistani support for terrorism in Kashmir and came close to including Pakistan in its list of state sponsors of terrorism, especially after the bomb explosions in Bombay. Meanwhile, Washington refrained from confronting New Dehli over its missile and nuclear developments which only encouraged the Indians.

Pakistan's Diplomatic Initiatives

It remains to the credit of Pakistani diplomacy that despite the internal and external challenges faced by the country, several diplomatic initiatives were taken to deflect the pressure on the country's strategic programme, especially after the imposition of the Pressler sanctions. The underlying purpose of these efforts was to highlight the need for a regional approach to the nuclear issue. It was consistently emphasised, especially to the US, that progress on non-proliferation issues, could not be achieved through a singular focus on Pakistan, which would not accept any unilateral measures. It was also emphasised to the US that with the application of the Pressler sanctions on Pakistan alone, there was no incentive for India to agree to any regional non-proliferation initiative. From the Indian perspective, by refusing to cooperate at the regional level, they had a virtual veto on the overall conduct of Pakistan-US relations. Nevertheless, in order to strengthen its own non-proliferation credentials, Pakistan added to its earlier proposals (discussed in previous chapters) by pursuing several new initiatives in the 1990s.

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These Pakistani initiatives focused primarily on proposing regional arrangements with India, starting with the offer of a five Nation Conference to discuss non-proliferation measures in the region which was made in June 1991. Apart from Pakistan and India, it would involve the major nuclear powers such as the US, Russia and China. It was due to Pakistan's relations with China that Beijing accepted participation in this "regional" approach even though it was opposed to being equated with India on the nuclear issue, since it viewed itself as being in the same league as the US and Russia. After some initial hesitation, the Americans and the Russians also agreed to participate in this initiative. However, India rejected this Pakistani proposal.

India also rejected a similar proposal made by the US in 1991 that included the same five countries. Another US proposal made in 1994 for Nine-Nation multilateral talks on non-proliferation in South Asia, which would have included the five nuclear weapons states, Pakistan, India as well as Germany and Japan, was also turned down by India. Despite such Indian obduracy, the important fact was that the US and the other permanent members of the UN Security Council, in principle accepted a regional approach to non-proliferation for the first time.

Another initiative by Pakistan was to successfully conclude a bilateral agreement with India in August 1992 not to acquire, develop, deploy or use chemical weapons. This was essentially a Confidence-Building Measure (CBM), taking advantage of the ongoing negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on banning Chemical Weapons. However, when these CD negotiations concluded and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was set up in January 1993 requiring all member states to declare whether or not they possessed chemical weapons, India was forced to acknowledge its secret possession of chemical weapons. This demonstrated that India had lied about the non-possession of chemical weapons when it signed the bilateral agreement with Pakistan five months earlier.

Another secret strategic programme ongoing in India at the time was the development of ballistic missiles such as the short-range Prithvi and the medium-range Agni missiles, both capable of carrying nuclear weapons. India was also involved in missile cooperation with Russia to acquire Russian Cryogenic engines for its missile programme. In view of these developments, Pakistan proposed the creation of a Zero-Missile Zone in South Asia in 1993.

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A similar proposal by the US, called the South Asia Missile Non-proliferation Initiative, was also made in 1993. India rejected both proposals. In the three-stage Pakistani proposal, the first stage envisaged conclusion of an initial agreement to suspend the deployment of all missiles – short, medium and long range – by both Pakistan and India. The second stage required both countries to negotiate an agreement to halt the further flight testing and production of missiles. In the final stage, Pakistan and India would dismantle all facilities for the production, development, research or flight testing of ballistic missiles and work out appropriate arrangements for the verification of the Zero Missile Zone. This was a bold initiative considering the fact that at that time, US sanctions had denied Pakistan the opportunity to acquire the F-16 aircraft which could be used as the delivery platform for nuclear weapons and, therefore, Pakistan's reliance on missile development as delivery vehicles had greatly increased.

In order to comprehensively address the security concerns of both Pakistan and India, Pakistan also proposed the convening of a multi-lateral conference on security, arms control and non-proliferation in South Asia in 1996. Despite this attempt at a balanced approach by Pakistan, this proposal was also turned down by India.

In September 1997, during a speech to the UN General Assembly by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan proposed further CBMs and non-proliferation measures to India. These included (i) mutual and equal restraint in the nuclear and ballistic missile fields; (ii) mutual and equal restraint on conventional weapons which would ensure equal security for both countries; and (iii) agreement on a set of principles that would guide further arms control arrangements.

Then in June 1998, Pakistan proposed additional CBMs including (i) measures for avoidance of conflict and (ii) nuclear and conventional restraint and stabilisation measures.

Apart from these regional initiatives, Pakistani diplomacy was also fully engaged in multi-lateral arms control and disarmament negotiations. It actively promoted the conclusion of the Chemical Weapons Convention in the CD and the formation of the OPCW in January 1993. It also fully supported the negotiations in the CD on concluding the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as a means of ensuring against further nuclear testing by India even though Pakistan itself had not conducted a "hot" test as yet. This was a matter

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of considerable debate within Pakistan between those who advocated the CTBT as a means of restraining further Indian nuclear development and those who felt that "credible" nuclear deterrence with India in future would require Pakistan to conduct a "hot" or real nuclear test.

Conveniently, India's opposition to the CTBT came to Pakistan's eventual benefit, as India vetoed the CTBT using the consensus requirement in the CD and then voted against the draft treaty when it was put to a vote in the UN in 1996. While Pakistan supported the CTBT in the CD and the UN, it made it clear that it would not sign the treaty until India did the same. Pakistan also argued that the entry into force of the CTBT required the signature and ratification of the Treaty by all the nuclear technology-capable states, especially all nuclear weapon states. This position worked to Pakistan's advantage since it had not foreclosed its option to test when India once again tested nuclear weapons in May 1998.

Nuclear Developments

From Pakistan's perspective, the US had imposed Pressler sanctions in October 1990 despite the fact that Islamabad had upheld its "tacit" commitment made by President Zia not to "embarrass" the US by conducting a nuclear test nor to assemble a nuclear weapon. In addition, the Benazir Bhutto government had undertaken a voluntary restraint on its nuclear policy. The American decision was, therefore, seen as a 'betrayal' since the US no longer needed Pakistan's cooperation against the Soviets in Afghanistan. The Americans had refused to release Pakistan's 28 F-16 aircraft for which it had paid and for which the US still continued to demand storage charges, which was particularly galling for Pakistan. The standard refrain for Pakistani leaders thereafter became the demand that the US should either release the planes or return Pakistan's money.

Much to the dismay of the US, the impact of its sanctions had the opposite effect on Pakistan. Instead of succumbing to Washington's non-proliferation demands, Islamabad pushed ahead with its strategic programme with even greater determination. This involved not only the enhancement of nuclear weapons development but also the acquisition of ballistic missile capabilities as delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons which became all the more necessary due to the denial of the F-16 aircraft. In retrospect, therefore, American

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sanctions actually helped Pakistan to develop its indigenous weapons capabilities, especially missiles, which in any case had become a significant necessity in view of the fast-growing Indian missile programme and India's rejection of Pakistan's Zero Missile Zone proposal.

In the nuclear domain, Pakistan's focus in the 1990s shifted from the uranium-based nuclear weapons capability that had already progressed at the Kahuta or KRL nuclear facility, to the plutonium route being developed by the PAEC at Khushab. Interestingly, just as international pressure in the 1970s and 1980s had forced Pakistan to abandon the plutonium route to the bomb and pursue the secret HEU (uranium) programme, international focus in the 1990s on the uranium route, enabled it to resume the pursuit of plutonium production capabilities.[5] As considered in the previous chapter, there were several sources of plutonium in Pakistan, such as the Pakistan Atomic Research Reactor (PARR-1), KANUPP, and the Chashma Power Plant which were all operational by the end of the 1980s. But, since these were under IAEA safeguards and there was a deliberate policy not to illegally divert the plutonium from these facilities to weapons development, separate and secret-unsafeguarded facilities were indigenously developed during the same period. Most of them were completed by the end of the 1990s or at the beginning of the next decade. These included the Khushab Reactor (KCP-II) started in 1987 and completed in 1997; the Heavy Water production facility (KCP-I) started in 1986 and completed in 1996 and the Tritium production plant (to boost the nuclear blast) started in 1987 and completed in 1998. Additionally, work also started in the 2000s sequentially after the establishment of the Strategic Plans Division (SPD) on three additional reactors, KCP-III, KCP-IV and KCP-V, at the Khushab facility. Consequently, by the end of 2014, Pakistan possessed both the uranium and plutonium routes to nuclear weapons. The uranium-based bombs with larger yields, so-called "counter value" weapons for the destruction of cities; and the lighter, more compact plutonium-based "counter-force" nuclear weapons for tactical or battle-field use.

By the beginning of the 1990s, both the PAEC and the KRL had also conducted their own "cold tests" successfully and the nuclear scientists, especially Dr A Q Khan, were keen to conduct "hot tests" to demonstrate Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability. However, the political and military leadership were mindful of the international consequences of carrying out

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any nuclear weapons test, an approach that was strongly advocated by the Foreign Office as well. Instead, as discussed above, Pakistani diplomacy was propagating nuclear restraint at the regional and global levels.

While making significant progress in the development of nuclear weapons capability, Pakistan was also pushing the case for peaceful uses of nuclear technology through the IAEA and in bilateral contacts. Given the reluctance of the NSG countries dominated by the US to engage in nuclear commerce with Pakistan, the only option for the country was to turn to China. Accordingly, in September 1986, Pakistan and China signed an agreement for the construction of two 325 MW nuclear power reactors in Chashma. Both plants were in operation by 2000 and 2005 respectively. Thereafter, Pakistan-China nuclear cooperation would increase further with two additional 325 MW power plants at Chashma and two 1100 MW power plants in Karachi (KANUPP 2 and 3) over the next decade. All these civilian nuclear facilities were, and continue to be under IAEA safeguards.[6]

In August 1995, a major nuclear crisis broke out when Pakistani intelligence sources discovered unusual activity at India's Pokhran nuclear test site where the 1974 Indian nuclear test had been conducted. This raised concerns in Pakistan about another nuclear test by India, perhaps of a thermonuclear or fusion bomb. US intelligence also picked up the signs of Indian test preparations and, according to George Perkovich, leaked the information to the press in December 1995.[7] Perkovich adds that Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao was under severe criticism by the BJP opposition for abandoning India's nuclear programme and, facing elections, authorised preparations for the nuclear test. However, Rao did not give the final clearance before the elections were held in April 1996. In May, the BJP, which won the largest number of seats in these elections, formed a coalition government which lasted for only 12 days. But in that brief period BJP Prime Minister Vajpayee secretly authorised the nuclear test- only to retract his decision under US pressure. The 13-party coalition led by Prime Minister Deve Gowda, which replaced the short-lived BJP government, was also inclined to conduct the test and in fact at least one nuclear device was placed in a test shaft in Pokhran. Again, under pressure from the US, Gowda decided to postpone the test.[8]

As this cat and mouse game was being played out between India and the US, Pakistan clearly conveyed to the Americans that the "irresponsible manner"

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in which the Indians were behaving on the nuclear issue was the result of America's singular focus on Pakistan's nuclear programme while tolerating Indian activities. The BJP in particular had made it amply clear in its election manifesto and statements by its leaders that India must conduct nuclear tests and become a nuclear weapon state. Despite these realities, it was Pakistan that continued to be sanctioned. This discriminatory American approach was encouraging Indian behaviour. More importantly, Pakistan conveyed to the US that if India conducted further nuclear tests, Pakistan would no longer be constrained by its nuclear restraint.[9]

Missile Race

The pursuit of missile capabilities in South Asia followed a path largely similar to the development of nuclear weapons by India and then Pakistan. Since the early 1960s, India developed its ballistic missile capabilities behind the façade of a peaceful space programme with international cooperation which was freely available at the time. But by the time Pakistan focused on catching up, it was confronted by the limitations of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) which required sanctions to be placed on countries pursuing ballistic missile programmes. Even so, the acquisition of missile capability was crucial for Pakistan's strategic programme, especially after American sanctions withdrew access to F-16 fighter aircraft which could be used as platforms for delivery of nuclear weapons. In retrospect, however, these sanctions forced Pakistan to develop alternate capabilities such as missiles as delivery vehicles. But, as in the nuclear case, this was an uphill task.

By comparison, India had a virtual free run till the 1990s. In 1963, as part of Indo-US Space cooperation, the US launched its Apache rocket from India's Thumba test range. For the next twelve years, the US, UK, France and Soviet Union colluded with India to launch nearly 350 rockets from Thumba. This cooperation enabled India to acquire solid-fuel technology that was later used in the Agni ballistic missiles, since space launch rocket technology is dual-use and can be used for ballistic missiles. One of India's leading scientists, APJ Abdul Kalam, also trained at NASA in the US and acquired the design and the blue-prints of the American Scout missile which he replicated to develop India's first space rocket, the SLV-3. In the 1970s, France and the Soviet Union provided liquid-fuel rocket technology which enabled India

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to develop the Prithvi missile. Germany also provided critical technology in the 1970s for guidance systems, rocket testing and composite materials. Designated as assistance for India's space programme, this technology proved critical for India's development of ballistic missiles. It was only in 1992 that the US objected to the Indian acquisition of Cryogenic engines from Russia for its GSLV rocket, but American objections were aimed more at Russia than India. In any case, by then India had already made considerable progress in the missile field.

By building on international space assistance, India was ready to set up its Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme in 1983 (later missile development would be undertaken by the Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO). In 1988, it conducted the first flight test of the Prithvi missile with a range of 150-200 km and capable of carrying a payload of 500-1000 kg, including nuclear warheads. In 1989, India carried out the first flight test of the Agni missile with a range of 1200-2400 km and a payload of 1000 kg which was also capable of carrying a nuclear payload. Since then, several tests of the Prithvi and Agni missiles were conducted and different varieties of these and other missiles were developed.[10]

The growing threat of Indian missile developments to Pakistan's security was underlined in June 1997, when Pakistani intelligence detected that India had deployed nearly 24 Prithvi missiles in Jalandhar, just 80 miles from Lahore. Within a few days, *The Washington Post* made these deployments public, most likely on the basis of an American intelligence leak. Though the Indians initially denied this report, the Indian newspaper, *The Hindu*, reported two days later that the missiles had been "stored" and not deployed. As discussed by Perkovich in his book, US intelligence had discovered the Prithvi deployment while it was underway and asked the then-Prime Minister I K Gujral to remove the missiles in order to avoid escalation of tensions with Pakistan. At first, Gujral denied any knowledge and then agreed to stop the deployment.[11]

The importance of this episode for Pakistan was to fully justify the development of its own missile capability. But in this regard, Pakistan was far behind the curve in relation to the Indian capability which had a definite head start with access to unrestricted international cooperation. By contrast,

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Pakistan's missile quest was constrained from the start by international limitations, especially those of the MTCR, which had come into effect in 1987.

Pakistan's first tentative steps in space were entirely for peaceful purposes by the launching of Rehbar-I and Rehbar-II rockets in 1962 by the newly established Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) set up a year earlier, mainly for weather forecasting purposes, designated as "sounding" rockets. These were developed in collaboration with the United States NASA and the programme was headed by Dr Abdus Salam who was appointed to head SUPARCO by President Ayub Khan. But SUPARCO was never given much importance owing to which it did not have adequate funding. It was only in the late 1980s when India demonstrated its missile capabilities by testing the Prithvi and Agni missiles that the then-Army Chief, Aslam Beg, tasked SUPARCO to quickly develop ballistic missiles with help from KRL. Using the knowledge and training acquired in cooperation with NASA for the sounding rockets, SUPARCO developed the very rudimentary and unguided Hatf-I and Hatf-II surface-to-surface missiles with a range of 50 and 150 km respectively and a payload of 500 kg. Both solid fuel missiles were tested in February 1989. Feroz Hassan notes that "according to western sources, the missiles were based on technology acquired from the French or that Pakistani scientists simply copied the French Dauphin and Eridan sounding rockets."[12] In any case, testing of the Hatf missiles broke a major barrier and enabled Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to claim that "Pakistan had entered the missile age."[13] The Hatf series was shelved for nearly a decade when the focus shifted to other missile programmes. It was revived in 2002 with new variants with longer ranges called Hatf-II (Abdali) and Hatf-III (Ghaznavi) which, after further testing, were inducted into the Army's Strategic Force Command.

Apart from the efforts of SUPARCO and KRL, the Combat Development Directorate of the Army, which had been set up by General Aslam Beg when he was Vice-Chief in 1985, also explored options for developing missiles as delivery vehicles for Pakistan's nuclear weapons. The Directorate conducted a comprehensive analysis and recommended the development of both liquid and solid fuel ballistic missiles with varying ranges. While the outright purchase of build-up missiles was one option, it was considered more viable in the long run to attain self-sufficiency for missile development.

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According to Feroz Hasan, MTCR resistance forced Pakistan to turn to its strategic ally – China.[14] American intelligence agencies alleged that as a result of this cooperation, China supplied around 30 assembled M-11 missiles to Pakistan in 1992 which were stored in crates in Pakistan's Air Force base in Sargodha.[15] The US accused China and Pakistan of violating the MTCR and placed sanctions on Chinese and Pakistani entities involved. Both countries responded by arguing that by trading off payload weight for increased range, these missiles did not fall within the MTCR. In any event, it is a tribute to Pakistani diplomats that they convinced China to continue assisting Pakistan and led to the supply of these missiles in unassembled form. This required Pakistani scientists and technicians to set up a dedicated missile assembly facility and acquire self-reliance for future missile production.

The focus also shifted to the creation of a permanent base for solid fuel technology in Pakistan by the creation of the Project Management Organisation under the directive of the next Army Chief, General Abdul Waheed Kakar, in 1994. Its task was to create the foundations for a solid-fuel missile programme, absorb the transfer of technology and learn reverse engineering as well as assembly techniques.[16] After undertaking design modifications and upgrades, Pakistan was able to produce the Ghaznavi series of missiles with a payload capacity of 500 kg and a range of about 290 km which were inducted by the Army's Strategic Force Command in 2004. Similarly, after several engine tests, the Shaheen-I missiles were developed in 1997 with a payload of 850 kg and a range of 450 km, to be inducted into the Army by 2003. Similar solid-fuel missiles in the Shaheen series were further developed in the coming years with extended ranges and payload capacity, in addition to the Babur, Raad and Nasr missiles.[18]

Apart from the development of these solid-fuel missiles, there was a need for liquid-fuel missiles to increase the range and payload. For this, Pakistan purchased the Nodong missiles from North Korea for which Prime Minister Bhutto signed an agreement with Pyongyang on 30 December 1994.[17] Facilities for assembling the Nodong missiles and for reverse-engineering them were set up in KRL. By 1998, Pakistan first tested its version of the liquid-fuel missile named Ghauri with a range of 1300 km and payload of between 700 to 1300 kg. Further improvements in the Ghauri project led to more testing and eventual induction of the Ghauri missiles by 2006.

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Owing to these developments, by the end of 2010, Pakistan had achieved significant missile capabilities to deliver both conventional and nuclear warheads. As a result, it was able to overcome the impact of US sanctions on the delivery of F-16 aircraft to a large extent. Now virtually most Indian targets were within Pakistan's range and provided a credible capability to deter any Indian attack. The Indian advantage in the missile gap with Pakistan had largely been closed. Over the next decade, further strides would be made in Pakistan's missile capabilities to ensure credible deterrence.

Pakistan-American Roller-Coaster

Following the imposition of Pressler sanctions, Pakistan-American relations entered a turbulent phase, marked by mutual recrimination and uncertainty. While the Benazir Bhutto government had been dismissed by the President a few months before the sanctions came into effect, the next Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, openly accused his predecessor during the election campaign of "selling out to American nuclear imperialism, blackmail and exploitation."[19] For their part, President Ishaq Khan and Army Chief Aslam Beg, though having included Prime Minister Bhutto in nuclear decision-making, still had reservations about her willingness to accept exclusive briefings by the CIA on the country's nuclear programme as well as the inclusion of her American friends in restricted meetings on sensitive issues. This enabled the Americans to sow suspicion and dissension within Pakistani ranks. As noted by Feroz Khan in this context, the President and the Army Chief were "even suspicious of the Prime Minister's fraternising with US intelligence" and resented her claim during a visit to the US that the "Pakistan Army did not keep her in the loop."[20]

As a result, President Ishaq Khan became the main repository of all decisions relating to the nuclear issue following Bhutto's ouster. Later in July 1993, when the President stepped down (following further political crises which brought Benazir Bhutto back into power), he decided to hand over custody of all nuclear matters to the next Army Chief, General Abdul Waheed Kakar. General Kakar entrusted the programme to the Combat Development Directorate. This was the first time that the country's locus of nuclear decision-making was transferred from the President's Office to the Army Headquarters.[21] To a large extent, this

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was the result of the vagaries of unstable national politics but also the need to insulate the nuclear programme from the divisive tactics used by the US.

As the assistance pipeline began to dry up after the imposition of Pressler sanctions, Pakistan launched its first diplomatic initiative of the 1990s by proposing a five-power conference on non-proliferation in South Asia, specifically to ban nuclear weapons in the region, as mentioned above. The underlying purpose of this proposal of June 1991 was to emphasise that nuclear non-proliferation could only be achieved at the South Asian or regional level and that Pakistan would not accept any unilateral measures.

In November 1991, US Under Secretary of State for Security Affairs, Reginald Bartholomew, visited Pakistan and met President Ishaq Khan who gave him a detailed briefing on Pakistan's nuclear Programme, pointing out that Pakistan had not developed nuclear weapons, even though it may have the capability to do so, in line with the commitment that had been given to the Americans and remained consistent with the limits set out in the Pressler amendment. As such imposition of sanctions was unjustified. Bartholomew argued that the US took a "broader" definition of nuclear weapons and even the possession of the capability to assemble a nuclear weapon was unacceptable and had triggered Pressler sanctions. To get out of the sanctions, he argued, Pakistan needed to completely roll-back its capability. The meeting ended abruptly on an unsavoury note and according to Kux, the American official walked out of the meeting.[22]

Another attempt to highlight Pakistan's position, this time in the public domain, was undertaken by Foreign Secretary Shahryar Khan during a visit to the US in February 1992. In an interview with *The Washington Post*, he stated that Pakistan had the "elements which, if put together, would become a (nuclear) device."[23] Unfortunately, the Foreign Secretary's candour, at the behest of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, was deliberately projected in Washington as an admission of guilt rather than an expression of a fact that had existed with American knowledge well before the imposition of Pressler sanctions. The only difference was that now, with the Soviets out of Afghanistan, the Americans had decided to interpret Pressler "more broadly" than before.

In March 1992, the office of the State Department's Inspector-General pointed out that while arms sales to Pakistan financed by the US government were curtailed as a result of Pressler, the Bush administration continued to allow

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commercial arms sales, mostly spare parts and other small equipment, worth over 100 million dollars. This led to vehement protests by Senators Glenn, Claiborne Pell and others that this was a violation of Pressler sanctions. But the State Department's lawyers argued that the Pressler amendment only applied to US government-financed sales and not commercial sales by private parties. On the political side of the argument, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Malott defended the commercial sales on the grounds that "we are trying to maintain some degree of access and influence with a government whose cooperation is essential to meet key American objectives in the region" and that, "we believe that if we are to promote a regional solution to non-proliferation, then cooperative ties with both countries, India and Pakistan, are essential."[24] This was arguably the first time that an American official acknowledged the need for a regional approach to deal with nuclear issues. Rabia Akhtar maintains that the Bush administration adopted this course of action at the cost of annoying the non-proliferation lobby in Congress in order to "create space for sustained interaction with Pakistan even after its nuclear weapons programme was no longer a secret."[25] Another motivation, which should not be overlooked, was the interest of American arms manufacturers who were already badly hit by the ban on US government-financed sales such as the F-16 aircraft, and were, therefore, allowed to engage in private commercial sales. This tactic also served to keep Pakistan hooked to the American arms supply chain.

While Pakistan was still trying to grapple with the impact of Pressler sanctions, another controversy broke out with the US in early 1992 – this time over Pakistan's procurement of missiles from China (as noted above). Washington claimed that these M-11 missiles violated the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) which required imposition of American sanctions even on those countries, like China and Pakistan, which were not members of the MTCR. According to the US, the M-11 missiles violated the MTCR standards which prohibited the export of missiles capable of delivering a payload of more than 500 kg over a range greater than 300 km. Both Pakistan and China argued that by trading-off payload for range, the missiles acquired by Pakistan did not violate the MTCR. But the US rejected these arguments and imposed sanctions on selected Pakistani and Chinese entities involved in missile developments. Despite these sanctions, China continued to supply the missiles but in unassembled form, largely due to Pakistan's diplomatic efforts.

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Then, in order to prevent further complications in its relations with the US and in the hope of avoiding a missile race with India, Pakistan took the initiative of proposing a Zero-Missile Zone in South Asia in 1993. The US also took a similar initiative in the same year called the South Asia Missile Non-proliferation initiative. (These have been referred to above) But India once again rejected both proposals. This ensured that the missile issue remained an additional point of friction between Pakistan and the US in the coming years.

In January 1993, leadership in the White House changed with the defeat of President Bush and the election of Bill Clinton of the Democratic Party as President. Now the non-proliferation lobby in Congress led by Democrats like Senator Glenn had a staunch ally in the President who was also committed to non-proliferation goals. Far from accommodating Pakistan on Pressler, the Clinton administration initially tightened the noose by demanding the return of six ageing Naval frigates that were leased to Pakistan earlier. Even though the US Navy intended to scrap these ships, American officials demanded their return and insisted that Pakistan pay for their transit to Singapore where they were to be scrapped.[26]

In April 1993, President Ishaq Khan's dismissal of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif led to the transitional caretaker government of Mr Moeen Qureshi. Among other important measures, he decided to stop payments for the F-16 aircraft in July 1993 which had continued till then.

Subsequent elections in 1993 brought Benazir Bhutto back as Prime Minister. According to Feroz Khan, during her second term in office, she was "in full harmony" with all institutions including the Army, on the nuclear issue.[27] In her inaugural televised address, the Prime Minister stated in October 1993 that Pakistan would not dismantle its nuclear weapons programme.[28]

By this time Pakistani authorities had given up all hopes of any change in US policy over Pressler while the Clinton administration came to realise that sanctions on Pakistan were not going to work. Moreover, Pakistan's successful diplomacy had placed the nuclear proliferation issue in a regional context while refusing to accept any unilateral measures. Equally important was the growing alienation from the US within the Pakistan Armed Forces, especially over the denial of the F-16 aircraft and discrimination against Pakistan over the nuclear issue. The once close cooperation between the Pakistani defence services and the Pentagon, such as during the Afghan war,

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had ceased, including the exchange of military training opportunities. This caused misgivings in the American establishment, especially since the US also needed Pakistan's cooperation in different peace-keeping operations such as in Haiti, Bosnia and Somalia apart from dealing with transnational issues such as terrorism and narcotics. Moreover, Pakistan's cooperation was needed in multilateral negotiations on nuclear issues, such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), which were a priority for the Clinton administration.

In these circumstances, Washington was forced to reassess its relations with Islamabad – in which the biggest hurdle was the nuclear issue. In order to get more administrative flexibility in the application of nuclear-related laws, the Clinton administration attempted to re-write the Foreign Assistance Act in early 1994. However, the move was strongly resisted by Senators Glenn and Pressler and was abandoned as a result. Then in March-April 1994, the administration first offered to make a one-time waiver for the release of F-16s in return for a "roll-back" of Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme. Since this was a non-starter even in the American assessment, the proposal was re-calibrated, offering a one-time waiver for the release of the planes in return for a "cap" on Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme along with "non-intrusive verification inspection" of the Kahuta facilities by American inspectors. This proposal was conveyed to Islamabad during the visit of Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Non-proliferation Robert Einhorn. They held extensive discussions with Foreign Secretary Najamuddin Sheikh and Additional Secretary for UN and Disarmament Affairs, Munir Akram, among other officials. Talbott also disclosed that if Pakistan were to accept this offer, the US would also ask India to freeze its production of weapons-grade fissile material but did not share what incentives would be offered to India. This initiative had a third aspect as well which was to convene a conference involving the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, plus Pakistan, India, Japan and Germany.

From Pakistan's perspective, this American initiative had several flaws. For one, the proposal would need Congressional approval and it was highly uncertain that the administration would succeed in obtaining it. Secondly, the Indians would surely reject the offer – not only because they would not accept a freeze on their nuclear weapons programme, but also because they

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would oppose the supply of the F-16 aircraft to Pakistan. Thirdly, in view of continuing Indian development of weapons-grade fissile material for nuclear weapons in which they had a headstart over Pakistan, a freeze by both countries in fissile material production would impose a permanent asymmetry between the two countries. Even the release of the F-16 aircraft was not worth such a permanent disparity. Fourth and most importantly, accepting intrusive inspections of Pakistan's nuclear facilities which would involve monitoring by cameras and other technical devices, was totally unacceptable. As a counter to this aspect of monitoring, Pakistani officials suggested that the US use its "national technical means" which had led them to determine that Pakistan had crossed the Pressler threshold in the first place.[29]

Meanwhile, details of the proposal were leaked by Senator Pressler to the American media who must have been informed by US intelligence sources, thereby demonstrating that elements of the Clinton administration were not on the same page. Pressler and his colleagues, together with the Indian lobby in Congress strongly opposed the initiative. Eventually, it was Pakistan's Army Chief, General Waheed Kakar, who put an end to this proposal when, during a visit to Washington, he stated categorically that he would not "bargain away Pakistan's nuclear programme for the F-16s or anything else."[30] Earlier, in her meeting with Talbott in Islamabad, the Prime Minister had already conveyed that, "If we are unilaterally pressed for capping, it will be discriminatory and Pakistan would not agree to it."[31]

One of the steps taken by the Clinton administration when it took office was to implement a recommendation by pro-Indian Congressmen Stephen Solarz to separate South Asia from the Middle East Bureau in the State Department and create a South and Central Asia Bureau. Essentially, the purpose was to give greater importance and visibility to American relations with India which had assumed a new significance for Washington in the post-Cold War world. Clinton chose Robin Raphael, a career diplomat serving at the time in the American Embassy in New Delhi, as the Assistant Secretary to head the newly created Bureau. As a colleague in New Delhi, I found her to be a fair, objective and balanced professional, qualities that she continued to demonstrate as Assistant Secretary. It was due to her fair and courageous stance that she had stated publicly in New Delhi that Kashmir is a disputed territory. Even though this was consistent with US policy, her remark stoked

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Indian hostility that persisted for years. Even so, this did not deter her from fulfilling her responsibilities as Assistant Secretary in an impartial manner between Pakistan and India, which was a welcome departure from the legion of biased Indophiles in the State Department.

Fortunately, along with Assistant Secretary Raphael, a few other influential members of the Administration, such as Defence Secretary William Perry and Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, also realised that American interests were not being served by placing Pakistan in the Pressler strait-jacket.

In September 1994, Secretary O'Leary visited Pakistan with a 60-member business delegation in response to Prime Minister Bhutto's request to President Clinton for energy cooperation. Her delegation signed 16 agreements worth four billion dollars.[32] Secretary Perry visited Pakistan in January 1995 and in his meeting with Prime Minister Bhutto was told in clear terms that Pakistan wanted its F-16 planes or its money back – and that the prevailing situation was unfair. As head of the Pentagon, Perry also recognised the need for reviving defence cooperation with Pakistan and was grateful for Pakistan's peacekeeping role in Bosnia and Somalia. On his return to Washington, Perry publicly stated that Pressler sanctions were a "blunt instrument", adding that "I saw no evidence that it has increased our influence or leverage with Pakistan. To the contrary, I saw ample evidence that it has undermined the influence that we formally had there."[33] As an immediate measure, Perry called for reviving the Pakistan-US Consultative Group for senior military-to-military talks.

This was followed by a goodwill visit to Pakistan by the First Lady, Hilary Clinton, as part of a regional tour in March 1995, which served to ease Pakistan-US relations and set the stage for Prime Minister Bhutto to visit the US later in 1995.

The most important visit from Pakistan's perspective, however, would turn out to be that of Senator Hank Brown in December 1993 as part of a Congressional delegation's visit to the region. After the Republicans swept both Houses of Congress in the March 1994 Congressional elections, Senator Hank Brown from Colorado became the Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on South Asia. He had returned from his Pakistan visit convinced that the draconian sanctions against Pakistan were damaging US interests and that while keeping Pakistan's planes and its money was unfair to a long-standing ally of the US. He was, therefore, determined to change the

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Pressler sanctions. As a first step, he held a hearing in his Subcommittee in which Assistant Secretary in the Defence Department, Joseph Nye, testified on 9 March 1995 that the Pressler amendment requires "fine-tuning."[34]

By this time, Prime Minister Bhutto had sent her friend, Dr Maleeha Lodhi, a well-known journalist and editor, as Pakistan's Ambassador to the US in early 1994. Though a non-career diplomat, she proved to be an excellent choice. Articulate and dynamic, Dr Lodhi energised not only the embassy but also the sizeable Pakistani-American community to influence the Clinton administration, the Congress, the usually hostile mainstream American media and the largely sceptical think-tank community. In April 1994, I joined the Washington Embassy on transfer from New Delhi and became part of the Ambassador's campaign as a Counsellor for Political Affairs.

Soon after becoming Chair of the South Asia subcommittee, Senator Brown's approached the Ambassador and conveyed his intention to change the Pressler amendment through his own amendment that would lift the ban on economic assistance to Pakistan and release all the military equipment frozen by the US including the F-16 aircraft.[35] But this was easier said than done. The success of the initiative not only required Congressional support but an endorsement by the Clinton administration. Fortunately, by this time, preparations were underway for Prime Minister Bhutto's visit to the US which would significantly contribute towards the eventual adoption of what later came to be known as the Brown amendment.

Prime Minister Bhutto's visit to the US

Before the visit took place in early April 1995, several positive developments had taken place in bilateral relations. The terrorist responsible for the World Trade Center bombing, Ramzi Yousaf, had been arrested in Pakistan and extradited to the US. At American request, Pakistan had also contributed troops for US peace-keeping operations in Haiti, Bosnia and Somalia. These gestures helped to overshadow the negative impact of the killing of two American Consulate personnel in Karachi in a terrorist attack just before the Prime Minister departed for the US. Then, more importantly, on the eve of the Prime Minister's visit, President Clinton himself spoke on the Pressler issue, responding to a journalist's question on 4 April that "the simple question is whether the policy we have pursued in the last few years is achieving its

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objectives..... for the defanging in terms of weapons of mass destruction..... I think we should seriously review the policy."[36]

Immediately, after her arrival in Washington, the Prime Minister met Congressional leaders from the House and the Senate separately on 10 April. Now that the Congress was controlled by the Republicans, many of its leaders were Cold War "warriors" who remembered Pakistan's role in defeating the Soviets in Afghanistan, the last battle of the Cold War which had led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. House leaders such as Dan Burton, Henry Hyde, Peter King among others as well as long-standing friends among the Democrats like Charlie Wilson, a great supporter of the Afghan Mujahideen and Pakistan, accorded an enthusiastic welcome to the Prime Minister. On the Senate side, apart from Hank Brown, the Senate leader, Robert Dole, and Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chair, Jesse Helms, expressed their full support for the Prime Minister and Pakistan. The Prime Minister's message to Congress was simple and straightforward based on equity and fairness – release Pakistan's withheld military equipment including the F-16 aircraft for which Pakistan had paid 1.4 billion dollars or return Pakistan's money. This demand for fairness by a long-standing ally had wide resonance in Congress, especially the Republicans.[37]

But officials in the Clinton administration, especially those dealing with non-proliferation issues, were still hedging, trying to extract some non-proliferation commitment from Pakistan in league with the non-proliferation lobby in Congress. Their tactics became clear in the meeting between Foreign Secretary Najamuddin Sheikh, who had accompanied the Prime Minister on her visit, and the Under Secretary of State for International Security Affairs, Lynn Davis, on 10 April. In response to the Foreign Secretary's opening comments that there was growing appreciation in Congress for the release of the military equipment or return of the money, Davis stated that this depended on who one talked to, and that the situation was "fluid". Then she added the punch line that "it was important for the US to find a step forward on non-proliferation in order to demonstrate flexibility."[38] Specifically, she proposed a commitment by Pakistan on no first-deployment of missiles. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs, Robert Einhorn, who also participated in the meeting, suggested an additional condition, that the spent fuel produced by the Khushab reactor, which could be reprocessed into nuclear fuel for

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weapons, should be placed under IAEA safeguards. They warned that if such measures were not accepted, there would be a serious impact on the views of the administration and Congress. The Foreign Secretary replied that Pakistan's policy was to "pursue non-proliferation on a regional non-discriminatory basis" and it would "not make any unilateral gesture."[39] He also reminded the Americans about Pakistan's Zero Missile Zone in South Asia proposal, which India had rejected. He further suggested that the US should pursue regional non-proliferation initiatives and try to get India on board instead of asking Pakistan for unilateral steps. The outcome of the meeting was only to agree on continuing focused talks on non-proliferation issues, including on proceedings in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) such as on the CTBT and fissile materials.

The next day, 11 April, the Prime Minister met President Clinton in the White House. While this meeting covered Pakistan-India relations and Kashmir, terrorism, narcotics, peace-keeping, and bilateral economic cooperation, the focus was on the Pressler amendment. The Prime Minister said that "if the defining issue of the relationship between Pakistan and India was Kashmir, between the US and Pakistan it was Pressler". Elaborating, she said the Pressler issue had two aspects – first, Pakistan had contracted for military equipment before the Pressler sanctions were imposed and had paid 1.4 billion dollars for it and it should either receive the equipment or its money should be returned; second, whether Pressler had advanced or impeded US non-proliferation objectives. In Pakistan's view, Pressler had impeded non-proliferation because it had destroyed any incentive for India to respond positively to the many non-proliferation proposals put forward by Pakistan and the US. Continuing, she said that the only way that India could be moved forward would be to have a level playing field which could only be done by repealing Pressler, which had encouraged India to promote rather than retard proliferation. This was apparent from the Indian development of Prithvi and Agni missiles as well as reports about conducting additional nuclear tests. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto also pointed out that the US itself acknowledged that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear device, as required under Pressler, but had applied sanctions on Pakistan for having the capability to assemble a nuclear device. She warned that if Pakistan was denied certification on the basis of capability alone, then it should go ahead with bridging the gap and assembling a nuclear device. Referring to her

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meetings in Congress the day before, she said that there was a lot of sympathy for Pakistan's views. But the help and support of the administration were needed to resolve the question of the equipment or the money.[40]

President Clinton acknowledged that he had serious reservations about this (Pressler) legislation when it was passed in 1985 and when it came into force in 1990. He had no hesitation in saying that it was wrong that neither the equipment nor the money was being given to Pakistan. He clarified, however, that the legislative history of Pressler made no distinction between the possession of a nuclear device and the possession of the capability. As for a solution, the President said that there did not appear to be enough support in Congress to repeal Pressler. As regards the equipment, there was "a no man's land situation," since under the law, the equipment could not be released and there was no money that could be returned. An alternative course was to sell the planes to another country and make up the difference in the amount received from the sale with Congressional appropriation for the balance. Clinton also disclosed that his approach to Congress to resolve the issue could not be made until after the conclusion of the NPT Review Conference scheduled to take place later in the year, as taking any step on Pressler before that could be perceived as undermining US non-proliferation policy. In the existing circumstances, he felt that there would only be support for approving the resumption of certain types of economic aid and some non-offensive military cooperation. Then he came to the punch line that his State Department officials had pitched to the Foreign Secretary a day earlier by stating that the picture in Congress could change if there were some gestures on Pakistan's part that could be seen as promoting non-proliferation efforts, including not to be the first to deploy missiles in the region.[41]

The Prime Minister shot back that it would not be fair to ask Pakistan to make unilateral gestures, though Pakistan was prepared to move ahead on a regional or global level, such as on the CTBT and fissile material cut-off in the CD. She added that Pakistan should be happy to respond to a request to do whatever India was prepared to do. When the President said that the Indian Prime Minister had, in his meeting with Clinton, "played the China card" when the subject of Indian missiles was discussed, Prime Minister Bhutto interjected that if Indian apprehensions about China were genuine then they should have accepted Pakistan's proposal for a multilateral conference

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on non-proliferation in South Asia which China had accepted. She also said that while the Indians talked about China, the deployment of their weapon systems all targeted Pakistan which showed clearly that they had no genuine apprehensions on this (China's) account.[42]

President Clinton repeated that while his feeling was that Pressler should be modified, Vice President Gore and other officials who were working on this issue with Congress felt that the required level of support was not there at this time unless he could indicate to Congress that there had been progress on non-proliferation with Pakistan. At the same time, he did not want to depart from even-handedness or from the regional approach – but something was needed for Congress. Still, he said, he understood the bind in which Pakistan and the Prime Minister were placed. In response to the Prime Minister's urging that an all-out attempt be made to get rid of Pressler and that the President should put his full weight behind this effort, Clinton said he would be working on the problem and making some of the arguments made by the Prime Minister and make calls himself (to Congress leaders) to see if this situation could be changed.[43]

After their 90-minute meeting, the two leaders spoke to the media. Questioned on the Pressler sanctions, President Clinton said that "under the law as it now exists, we cannot release the (military) equipment. However, Pakistan made payment and I don't think what happened to Pakistan was fair in terms of the money.....so I intend to consult with the Congress on that and see what we can do". He added that "I intend to ask Congress to show some flexibility in the Pressler amendment so that we can have some economic and military cooperation."[44] Another question regarding making an exception for Pakistan on non-proliferation, Clinton said that "it's important to point out that the impact of the Pressler amendment is directed only at Pakistan. And instead, we believe that in the end, we are going to have to work for a nuclear-free sub-continent, a nuclear-free region."[45] Prime Minister Bhutto, when asked why Pakistan needed nuclear weapons, stated that "Pakistan does not have nuclear weapons but we have enough knowledge and capability to assemble a nuclear weapon (though) we have voluntarily chosen not to either assemble a nuclear weapon, to detonate a nuclear device, or to export nuclear technology." She added that for this Pakistan "should be recognised as a responsible international player which has demonstrated restraint and not taken any action to undermine our common goals of non-proliferation." She

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went on to add that "we have welcomed all the proposals made by the US in connection with the regional solution to non-proliferation, and we have given our own proposals for a South Asia free of nuclear weapons and for a Zero Missile regime. Unfortunately, it is India which has not played ball."[46]

In addition to these comments to the press, the Joint Statement issued after the meeting between the two leaders also referred to the Pressler sanctions, noting that "President Clinton expressed his intention to work with Congress to revise the Pressler amendment to facilitate both a strong relationship with Pakistan and nuclear non-proliferation aims in South Asia."[47]

The next day, on 12 April, the Prime Minister addressed a packed auditorium at Johns Hopkins University in Washington. She forcefully articulated Pakistan's fairness and equity argument – that the US should return Pakistan's military equipment for which it had paid or return its money. She recalled Pakistan's "contract" with America by being a close ally during the Cold War and said that Pakistan had fulfilled this contract and now the US must fulfil its part. Recalling that it was India which detonated a nuclear weapon in 1974, while Pakistan, as a matter of policy, had not done so even though it possessed the capability. This restraint demonstrated Pakistan's commitment to non-proliferation. Pakistan had also put forward several regional non-proliferation proposals to India which the Indians had rejected. In this situation, she stressed, "the existence of our technology and perceived capability has served as a deterrent to India – as a deterrent to a nuclear power that has gone to war against us three times in the last 48 years. I certainly have no apologies to make – not in Islamabad, not in New Delhi and not in Washington D.C."[48]

The Prime Minister also spoke to mainstream media outlets such as CNN, *Washington Post* and *New York Times* apart from addressing large gatherings of the Pakistan-American community in Washington and New York organised by the Embassy. The result was a highly successful publicity campaign to put forward Pakistan's perspective, especially on the Pressler sanctions. Several editorials and op-ed articles appeared thereafter supporting Pakistan. *The Washington Post* editorial stated that "not only does the status quo disadvantage and discriminate against Pakistan, but American policy has failed to reverse Pakistan's nuclear programme or India's, or to draw them into political and security dialogue, and may even have added to India's intention to evade

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dialogue."[49] *The Boston Globe* wrote that the Pressler amendment "has had the perverse effect of harming US interests without altering Islamabad's nuclear policy. Since Congress will not rectify its error by authorizing repayment to Pakistan, it is left to the Clinton administration to undo the mischief."[50] *The Washington Times* commented that "again the United States is committing the error of rewarding our enemies and punishing our friends. Look at India, which conducted its first nuclear test 20 years ago, and which not only has nuclear weapons but is also developing ballistic missiles. India's weapons programme is precisely the reason Pakistan refuses to renounce its own nuclear programme. India is not the subject of any US-targeted sanctions. If nuclear proliferation is of such overriding importance to the United States, might it not at least make sense for the US Congress to level the playing field between India and Pakistan, stick to our principles and apply the sanctions equally to both."[51] *The Boston Herald* pointed out that "fairness demands that Pakistan get its money back. The United States ought to not conduct foreign policy like a Middle Eastern rug merchant conducts business."[52] *The Sacramento Bee,* referring to Pakistan's demand for the equipment or the money, commented that "Clinton must do more than pay polite lip service to Bhutto's request. And Congress must get beyond its myopic approach to critical international problems."[53] Even the far-off *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* weighed in on the issue, stating that "the law should be repealed, in order to give the administration more flexibility in dealing with such situations. But if the law is allowed to stand, Congress should pass a one-time exemption to permit Pakistan to obtain the weapons it has already paid for."[54]

Despite the obvious success of Prime Minister Bhutto's visit to change the narrative on Pressler sanctions, especially on the basis of the fairness and equity argument, there were still forces in the US that opposed relief for Pakistan. The Clinton administration itself was divided between those supporting repeal of Pressler and others, belonging to the non-proliferation lobby, still seeking to derive some unilateral non-proliferation concession from Pakistan. This latter group also had considerable support in Congress from the Democrats and especially the supporters of non-proliferation such as Senator Glenn who commanded considerable respect among his colleagues on this issue. Pressler himself was a lightweight and had been called "one of the dimmest bulbs in Congress" by a Congressional journal but used the legislation named after

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him to project his importance.[55] Both Glenn and Pressler wrote separately to Clinton immediately after Bhutto's visit that any relief for Pakistan would undermine US non-proliferation policy. There was also the negative role of the powerful intelligence community, especially those in the CIA working on non-proliferation threats who were the source behind many of the leaks to the media regarding Pakistan, based mainly on conjecture rather than hard facts.

Then there was the strong pro-Indian lobby in the administration as well as in Congress which gave higher priority to developing economic and trade links with India rather than being fair towards Pakistan. They fully supported the Indian argument that the release of Pakistan's military equipment such as the F-16s would upset the conventional "balance" in the region. The Indian Embassy in Washington also became directly involved in this issue and worked hard over the next several months to prevent any sanctions relief for Pakistan. Since the Indian-American lobby was larger and richer than the Pakistani-American community, it used its resources in Congress through generous donations to obstruct any relief for Pakistan.

We in the Embassy were also apprehensive about the position that would be taken on the issue by the all-powerful Jewish-American and pro-Israel lobby, led by the American-Israeli Political Action Committee (AIPAC). It was already known that Israel opposed Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme and had even connived with India to attack Pakistan's nuclear facilities in the 1980s. Since Pakistan did not recognise Israel, the Embassy had no contacts with AIPAC. As such we could not reach out to them even though some of our American friends suggested that we should. Eventually, it was largely through the efforts of Pakistan's consistent supporter, Congressman Charlie Wilson, who used his influence with AIPAC, which eventually conveyed that "we don't have a dog in this fight."[56] This was a major gain since AIPAC had the capacity to derail any legislative action by Congress or the administration.

The Brown Amendment

Owing to the foregoing challenges, the eventual adoption of the amendment offered by Senator Hank Brown, which came to be known as the Brown Amendment, to modify and dilute the Pressler sanctions, was a tortuous and unpredictable process that twisted and turned for almost a year. Several attempts were made by the non-proliferation and Indian lobbies to

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derail this process and it is to the credit of Senator Brown that he persisted with his initiative to help Pakistan.

But the key to launch and sustain his legislative effort required the support of the administration, especially to persuade the Democrats in Congress, although Brown had the support of most of the Republicans. He wrote to the administration to officially convey its position to Congress and asked us to push the administration for an early response in order to take advantage of the momentum created by the Prime Minister's visit. To do so, Foreign Secretary Najamuddin Sheikh met with Assistant Secretary of State, Robin Raphael in Washington on 4 May 1995 – a meeting which indicated the uphill task ahead. Though personally sympathetic to our cause, she conveyed that despite President Clinton's clear direction, "as yet no clear policy had emerged." The problem was that while some in the administration favoured the release of the (military) equipment, others such as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs, Robert Einhorn, and Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), John Holum, were arguing that allowing release of the F-16 planes would be contributing to the deployment of Indian Prithvi missiles and thereby setting in motion a missile race in South Asia. While admitting that this amounted to allowing India to blackmail the US, Raphael suggested that a way out could be for Pakistan to accept a Presidential certification that Pakistan supported the creation of a Zero Missile Zone in South Asia. She added that the US would also need a "private assurance" that Pakistan would not take any step to disturb the status quo regarding fissile material production and transfer of sensitive technology. Such an assurance would be operative as long as the status quo in South Asia was not disturbed and Pakistan would need to take the appropriate steps if India took any action to change the status quo. The Foreign Secretary argued that India already maintained a nine-to-one advantage over Pakistan in terms of high-tech aircraft and that release of 28 F-16 aircraft would not change the co-relation of forces. Moreover, if the Indians were able to blackmail the US and dictate American policy, they would be encouraged to use this leverage in future. As regards, the private assurance, he said that nothing remained private and, in any case, Pakistan could only consider the proposal if it was conveyed formally. The Assistant Secretary agreed and suggested that the issue be taken up by the Foreign Secretary with Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott.[57]

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Where Raphael had been candid and straightforward, Talbott was cagey and evasive in the meeting with Foreign Secretary Shiekh the next day on 5 May. He said that the administration had been taking "soundings on the Hill" (Congress) and had a "sober view of what is possible." To the Foreign Secretary's comment that Senator Brown wanted to be sure about what the administration wanted to propose before he could launch his initiative, Talbott said that "Brown was not the only player in Congress." He went on to state that the issue was whether the waiver authority (for the President) or any other option would be "conditioned on the issue of fissile material production" (by Pakistan) and on the determination about how India would react and whether it would continue to show restraint. The last thing the US wanted was to trigger India to set in motion a spiral of a missile race. The American approach, continued Talbott, was to reconcile the objective of "building a solid basis for relations with Pakistan and heading off an arms race in South Asia."[58]

The same day Foreign Secretary Sheikh met Sandy Berger, the National Security Adviser. He was equally non-committal and evasive as Talbott, conveying that the administration was "actively engaged with Congress" since the Prime Minister's visit to try and find the best way forward. While there was "clearly broad support for restoring economic assistance" to Pakistan, there was "still some controversy on the planes" that needed to be dealt with, especially with the non-proliferation lobby. To have a package "without any conditions" was being "strenuously opposed by the Democrat side." Accordingly, Berger added, "if we are to go forward, then some action by Pakistan on fissile material production and missile deployment was needed." If there was no change with regard to these issues, the "administration would be placed in a difficult and embarrassing position." He suggested "something on your (Pakistan's) part that would ensure against any adverse step involving missile or nuclear proliferation by any country in South Asia" was needed. Berger then asked, "what kind of assurances could be given by Pakistan on missiles and fissile material production"? These he clarified, could be private or public assurances. The Foreign Secretary replied that private assurances would not remain private. Moreover, Prime Minister Bhutto had also clearly stated that Pakistan would not make any unilateral gesture or accept unilateral obligations. This would weaken Pakistan's ability to move on these issues at the regional level. Pakistan had already put forward a Zero Missile Zone proposal

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for South Asia and was cooperating on the fissile material issue in the CD. The meeting ended on a desultory note with Berger saying that he was "a little less optimistic" and that "we should not delude ourselves" since the issue "will be controversial" in Congress. But he conceded that "there is an opportunity to move (forward)."[59]

These efforts of the administration to get a commitment of unilateral restraint from Pakistan continued over the coming days and weeks. Shortly, after the meeting with Berger, Assistant Secretary Raphael met the Ambassador and suggested that in response to questions being asked by Congress regarding restraint by Pakistan on the production of HEU, enriched plutonium, missile testing and not conducting nuclear tests, the President was considering conveying on the basis of his talks with the PM a "general" and "vague" response that he had received "assurances on non-proliferation issues of concern." He could also refer to the restraint shown by Pakistan over the last five years. Raphael emphasised that this assurance to Congress would clarify that there was no secret deal or that Pakistan had promised anything. The Ambassador emphasised that while the administration could make its own assessment, Pakistan's position remained that it would not accept unilateral restraint but was prepared to accept a non-proliferation initiative at a regional level.

Then on 7 July, the Ambassador conveyed instructions to Assistant Secretary Raphael that after careful consideration in a high-level meeting in Islamabad, it was decided that any assertion by the administration on Pakistan's restraint would be "tantamount to Pakistan accepting a unilateral freeze." This would have an impact on the regional situation and domestically for the government. Pakistan had cooperated on the fissile material issue in the CD, had not conducted nuclear tests, nor exported sensitive technologies while being prepared for regional and global non-proliferation measures. These measures should be sufficient for Congress apart from Pakistan's cooperation in counter-terrorism, peacekeeping and narcotics control. But a statement by the President as envisaged would erode our position.[60]

While the administration dithered on its own proposal for Pakistan, trying to extract some non-proliferation concession, the process in Congress moved ahead. But, since Pakistan's Republican supporters in both the House and the Senate needed a minimum level of support from the Democrats, they were forced to work out compromise legislative language acceptable to the

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Democrats. As a result, the most controversial issue, the release of the F-16 aircraft, had to be dropped from the draft legislation. In his meetings with the Ambassador on 17 May, 7 June and 1 August, Senator Brown expressed his frustration with the administration, saying that senior officials were not agreeable to any of the options he had presented to them, including non-release of only lethal military equipment; authorising funds to payback Pakistan; or grant of Presidential authority to waive off sanctions for equipment purchased by Pakistan before the imposition of Pressler sanctions in October 1990. He said the administration was "split within itself" and he had asked them "to get their act together." Later he conveyed that in Congress, he was caught between those who were committed to non-proliferation and those willing to help Pakistan. He confirmed that the main opposition was coming from the Democrats even though Clinton, a Democrat President, had publicly stated that he wanted to help Pakistan and that the situation was unfair. Brown also disclosed that within his own Senate Foreign Relations Sub-Committee on South Asia, the ranking member (Democrat), Dianne Fienstien, was being influenced by the non-proliferation and Indian lobbies to stall any action. More importantly, the intelligence agencies had given briefings to Senators aimed at strengthening opposition to relief for Pakistan. Nevertheless, Brown said he would go for the consideration of the issue in the Sub-Committee and in the whole Foreign Relations Committee even though the votes were not solid.[61]

Meanwhile, on 11 May, the House International Relations Committee adopted by a voice vote an amendment by Republican member Doug Bereuter to modify Pressler sanctions which was then adopted by the full House on 8 June by a vote of 222 in favour and 192 against. It envisaged retaining the ban on military assistance but allowed economic and humanitarian assistance, including for NGOs, Overseas Private Investment Cooperation (OPIC), narcotics control, counter-terrorism, peacekeeping activities and the promotion of US trade and investment. The legislation also contained a non-binding "Sense of the Congress" clause, which called for the US to sell the F-16 planes to a third party and reimburse Pakistan. It also asked the administration to return the equipment which Pakistan had sent to the US for repair so long as the equipment was not returned in an upgraded or repaired condition. So, while in substance the House amendment had few significant

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benefits for Pakistan, its importance lay in the fact that for the first time the Pressler amendment had been dented by Congress.[62]

On the Senate side, the Brown amendment was adopted by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by a vote of 16 in favour and 2 against on 17 May. At this stage, the Brown amendment called for virtually the same relief for Pakistan as the House version while also releasing Pakistan from payment of the storage cost for the 28 F-16 aircraft, amounting to 658 million dollars which Pakistan had paid.[63]

Then, finally, after continued strenuous efforts by the Embassy, Senator Brown and the Pakistani-American community in Congress, the administration came up with its own package on 14 July 1995. It involved returning Pakistan's withheld military equipment except for the 28 F-16 aircraft; selling the aircraft to a third party to reimburse Pakistan, and seeking to make up for the difference in the proceeds from the sale. It also called for the resumption of economic and humanitarian assistance. Now, with the administration's endorsement of the relief for Pakistan, the leading Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Harkin, became a co-sponsor of the revised Brown amendment. This package was formally conveyed by Defence Secretary Perry on 2 August and by Acting Secretary of State Peter Tarnoff on 3 August to the Senate and House leaderships.[64]

But due to continuing opposition from the non-proliferation lobby and Indian supporters in both the Congress and the administration, the adoption of the amendment kept being opposed with several attempts to derail its passage. Several problems were also encountered over the appropriate legislative "vehicle", the overall "Bill" in which the Brown amendment was to be included, since the different vehicles tried by Brown were blocked due to differences with the administration over non-related issues. Finally, Brown and Harkin chose the Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill to include their modified amendment. This included (i) retaining the ban on military assistance to Pakistan; (ii) allowing the transfer of 368 million dollar worth of military equipment to Pakistan for which it had paid except the F-16 aircraft contracted for prior to October 1990; (iii) allowing humanitarian as well as narcotics control, military-to-military contacts (IMET), anti-terrorism and peacekeeping assistance; (iv) enabling the President to release Pakistan from the obligation of paying storage costs for the undelivered military equipment and reimbursing Pakistan for those amounts already paid, provided that these

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reimbursements would have no budgetary impact; (v) remove restrictions on return of any military items sent to the US for repair prior to 1 October 1990 with a certification that the equipment had not been significantly upgraded; and (vi) nothing in the amendment shall affect the MTCR sanctions on Pakistan (which had been applied earlier for the M-11 missiles from China).[65]

When this amendment was brought to the Senate floor, on 20 September, its opponents like Senators Glenn, Pressler, Levin and Sarbanes led the attempt for a filibuster which was defeated by a vote of 61 to 37 and then after five hours of debate, the amendment was adopted by 55 to 45 votes on 21 September.[66]

But Pakistan's opponents were still not done. They insisted that the House and Senate versions of the amendment had to be reconciled in a Joint House-Senate Conference. Fortunately, Pakistan's strongest supporter, Charlie Wilson, was in the Conference Committee who ensured that the amendment was adopted on 24 October. The extent of Indian involvement in this process became obvious when Indian embassy officials were seen crowding the hallway with their lobbyists, exchanging chits with their supporters inside the Conference room in a last-ditch effort to defeat the amendment.

Finally, the overall bill containing the Brown amendment was signed into law by President Clinton on 12 February 1996.

Continuing Complications

The adoption of the Brown amendment, despite its limited benefits for Pakistan, was a major step forward for Pakistan in relations with the US without making any unilateral concessions. The most important outcome was to damage the Pakistan-specific Pressler amendment while ensuring that the US recognised that henceforth only a regional approach on non-proliferation would be acceptable to Pakistan and that it would not make any unilateral concessions for American assistance. But, despite this setback, the efforts of the American non-proliferation lobby to ensnare Pakistan over proliferation issues continued. Now their objective was to derail the implementation of the Brown amendment and invoke other sanctions, such as under the Glenn and Symington amendments and/or to reverse the Brown amendment.

On 5 February 1996, after the adoption of the Brown amendment but before it was signed into law by the President, *The Washington Times* carried a report based on an intelligence leak that during 1995 a Chinese company had

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sold some 5,000 custom-made Ring Magnets to the Kahuta Research Labs (KRL) for alleged use in uranium enrichment centrifuges worth about 70,000 dollars. Within a day, Senator Pressler brought this issue to the Senate floor and threatened to table an amendment to reverse the Brown amendment. He also wrote to President Clinton in this regard as did Senator Glenn, both of them arguing that the military equipment should not be released to Pakistan under the Brown amendment. The administration announced that the "report" was being investigated and if it was determined that the ring magnets sale had indeed taken place, then the Symington sanctions would be automatically triggered. While the administration was still grappling with this issue, another report was leaked in the media that US intelligence had received indications that Pakistan had resumed production of weapons-grade uranium. Soon thereafter, National Security Adviser Sandy Berger, rushed to Islamabad to convey that President Clinton would have difficulty implementing the Brown amendment in these circumstances. The US also opened talks at the same time with the Chinese over the ring magnets issue. Then in mid-1996, US intelligence again leaked reports about transfer of Chinese M-11 missiles to Pakistan in crates which could be assembled at short notice. This was the second time that such allegations were made (see above). Yet another point of pressure that emerged in 1996 as the CTBT negotiations in the CD came towards a conclusion was for Pakistan to sign the CTBT even if India refused to do so in order to take "the high moral ground." Another issue in the CD on which Pakistan was blamed for stalling progress was on negotiations for a ban on fissile material production.

In Pakistan's view, these were attempts by opponents of the Brown amendment in the Administration and Congress to deny sanctions relief to Pakistan, in the hope that some unilateral concession could still be derived from Pakistan. On the other hand, the Administration took a benign and accommodating view of Indian actions which Pakistan repeatedly highlighted in Washington and Islamabad. These included Indian testing of the Prithvi and Agni missiles over the past year and then, in August 1995, preparations for a nuclear test in Pokhran, as was also reported in the American press.[67] What was especially galling for Pakistani officials was the continuing discrimination against Pakistan by the American non-proliferation advocates who exclusively focused on Pakistan but remained ambivalent at best towards

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Indian transgressions. This only served to persuade Pakistan to even more stridently pursue only a regional approach to non-proliferation and reject any unilateral measures.

For instance, one of the State Department's Political-Military Bureau officials told me that they recognised the "provocative" nature of Indian missile tests and the deployment of the Prithvi missile, but had been told by the Indians that this was a "technical demonstration." In their assessment, he said, "India had not developed warheads for missiles so they were not yet ready to use them as vehicles for delivery of nuclear weapons."[68] This was a disingenuous argument because the Indians could still use the missiles with conventional warheads and, in any case, deployment of the Pakistan-specific Prithvi had crossed a major threshold.

In the Ambassador's meeting with Defence Secretary Perry, she reminded him that after adoption of the Brown amendment a "water-shed had been reached" in bilateral relations but the media leaks against Pakistan over ring magnets and M-11 missiles could push the relations backwards. She also highlighted Pakistan's cooperation with the US in the CTBT negotiations which India was opposing, as also on fissile material cut-off issue. Moreover, she pointed out that India had rejected Pakistani and American proposals on missle non-proliferation issue. Perry replied that the "best we can do is to influence South Asian developments through engagement."[69] As regards the proliferation allegations against Pakistan, he said that "we require to come to findings and judgements" from a legal perspective, for which the President had final authority.

Deputy Secretary of State Talbott said (on 9 February 1996) after National Security Adviser Berger's visit to Pakistan that Berger had returned "more hopeful of finding a way through." He added that the US "wanted to get to post-Pressler" phase in relations with Pakistan and would "nudge India" towards a regional approach (on non-proliferation).[70]

Director for South Asia in the National Security Council (NSC), Bruce Riedel, told the Ambassador on 28 February, that Pressler's letter to the President and his initiative in Congress (regarding the ring magnets) would hopefully not create "a dynamic to undo Brown (amendment)" and that the State Department and NSC should "move sooner rather than later" to implement the Brown amendment. The Ambassador stressed that US reliability had been

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put into question by the media leaks and that Pakistan was being subjected to "trial by media." The question was "whether the sources leaking to the media were shaping (US) policy?" Riedel disclosed that Berger and Talbott were consulting within the administration to reach a determination (on the leaked reports), and acknowledged that "we owe you a decision one way or another."[71]

The same day, I was told by a State Department official that the ring magnets issue could trigger Symington amendment sanctions once a definite determination was made. He added that the ring magnets issue was minor compared with the issue of the resumption of HEU production by Pakistan. The administration, he said, wanted a dialogue to resolve these issues. I reiterated that Pakistan had denied these allegations but was prepared to discuss them. However, if Symington sanctions were applied on Pakistan, then there would be no possibility of any dialogue.[72]

On 29 February 1996, Senator Brown confirmed to the Ambassador that the administration "was split" on the action to be taken. Opponents of the Brown amendment in State and other departments did not want to release even the limited military equipment. He would be sending a letter to the administration to immediately release the equipment and the withheld funds. Regarding Pressler's move in Congress, he said that Pressler did not have the 60 votes he needed to overturn the Brown amendment.[73]

On 7 March 1996, the Ambassador conveyed a tough message to Deputy Secretary Talbott after speaking to the Prime Minister and Army Chief. She said that the impression in Islamabad was that "some people in Washington were not reconciled to the Brown amendment and were not in favour of improving bilateral relations." Consequently, a media campaign had been launched against Pakistan and it had been "subjected to a trial by media." As regards the alleged reports (about ring magnets and M-11 missiles), the facts had not been shared with Pakistan. The "positive momentum in relations had been jeopardised" and had "become hostage to media reports that were wrong." Some people were not interested in letting relations move forward. It was also the perception in Pakistan that its relations with the US "were being shaped by outside forces." At the same time, the Indians had been testing missiles, deployed the Pakistan-specific Prithvi missile, were conducting preparations for another nuclear test and had refused to accept the CTBT. In response, Talbott essentially waffled, saying there was no systematic campaign

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against Pakistan. He added that while the administration was not against what Clinton had promised Prime Minister Bhutto, the "Hill (Congress) was another matter" where the "zero-sum nature of Pakistan-India relations was replicated." Talbott added that "Friends of India (in Congress) do not accept our point of view that it is strategically important for the US to have good relations with Pakistan."[74]

While Talbott placed the blame on members of Congress for giving greater importance to relations with India over Pakistan, the fact was that members of the Administration, himself included (as later developments would demonstrate), were also similarly inclined.

In a later more substantive meeting with Assistant Secretary Raphel, on 10 May 1996, the Ambassador was informed that the administration was trying to "find a fix" to the issues. While the Administration believed that the ring magnets had been transferred, the question was whether these had been willfully transferred by the Chinese government." The US was talking to China and the Chinese could make a statement that they had not provided assistance to an un-safeguarded nuclear facility in Pakistan. In this case, the Symington sanctions would not apply to China. With regard to Pakistan, any transfer after 1994, by when waiver had been issued (by the Brown amendment), "would have to be sorted out." In case Symington would be applicable for post-1994 transfers, if so determined by the administration, then assistance for IMET, OPIC and UN peacekeeping would be affected. The Ambassador urged that a public formulation be made by the Administration that is useful and helpful to work out the issue.[75]

Eventually, the Clinton administration decided to finesse the issue in order to resolve the ring magnets and M-11 issues. On the ring magnets, it concluded that the Chinese government had not knowingly approved the sale and so avoided sanctioning the governments of China and Pakistan while blacklisting only the entities involved on both sides. In return, the US received a Chinese commitment that they would not sell Pakistan this nuclear equipment in future. As regards the M-11 missiles, the administration concluded that the intelligence information was not sufficiently conclusive to justify the imposition of sanctions.[76]

As a result, in March 1996, the US began implementation of the Brown amendment with the release of 368 million dollars of withheld military

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equipment and refunded 120 million dollars for equipment paid for before the 1990 sanctions but not produced. The F-16 issue, however, remained unresolved. The equipment that was released included the P-3C Orion reconnaissance aircraft, Harpoon Missiles, Howitzers, radars, F-16 Engine Kits and spares etc.

While one of the reasons for finding a "legislative fix" was undoubtedly the American need not to damage its trade relations with China, it was equally due to Pakistan's determined and focused diplomacy that succeeded in overcoming the hurdles created by the American non-proliferation lobby. But still, this determined group proved to be unrelenting in their efforts.

Non-Proliferation Dialogue

While the Brown amendment efforts were underway, Pakistan and the US agreed through an exchange of letters in February 1995, to hold talks on South Asian Security, Arms Control and Non-proliferation. They also agreed on a mandate for a Fissile Material Cut-off Convention which was that "the language of the mandate for the establishment of the Ad-hoc Committee on the Convention (in the CD) will not preclude any delegation from raising the issue of the appropriate scope of the Convention in the Ad-hoc Committee."[77] This covered Pakistan's contention that the scope of the deliberations and the Convention must include the issue of existing fissile material stockpiles and not just the ban on the production of future fissile material stocks. This would go on to guide Pakistan's position on the issue several years later.

The first substantive round of the bilateral dialogue was held in Washington on 21 November 1996. By this time, the Brown amendment had been adopted and was being implemented. The Pakistan side was led by Ambassador Munir Akram, then Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN and the CD in Geneva and the American side by Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs in the State Department, Robert Einhorn. The Americans said that President Clinton had supported the Brown amendment on the basis of the understanding reached with Prime Minister Bhutto during their meeting in April 1994 that Pakistan would maintain the status quo on the non-proliferation issue. However, there had been developments since then that changed the status quo such as additional production of fissile material and the construction of the Khushab reactor to produce plutonium which was outside safeguards. Pakistan had

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also acquired M-11 missiles from China. Pakistan's position on global non-proliferation efforts in the CD such as on Fissile Material Cutoff and CTBT was also "worrisome."

Ambassador Munir Akram replied that the Prime Minister, while agreeing to maintain the status quo had also underscored that Pakistan would not accept any unilateral obligations and that non-proliferation efforts had to be pursued at the regional level since Pakistan could not ignore Indian actions owing to its security concerns. He stated that restraint was being maintained on HEU production and the status had not changed. When Einhorn said that the American view of the status quo was no enrichment beyond 3-5 per cent, Ambassador Akram rejected this contention, saying that no percentage or figures of enrichment had been agreed upon by the Bhutto government and the US was now adding new conditionalities and raising the bar. Pakistan had only agreed not to resume HEU production and was maintaining this position. As for placing the Khushab facility under safeguards, Ambassador Akram said that, as was pointed out earlier by Pakistan, India also had similar plutonium-based facilities outside safeguards and so Pakistan shall not accept any unilateral measures. Regarding the M-11 missiles, Ambassador Akram said that if the Americans succeeded in restraining India from testing and deploying missiles such as the Pakistan-specific Prithvi missile, Pakistan would also be willing to show restraint. When Einhorn said that India had been developing but not deploying the Prithvi, our side responded that Indian preparations for deployment were already underway with the training of military brigades that would be handed these missiles.

On the CTBT negotiations, Ambassador Akram said that it was India that had linked this treaty to a time-bound global disarmament commitment. Pakistan supported the CTBT but would not sign it if India refused to do so. Regarding the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, he referred to the earlier bilateral understanding on the mandate of the negotiations which included consideration of existing stockpiles. While there may be difficulties in agreeing on how this would be done, the objective should not be abandoned.[78]

The importance of this dialogue was to frame Pakistan's position in future negotiations both with the US and in the CD. It also demonstrated that American concerns remained exclusively focused on Pakistan while India proceeded with its nuclear and missile programmes. For the Americans,

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growing relations with India took precedence over Indian proliferation activities. The Americans also felt that as the weaker power compared to India, Pakistan could be pressurised into eventually accepting unilateral non-proliferation measures. Events would soon prove them wrong.

CTBT

By August 1996 negotiations in the CD on the CTBT had reached a critical impasse. Using the consensus rule of the CD, India blocked the adoption of the CTBT, negotiations on which had by now produced a draft treaty text. Clearly unwilling to foreclose its option for conducting more nuclear tests, India used the tactic of demanding that the treaty be linked to a time-bound commitment for nuclear disarmament by the 5 nuclear powers. This led to a stalemate in the CD. Supporters of the treaty then proposed to forward the draft to the UN General Assembly for consideration. India blocked this move as well. Then pro-treaty countries decided to bypass the CD and placed the draft text directly before the UN for a vote, a move led by Australia. In the UN, India was isolated and failed to muster enough support to defeat the move.

Pakistan came under tremendous pressure from the US and its western allies to join the CTBT despite the Indian opposition, on the spurious argument that Pakistan should "occupy the high moral ground."[79] In Islamabad, there was an intense debate on the subject with the nuclear scientists arguing that though the country had conducted "cold" tests, there was no substitute for "hot" tests to confirm the reliability of the weapons. Accordingly, they argued that Pakistan should keep its options open in case India tested again. The Foreign Office, guided by advice from the Ambassador to the CD, Munir Akram, also advocated that the treaty should not be signed though it could be supported in the UN. Most importantly, national public opinion was strongly against the treaty which proved to be the deciding factor. In a meeting of all stakeholders convened by Prime Minister Bhutto which was also attended by Army Chief Jehangir Karamat, it was decided that Pakistan would not sign the CTBT and would reserve the right to conduct nuclear tests should this be required by national security considerations. Nevertheless, it was also decided to vote in favour of the treaty when it was voted upon in the UN General Assembly on 10 September 1996, which did not amount to signing the treaty. Pakistan also declared that it would unilaterally adhere to the letter and spirit of the treaty as

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long as testing was not required due to national security reasons. This would turn out to be a fatefully correct decision.

Despite the fact that India rejected the CTBT, the center-piece of Clinton's non-proliferation agenda, there was minimal negative impact on Indo-US relations, mainly owing to their growing economic and trade ties. This proved to be an important lesson for Pakistan when it was confronted by the choice whether or not to conduct nuclear tests following the Indian tests in May 1998.

Notes

[1] Author's notes and Foreign Office records.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
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6 | Paradigm Shift

The remaining years of the 1990s would bring about qualitative and far-reaching changes in the security dynamics of South Asia. From the perspective of Pakistan's security implications, a definite paradigm shift would take place.

To begin with, fateful political changes took place in Pakistan and then in India. Prime Minister Bhutto was dismissed by President Ghulam Ishaq in November 1996 and in February 1997, Nawaz Sharif was reelected as Prime Minister with a large mandate. In India, about a year later, in March 1998, BJP leader Vajpayee formed a coalition government. While in opposition Vajpayee and other BJP leaders had repeatedly advocated the Indian acquisition of nuclear weapons which was also a part of their election manifesto. Soon after his election, Vajpayee again spoke of the "induction" of nuclear weapons.

In September 1997, President Clinton, who had been re-elected, met Prime Minister Sharif for the first time in New York where they were both attending the UN General Assembly session. This meeting, however, was not dominated by the nuclear issue but was mostly devoted to bilateral cooperation, Kashmir, Pakistan-India relations and Afghanistan. Similarly, the visit by the new Secretary of State Madeline Albright to Pakistan (and India) in September 1997 did not focus on the nuclear issue. This was seemingly a deliberate decision to broaden relations with Pakistan and India and reduce the emphasis on nuclear proliferation. As a result, when reports of Pakistani acquisition of missiles from North Korea broke out in April 1998, which Pakistan denied, the issue did not become a major controversy and only led to sanctions on the entities involved which in any case were already under sanctions. (See previous chapter). Another sign of the changed approach was the adoption of the amendment by Senators Harkin and Warner to resume assistance to Pakistan under the Overseas Investment Cooperation (OPIC), International Military Education and Training (IMET) and Trade and Development (TDA) programmes in late 1997.

A change had also taken place at the Pakistan Embassy in Washington. Ambassador Lodhi resigned after Prime Minister Bhutto was defeated in the elections and Nawaz Sharif became Prime Minister. The Ambassador was

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replaced by Ambassador Riaz Khokhar, with whom I had served in New Delhi and knew him to be a tough and pragmatic professional diplomat of the highest calibre.

The Road to Nuclear Tests

With his focus on domestic issues, especially economic revival, Prime Minister Sharif was keen to improve relations with both the US and India. With the Clinton administration, he was able to establish a positive rapport, while with the short-lived Deve Gowda government, he succeeded in reviving the bilateral dialogue and the Foreign Secretaries of the two sides met in March 1997. When Gowda's government fell, Sharif engaged with his successor, I K Gujral and the two met at a SAARC Summit in Malé in May 1997. But, despite Gujral's claims about improving relations with Pakistan, he approved the deployment of the nuclear-capable Prithvi missiles in Jalandhar, close to the Pakistani border in June.[1] Pakistan, which was already aware of this development months earlier, described it as a "provocative act" when the deployment was confirmed by the US. Soon thereafter the bilateral Foreign Secretary-level talks also reached an impasse in September, with India reneging on its agreement to discuss Kashmir.

It was under such an uncertain backdrop in Indo-Pakistan relations that Indian elections were held in early 1998. To make matters worse, Vajpayee threatened during the election campaign that a "BJP government would take back the part of Kashmir under Pakistan's occupation."[2] The BJP manifesto also declared that it would "re-evaluate the country's nuclear policy and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons." This was a long-standing policy of the BJP which had earlier, when it was trying to form a coalition government in May 1996, ordered preparations for conducting nuclear tests. However, at that time BJP leader Vajpayee lost the vote of confidence 28 days after assuming power, owing to which the nuclear tests were not carried out, even though at least one nuclear device had been placed in a testing shaft.[3] After securing the March 1998 elections, Vajpayee as Prime Minister once again appointed a team of experts to formulate a National Agenda for Governance with the task to, inter alia, "ensure the security, territorial integrity and sovereignty of India, and to take all necessary steps and exercise all available options. Towards that end, to reevaluate the nuclear policy and exercise the option to induct nuclear

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weapons."[4] On 4 March 1998, the Chairman of the Indian Atomic Energy Commission, Dr R Chidambaram, told the Press Trust of India (PTI) that India was technologically prepared to go nuclear in the event of a decision to that effect by the new government.[5] The Convener of the BJP's Foreign Affairs Cell stated to journalists that "the BJP has been consistently promoting the idea that to merely say that India must retain the nuclear option is meaningless."[6] Indian Defence Minister George Fernandez declared that "if India's defence needs nuclear weapons, we shall not fight shy of inducting them."[7]

Despite these ominous signals from New Delhi, Prime Minister Sharif still hoped, perhaps naively, that he could engage Vajpayee's BJP-led government in bilateral talks on all issues including Kashmir and nuclear policy. He was also hopeful that the US would play a supportive role to encourage a revival of the Pakistan-India dialogue. What he received instead was a letter from US Secretary of State Madeline Albright dated 20 March 1998 suggesting a "strategic pause" by Pakistan, especially not to conduct the planned first test of the liquid-fueled Ghauri missile with a range to hit virtually all major Indian cities. The American communication indicated that a similar demarche was being made to India although no record of this exists. In any event, the real issue, at least from Pakistan's perspective, was for the US to focus on India's nuclear intentions, which were far more serious than Pakistan's missile testing since India had already carried out several tests of the Prithvi and Agni missiles which could target all of Pakistan. But the Americans seemed apparently oblivious to the threat of nuclear testing by the new Vajpayee government. In this situation, the Ghauri test went ahead as planned on 6 April 1998.

By late March 1998, Pakistani intelligence had already picked up signs of alarming unusual activity in Rajasthan State where the Indian Pokhran nuclear test site was located. These involved changes in train schedules, unusually heavy movements by trains and trucks towards the vicinity of the Pokhran test site and cancellation of leave for troops among other signals. The conclusion of Pakistan's intelligence community was that India was preparing for a nuclear test or tests. Accordingly, Prime Minister Sharif wrote to the leaders of the P-5 countries. The letter to the American President, dated 3 April 1998, was delivered by Ambassador Riaz Khokhar (accompanied by the Author) to the State Department. The letter stated that the "recent policy pronouncement by the new Indian government to exercise the option to

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induct nuclear weapons has qualitatively altered the security environment in our region" and that the "articulation in categorical terms of India's desire to be regarded as a nuclear weapon state and overt nuclearisation together with large Indian stock-piles of weapons-grade fissile material, development of ballistic missiles as well as reported possession of over one hundred atomic weapons, poses an immediate and grave threat to Pakistan's security." The letter further conveyed that "we have every reason to believe that the Indian policy pronouncement creates a giant step towards fully operationalising Indian nuclear policy." It also regretted that "unfortunately, the international community has continued to disregard the series of escalatory steps taken by India during the recent years on the nuclear and ballistic missile ladder." It then went on to warn that "Pakistan will be obliged to take cognizance of these alarming developments and it cannot but exercise its sovereign right to adopt appropriate measures to safeguard its security." The letter concluded by calling upon "all members of the international community to exercise their influence to restrain India from pursuing its nuclear ambitions."[8] While the letter was addressed to all permanent members of the Security Council, Pakistan looked especially at the US, in view of the Clinton administration's active advocacy of non-proliferation in South Asia to restrain India with which it was seeking a close strategic relationship. Unfortunately, the Americans did not respond to Pakistan's warning, probably dismissing it as Pakistani paranoia. This also demonstrated that the Clinton administration was in a state of denial about Indian intentions due to its eagerness to engage with India.

This American mindset was articulated shortly after Vajpayee's election in a seminar organised by the Asia Society addressed by Frank Wisner who had just ended his tenure as US Ambassador to India. Wisner spoke at length about India's new embrace of capitalism and its growing economic and trade links with the US, as an example of which he referred to the "Maharaja Burger" being marketed by the McDonald's franchise in New Delhi. When I questioned him about the Vajpayee government's likelihood of testing nuclear weapons, he replied that the new Indian government would not risk its growing relations with the US by conducting nuclear tests. Such views were also held by other senior officials in the Clinton administration, as reported by *The New York Times*.[9]

Meanwhile, the Indian government launched an elaborate disinformation campaign. On 26 March, N N Jha, a senior policy advisor to Vajpayee told US

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officials in New Delhi that his government had initiated a security policy review as part of its National Agenda for Governance which would take up to six months and had no plans to test nuclear weapons before then. On 14 April, the US Ambassador to the UN, Bill Richardson, met Prime Minister Vajpayee and other senior officials while touring India. He came away persuaded that there would be no tests.[10] The then-Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, gives further information about this visit in his book 'Engaging India'. According to Talbott, the American delegation met, apart from Prime Minister Vajpayee, his Principal Secretary Brajesh Mishra, Home Minister L K Advani, Defence Minister George Fernandez and head of the Planning Commission (and soon thereafter Minister for External Affairs) Jaswant Singh in an "off-line" meeting. Despite polite enquiries by the Americans, none of the Indians gave any indication of carrying out nuclear tests. In fact, in response to a question "whether there aren't going to be any surprises on testing", Fernandez replied "absolutely not."[11] From Talbott's account, it appears that in the last meeting with Vajpayee's closest aide, Jaswant Singh, the Americans did not even bother to ask about the Indian government's nuclear intentions.

In *The New York Times* article (referred to above), it was correctly argued that "The Indian denials were part of a sophisticated disinformation campaign, but they dovetailed with the administration's evident eagerness to believe that restraint would prevail," in view of growing relations with India. This was exactly our own assessment in the Washington embassy which was reported to Islamabad.

On 1 May, Indian Foreign Secretary Ragunath visited Washington to hold the bilateral "strategic dialogue" with Under Secretary of State, Tom Pickering, who asked him whether the new Indian government would continue to pursue a policy of nuclear restraint. Raghunath replied that it would.[12] When the Foreign Secretary called on National Security Advisor, Samuel Berger, the American side did not even bother to raise the issue of nuclear tests but, in fact, "praised India's restraint in not responding to Pakistan's testing of the (Ghauri) missile."[13]

Indeed, the Ghauri missile test seems to have weighed more heavily on American minds at the time than the possibility of another Indian nuclear test, despite Indian statements in this regard. Yet again there was an expectation of unilateral restraint by Pakistan on missile testing even though India had conducted several missile tests of its own. By now, it was also quite obvious that while Secretary of State Albright had written to ask for Pakistan's restraint

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by not conducting its Ghauri missile test, no such appeal had been made to India to demonstrate restraint in conducting missile or nuclear tests.

Even an academic like George Perkovich in his book on the Indian nuclear programme links the Ghauri test to the Indian nuclear tests, writing that "Pakistan's Ghauri test assuaged any doubts Vajpayee might have had. The BJP's historic toughness on national security would have sounded hollow if the government did not respond decisively to the new Pakistani threat."[14] This line of argument is untenable because the Indians could have tested one of their own missiles in response to the Ghauri test instead of testing nuclear weapons. Such arguments amount to ex-post-facto efforts to justify the Indian nuclear tests on flimsy grounds. Besides, the facts clearly establish that the BJP was already intent on nuclear testing as Vajpayee had even ordered the tests while in power for only two weeks in May 1996. They did not need any 'provocation' from Pakistan then or in May 1998.

Perkovich and others have also claimed that Indian officials such as Foreign Secretary Raghunath and others "were not in the loop" about the testing decision.[15] But certainly, Vajpayee himself and his close associates like Brajesh Mishra, George Fernandez and Jaswant Singh were either lying to the Americans or, as the Indians later claimed, they never denied such plans. This points to the conclusion that the Americans were not really pressing the Indians against testing which obviously sent the wrong message to the BJP leadership.

Indian Nuclear Tests

On 11 May 1998, Prime Minister Vajpayee announced to the media that "at 3.45 pm (Indian time) India had carried out three underground nuclear tests at the Pokhran test site of a fission device, a low-yield device and a thermonuclear device." He further stated that the "measured yields are in line with expected values..... Measurements have also confirmed that there was no release of radioactivity into the atmosphere."[16]

The same day the Indian Embassy in Washington circulated a press release issued in New Delhi stating that "these tests have established that India has proven capability for a weaponised nuclear programme. They also provide a valuable database which is useful in the design of nuclear weapons of different yields for different applications and for different delivery systems." The statement justified the tests on the grounds that the "government was deeply

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concerned.....about the nuclear environment in India's neighbourhood. These tests provide reassurance to the people of India that their national security interests are paramount and will be promoted and protected." It went on in a rather hypocritical manner to state that India "would like to reiterate its support for efforts to realise the goal of a truly comprehensive international arrangement which would prohibit underground nuclear testing of all weapons as well as related experiments described as sub-critical or hydro-nuclear." Moreover, the statement claimed that "India would be prepared to consider being an adherent to some of the undertakings of the CTBT;" remained "committed to a speedy process of nuclear disarmament leading to total and global elimination of nuclear weapons;" and "we shall also be happy to participate in the negotiations for the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament."[17] In a letter to President Clinton dated 11 May, Prime Minister Vajpayee tried to justify the tests by claiming that the threat from China motivated the tests, conveying that "we have an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders.....a state which committed armed aggression against India in 1962." Brajesh Mishra claimed that "we had to show a credible deterrent capability not only to the outside world, but to our own people."[18]

While the world was still coming to grips with this development, India conducted two more nuclear tests on 13 May of sub-kiloton devices "to generate additional data for improved computer simulation and other nuclear weapon experiments."[19] Obviously, the negative international reaction to the tests had not deterred India.

As India erupted in frenzied celebrations, Prime Minister Vajpayee and other leaders engaged in virulent belligerence, especially against Pakistan. Vajpayee claimed, "we have a big bomb now"[20] and separately stated that his government "will not hesitate to use these weapons in self-defence."[21] Home Minister L K Advani was more direct, stating that "Islamabad should realise the change in the geo-strategic situation in the region" and "roll back its anti-India policy, especially with regard to Kashmir."[22] A few days later he also declared that India would undertake "hot pursuit" to chase Kashmiri insurgents into Pakistan."[23]

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Pakistan's Response

At the time of the first series of Indian tests on 11 May, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was on an official visit to Kazakhstan to attend a Summit meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and on being informed of the development, cut short his visit and returned to Pakistan. The Indian tests did not come as a surprise to Pakistan whose position, in fact, had been vindicated. The first official response was made by Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan in the Senate on 11 May. He stated that "the news of the resumption of nuclear testing by India has not come as a surprise for us." He recalled that "for the past 24 years, Pakistan had consistently drawn the attention of the international community to India's nuclear aspirations" and had "also pointed out the duplicity surrounding India's political pronouncements and its clandestine nuclear weapons programme." But, he added, "The international community has, in fact, by adopting a dismissive approach, encouraged India to achieve its nuclear aspirations". He ended by warning that "Pakistan reserves the right to take all appropriate measures for its security" and that "The Prime Minister has assured the people of Pakistan that Pakistan's defence would be made impregnable against any Indian threat be it nuclear or conventional."[24]

The Prime Minister convened a meeting of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC) on 13 May. The meeting was also attended by the three services chiefs and General Zulfiqar, Director General of the Combat Development Directorate as well as his colleagues in the Directorate. Apart from the Foreign Minister, the Foreign Secretary and concerned Foreign Ministry officials were also present. The heads of the nuclear facilities, Dr A Q Khan of KRL and Dr Ashfaque Ahmad and Dr Samar Mubarakmand of the PAEC participated as well. Earlier, the Army Chief, General Karamat had alerted all Corps Commands and asked the 12 Corps (in Quetta) to secure the nuclear test site in the Raskoh hills in the Chagai district of Balochistan. The Air Force was also tasked to fly Combat Air Patrols covering all strategic and sensitive locations.[25] These measures were taken in anticipation of any preemptive strike by India or even the US or Israel on Pakistan's nuclear facilities.

The DCC considered Pakistan's options, taking into account the full spectrum of issues involved – the security, political and economic implications of Pakistan's response. The PAEC provided its assessment of the Indian nuclear

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tests of 11 May as the first order of business. According to its assessment, Pakistan's seismic station recorded only one test – and not three as claimed by India. The so-called "thermonuclear" test probably failed to ignite the secondary explosion and the third test probably fizzled out or might have been an experiment. The PAEC concluded that at best India had successfully conducted one nuclear test of 12 to 15 kiloton yield.[26] Later western sources would validate the conclusions of the PAEC.[27]

While the DCC meeting was underway, it was reported that India had conducted two additional tests of 2 sub-kiloton low-yield weapons.

As for Pakistan's response, the DCC meeting weighed the pros and cons of testing. It was obvious that a Pakistani test would lead to sanctions which would further exacerbate the country's economic challenges. But, by not testing, Pakistan's security would be compromised, and the country would face nuclear blackmail from India. The nuclear scientists and the Foreign Office were strongly in favour of testing while the economic team suggested caution with a more detailed evaluation of the consequences. The Armed Forces were also in favour of testing but, according to General Karamat, "wanted a political decision from the Cabinet and the DCC." He also said to the Author later that "it was clear that Pakistan had no option but to test, but needed to play for time until preparations for the test were completed."[28] The DCC concluded on the note to keep the decision pending regarding testing while the Prime Minister also consulted with the entire Cabinet.

Meanwhile, in Washington, all hell had broken loose. As Talbott admits, the Clinton administration learnt about the Indian tests on 11 May from CNN. He also admits this was a major intelligence and State Department failure not to have picked up signals about the Indian testing.[29] The initial reaction by the White House spokesman was that "the United States is deeply disappointed by the decision of the government of India to conduct these nuclear tests." He also pointed out that US laws would require sanctions on India. Another official source stated that "Washington would urge.....Pakistan to exercise restraint."[30] According to Talbott, in private, President Clinton was furious, saying "we're going to come down on those guys like a ton of bricks."[31] But in public, the White House expressed the President's "distress and displeasure." Clinton also called on Pakistan "not to follow suit."[32] This weak stance was followed by even further dilution in the American position in the briefing

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conducted by National Security Advisor Sandy Berger later on 11 May. He said, "we are deeply disappointed by India's decision to test nuclear weapons," adding that, "we think that it's an unfortunate development." Going on he said that "we would like to see restraint, on the part of India and on the part of Pakistan, both with respect to nuclear weapons programmes and with respect to ballistic missile programmes." Asked whether the Indian tests would put at risk the President's impending plan to travel to India, Berger said "our plans remain unchanged." Then he added, "the United States and India are the two largest democracies in the world. There's enormous amount of common interest that we have. But I think we have a better chance of deescalating or at least slowing these kinds of actions if we remain engaged than if we don't."[33]

It was early morning in Washington when the news about the Indian tests spread like wildfire in the media. Ambassador Khokhar had already been in touch on the telephone with the Foreign Minister as we had been informed about the Indian tests earlier by Islamabad given the time difference. Our first task was to give an assessment of the American official reaction. Personally, I had a deep sense of satisfaction at what the Indians had done – for two reasons. First, because it provided an opportunity for Pakistan to test its own nuclear weapons and end the cat-and-mouse game we had been playing with the Americans. Second, that we had been vindicated as hitherto our arguments about Indian proliferation had fallen on deaf American ears. Yet, we had to be objective in conveying our assessment of the American position. Throughout the day our contacts with State Department and National Security Council officials had revolved around American condemnation of India and assertions about sanctions on India along with advice that Pakistan should take the "high moral ground" by not testing which would also bring benefits for Pakistan, including the release of Pakistan's withheld F-16 aircraft plus economic assistance. We were also informed that President Clinton had decided to send a delegation headed by Deputy Secretary of State Talbott to Pakistan the same day and requested us to facilitate the visit. Our initial assessment of the American reaction based on statements issued by the administration thus far was largely sceptical about the position that the US would take over the longer term despite the fulminations in their immediate response. We argued that given the geo-political factors, the US would still continue to pursue a close strategic partnership with India and for this reason, it would eventually accept

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India's nuclear tests. We also conveyed that the Indian tests had provided an opportunity for Pakistan to test as well and that this opportunity may not present itself again. Still, it was recommended that we should not rush into a decision to test but wait to see what the Americans would actually do – against India and in Pakistan's favour. If, as we expected, nothing substantive would be done in either case, we would then be in a much more justifiable position to carry out our own nuclear tests.[34]

President Clinton also telephoned Prime Minister Sharif the same day. According to our records, the Prime Minister heard out the President but did not make any commitment. He highlighted the Indian threat posed to Pakistan and the growing demand within Pakistan to make a matching response. At best he agreed to wait before testing to consult his advisors and consider the American offer of assistance.[35] According to the American narrative, written by Strobe Talbott in his book, Clinton offered the F-16 planes, financial assistance and "a prize certain to appeal to Sharif – an invitation for him to make an official visit to Washington."[36] The offer of a visit, though in reality an empty gesture, was aimed at exploiting the unfortunate penchant among Pakistani leaders and not just Nawaz Sharif, who viewed a visit to the White House as a "reward" in itself. After the call, according to Talbott, Clinton said "you can almost hear the guy wringing his hands and sweating."[37]

Late that night, I received a call from Karl Inderfurth, who had replaced Robin Raphael as Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, and was part of Talbott's delegation waiting to leave for Pakistan, from the Central Command (Centcom) headquarters in Tampa, Florida. Inderfurth complained that their flight was still waiting for clearance from Pakistan and could not take off. I promised to convey this to Islamabad to resolve the problem. Actually, there was a difference of opinion within our government on whether or not to engage with the Americans before we had taken our own decision. The purpose was to prevent the Americans from exerting pressure on the Prime Minister before he had taken a decision to test. Later I was told by General Karamat that he had been contacted by Centcom Commander, General Antony Zinni, who was also part of the delegation, for his help to get approval for the American delegation's visit. General Karamat then persuaded the Prime Minister to clear the visit.[38]

Before the American delegation arrived, the Prime Minister chaired a full Cabinet meeting on 14 May. Broadly three views were expressed – those that

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favoured an immediate decision to test; those who wanted to wait and hear out the Americans and those who felt that Pakistan's economic situation was so dire that it could not afford to be under sanctions due to the tests and so should ask the Americans for enhanced military and economic assistance if not comprehensive security guarantees. Among the ministers in favour of the test were Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan, Information Minister Mushahid Hussain and Railway Minister Sheikh Rashid. The Prime Minister's Special Advisor, Raja Zafarul Haq also advised conducting the tests. But there were six other ministers who advised caution. There are conflicting reports about the Prime Minister's position. Some senior Foreign Ministry officials who were involved in the decision-making claim that Nawaz Sharif had "cold feet" and feared the economic impact of testing. They also claim that if the Foreign Office had not pushed hard, there would have been no tests.[39] But the then Finance Minister, Sartaj Aziz, later told the author that "Nawaz Sharif did not hesitate and had made up his mind after he returned from Kazakhstan", but that he "needed time to prepare for the tests."[40] Mr Aziz also stated that the Prime Minister asked that a contingency plan be prepared to deal with the impact of testing.[41]

Meanwhile, tremendous domestic pressure had built up on the Prime Minister due to the joint declaration by eleven political parties to demand nuclear tests and the resolution in the Senate presented by Benazir Bhutto, who was now the leader of the opposition. Across the border, India was also indulging in aggressive rhetoric. Members of Indian think tanks and the media began speculating that Pakistan lacked the technological capacity to carry out nuclear tests while nuclear experts argued that Pakistan did not possess enough weapons with useable fissile material to engage in a testing competition with India.[42] It, therefore, became obvious to the Pakistani decision-makers that only a demonstration of Pakistan's nuclear capability could equalise the score and ensure credible strategic deterrence with India.

In these circumstances, when Talbott's delegation met with Pakistani officials and later called on the Prime Minister as well as Army Chief, General Karamat on 15 May, the decision to conduct the tests had virtually been made. The only delay was getting the shafts ready for the tests in Chagai. According to then-Foreign Secretary, Shamshad Ahmad, Talbott had a one-point agenda – that Pakistan should not test and if did, US laws required imposition of

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sanctions. He was not willing to engage in discussions on regional security or the role that the US would be willing to play to constrain India nor how the US would be helpful to Pakistan. There was no mention at all of any US security guarantee for Pakistan.[43] The Americans in return got an earful, especially from some senior Foreign Ministry officials, who accused the US of trying to tie Pakistan's hands behind its back. The Americans were also criticised for having ignored Pakistan's warning about Indian intentions of carrying out nuclear tests conveyed in the Prime Minister's letter in April to President Clinton.[44] When Talbott brought up the possibility of releasing the F-16 planes, the Foreign Minister replied, in Talbott's own recounting of the meeting, that "those rotting and virtually obsolete airplanes" were "shoddy rugs you've tried to sell to us before." The Foreign Minister also conveyed rather presciently, that "The current burst of international outrage against India would dissipate rapidly" and that "India would get away with the test and the sanctions would wither away."[45]

Recalling his meeting with Talbott to me several years later, General Karamat said that "there were no threats or pressure from the American delegation. Talbott pointed out that sanctions would have to be imposed if Pakistan carried out its tests and Pakistan would be better off by not testing. General Karamat also said there was no offer of assistance or release of the F-16 aircraft.[46] (Probably by then the Americans had realised that this bait would not work). In Talbott's own narration of his meeting with General Karamat, "the cool customer in Rawalpindi," the Army Chief conveyed that what Pakistan "needed from the United States was a new, more solid relationship in which there was no arm twisting or forcing us into corners." Talbott adds that "by stressing this point, Karamat made clear that our arguments against testing did not impress him."[47]

Talbott paints a rather pathetic picture of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in his account of his meeting with the Prime Minister which he describes as a "Hamlet Act."[48] He claims that Sharif conveyed that "left to his own judgement he would not test" but that he was under political pressure from the opposition. The Prime Minister also conveyed, correctly as it turned out, that India would not only get away with what it had done but profit from it as well. Sharif also reportedly asked whether Clinton, on his planned visit to South Asia, would skip India on his trip which Talbott could not promise. Then, according to Talbott, the Prime

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Minister asked to talk to Talbott alone. This is a surprising assertion because it was Talbott who used the opportunity of an exclusive meeting to pass on a note from Secretary of State Albright urging Sharif to "hold firm against those clamouring to test and warning about the economic damage." According to Talbott, the Prime Minister read the note and looked at Talbott "with desperation in his eyes" and went on to say "please believe me when I tell you that my heart is with you. I appreciate – and would even privately agree with you – what you are advising us to do."[49] Talbott's version gels with the uncharitable and even dismissive view of the Prime Minister held by several officials from the Foreign Office but is contested by others close to Sharif. Perhaps Talbott misread the Prime Minister's low-key and polite demeanour.

In any event, General Karamat recalls that after meeting the American delegation, the Prime Minister called him to convey that Pakistan should go ahead with the tests. The General then spoke to Talbott on the phone while he was on his way to the airport after what was obviously a failed mission for the Americans. Sounding frustrated, Talbott said "do what you want, I have had it."[50]

Meanwhile in Washington, the Clinton administration was coming under severe criticism from the majority of Republicans in Congress. In a hearing convened by Senator Brownback, Chair of the South Asian Affairs Sub-Committee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on 13 May, Senator Jesse Helms, Chair of the full Committee, said that "I am absolutely astonished that the Indian government was able to catch the US intelligence community so sound asleep at the switch, revealing the stark reality that the administration's six-year cosying up to India has been a foolhardy and perilous substitute for common sense." He added that "India's actions demonstrate that the CTBT..... is scarcely more than a sham." Regarding Pakistan, he said that "I understand the position that Pakistan is in today. They are threatened, politically and militarily, and no doubt the Pakistanis feel enormous pressure to act." But he suggested that "Pakistan can be a partner to the United States in fighting nuclear proliferation."[51] Virtually all other Senators, even those who were pro -India, expressed similar criticism of Indian tests, while calling on Pakistan to show restraint. The lawmakers also asked the administration officials at the hearing what punitive measures apart from sanctions, would they impose on India. This was a question we at the embassy were also asked to gauge whether the administration would actually implement its tough talk against

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India. Hence our focus on this particular hearing. After much prodding by the Senators, Deputy Assistant Secretary Einhorn conceded that "it is certainly our ultimate goal to have all non-nuclear weapon states join the NPT," but he added that "we have to set our sights on what is achievable." Continuing he said that "we think in the near term, what is achievable is to ban all nuclear testing and ban additional production of un-safeguarded fissile material..... and to constrain missile programmes in a variety of ways."[52]

This position confirmed our suspicion that the Clinton administration would not go beyond the imposition of sanctions required by law against India while refraining from any efforts to roll back the Indian nuclear programme or offer any substantive guarantees to Pakistan for its security. In fact, this reluctance underscored the administration's larger interests with India due to which the sanctions would also be eventually withdrawn. Moreover, the freeze on further nuclear testing, ban on fissile material production and limiting missile developments which were applicable to both India and Pakistan, would leave Pakistan at a disadvantage, given India's head start in all these three areas. Therefore, our view was reinforced that Pakistan must test its nuclear weapons now before the Indians conceded to American demands and foreclosed our options.

To entice Pakistan, the administration was also working on Congress to repeal the Pressler sanctions and clear the delivery of the F-16 aircraft to Pakistan. Secretary of State Albright had been busy persuading members of Congress, especially those friendly to India, to adopt such legislation. A draft law had already been prepared for consideration by the Senate as a first step, which would be offered by Senator Brownback.[53]

Other 'informal' approaches were made to us as well. Since Ambassador Khokhar had by 14 May left for Islamabad for consultations, I was now the CdA in Washington and was called for a meeting by the Deputy National Security Adviser, James Steinberg. Stressing the need for Pakistan not to conduct its tests, Steinberg informed me that the administration was working to get Congressional approval for the release of the F-16 planes. While I undertook to convey the offer to Islamabad, I could not resist the temptation of telling Steinberg that the "US was trying to bribe Pakistan with what belonged to it anyway." I am sure he caught the irony. Other approaches, by people in the Washington think-tank community, included such offers as the US certifying a 'cold test' by Pakistan to

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confirm its nuclear weapons capability. I said that at this stage only a 'hot test' could establish credible deterrence against India. Another, rather lame proposal, was for the US to persuade China to conclude a defence or security treaty with Pakistan. I replied that if Pakistan and China wanted to conclude such a treaty, we did not need the Americans to intercede on our behalf.[54]

Former Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz told me later that Clinton conveyed a five-billion-dollar aid package plus the release of the aircraft to Prime Minister Sharif. But Talbott had made no such offer during his visit. Perhaps this had been conveyed through informal channels. The Prime Minister also mentioned this to General Karamat. Even so, nothing concrete emerged in the talks either in Islamabad or Washington.[55]

On 17 May, Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad travelled to China where he received a full understanding from the Chinese of Pakistan's decision to test. Pointing to the hardships we would face, the Chinese said that they would help Pakistan as best they could[56]

While Pakistani diplomats were in the process of engaging with the Chinese, the same day President Clinton was in Birmingham in the UK to attend a G-8 Summit. The Americans planned to get a strong condemnation in the G-8 declaration against the Indian test and a warning to Pakistan to desist from testing. Even though Prime Minister Sharif wrote to G-8 leaders before the Summit conveying our concerns, to us this seemed like a pointless exercise since the Indians had already tested and a G-8 statement was not going to prevent Pakistan from doing so either. Moreover, not all the G-8 countries were on the same page with the US on this issue. In fact, from our perspective, even the US position lacked any substance. While the UK would do what it was told by the US, France and Russia in particular, were not willing to strongly criticise India. Our assessment proved to be correct as the final G-8 Joint Communique indicated that the group was "unable to agree on concerted action to stop India or Pakistan from going their own way." Indeed, the text was "written in vague language to disguise serious disagreements over whether to apply economic sanctions against India or to threaten them against Pakistan." Explaining the outcome to the media, British Prime Minister Blair said that "this means individual countries will have their own individual responses". In fact, apart from the US, UK and Japan, the other countries "were inclined more to verbal warnings or mild reprimands of India."[57]

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Elsewhere in the world, the reaction to the Indian tests had been mild, to say the least. Only Japan suspended its aid to India while Australia and New Zealand withdrew their Ambassadors from New Delhi, with Australia also suspending defence links and non-humanitarian assistance. Clinton also tried to set up a "Troika" with Russia and China, as disclosed by Talbott, during the G-8 Summit, with the objective of persuading Pakistan and India to sign the CTBT and begin a peace process on Kashmir. But, American and Russian officials were opposed to this idea and advised their leaders against it. The proposal was immediately shelved.[58]

At this stage, the most relevant forum for Pakistan to highlight its position on the Indian nuclear tests was the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva. Pakistan's Ambassador to the CD, Munir Akram, made a tough and blunt statement on 14 May, castigating not only India but some of the major powers for their perfidy and discrimination against Pakistan, which had led to this situation. He recalled India's "endemic hostility" towards Pakistan since its independence and dismemberment of the country in 1971 as well as its brutal repression of the Kashmiris, while also pointing out the concentration of Indian armed forces on Pakistan's borders and attacks along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir. Referring to the latest situation, he recalled the BJP leadership's declaration to induct nuclear weapons and conduct attacks on Pakistan across the LoC. The nuclear tests were the first step in this direction. Stating that "it is essential to bear in mind the history and context of nuclear proliferation in South Asia," Ambassador Akram, stressed the difference between "the ambitions of India and the compulsions of Pakistan." He also stated that it was "essential to recall the inertia and the responsibility of certain major powers for this development which has grave portents for regional and international peace and security." India's ambitions to acquire nuclear weapons, though no secret, were "often disguised by chronic deceit and hypocrisy." It "acquired a research reactor and other nuclear facilities outside safeguards in the 1960s." It "refused to sign the NPT in 1968." It diverted nuclear fuel from its 'civilian' nuclear programme to conduct a so-called 'peaceful nuclear test' in 1974. Ambassador Akram added that for the record it should be recalled that "Canada supplied India's unsafeguarded CIRUS reactor, a heavy water plant, a nuclear fuel complex and two power reactors. The United States provided un-safeguarded heavy water, assistance in the construction of reprocessing

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facilities and in training dozens of experts in reprocessing. France offered special training in plutonium extraction from spent nuclear fuel."

In the development of India's missile programme as well, Ambassador Akram continued, it received assistance from major powers under the garb of a 'peaceful space programme.' The American Scout missile development in 1963 and 1964 involved the participation of Indian scientists and engineers which led to the development of the Agni missile. Western countries provided equipment and technologies, including liquid fuel technology, guidance and navigation systems, high-attitude rocket simulation electronics and the Viking rocket engine. As a result, the Pakistan-specific Prithvi missile was developed on the Viking rocket model. Moreover, despite the MTCR, India obtained at least one Cryogenic engine from Russia with 80 per cent of the design and technical information already in its hands.

By contrast, Pakistan's actions in the nuclear and missile fields taken in response to the escalatory steps by India, were subjected to "a series of discriminatory penalties, sanctions and restraints." This was done despite the restraint demonstrated by Pakistan – "after India's 1974 nuclear test, we did not reciprocate." Pakistan "exercised unilateral restraint in production of highly enriched uranium despite our concerns regarding India's larger plutonium stockpiles;" and made several proposals for bilateral and multilateral restraint to ensure non-proliferation and regional security. These included, as listed by Ambassador Akram: i) joint Indo-Pakistan declaration renouncing the acquisition of nuclear weapons (1978); mutual inspection by Pakistan and India of each other's nuclear facilities (1979); simultaneous adherence by Pakistan and India to the NPT (1979); simultaneous acceptance of full-scope IAEA safeguards (1979); a bilateral or regional nuclear test ban treaty (1987); and a South Asia Zero Missile Zone (1994). Pakistan also fully supported American initiatives such as the Five Nations talks and then the Nine Nations talks on non-proliferation and South Asian security. While India rejected all these initiatives, "what was most disappointing for Pakistan is the alacrity with which these initiatives were jettisoned by the proponents in the face of India's obdurate and bellicose rejection." What is more, according to Ambassador Akram, "when India threatened to veto the CTBT in the CD, it was told that it need not adhere to the Treaty so long as it did not block its transmission to the UN General Assembly."

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By comparison, the discrimination towards Pakistan was clear ever since the 1974 Indian nuclear test "when Canada reneged on its commitment to provide safeguarded fuel to Pakistan's safeguarded (KANUPP) civilian reactor; halted shipment of a fuel fabrication plant and terminated all civilian and safeguarded nuclear cooperation with Pakistan." The US, for its part, adopted the "Symington amendment which penalized acquisition of enrichment and reprocessing capabilities but only after 1976, thus effectively exempting India but not Pakistan." In 1979, US economic assistance "was terminated for contracting to purchase a reprocessing plant from France." Soon thereafter that "country was also obliged to renege on its contract" due to American pressure. But still, France was not halted from providing India with a vital shearing machine for its un-safeguarded reprocessing facility." Then in 1980, the US "shipped 38 tons of enriched uranium to India." Such discrimination against Pakistan was "further compounded by the (Pakistan) specific Pressler legislation" which was applied in 1990.

Ambassador Akram then pointed to the Indian statement after their 11 and 13 May tests that India would "be prepared to consider being an adherent to some of the undertakings in the CTBT dependent on a number of reciprocal activities and that it would be happy to participate in FMCT negotiations." This, the Ambassador said, "indicates a game plan to ease the cost of the nuclear tests." He also questioned whether the "demands now being made by the major powers (statement by Einhorn to the Senate as referred to above) that appear to match the offers the Indians were making was merely a coincidence? Ambassador Akram then stated, what later came to be true, that the undefined "reciprocal activities" demanded by India for acceptance of the CTBT was a reference to "India's desire for technology to carryout sub-critical tests, its demand for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council" or "even more ambitiously, for India to be acknowledged as a nuclear weapon state" and explore "deals for civil nuclear cooperation." He wondered whether "it is merely a coincidence that two nuclear powers (France and Russia) have recently expressed an interest in civil nuclear cooperation with India." He concluded by reiterating that "we will accept obligations only if these are equitable and non-discriminatory" and that "we will not accept unilateral obligations or commitments."[59]

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This statement was important for several reasons. It placed on record of the CD, the world's sole body for disarmament negotiations, the history of the developments leading up to the nuclear tests by India as well as its proliferation record. It also exposed the duplicity of the major proponents of non-proliferation such as the US, as well as their discriminatory policies towards Pakistan. Most importantly, it generated a better international understanding of Pakistan's compulsions to carry out its own nuclear tests.

Accordingly, to build on this momentum, Ambassador Munir Akram again addressed the CD on 19 May. He stated that the actions taken by India, such as "the testing, the policy declaration and now the threats, which by the way, are matched by actual movements on the ground, has created a situation of grave crisis in our region. It is a situation of political, military and indeed, nuclear crisis." Pakistan, he added, "had been asked to exercise restraint" and by our statements and our actions it was clear that "we have acted with circumspection and restraint." But, he emphasised that "we have to respond to the threat which is now posed to our security and indeed to our survival." He also said that "we must take into account – not only our capabilities but also the responses of the international community," regarding which he said Pakistan was "deeply disappointed" and described them as "examples of pusillanimity." Ambassador Akram went on to state that as a result, "non-proliferation as a political and legal norm has been completely torn apart by India's actions. The CTBT is now a questionable restraint.....(and) the FMCT is also, in our view, an entirely irrelevant goal at this moment." Replying to the (US) proposal to set up an Ad Hoc Committee on the Cut-Off Treaty (on fissile materials), he said that this "is a waste of time" and the CD "should focus on the real danger to non-proliferation, not resort to tokenism." He concluded with the warning: "Pakistan will do what it has to do and we will choose the time to do so."[60] The future course of Pakistan's policy on the CTBT and the FMCT was truly set on that day in the CD and would continue to the present time.

While it is self-evident that the Indian nuclear tests violated the political and legal norms of the international non-proliferation regime, the question remains about American acts of omission and commission that enabled India to conduct these tests and get away with them, as claimed by Pakistani officials. Some reports in the American media at the time certainly hold the US administration as being culpable or at least naïve. A Sikh community

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newspaper in North America published in Canada had reported even before the tests, on 7 May, that "feverish night time activities in the vicinity of the Pokhran test site" indicated "preparations for an Indian nuclear test" and the real purpose of Indian Foreign Secretary Raghunath's visit to Washington a week before the test was to "test the temperature of the non-proliferation lobby"[61] after the tests. *The Washington Post* editorial of 15 May, stated that the US should "ensure that testing does not lead to deployment;" and then it should "focus on the security requirements of Pakistan;" while also "imposing severe sanctions on India."[62] The same day an op-ed in the *Post* argued that "US sanctions against India are likely to inflict only modest economic punishment" and would "not (be) nearly as drastic as say, the near total embargo on Iraq's global trade, which is backed by a UN resolution."[63] An op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* of 15 May was even more severe. It stated that "if the guilty parties must be punished, beatings should start at the White House and continue at the State and Commerce Departments." It maintained that "much of the technology that enabled India stealthily to develop bigger and better nuclear weapons came from America." As examples, it referred to "the Clinton administration's 1995 decision permitting India to purchase American nuclear technology for use in un-safeguarded facilities" as well as the fact that "we sold them Super Computers and advanced CAD/CAM software that they could use for weapons design." The US also "sold them advanced control room technology and devices for artificial intelligence-based monitoring, along with robotics technology that could be used to handle dangerous materials." Continuing, the article stated that "the CIA had been rightly criticised for its failure to detect India's detonation plans" and that it "was naïve to think that India, which exploded its first nuclear device in 1974, wouldn't exploit our technology to strengthen its nuclear programme." The article further argued that "if the administration had been serious about non-proliferation, it would have insisted that the US be permitted to inspect all the sites that received American technology." It concluded by stating that "it is, therefore, unlikely that we will have any long-term success in convincing Pakistan to refrain from matching India's demonstration of nuclear power."[64] On 18 May, noted commentators Rowland Evans and Robert D Novak wrote in *The Washington Post* that "An urgent letter on 3 April from Pakistani Prime Minister.....that India was about to take a giant step towards testing and

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producing nuclear weapons.....rang no alarm bells in the White House." As a result," nuclear non-proliferation, the core of Clinton's post-cold war foreign policy, now lies in the wreckage of last week's underground testing pits in Rajasthan."[65] A major strategic analyst and former National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, along with Paul Craig Roberts, wrote in *The Washington Times* that "India's nuclear weapon tests.....highlight the failure of US anti-proliferation policy." As the reason for this failure, they stated that "the United States has never pursued a genuinely universal and non-discriminatory policy of halting proliferation. In fact, US policy all along has been one of selective and preferential proliferation." In these circumstances, they asked "Would anyone today in the shoes of a Pakistani Prime Minister feel inclined to take seriously American admonitions to abstain from acquiring and publicly demonstrating a Pakistani nuclear capability?"[66]

Unfortunately, such realistic advice from within the American system fell on deaf ears of the Clinton administration, which dithered between berating the Indians while also appeasing them. On the other hand, the Administration tried to persuade Pakistan not to test without seriously addressing its legitimate security concerns.

Danger of Attack on Pakistani Nuclear Facilities

Meanwhile, relations between Pakistan and India were on a razor's edge. Threats from the Indian leadership against Pakistan were further compounded when on 27 May, there were unconfirmed intelligence reports in Pakistan that Israeli warplanes had moved to Indian bases, raising concerns that there could be an attack on Pakistan's nuclear facilities. Both former Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad and General Karamat later confirmed receiving such reports and said that the Indians were immediately warned that Pakistan would definitely respond to any attack. The air force and air defence systems were also placed on red alert.

Pakistan also conveyed its concerns to the US and the UN Secretary-General.[67] Ambassador Khokhar in Washington spoke to senior officials at the State Department and the National Security Council. Within hours the Ambassador was assured that the Israelis had been contacted and they had confirmed that "all Israeli fighter aircraft were in Israel."[68]

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Referring to this incident, Talbott writes in his book, that "members of the Sharif government put out this story to show that a Pakistani test would be an act of self-defence."[69] But the fact is that Pakistan did not need such an excuse since it already had a major justification to test after the Indian tests.

Moreover, given the history of Indo-Israeli collaboration, perhaps with American connivance, to attack Pakistan's nuclear facilities, this report had to be taken seriously. The truth about such a threat may never be known, but at the time, given the increased tensions with India and the well-known American opposition to Pakistan conducting nuclear tests, it was entirely possible that Washington could encourage Israel to carry out an attack on Pakistani nuclear sites with Indian collaboration. After all such contingency planning between India and Israel had taken place since the early 1980s. Accordingly, Pakistan could not afford to lower its guard.

Pakistan's Finest Hour

As he had conveyed to Army Chief General Karamat soon after his last meeting with Talbott's team, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif convened another meeting of the DCC on 16 May to give formal approval to carry out the nuclear tests. While the nuclear scientists started preparations for the tests at the sites in the Ras Koh hills in Chagai and at another shaft in Kharan, both in the Balochistan province, the Army was entrusted with the task of providing logistical support and establishing a three-tier security perimeter around the test sites and the Air Force flew constant CAP missions to secure the air space over all sensitive strategic facilities. The decision was to conduct five tests at the Ras Koh sites and one at Kharan. By 28 May, all preparations were completed and at 3.16 pm Pakistan time, five nuclear devices were detonated under the Chagai hills. According to eyewitnesses, the granite mountains shook and threw up vast clouds of dust. When the dust settled, the dark rock mountains had changed to white due to deoxidisation.[70] These five tests were of boosted fission highly enriched uranium (HEU) devices with a total yield of 40 kilotons. One of them was the main device with a yield of 30 to 35 kilotons while the other four were low-yield weapons. Some international observers maintained that as per their calculations based on seismic data, it was a single weapon fission test with a six to twelve-kiloton yield with the possibility of some other experimental explosions.[71] But even these sceptics could not deny

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that a working nuclear weapon had been successfully tested and Pakistan had emerged as a nuclear weapon state. Two days later, on 30 May, the sixth nuclear test took place in Kharan at 1.10 pm. According to Shahid-ur-Rehman in his book *Long Road to Chagai*, this was said to be a "miniaturised device" with a yield of about 18 to 20 kilotons. This test was of immense significance because it was the latest and best design developed by the PAEC and since it was a miniaturised device, it could be delivered by Pakistan's short-range ballistic missiles and aircraft. However, highly knowledgeable authorities have rejected this assessment.[72]

Immediately after the announcement of the 28 May tests, spontaneous celebrations broke out all over the country. Prime Minister Sharif, in his televised speech on 28 May evening famously said, "Today we have settled the score with India." In the written text prepared by the Foreign Office, he congratulated the nation on this feat, especially the nuclear scientists, engineers and technicians. Referring to the Indian tests as having "rapidly altered the strategic balance in our region," he said that "as a self-respecting nation, we had no choice left to us." Sharif also recalled that "our warnings remained unheeded" and "our initiatives to keep South Asia free of nuclear and ballistic weapon systems were spurned." Moreover, "The international response to the Indian nuclear tests did not factor the security situation in our region" and "while asking us to exercise restraint, powerful voices urged acceptance of the Indian weaponisation as a fait accompli." He added that since, "Pakistan's legitimate security concerns were not addressed, even after the threat of use of a nuclear weapon and nuclear blackmail," Pakistan could "not have ignored the magnitude of the threat." Still, the Prime Minister extended the assurance that "these weapons are to deter aggression, whether nuclear or conventional" and while Pakistan was "undertaking a re-evaluation of the applicability and relevance of the global non-proliferation regime to a nuclearised South Asia," Pakistan remained "ready to engage in a constructive dialogue with other countries, especially the major powers, on ways and means to promote these goals in the new circumstances." Even with regard to India, the Prime Minister said, "we are prepared to resume the Pakistan-India dialogue to address all outstanding issues, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir as well as peace and security." Turning to the emerging nuclear policy of the country, Sharif stated that "we are fully conscious of the need to handle these weapons with the highest sense of responsibility." He further assured that "we have not and

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will not transfer sensitive technologies to other states or entities" but at the same "Pakistan will oppose all unjust embargoes aimed at preventing it from exercising its right to develop various technologies for self-defence or peaceful purposes."[73]

The Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs described the tests in its statement as "Pakistan's finest hour."[74] This reflected the sentiments of most Pakistanis – not just as an expression of newly acquired national power but also as the culmination of a long struggle to ensure national security in the face of western discrimination and Indian intimidation. But the statement was also moderated by the offer of dialogue to India to resolve all outstanding disputes and ensure nuclear stabilisation in the region as well as a commitment to the international community for continuing responsibility and restraint.

In Geneva, the CD convened a special session, perhaps the first in its history, on 2 June, which Pakistan welcomed, unlike the Indians who had refused to accept such a session after their tests. Addressing the session, Ambassador Munir Akram said that three factors influenced Pakistan's decision to test – i) escalation in the provocations and threats emanating from India; ii) the weak and partial response of the world community to India's tests and threats; and iii) the need to establish the credibility of Pakistan's capability to deter any aggression against the country. He also emphasised the difference between the Indian and Pakistani tests as crucial. India's tests "were a provocateur" while "Pakistan's were a reaction." India's tests "destabilised the security balance in South Asia" whereas "Pakistan's tests have reestablished the balance of mutual deterrence". Regarding the future, Ambassador Akram stated that Pakistan's position on the CTBT, the FMCT and missile capabilities would depend on Indian actions and policies. Pakistan, he stressed, "cannot afford to allow India to once again destabilise the balance of deterrence."[75]

It is also noteworthy that a day before the tests, Prime Minister Sharif telephoned President Clinton to inform him in advance that the tests were going to take place. Unlike the Indian leadership, he did not act in a surreptitious and deceptive manner. While this did not obviously prevent the imposition of subsequent American sanctions, Clinton at least acknowledged in his public remarks that India had instigated the crisis and that Pakistan had been forced to respond.

In his first remarks to the press at the White House on 28 May, Clinton said "I deplore the decision. By failing to exercise restraint in responding to the Indian test, Pakistan lost a truly priceless opportunity to strengthen its

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own security, to improve its political standing in the eyes of the world. And although Pakistan was not first to test, two wrongs don't make a right."[76] In a State Department press briefing Deputy Secretary Talbott also said that "what is indisputable.....is that India tested first and put Pakistan under horrendous pressure." He further acknowledged that "they (Pakistan) played very straight with us. They told us that they.....felt under mounting pressure as a result of public opinion, parliamentary pressure.....and as a result of the dynamics in the region." Referring to the future course of US policy, Talbott said that though sanctions under US law would be applied to both India and Pakistan, "our long-range goals are peace in South Asia; military stability and balance....., (and) a political dialogue between India and Pakistan." In terms of immediate US goals, Talbott said, these "are that the two countries renounce further testing; that both sign the CTBT;.....seriously join negotiations on a cut-off of the production of fissile materials.....and they undertake not to weaponize or deploy ballistic missiles."[77]

In his statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Sub-Committee on South Asia on 3 June, Assistant Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth said that "Pakistan's decision to test was not entirely unexpected" even though the US had tried to persuade Pakistan "to capture the political and moral high ground." In the short term, he said that the administration was focusing "on ways to prevent further provocative acts such as missile testing and deployment" and "encouraging the immediate resumption of direct dialogue between India and Pakistan." Regarding imposition of sanctions, Inderfurth said "we do not wish to make international pariahs out of either India or Pakistan." In the longer term, he elaborated, the US would ask both countries to i) sign and ratify the CTBT without delay or conditions; ii) halt production of fissile material and participate constructively in FMCT negotiations; iii)accept IAEA safeguards on all nuclear facilities; iv) maintain existing restraints against sharing nuclear and missile technology or equipment with others; and v) agree upon a framework to reduce bilateral tensions, including on Kashmir.[78]

The US sanctions on India and Pakistan were announced on 29 May, under the Glenn amendment. These included termination of assistance except for humanitarian assistance or food or other agricultural commodities; termination of sales of defence articles, services and licenses for the export of any items on the munitions test; termination of all foreign military financing; denial of

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any credit, credit guarantees or other financial assistance by any department, agency or instrumentality of the US government; opposition by the US to any loan or financial or technical assistance by an International Financial Institution (IFI); prohibiting US banks from making any loan or providing any credit, except for the purpose of purchasing food or other agricultural commodities; and prohibiting the export of specific goods and technologies subject to export licensing by the Commerce Department. The statement acknowledged that the most significant impact on Pakistan would be the cut-off in funding from the IFIs such as the IMF and World Bank. However, later the US signalled to the IFIs that it would not block IFI assistance to Pakistan.[79]

Meanwhile, in anticipation of these sanctions, Pakistan had already approached friendly countries like Saudi Arabia and China for assistance. The Saudis promised 100 thousand tons of crude oil and 100 thousand tons of furnace oil, plus 500 million dollars free grant for five years.[80] An unspecified but significant amount of assistance was also received from China. Such support along with IFI funding which the US did not veto helped Pakistan to avoid default on its balance of payments, although the government's freezing of private foreign currency accounts at the time created unnecessary hardship and was highly controversial at the time. In any event, Pakistan was already accustomed to American sanctions and was able, over time, to deal with the economic impact of the new sanctions.

International Reaction

Even though the Indians had tried to goad Pakistan into testing, many Indians were surprised by the tests, perhaps because in their arrogance they believed that Pakistan lacked the capability to do so. As a result, there was pandemonium in the Indian Lok Sabha which was in session at the time of the Pakistani tests. According to George Perkovich, "politicians seemed genuinely surprised and the House erupted in shouting and finger wagging as opposition parliamentarians accused the government of harming the nation's security by provoking a nuclear arms race." Prime Minister Vajpayee asked opposition leaders "to give the message that ..... the country is together," but the uproar continued, and the day's session had to be called off. In this acrimonious debate, an opposition Janata Dal leader, S Jaipal Reddy, accurately described the situation by stating that "India had a decisive military edge over Pakistan.

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We must remember that an atom bomb is a great equaliser. With this test, the edge that India had has been wiped out".[81] Indeed, from then onwards to the present, India has been making unsuccessful efforts to regain this edge.

To salvage what was left of American no-proliferation goals, the US persuaded the other P-5 countries to issue a joint communique regarding the Indian and Pakistani tests. The foreign ministers of the UK, France, Russia and China met with the US Secretary of State in Geneva on 4 June and in their Communique "condemned" these tests, expressed their "deep concern about the danger to peace and stability in the region," and pledged to "cooperate closely in urgent efforts to prevent a nuclear and missile arms race in the sub-continent," to "bolster the non-proliferation regime and to encourage reconciliation and peaceful resolution of differences between India and Pakistan." In particular, they asked India and Pakistan to "stop all further tests, refrain from the weaponization or deployment of nuclear weapons, from the testing or deployment of missiles.....and from any further production of fissile material for nuclear weapons." In terms of specific steps, they called on both to "adhere to the CTBT immediately and unconditionally.....participate in negotiations with other states in the Conference on Disarmament for a Fissile Material Cut-off Convention, not to weaponise or deploy nuclear weapons or missiles.....and not to export equipment, materials or technology." With a focus more on India than Pakistan, the Chinese insisted on including in the Communique on behalf of the P-5 that "Their goal continues to be adherence by all countries, including India and Pakistan, to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) as it stands, without any modification" and that "India and Pakistan do not have the status of nuclear weapon states in accordance with the NPT." For China, this was an important objective in order to preempt any Indian effort to gate crash into the NPT as a nuclear weapon state and thereby attain equivalence in status with China. Since Pakistan had also carried out nuclear tests, China, however, could not avoid a reference to Pakistan in the same context. This was clarified to Pakistan separately in advance by China. Also, with Chinese insistence and American acceptance in order to put pressure on India, the Communique again declared that the P-5 would "actively encourage India and Pakistan to find mutually acceptable solutions, through direct dialogue, that address the root causes of the tension, including Kashmir."[82]

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In its reaction, Pakistan welcomed the P-5 Communique. The Spokesman of the Foreign Office issued a statement on the same day, 4 June, which declared that "we note with satisfaction that the P-5 have adopted a comprehensive approach to peace and security in South Asia and had addressed not only the non-proliferation issue but also the threat to peace and security, including the need for a solution of the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir." While supporting the P-5 call for resumption of bilateral talks, the statement stressed the "need (for it) to be supplemented by a broader multilateral process to promote desirable peace and security in South Asia." Affirming that Pakistan had "always exercised utmost restraint" and recalling Pakistan's offers of bilateral or regional non-proliferation arrangements, the statement stressed: "However, Pakistan will not allow itself to be placed in a position of strategic vulnerability or inequality."[83]

Predictably, the Indians opposed the P-5 Communique but there was also a realisation in their response that the pressure being built upon India could not be resisted. The Indian reply made on 5 June claimed that "India has a consistent record as a responsible member of the international community, and a pioneer and leading participant in the movement towards global nuclear disarmament." It regretted that "the world is still far from establishing a comprehensive and equitable regime of nuclear disarmament, primarily because the nuclear weapon states have not taken credible and effective steps towards this goal," adding that "what has been put in place is a deeply flawed and discriminatory non-proliferation treaty which has legitimised the possession of nuclear weapons by a few countries and their presence in our neighbourhood," which was a clear reference to China. Accordingly, the Indians maintained, "It is this adverse security environment that has compelled us to take the decision to carry out nuclear weapon tests." But in an obvious gesture of accommodation, India's statement declared that it would: i) observe a voluntary moratorium and refrain from conducting further nuclear tests, while being willing to move to a de jure formulation of this declaration; ii) participate in negotiations on the FMCT in the CD; iii) would be ready to discuss a non-first use agreement bilaterally with Pakistan as also with other countries, bilaterally or in a collective forum; and iv) engage in a broad-based dialogue with Pakistan on issues of peace and security and Jammu and Kashmir. However, the statement made clear "that there is no room for any outside involvement of any nature whatsoever in this process."[84]

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On 6 June, in New York, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1172, which was largely based on the P-5 Communique adopted two days earlier. This resolution "condemned the nuclear tests conducted by India on 11 and 13 May and by Pakistan on 28 and 30 May 1998." The mentioning of the specific dates was done at China's insistence following a request by Pakistan to ensure the sequence of the tests so that it would be clear that Pakistan had been compelled to respond to the Indian tests. In substantive terms, the resolution repeated the objectives of the P-5 Communique that India and Pakistan: refrain from further nuclear tests; exercise maximum restraint; resume their bilateral dialogue including on Kashmir; stop their nuclear weapons development programmes; refrain from weaponisation or deployment of nuclear weapons; cease development of ballistic missiles; stop further production of fissile material and not export equipment, material or technology that would contribute to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or missile capabilities. The resolution also called on India and Pakistan to join the NPT (as non-nuclear weapon states) and the CTBT apart from participating in FMCT negotiations. Again at China's insistence, the Security Council affirmed "its full commitment to and the crucial importance of the NPT and the CTBT.....as essential foundations for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament" and expressed its "firm conviction that the international regime on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons should be maintained and consolidated." Resolution 1172 also contained two other substantive paragraphs in its operative part that would become highly relevant later as stipulations that the US would violate in a few years to engage in civilian nuclear cooperation with India. One of these paragraphs called for the "full realization and effective implementation of all the provisions of the NPT" and welcomed the "determination of the five nuclear weapon states to fulfill their commitments relating to nuclear disarmament under Article VI of the NPT" (which disallowed nuclear cooperation with any non-NPT state). The other paragraph in this context stipulated: "Encourages all states to prevent the export of equipment, materials or technology that could in any way assist programmes in India or Pakistan for nuclear weapons or for ballistic missiles."[85] But this is exactly what the US did in violation of Resolution 1172 during the changed geo-political environment of the mid-2000s while pursuing its strategic partnership with India to contain China.

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Paradigm Shift

Pakistan's nuclear tests were variously described as settling the score with India, restoring strategic balance, ensuring strategic stability and as an equaliser with India. The tests were all these but much more. In essence, the tests brought about a paradigm shift in the historic correlation of power between Pakistan and India and replaced it with a new security calculus between the hitherto more powerful India and the comparatively weaker Pakistan. Perhaps without fully recognising the significance of his statement, Indian opposition leader, S Jaipal Reddy, had hit the nail on its head when he argued in the Lok Sabha that India had lost its decisive military edge over Pakistan since an atom bomb is a great equaliser. Indeed, India's numerical advantage in conventional weapons over Pakistan which had existed since the independence of the two countries, was wiped out overnight with Pakistan's nuclear tests. Deterrence based on conventional weapons which had favoured India had moved to another level – deterrence based on nuclear weapons in which both sides were at par. In short, deterrence based on Mutual Assured Destruction backed by nuclear weapons on both sides, had neutralised India's numerical advantage in conventional weapons. While this transition had started since the mid-1980s, when Pakistan conducted its "cold" nuclear test, following which an unofficial and covert "non-weaponised" deterrence had prevented conflicts during the 1986-87 "BrassTacks" crisis or after the 1990 Kashmiri uprising, Pakistan's practical demonstration of its nuclear weapons capability established the credibility of its overt weaponised nuclear deterrence. Consequently, there was no longer any room for doubt or ambiguity about the new strategic equation between the two countries.

This paradigm shift denoted a qualitative transformation in Pakistan's security imperative in several dimensions. Firstly, the imperative of ensuring national security was now firmly in Pakistan's own hands and capabilities. It would no longer need the crutch of external support or alliances to ensure its security as it had done since independence. Secondly, for the first time in its history, Pakistan would be able to effectively protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity despite India's greater conventional power capabilities which it had used to dismember Pakistan in 1971. Thirdly, because of the nuclear "equaliser", Pakistan would be able to deal with India on an equal footing despite India's larger size and population. Fourthly, the establishment

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of mutually assured destruction had ensured, for the first time in the region, an environment of relative strategic stability. And lastly, Pakistan would no longer be vulnerable to discriminatory demands for showing restraint as it now had the capability to reject such discrimination.

But, while the security calculus had changed in Pakistan's favour, the dynamic nature of credible deterrence would certainly require adapting to the changing political, security, military and technological developments in the future. In this respect, there would be new challenges that would need to be overcome in the coming years. Equally important would be the need to overcome the challenges posed by continuing internal political instability and chronic economic problems which the achievement of nuclear deterrence could not resolve.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the attainment of nuclear weapons capability by Pakistan had changed the security dynamics in South Asia. A paradigm shift had taken place with far-reaching impact on Pakistan's security imperative and regional strategic stability in the years ahead.

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7 | Dialogues and Doctrines

After having established Mutual Assured Destruction as a result of their respective nuclear tests, the immediate task for Pakistan and India was to deal with the repercussions. This involved responding to international criticism, especially from the United States and its allies, which required a sustained dialogue with the US. Equally if not more important was the need for a bilateral Pakistan-India dialogue to manage relations in a qualitatively more dangerous environment under the shadow of nuclear weapons. At the same time, it was necessary to evolve a nuclear doctrine that was consistent with the country's strategic requirements and integrated with its overall defence posture.

The underlying factor that determined the direction of both the dialogues and doctrines was the respective rationale for the nuclear tests by Pakistan and India. For Pakistan, the rationale was simple and straightforward – a defensive response to establish credible nuclear deterrence against India. As such it was security driven and specific to deterrence against India, not any other country. It also did not seek parity with India and, therefore, eschewed any nuclear arms race with India.

In this spirit, Pakistan announced on 11 June 1998 its unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing and invited India to conclude a bilateral moratorium on further nuclear tests.

The Indian rationale was more ambitious and convoluted. The Indian nuclear tests were at times projected as necessary for deterrence against China or Pakistan or both. At other times, it was claimed that the tests were in response to the failure of the five nuclear weapons states to undertake nuclear disarmament and the imposition of permanent discrimination against non-nuclear weapon states by the indefinite extension of the NPT. Still another argument was that India, as an emerging great power, was entitled to possession of nuclear weapons, as the other five major powers. In effect, therefore, the Indian justification was status-driven, and was not country-specific. It also sought to retain the Indian advantage in conventional weapons capabilities, especially against Pakistan, by pledging not to be the first to use nuclear weapons or No First Use (NFU) of nuclear weapons in order to keep any future conflict with Pakistan at the conventional level and below the nuclear

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threshold. The NFU pledge was also meant to project India internationally as a 'responsible' nuclear-weapon state. At the same time, India claimed to pursue a 'limited' nuclear capability, but since this capability was not country-specific, it did not specify how 'limited' its nuclear arsenal would be.

This asymmetry in the rationales for their nuclear tests between Pakistan and India determined their respective positions in their dialogues with the US and between themselves, as well as in the formulation of their respective nuclear doctrines.

Dialogues

On 17 July 1998, US President Clinton wrote to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif proposing a dialogue with the US on nuclear-related issues. He offered to remove or at least minimise sanctions in return for steps by Pakistan that were earlier spelt out in the P-5 Communiqué of 4 June 1998 and in UN Security Council resolution 1172, adopted on 6 June 1998 (Discussed in Chapter 6). In brief, these 'bench-marks' called for i) adherence to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); ii) cessation of unsafeguarded fissile material production and accelerated progress on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) in the Conference on Disarmament (CD); iii) limits on the production of missiles and a commitment not to deploy ballistic missiles; iv) acceptance of international norms and guidelines to control the export of dangerous technologies; and v) resumption of direct Pakistan-India dialogue to address all issues, including Kashmir. Pakistan was also informed that a similar approach had been made to India and that Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, would be leading a team to the region for talks with both countries.[1]

In fact, the Indians were already in touch with the Clinton administration after Prime Minister Vajpayee realized that his decision to carry out nuclear tests had isolated India and was especially rattled by the references to Kashmir in the P-5 Communiqué and the UN Security Council Resolution 1172. Vajpayee tasked his close aide, Jaswant Singh, who would go on to become Minister for External Affairs, to engage with American officials in order to lower tensions. As described by Talbott in his book "Engaging India", the Indians approached the administration first through George Perkovich, the American academic who was then working on his book "India's Nuclear Bomb" and through Frank Wisner who had recently served as American

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Ambassador to India. These two helped set up Jaswant Singh's meeting with Talbott on 12 June 1998 in Washington. He was told that the US would be ready to ease sanctions provided India committed not to carry out nuclear tests in future while also accepting other measures for nuclear and missile restraint. Of course, this was a secret meeting and was made public only after Talbott's book was published in 2004. At the time, Jaswant Singh, according to Talbott, agreed to "find a modus vivendi with the US and with the global nuclear order."[2]

The two sides met again, this time with full delegations, at a Frankfurt Airport hotel on 9-10 July 1998. As summed up by Talbott, the Americans tried to convince the Indians that the "best way to get sanctions lifted and put US-India relations on a favourable course was for them to adopt the restraints urged upon them by the P-5 members of the Security Council in their Geneva Communiqué." The Indian response was to persuade the US that the best way to create a climate for cooperation, including on the issue of nuclear weapons, was to lift sanctions. Then, once the two sides were dealing with each other as equals, maybe something could be worked out on non-proliferation."[3]

It was against this backdrop that the formal American dialogue began separately with Pakistan and India involving eight rounds spread over from July 1998 to February 1999. According to the Americans, the agenda was the same with both sides and revolved around the five bench-marks that had been conveyed by Clinton to Nawaz Sharif. However, at the time, there was no way for Pakistan to be certain of the nature of the talks being held by the Americans in New Delhi. But in hindsight after several years, it became clear, as stated by Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad, the "US was playing a double game – claiming to ask both countries to demonstrate restraint but in reality talking to the Indians about their nuclear normalisation."[4] This indeed was the Indian agenda and it is implicitly acknowledged by Talbott in recounting of his talks with Jaswant Singh over the eight rounds of their dialogue. As Talbott writes "Its (India's) strategy was to play for the day when the United States would get over its huffing and puffing and, with a sigh of exhaustion or a shrug of resignation, accept a nuclear-armed India as a fully responsible and a fully entitled member of the international community."[5] By not sharing India's delaying and diversionary tactics with Pakistan, Talbott was actually being deceitful and misleading Pakistan, though he claims that this would

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have "embarrassed the Indians."[6] This is a very weak argument indeed as the differentiated American approach towards Pakistan and India shaped the course of subsequently dangerous developments.

In the eight rounds of talks, the Indians led the Americans in a merry-go-round that if anything should have embarrassed Talbott and not the Indians. From the start, Jaswant Singh obfuscated and demurred – even objecting that India had to do anything at America's behest. Rejecting the term 'benchmarks' set the tone for rejecting the benchmarks themselves; on the grounds that these benchmarks – CTBT, fissile materials and strategic restraints – "were based on American judgments about Indian defence requirements." The most that Singh committed to "was a timetable for his own efforts to move his government in the right direction."[7] Eventually, by the time the Indo-US dialogue ended in February 1999, the Indians had only given the assurance that they would abide by their unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing but refused to sign the CTBT. In the words of George Perkovich, "the early post-Pokhran-II period ended with India's political leader unable or unwilling to impose clear limits on the ambitions of the weaponeers, who wanted to produce an even larger gamut of nuclear weapons and delivery systems."[8]

By contrast, the Pakistani side engaged much more constructively with the Americans while still protecting national security interests. This required elaboration of a negotiating strategy, worked out jointly by the Foreign Office and the Army's Combat Development Directorate, to reject any unilateral restraint measures, resist economic pressure and avoid an arms race with India. But unfortunately, largely due to economic compulsions that required relief from sanctions, Pakistan did not bargain hard for the big prize as India did for acceptance as a de-facto and legitimate nuclear-weapon state. Instead, it negotiated within the parameters set by the US even though it did not compromise on issues that were critical to maintaining credible deterrence against India. In this sense, Talbott is wrong to claim that "the Pakistanis had no game plan."[9] In fact, the Pakistani side had fully prepared its position on each of the issues raised by the Americans and even presented their own alternative proposals. According to former Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad, who was the lead Pakistani negotiator, Pakistan's "key concerns were security, sanctions relief, equal treatment with India and Kashmir."[10] Detailed responses were given to each of the American benchmarks and "we were able

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to make and defend our case" even though "our task was more complex and difficult because Pakistan was under heavy economic sanctions which we were struggling to have waived, at least for resumption of multilateral programmes."[11]

On the specific benchmarks, a clear linkage was drawn with actions taken by India. As regards the CTBT, Pakistan conveyed that, unlike India, it had voted in favour of the treaty in the UN and supported it in the CD. However, in view of its security concerns, Pakistan would not unilaterally sign the CTBT and would do so only if India signed as well. Even so, Pakistan would continue to adhere to its unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing as long as India did not test again. On FMCT, it could agree to negotiations in the CD provided the issue of asymmetry of fissile material stockpiles, which existed between Pakistan and India, was addressed in the negotiations. As regards restraints on missile developments and deployments, Pakistan did not want to enter into a missile race with India but would need to maintain the capability for credible deterrence, especially since it had been denied access to fighter aircraft such as the F-16s due to American sanctions. On export controls, Pakistan pledged not to transfer sensitive materials and technologies to any third country or entity and was ready to take requisite administrative and legislative measures. As for overall nuclear restraint, Pakistan offered to enter into a mutually acceptable and verifiable restraint regime with India, and later made specific proposals in this regard. On the key issue of Kashmir, it was emphasised that this root cause of the tensions with India required a proactive role by the US to facilitate a solution.

In the last week of July, after the first round of talks, the Americans conveyed proposals for a "minimum deterrence posture", covering missiles, nuclear-capable aircraft and nuclear weapons. It called on Pakistan not to conduct flight testing of ballistic missiles except for the liquid-propelled Ghauri and one solid-propelled short-range ballistic missile, which should be limited to one test only each year, with14 days' advance notification given to the US and Pakistan's neighbours. Moreover, that the US be notified of missile storage, and testing facility locations; that missiles of different types should not be located in the same place and that storage of ballistic missiles and launchers be separated by at least 100 kilometres and also be located at least 100 kilometres from the border with India. As for nuclear-capable aircraft, such as the F-16s and Mirages, they should be kept separately from other combat aircraft.

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Regarding nuclear weapons, the US demanded that nuclear weapons could not be kept in an assembled state, whereby the fissile material components would not be mated with delivery systems nor armed.[12]

These American proposals were not only unacceptable but unrealistic. But instead of outright rejection, the Pakistani side came up with counter-proposals. Regarding the specific measures suggested by the Americans, General Zulfiqar Ali Khan, the head of the Combat Development Directorate, responded that missile restraint was already being observed since Pakistan's nuclear weapons were not deployed and that the delivery systems and warheads were already separated. The segregation of nuclear-capable and other combat aircraft was declined and sharing of the locations of aircraft and missiles was rejected as well, including means for their verification. General Zulfiqar also asked the Americans to study Pakistan's size and geography before suggesting a minimum of 100 kilometres distance between its strategic facilities which was not physically possible.[13]

In addition, the Combat Development Directorate and the Foreign Office presented a formal counter-proposal on regional security in response to the American 'minimum deterrence posture' recommendations. Termed a Strategic Restraint Regime (SSR), it stressed that requirements for security and stability should not be country specific but on a regional basis. This could be in the shape of trilateral confidence-building measures (CBMs) at the regional level. It should include conflict resolution as a pre-requisite; require equitable obligations; linkage between nuclear deterrence and conventional force balance in the region; realisation that arms control measures on nuclear weapons and their delivery systems should be commensurate with the threat posed by the overwhelming conventional force imbalance between Pakistan and India; and arms control measures should take into account the acquisition of strategic capabilities acquired by India from cooperation with other countries such as Russia. This Pakistani counter-proposal was shared with the US in September 1998 during a meeting led by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative to the UN and the CD in Geneva and included General Zulfiqar. In particular, it was emphasised to the US that Pakistan would not take any unilateral steps but was willing to accept a regional approach.[14]

While these proposals and counter-proposals were discussed during the course of the eight rounds of talks between the US and Pakistan, no progress

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could be made since the Indians rejected this Pakistani approach. In particular, the Indians were not willing to accept any US role in the process. Instead, they sought direct talks with Pakistan.

Earlier, on 11 June, Pakistan had already proposed resumption of the bilateral dialogue on the basis of the agreement that had been reached between the Foreign Secretaries of the two sides on 23 June 1997, before the change of government in India. This agreement involved a 'Composite' dialogue on an eight-point agenda including Peace and Security and Jammu and Kashmir. Under pressure from the Americans after the nuclear tests, Prime Minister Vajpayee finally agreed to resume the talks during his meeting with Prime Minister Sharif on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on 23 September 1998. This understanding was formalized in a Joint Statement by the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries on the same day, declaring the resumption of talks on the agreed agenda of June 1997, with priority being accorded to the items relating to Peace and Security and Jammu and Kashmir. The first round was to be held in Islamabad on 15-18 October 1998.

By this time, I had been transferred back to Headquarters in Islamabad from Washington and appointed as Director General South Asia Division. Extensive preparations for the resumed dialogue were undertaken in the Foreign Office and I worked closely with Director General (UN), Salman Bashir, who was responsible for nuclear issues, to prepare for the discussions on Peace and Security relating to strategic matters. The Foreign Secretary personally presided over these preparations. Inputs on strategic issues were also received from the Combat Development Directorate and the Army Chief's office.

The Islamabad talks were candid and cordial with both sides presenting their respective positions but there were no substantive outcomes. On Peace and Security, there were exchanges of proposals on different CBMs. Most importantly, from our side we shared a revised Strategic Restraint Regime (SRR) proposal which comprised three interlocking parts. The first part dealt with "Non-Use of force and peaceful settlement of disputes" including i) Identification of the issues of peace and security between Pakistan and India; ii) Mechanisms for peaceful settlement of disputes, and iii) Conclusion of an agreement on non-use of force (non-aggression pact). The second part covered a Strategic Restraint Regime in South Asia, involving a) Nuclear Restraint and Stabilisation based on i) Prevention of nuclear and ballistic

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missile race; ii) Risk reduction mechanisms; iii) Avoidance of nuclear conflict; iv) Formalisation of moratoriums by both sides on nuclear testing; v) Non -induction of Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) systems and Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBM) systems, and v) Nuclear doctrine of minimum deterrent capability; and (b) Conventional Restraint and Stabilisation, involving i) Mutual and balanced reduction of forces and armaments. The third part related to Confidence Building Measures and included i) Review of existing CBMs and other measures; ii) Measures for the prevention of violations of air space and territorial waters; iii) Revival of pre-Simla agreement ground border rules; iv) Prior notification of military exercises; v) Enhancing the efficacy of and upgrade the existing communication links between DG (MO's)/Sector Commanders; vi) re-activation of existing hotlines between the Prime Ministers, and vii) Restraint on hostile propaganda.[15]

In the discussions, the Indians conveyed that they would study Pakistan's SSR proposal but maintained that the nuclear issue was a global and not a regional problem. They also stressed their favourite theme that the international nuclear regime was discriminatory which India would not accept. They also claimed that their nuclear capability was not country-specific nor was its conventional capabilities, since it had "borders with other countries as well" (China). Moreover, that India had declared a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing and that it also had announced a No-First Use of nuclear weapons policy. Pakistan maintained that since both countries had declared a moratorium on nuclear testing, this could become the basis of a bilateral agreement or a joint declaration. As for No-First Use, Pakistan's position was that in view of the imbalance in conventional weapons, Pakistan could not pursue such a policy while suggesting instead a bilateral commitment to no-first use of force, either conventional or nuclear.[16]

The talks on Jammu and Kashmir were even more sterile with both sides reiterating their well-known positions on the dispute. The Joint Press statement issued at the conclusion of the talks maintained that "an environment of durable peace and security was in the supreme interest of both countries and the region as a whole, and that a peaceful settlement of all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, was essential for this purpose."[17]

Pakistan's views on establishing strategic stability in a nuclearised South Asia were further elaborated by Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad at the

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conclusion of the Pakistan-India dialogue in the press briefing on 18 October. He commented that "we believe (we) can begin at least by taking suitable steps in the form of CBMs which will signify our commitment to the reduction of tensions, non-use of force and peaceful settlement of disputes. We have also proposed a regime of mutual restraint and stabilisation in the nuclear and ballistic (missile) fields and a regime that can enable both India and Pakistan which are now nuclear weapon states to avert the risk of nuclear conflict and prevent an expensive nuclear and missile race." He went on to state that "After our successful nuclear tests, we have signified our desire to eschew a nuclear arms race with India by declaring a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing" and are "prepared to take further steps in tandem with India for nuclear stabilisation and confidence building."[18]

The Indians, however, were not interested in any regional restraint measures for strategic stability nor in avoiding an arms race with Pakistan, which in any case, they calculated, was not in a position to compete with India, given its comparatively limited economic resources and technological capabilities. Due to Indian ambitions for great power status, they were more interested in competing with China in order to be recognised as a global power. Accordingly, they rejected any constraints on the further build-up of their strategic capabilities, such a development of ABM and SLBM capabilities as well as the expansion of their nuclear weapons arsenal. But to be seen as a 'responsible' nuclear weapon state and to be admitted into the great power club, India was willing to undertake commitments such as No-First Use of nuclear weapons and moratorium on further nuclear testing as well as CBMs that did not impinge on its future nuclear and missile programmes. To that end, India was willing to engage with Pakistan as long as such engagement did not put limits on the attainment of its strategic ambitions. Therefore, it was within these parameters that the Vajpayee government engaged with Pakistan on concluding CBMs which did not detract from its larger objectives.

The progress on CBMs was, therefore, taken forward when Vajpayee prepared to visit Lahore in February 1999 on a bus service that had by then started operating between Lahore and New Delhi following a bilateral agreement concluded after the resumption of talks in October 1998. Vajpayee's visit took place amid great fanfare including a state banquet hosted by Nawaz Sharif at the Lahore fort, Vajpayee's visit to the Pakistan monument

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and summit level talks at the Governor's House. In preparation for the visit, Pakistani and Indian officials met a few days earlier to draft the outcome of the meetings, including the 'Lahore Declaration' and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Diplomats on both sides were under pressure to come up with positive results and negotiated for two days to produce an outcome based on minimum common denominators. Pakistan's team led by Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad and including Additional Secretary Tariq Altaf, Director General UN Salman Bashir and myself as Director General South Asia, realised that we had to come up with documents that would be high on rhetoric but low on substance. But that was the best that could be achieved in the circumstances due to the Indian refusal to accept substantive measures contained in the SSR proposals.

In the Lahore Declaration, signed by the two Prime Ministers, the text established broad principles, such as: "Recognising that the nuclear dimension of the security environment of the two countries adds to their responsibility for avoidance of conflict between them;" 'committed to the objectives of universal nuclear disarmament'; and 'convinced of the importance of mutually agreed confidence-building measures for improving the security environment.' More specifically, the Declaration stated that the two sides "shall intensify their efforts to resolve all issues, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir;" and that they "shall take immediate steps for reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons and discuss concepts and doctrines with a view to elaborating measures for confidence-building in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at prevention of conflict."[19] In the MoU, signed by the two Foreign Secretaries, it was agreed that the two sides shall engage in bilateral consultations on security concepts and nuclear doctrines, to develop confidence building measures in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at avoidance of conflict; provide each other with advance notification regarding ballistic missile tests, for which a separate bilateral agreement would be concluded; undertake national measures for reducing risks of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons under their control and provide immediate notification in the event of any accidental, unauthorised or unexplained incident that could create the risk of a fallout with adverse consequences for both sides or an outbreak of a nuclear war between the two countries as well as to adopt measures aimed at diminishing the possibility of

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such actions or such incidents being misinterpreted by the other; continue to abide by their respective unilateral moratorium on conducting further nuclear test explosions, unless either side decides that extraordinary events have jeopardised its supreme interests; conclude an agreement on the prevention of accidents at sea to ensure the safety of naval vessels and aircraft belonging to the two sides; periodically review the implementation of existing CBMs and set up appropriate mechanisms to monitor and ensure effective implementation of the CBMs; undertake a review of the existing communication links between the respective Director-Generals, Military Operations, with a view to upgrade and improve these links; and engage in bilateral consultations on security, disarmament and non-proliferation issues within the context of negotiations on these issues in multilateral fora.[20]

While the results of the Lahore Summit were modest at best, the most important outcome was the emergence of a relatively stable strategic order in South Asia based on nuclear parity which ensured credible nuclear deterrence between Pakistan and India. It was for the first time that such an environment of comparative strategic stability had emerged in the region. These documents also reinforced Pakistan's stance that all nuclear-related measures must be on a regional and not a unilateral basis. The next step for both sides was to evolve their respective nuclear doctrines based on their strategic objectives and capabilities.

Doctrines

It was obvious ever since the inception of the nuclear weapons programmes of India and Pakistan that their strategic objectives and capabilities were different. This difference was reflected in their respective nuclear doctrines. India had always aspired to a great power status and viewed the possession of nuclear weapons as the necessary credential for becoming a member of the exclusive P-5 group. Its attainment of nuclear weapons capability was, therefore, essentially status-driven. The so-called nuclear threat from China or the refusal of the five nuclear powers to give up their nuclear weapons were at best secondary arguments to justify the ambitious Indian nuclear weapons programme. By contrast, Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear weapons was meant to ensure credible deterrence against India and was, therefore, security driven. Moreover, it was clear from the start that Pakistan's economic and

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technological capabilities were more limited as compared to those of India. For these reasons, Pakistan sought to establish deterrence at the lowest levels and proposed its Strategic Restraint Regime to avoid a nuclear and missile race with India, which the Indians rejected in view of their larger ambitions. This rejection underscored Indian intentions in the future.

As for all nuclear weapon states, a nuclear doctrine was necessary for both Pakistan and India to provide the guidelines on how and under what circumstances they would use nuclear weapons, which in turn would determine the force configuration and the type of nuclear weapons and delivery systems required. This would also be influenced by their respective threat perceptions, availability of resources and the size of the territory as compared to the adversary. In line with traditional strategic thinking, the nuclear doctrine could be to deter war either through "deterrence by punishment", that is by threatening to unleash an unacceptable level of destruction in response to an attack by the enemy; or "deterrence by denial" which involves nuclear war fighting itself. For Pakistan, nuclear weapons have always been a means of preventing a war, in keeping with the famous maxim of Bernard Brodie, one of the leading American experts on nuclear deterrence. However, the "choice of doctrine does not lie with the concerned state but is dictated by the constraints of geography, the size of the population and economic potential... ..."[21] Moreover, the doctrine cannot be static since its very basis, credible deterrence, can change due to political, military and technological factors. Accordingly, any nuclear doctrine must continuously evolve in response to circumstances, which it has in Pakistan's case. A further key consideration for Pakistan has been that India has a qualitative and quantitative advantage over Pakistan in conventional weapons which requires that Pakistan's nuclear doctrine must keep open the option of first use of nuclear weapons in case of a conventional attack by India that threatens Pakistan's security and territorial integrity. In this sense, there cannot be a clear demarcation between nuclear and conventional doctrines nor in the employment of nuclear weapons.

Pakistan's Nuclear Doctrine

As written by Feroz Khan and Naeem Salik, both of whom were then Lt. Colonels serving in the Evaluation, Analyses and Research Cell under its Director General Lt. General Khalid Kidwai, the formulation of Pakistan's nuclear

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doctrine and setting up of the nuclear command and control infrastructure was initiated immediately after the nuclear tests.[22] This was done by a team of officers under General Kidwai who was later appointed as the first Director-General Strategic Plans Division (SPD) and led Pakistan's Nuclear Programme for 15 years. A draft was completed by October 1998 and presented to the new Army Chief General Pervez Musharraf in November 1998 by General Kidwai. A formal presentation was thereafter made to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in February 1999 but he pended approval for further discussion between General Kidwai and Foreign Minister Sartaz Aziz. Due to political changes following the ouster of Nawaz Sharif in 1999, the doctrine could not be adopted formally till February 2000 when it was approved by the National Security Council in a presentation made by General Kidwai. However, due to various extraneous factors (discussed in the next chapter), it was decided that "there was virtue in the fact that any ambiguity in the doctrine adds to deterrence and complicates the calculus of the opposing side."[23] As a result, maintaining ambiguity itself became a part of Pakistan's nuclear doctrine. Principally for this reason a formal nuclear doctrine has not been announced.

Nevertheless, the contours of this doctrine can be outlined on the basis of official statements and public pronouncements by serving and retired Foreign Ministry and military officials. From the outset, it was decided that "since the main purpose of Pakistan's nuclear doctrine is to deter all kinds of Indian aggression whether conventional or nuclear, a minimum deterrence doctrine would suffice." But, since such a 'minimum' level of deterrence would be vulnerable to a disabling first strike, the qualifier 'credible' was prefixed to minimum deterrence, which "meant that the size of the nuclear force would be flexible and more than minimal."[24] This would obviously be dependent on the quantum of the Indian nuclear and conventional threat, even though Pakistan would not seek parity in the numbers of nuclear weapons and delivery systems. This approach was also necessitated by Pakistan's economic limitations which required avoiding an arms race with India. Public articulation of this approach was made in a joint article by former Foreign Minister Agha Shahi, former Foreign Secretary Abdul Sattar and former Air Chief Zulfiqar Ali Khan who wrote that "Deterrence was the sole aim and a small arsenal was considered adequate. At no time did Pakistan contemplate use of nuclear weapons for war fighting or seek to develop capability for a pre-emptive strike." They added

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that "Minimum deterrence has been and should continue to be the guiding principle of Pakistan's nuclear pursuit. Of course, minimum cannot be defined in static numbers. In the absence of mutual restraints, the size of Pakistan's arsenal and its deployment pattern have to be adjusted to ward off dangers of pre-emption and interception."[25] Later Foreign Secretary Sattar added in an address to the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad that "Minimum deterrence will remain the guiding principle of our nuclear strategy. The minimum cannot be quantified in static numbers. The Indian build-up would necessitate review and assessment."[26]

From these developments and statements, it was clear that the fundamental elements of Pakistan's nuclear doctrine involved: i) Credible minimum deterrence; ii) no static limits on the numbers of nuclear weapons or delivery systems which would vary in response to Indian capabilities; iii) no pursuit of parity with India; iv) deterrence would be India specific; v) the purpose of the nuclear capability would be to deter war – whether conventional or nuclear; vi) given Indian advantage in conventional weapons, the option of first use of nuclear weapons for deterrence would be retained; vii) adequate stockpile of weapons and delivery systems would be required to ensure first and second strike capabilities; viii) maintain effective conventional forces for deterrence at the lower rungs of the escalation ladder; ix) effective Command and Control together with measures for the safety and security of the strategic assets (against sabotage, conventional or terrorist attacks, or a nuclear strike); x) exercise restraint and responsibility by maintaining a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing unless India conducts tests, support arms control regimes and engage in negotiations but not accept discriminatory measures or those that would undermine Pakistan's credible deterrence, and strengthen controls on exports of nuclear technology or materials.

These fundamental aspects of Pakistan's nuclear doctrine would continue to guide its policy in the future but in view of changes in the Indian doctrine as well as its conventional and nuclear build-up in the future, such as seeking the ability to fight a conventional war below the nuclear threshold, this doctrine would then be updated in the mid-2000s so as to maintain credible deterrence (discussed in detail in subsequent Chapters).

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Indian Nuclear Doctrine

When India announced its "draft" nuclear doctrine on 17 August 1999, Pakistan's concerns about Indian nuclear ambitions were vindicated. Even though the document, prepared by the Nuclear Security Advisory Board, set up by the National Security Council, was described as a "draft", it was released by the National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, which underlined its official status. But the subterfuge of a "draft" was used to retain official deniability and operational flexibility.

The document stated that it "outlines the broad principles for the development, deployment and employment of India's nuclear forces" and that the "Details of policy and strategy concerning force structures, deployment and employment of nuclear forces will flow from this framework." The doctrine elaborated that: i) India shall pursue credible minimum deterrence for "retaliation only"; ii) this would be a 'dynamic concept' related to the 'strategic environment, technological imperatives and the needs of national security'; iii) the actual size, components, deployment and employment of nuclear forces will be decided in the light of these factors; iv) any nuclear attack on India and its forces shall result in punitive retaliation with nuclear weapons to inflict damage unacceptable to the aggressor; v) India would follow a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons but will respond with punitive retaliation should deterrence fail; vi) India would maintain sufficient, survivable and operationally prepared nuclear forces, a robust Command and Control system and effective intelligence and early warning capabilities; vii) Highly effective conventional military capabilities should be maintained to raise the threshold of outbreak both of conventional military conflicts as well as that of threat or use of nuclear weapons; ix) Indian nuclear forces will be based on a triad of aircraft, mobile land based missiles and sea-based assets; x) Assured capability to retaliate effectively even in case of significant degradation by hostile strikes (second strike capability); xi) Space based and other assets shall be created to provide early warning, communications, damage/detonation assessment; and xii) Global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament is a national security objective.[27]

While the Indian doctrine did not mention the eventual size of the nuclear arsenal, separate comments in the media by two prominent members of the

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National Security Advisory Board indicated their own estimates. K Subrahmanyam put the figure at 150 nuclear weapons[28] and Bharat Karnad claimed the number to be 325-400 nuclear weapons.[29]

Pakistan's Response to the Indian Nuclear Doctrine

The Indian nuclear doctrine confirmed Pakistan's suspicions that it would embark on a massive development of its strategic capabilities after it had rejected the proposals made by Pakistan for restraint in its Strategic Restraint Regime offer. While claiming to pursue "credible minimum deterrence", the doctrine proposed pursuing the exact opposite. Even independent experts like George Perkovich wrote that "it sought to give Indian audiences a feeling of strength, technological prowess, and great power assertiveness, with little regard for the document's potential to stimulate counter-moves by adversaries." He added that "Pakistan, for example, interpreted India to be declaring the intention to conduct an open-ended, aggressive nuclear and missile arms race."[30]

The immediate Pakistani response came from Ambassador Munir Akram, at the Conference on Disarmament (CD). In a statement on 19 August, he said that the doctrine "indicates that India is about to embark on a further and even more dangerous escalation in the nuclear and conventional arms build-up." Referring to the doctrine envisaging the establishment of "sufficient, survivable and operationally prepared nuclear forces," the Ambassador pointed out that "India is likely to go ahead with the deployment and operationalisation of its nuclear weapons and delivery systems" which would "negate several measures of understanding signed by Pakistan and India at the Lahore Summit." Regarding India's "No-First Use" commitment, he said that "no first use has never been accepted as the basis for determining the deterrent postures of any of the Nuclear Weapon States" and that "India itself places no credibility in no first use. If it did, it should have accepted China's assurance of no-first use." Referring to the Indian doctrine's assertion to "ensure survival against.... first strike.....with adequate retaliatory capabilities" and acquire a "triad of nuclear forces including aircraft, mobile land-based missiles and sea-based assets," the Ambassador said "this would require a huge arsenal." Based on a study published in the US, he added, "India possesses over 1600 kg of fissile material which can be used to produce over 400 nuclear warheads. As regards the planned further build-up of India's conventional forces,

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Ambassador Akram pointed to the imbalance in the conventional forces between Pakistan and India and that any "growing imbalance in conventional forces will intensify Pakistan's reliance on its nuclear capabilities to deter the use or threat of aggression or domination by India."[31]

Another comprehensive response to the Indian doctrine was given by Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad on 7 September. He maintained that Pakistan's nuclear tests in response to the Indian tests "restored the strategic balance and established nuclear deterrence" which "served the interest of peace and stability in South Asia." He further recalled that Pakistan had "emphasised the need to prevent a nuclear and missile arms race," had declared a "unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing," expressed the "desire for mutual restraint in the operational deployment of nuclear weapons" and "sought to evolve a risk reduction mechanism and to maintain deterrence at the minimum level." However, the Foreign Secretary stated, "The nuclear doctrine announced by India is obviously incompatible with both the idea of credible minimum deterrence as well as the concept of the Strategic Restraint Regime." He elaborated that, "New Delhi's goal of acquiring massive nuclear war-fighting capabilities – a triad of up to 400 operationally deployed ground, air and sea-based nuclear weapons……may be credible but it will certainly not be minimum," as claimed by India. He also said that not all of the five NPT nuclear weapon states possess such a triad. Moreover, he said, that "The size of India's nuclear arsenal, and its operational deployment, would transform it into a threatening first-strike force" and that "such massive deployment cannot conceivably be designed purely for deterrence." As such, he described "India's profession of no first use of nuclear weapons (as) only a façade to justify a second strike capability and large scale acquisition and deployment of nuclear weapons." The Foreign Secretary added that "for credible minimum deterrence, India does not need 150-400 nuclear warheads; it does not need sea-based and submarine-based nuclear capabilities; it does not require huge conventional forces, including aircraft carriers and advanced strike aircraft."

Elaborating on the impact of the Indian nuclear doctrine, he said that "The development of such a nuclear arsenal by India will oblige Pakistan to take appropriate action to preserve the credibility of its nuclear deterrence posture and the capability for conventional self reliance." As for the doctrine's envisaged maintenance of highly effective conventional military forces to

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ostensibly raise the threshold of conventional and nuclear conflict, he stated that "The growing imbalance in conventional capabilities will accentuate Pakistan's reliance on nuclear deterrence" which will "have the consequence of lowering, not raising the threshold of the possible use of nuclear weapons in South Asia." In a prescient evaluation of the impact of the Indian doctrine on arms control and disarmament, the Foreign Secretary stated that the "Indian nuclear doctrine will militate against major disarmament and non-proliferation objectives, including perhaps the CTBT and the Fissile Materials Treaty." He warned that "If India does conduct further nuclear tests, this will, once again, oblige Pakistan to respond." As for the fissile material treaty, he pointed out that "India will require substantial qualities of fissile material (for its 400 nuclear weapons)" and "under such circumstances, neither India nor Pakistan could accept the conclusion of the FMCT, much less a moratorium on fissile material production." In a candid declaration, he stated further that "Pakistan will be obliged to also build-up the amount of fissile material in its inventory in order to maintain the capability for credible nuclear deterrence against the anticipated larger Indian nuclear force."[32]

When the Indian nuclear doctrine was announced and for several years thereafter, apologists for India endorsed the Indian government's claim that this doctrine was a mere "draft" and that too written by India's nuclear 'hawks' which did not necessarily reflect the 'official' thinking or plans. But, as subsequent events demonstrated, this was just subterfuge. Within less than a decade, Indian strategic developments were well on course towards achieving the goals of the 'draft' doctrine. Of course, Pakistani diplomats and military planners were never taken in by the claims of the Indian government or their western supporters. From the start, Pakistan rejected the claim that the Indians would pursue a credible 'minimum' deterrence posture nor did it accept the assertion of 'no-first use', which has always been viewed as a façade. It was also correctly judged by Pakistan that India would acquire a triad of delivery systems as well as a Ballistic Missile Defence capability in response to which Pakistan would need to take the necessary countermeasures. Similarly, Pakistan's assessment that India would buildup its conventional forces to retain this edge over Pakistan proved to be accurate in the next five years with the Indian pursuit of the Cold Start doctrine for limited conventional war below the nuclear threshold. This required Pakistan to respond by adopting

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its Full Spectrum Deterrence policy to lower the nuclear threshold and ensure deterrence across the entire spectrum of threats. All these factors required that Pakistan's nuclear doctrine and posture would need to be flexible and dynamic in order to continue maintaining credible nuclear deterrence and strategic stability in the future.

Command and Control

An essential requirement for the pursuit of Pakistan's nuclear weapons policy and doctrine was the creation of a Command and Control structure. From the early stages of the nuclear weapons programme in the 1980s and 1990s, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan was in control of all decision-making after he replaced President Zia. When Ishaq Khan relinquished his position due to political changes in 1993, he handed over responsibility to the then-Army Chief, General Abdul Waheed Kakar. This was the first time that the Army inherited responsibility for the nuclear programme, contrary to the western narrative that the Army had control of the programme from the beginning.[33]

As a result, from July 1993 to December 1998, the nuclear policy was handled by the Combat Development Directorate that had been set up in 1985 and was given the responsibility for nuclear policy by General Kakar. Apart from weapons development, the Directorate coordinated with the Foreign Office on nuclear diplomacy. By February 1999, the main structure of the Command and Control system had been created called the National Command Authority (NCA), supported by its own secretariat, the Strategic Plans Divsion (SPD), and headed by the Prime Minister. It included ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Finance and Interior as well as the four Service Chiefs. As mentioned above, in February 1999, the new Army Chief, General Pervez Musharraf asked General Kidwai to present the nuclear doctrine and its operational plan to Prime Minister Sharif. However, at the time, this plan was not formally approved. Later when Sharif was removed in a coup by General Musharraf in October 1999, the NCA proposal was approved in February 2000 by the newly formed National Secruity Council (NSC) with the replacement of the Combat Development Directorate by the Strategic Plans Division (SPD) as the operational arm of the NCA, headed by General Khalid

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Kidwai, as Director-General, who would go on to lead the SPD for over 15 years upto 2014.

In the beginning, the primary goal of the SPD was to establish an operational nuclear deterrent based on Pakistan's nuclear doctrine including the raising of the 'Army Strategic Command (ASC), the Air Force Strategic Command (AFSC) and the Naval Strategic Force Command (NSFC). The second stage was to implement nuclear deterrence into a force development strategy, including deciding upon the quantity and quality of nuclear weapons and delivery systems necessary to maintain credible deterrence. Another requirement was to develop a command structure for the air, land and sea-based strategic forces. Lastly, the SPD undertook the important task of ensuring the safety and security of Pakistan's strategic assets including through physical safety of the assets and stringent personnel reliability measures.

The SPD was further entrusted with the task of serving as the secretariat of the NCA, a role that it continues to perform. The NCA, headed by the Prime Minister (or President as in Musharraf's case), key ministers and service chiefs (as mentioned above), includes the DG SPD. For its routine operations, the NCA is placed under the control of the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. The NCA retains the final authority on all nuclear decisions, including the use of nuclear weapons. As such no single individual can operate a weapon system, nor issue the command for weapons use. Operationally, Pakistan's nuclear weapons are not kept on hair-trigger alert, but, through an elaborate systems of alert statuses, these can be readied to meet any contingency rapidly. This prevents the risk of capture, accidents or unauthorised use.

With the setting up of the NCA and the SPD as its administrative and implementation body, all nuclear and other strategic entities such as the PAEC, KRL, National Engineering and Scientific Commission (NESCOM) Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) and Pakistan National Regulatory Authority (PNRA) as well as the organisations for nuclear safety and security have been brought under the direct control of the SPD. In the field of nuclear diplomacy, the Arms Control and Disarmament Authority (ACDA) of the SPD works in close cooperation with the Foreign Office.

Over the coming years, the NCA and the SPD would grow as the basic framework for Pakistan's Command and Control as well for the safety and security of Pakistan's strategic assets. Their role would also be of fundamental

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importance for the conduct of Pakistan's nuclear diplomacy in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Notes

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[11] Ibid.
[12] Author's interview with General Kidwai, former Director-General Strategic Plans Division, 10 Decemeber 2019.
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[15] Author's notes and papers.
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[31] Ambassador Munir Akram, Statement to the Plenary Meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, 19 August 1999.
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8 | Squandered Opportunities

Pakistan's overt demonstration of its nuclear weapons capability in May 1998 and the operationalisation of its nuclear deterrent provided for the first time in its history an indigenous guarantee for its national security. This brought about a paradigm shift in its security calculus as considered in Chapter 6. No longer could India use its numerical superiority in conventional weapons to undermine the integrity of Pakistan as it had done in the 1971 Bangladesh war. This red line had been made clear in Pakistan's nuclear doctrine. Yet India was determined to seek space for conventional war under the nuclear shadow which was obvious from the Indian nuclear doctrine. The Indians had also rejected Pakistan's proposals for strategic restraint put forward in their bilateral dialogue as well as the measures for restraint suggested by the US in its dialogue with India. Instead, New Delhi used its engagement with Washington to be recognised as a member of the exclusive group of the five NPT nuclear weapon states. While the US could not accommodate India without changing the NPT, which China, if not others, would have opposed, it was willing to eventually accept India as a 'legitimate' and 'responsible' de-facto nuclear-weapon state. Unfortunately, unlike India, Pakistan did not pursue the same agenda for its nuclear 'normalisation.'

Squandered Opportunities

This was not due to any shortcomings in Pakistan's diplomacy but more so due to factors beyond the control of Pakistani diplomats. These factors were both internal and external. Internally, Pakistan was confronted by multiple challenges before and after the nuclear tests, involving political instability, corruption, and economic meltdown, especially as a result of the sanctions following the tests. Increasing acts of terrorism by religious and sectarian groups further added to internal security concerns. Externally, Pakistan was blamed for supporting 'terrorist' groups in Afghanistan and Indian-occupied Kashmir by India and the US along with its allies. The Kargil episode further intensified western criticism of Pakistan while the 1999 military coup raised concerns about political stability in a nuclear weapon state. To make matters

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worse, elements within the US and its allied countries, such as the non-proliferation, pro-Indian and Israeli lobbies, were not willing to accept Pakistan's nuclear capability, which they repeatedly described as the 'Islamic bomb' – even though Pakistan had made it clear that its capability was India specific. The reality was and remains that since Pakistan's nuclear weapons could potentially threaten Israel, these could never be justified or accepted, whereas the Indian nuclear capability could be legitimised since it is not seen as threatening Israel. That has always been the bottom line. For all these reasons, Pakistan's nuclear weapons status could not be accepted or placed at par with India in terms of 'legitimacy' or as a 'responsible' nuclear-weapon state.

This situation was made worse by the discovery and subsequent dismantling of the A Q Khan proliferation network by the Musharraf government. Instead of improving Pakistan's credentials as a responsible steward of nuclear weapons, this episode placed the country in a virtually pariah status. This was despite the fact that nearly all nuclear weapon states have indulged in proliferation and still continue to do so.

The combination of all these factors put Pakistan and India on different trajectories as far as the US was concerned, giving rise to the de-hyphenation of American relations with Pakistan and India. While Pakistan was increasingly viewed as an 'unstable' and 'irresponsible' nuclear weapon state, India came to be accepted eventually as a 'responsible' nuclear power. The fact that India was also a potential American ally against a rising China added to its importance for the US.

The vilification of and resultant discrimination against Pakistan became so intense that even when the US once again needed Pakistan's 'partnership' after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Americans persisted with their 'different trajectories' in nuclear relations with Pakistan and India. But, once again, unfortunately, Pakistan was unable to use this opportunity as leverage for equal treatment with India.

As a result, the opportunities provided by the 1998 nuclear tests and the 9/11 terror attacks on the US were squandered by the Pakistani leadership to ensure nuclear legitimacy and equal treatment with India. Instead of seeking a substantive quid pro quo on the nuclear issue in both instances, as General Zia had done after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Nawaz Sharif and then

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Musharraf settled for crumbs of economic assistance and military hardware which only provided temporary respite for national security.

The Beginning of De-hyphenation

In the past Cold War world following the disintregration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the emergence of the US as the sole super-power, there was a growing realisation in Washington and New Delhi of a convergence in their strategic relations. India quickly recalibrated its relations with the US, projecting itself as a "natural ally", claiming to be the world's largest democracy and a reformed economy open to American investments. These global geo-political changes also offered the opportunity that the US had long sought to strengthen relations with India, which New Delhi had spurned during the Cold War owing to its partnership with the Soviet Union but was forced to reassess after the Soviet collapse. This transformation started with the senior Bush administration and continued with President Clinton to 'engage' India. Even as Clinton tried to resolve the issues of 'fairness and equity' with Pakistan over its withheld military equipment due to the Pressler sanctions, he pushed far ahead in relations with India, despite that country's proven nuclear proliferation record. But when the Indians deceived the Americans and conducted their nuclear tests in May 1998, followed by Pakistan, Washington resolved to treat both countries equally, with equal application of nuclear sanctions and demands for restraint.

However, this attempt at equal treatment did not last long since the larger objective of engagement with India eventually took precedence over American non-proliferation goals. Efforts began to accommodate India over the proliferation issue with the clear intention that this issue should not become a hurdle in the development of broader strategic relations. This was exactly what India had wanted and successfully negotiated. The American objectives with Pakistan, however, were far more limited – cooperation to end the civil war in Afghanistan and reduce tensions with India over Kashmir. The offers of strategic restraint by Pakistan on reciprocal basis to India were welcomed but the US was not willing to compel India to accept these as this would undermine their growing bilateral relationship. This differentiated approach marked the beginning of the "de-hyphenation" by the US in its relations with Pakistan and India. Subsequent developments further entrenched this distinction.

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At first there were mixed signals after the nuclear tests. In mid-July 1998, the administration persuaded Congress to exempt agricultural credits to both India and Pakistan from the nuclear sanctions. This was comparatively more helpful to Pakistan than to India since Pakistan had been importing large quantities of wheat from the US under the PL-480 programme. But, as pointed out by American observers, "one impulse was commercial self-interest" because if fully implemented "the sanctions.....would cost farmers in the US Pacific Northwest."[1] Then, in October 1998, another legislation was adopted called the India-Pakistan Relief Act, 1998, giving authority to the President to waive for one year some of the economic sanctions imposed on the two countries. This also helped Pakistan economically as it enabled the US to support IMF assistance to Pakistan.[2]

Even as the US worked to ease the nuclear sanctions on Pakistan (and India), the issue of terrorism reared its head in Pakistan-US relations when American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were attacked by al-Qaida terrorists on 15 August 1998. This organisation of Muslim radicals, mostly Arabs, had been formed by Osama bin Laden, a Saudi national, who had worked closely with the Saudi and American intelligence agencies to help the Afghan mujahedeen in their Jihad against the Soviets. After the Soviet retreat, Afghanistan had been abandoned by the US while the country descended into civil war. In this chaos, Bin Laden had been able to establish a terrorist base from where, according to American sources, he had launched the terrorist attacks on American targets in Africa. A few days later, on 21 August, the US retaliated by launching cruise missiles on bin Laden's training camps in Afghanistan. The missiles flew through Pakistani airspace and some even fell inadvertently on Pakistani soil. The US Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph W Ralston, travelled to Pakistan to pre-warn Army Chief General Karamat, so that the American missiles were not mistaken for Indian missiles. Even so, there was sharp criticism of the American action for violating Pakistani territorial integrity. Another source of embarrassment was that, according to American intelligence, at least eleven Pakistanis belonging to the Harkat al-Ansar group, which was operating in Indian-occupied Kashmir, were killed at the al-Qaida camp.[3] Since the Harkat was on the US list of terrorist organisations, their presence in the al-Qaida camp raised concerns about a linkage between the Harkat and al-Qaida which brought into question

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Pakistan's role in such Harkat-al-Qaida cooperation. Even more important for the Americans was Pakistan's inability or unwillingness to help the US deal with the al-Qaida threat to the US. The incident was also greatly beneficial to India which highlighted its repeated assertions that the US and India were both confronted by terrorism that was being 'sponsored by Pakistan.' It also helped the Indians to project the legitimate Kashmiri struggle as 'terrorism'.

Despite such turbulence in relations, Prime Minister Sharif visited Washington on 2 December 1998 at President Clinton's invitation, who had by then postponed his visit to Pakistan and India due to the nuclear tests. According to then-Foreign Secretary, Shamshad Ahmad, Clinton referred to Pakistan's nuclear tests and said that had he been in Sharif's position, he would have done the same thing.[4] The highlight of the Prime Minister's visit turned out to be the final resolution of the F-16 issue. By then, Pakistan had decided to use the option of taking the administration to a US court for reimbursement of the F-16 funds and the American Justice department had advised that Pakistan had a seventy per cent chance of success. Accordingly, the administration tapped a Special Fund for litigation with foreign countries/entities to settle with Pakistan. As a result, 470 million dollars plus 140 million dollars worth of wheat and other commodities were given to Pakistan over the next two years as a grant.[5] Thus, the F-16 issue was finally settled after nearly eight years. But this experience still rankles many Pakistanis and remains a symbol of American unreliability.

The saga of nuclear sanctions was eventually concluded in October 1999 when legislation proposed by Senator Sam Brownback was adopted to give the President the authority to waive sanctions under the Glenn-Symington law to Pakistan and India. Though this move was driven more by the objective to give sanctions relief to India, it also helped Pakistan. Clinton exercised this authority and removed sanctions on India and Pakistan in 2000.[6]

Impact of Kargil and the Coup

Even as the US moved towards renouncing nuclear sanctions on Pakistan and India, two major developments took place that severely undermined Pakistan's credentials as a 'responsible' and 'stable' nuclear-weapon state. The first was the limited Pakistan-India conflict in Kargil and the second was the coup that followed shortly thereafter in which Prime Minister Sharif

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was deposed by General Musharraf. Both developments negatively impacted Pakistan. Yet the Kargil episode also demonstrated the credibility of nuclear deterrence between Pakistan and India by preventing a full-scale war.

The roots of the Kargil conflict lay in the temporary and shifting nature of the Line of Control (LoC) between Pakistani and Indian troops in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. At the conclusion of the 1948 Pakistan-India war in Kashmir, a cease-fire line was drawn marking the positions held by Pakistani and Indian forces. This line terminated at map reference NJ9842 beyond which neither side had a permanent military presence, but the ceasefire agreement recognised that the line continued "northwards" towards the Karakoram Pass. To the west of this line was the Saltoro Range including the Siachin Glacier, which had been recognised as being under de-facto Pakistani control since mountaineering and trekking expeditions in the area were organised and conducted by the Pakistani military authorities. Maps and atlases also showed this area within Pakistan's control. This situation was confirmed by the Simla Agreement between Pakistan and India in 1972 which called for respect by both sides of the ground situation while converting the ceasefire line into the Line of Control (LoC).

However, in 1984, while Pakistan was preoccupied with the threat on its western border following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, India launched "Operation Meghdoot" to surreptitiously occupy unmanned positions in the Siachen area. The Indian occupation was discovered when Pakistani forces returned to the area in the summer by which time Indian troops had fully entrenched their positions in what they described as a "preemptive" move. Subsequent efforts by Pakistan to resolve the dispute through negotiations were repeatedly stalled by India even after agreeing to the proposed solution, at least on two occasions.

Earlier, just after signing the Simla Agreement, the Indians had also violated the LoC in 1972 to occupy the area of Chorbat La. But especially after the Indian occupation of the Siachen area, recurring violations of the LoC by both sides turned the LoC "into an active war zone." "Sporadic firing became the norm....with the express purpose of nibbling away territory along the LoC and positioning their respective armies in strategically advantageous positions" by both sides. For instance, the Indians captured Pakistan's Quaid Post which dominated Indian positions in Bilafond La in 1987 while Pakistan

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retaliated by conducting the Dalunang operation and the Chummik operation in 1989.[7] The two sides also used artillery fire repeatedly to interdict vital road links like the Neelum Valley road on Pakistan's side of the LoC and the Srinagar-Leh road on the Indian-occupied side.

It was against this background that Pakistan's military leadership felt the need to "plug the gaps along the LoC and prevent the Indians from creeping forward." According to the then Army Chief, General Pervez Musharraf, a plan was prepared and presented to him for "the defensive manoeuver in the Northern Areas so as to deny any ingress across the LoC." It was approved in January 1999, and by the end of April, the unoccupied gaps along 12 kilometres of the LoC had been secured by over 100 new posts in the Kargil Sector. According to Musharraf, "our manoeuver was conducted flawlessly, a tactical marvel of military professionalism."[8] The Pakistani forces involved regular troops of the Rawalpindi Corps, the Frontier Corps Northern Areas (FCNA) and Kashmiri fighters. The first confrontation with Indian troops took place on 2 May in the Shyok Sector and the second on 7 May in Batalik. The Indians had not only been caught unawares but suffered heavy casualties in trying to retake these positions. The Kargil conflict had erupted and went on till July 1999.

While the Kargil operation was tactically successful, it proved to be a political blunder. Though India was unable to dislodge the Pakistani forces from their posts despite massive use of troops, heavy artillery fire and use of air power, it was successful in politically isolating Pakistan at the international level. In contrast to its own policy of not involving third parties in Pakistan-India issues, New Delhi refused to engage with Islamabad and rushed to Washington for American intervention. In several letters to President Clinton, Prime Minister Vajpayee asked the US to compel Pakistan to withdraw while threatening to widen the conflict across the LoC and even perhaps across the international border. The Clinton administration was responsive to Indian demarches and launched a sustained diplomatic offensive to convince Pakistan to unconditionally withdraw. The greatest American concern was that a wider Pakistan-India war could lead to the use of nuclear weapons, especially by Pakistan since its conventional forces were numerically weaker than those of India. Another key consideration for Washington was not to allow "Pakistan any strategic advantage accruing to it from its nuclear status", and it was

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"determined not to let Pakistan benefit from playing the nuclear card."[9] Yet another factor in American calculations was that by forcing Pakistan to withdraw provided "an opportunity to strengthen relations with India", and it was "believed that through a transparent and proactive handling of the Kargil crisis, Washington could win New Delhi's trust and confidence."[10]

Eventually, under sustained American pressure, Prime Minister Sharif concluded he had no other option left but to agree to withdraw from the Kargil heights. But in a desperate attempt to derive some mileage from the situation, he asked to meet Clinton in Washington. The meeting on 3 July proved to be a disaster. Sharif was alone as the Americans deliberately kept Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad and Ambassador Riaz Khokhar out of the meeting, while Clinton was accompanied by an American note-taker, Bruce Riedel, an official of the National Security Council and formerly of the CIA. Before the meeting had started, Riedel had briefed Clinton that there was "evidence" that Pakistan was preparing its nuclear arsenal for possible deployment and asked the President to use this information only when he was alone with Sharif."[11] Since Sharif has never divulged the details of this meeting and Pakistani officials were kept out of the discussions, the only record of the meeting is that made public by Bruce Riedel.[12] It is by no means an objective or reliable account since it was Riedel who had insisted on preventing Shamshad Ahmad from participating.[13] According to Riedel, Clinton confronted Sharif with the allegation of Pakistan readying its nuclear weapons which came as a shock to the Prime Minister who, thereafter, "literally broke down." After being grilled for over one hour, he accepted the statement about Pakistani's unconditional withdrawal prepared by the Americans without Pakistani officials having had a chance to see, much less accept it. As a result, Pakistani troops were obliged to disengage from their positions in broad daylight and under relentless Indian fire as there was no accompanying ceasefire agreement. Now the Prime Minister was isolated at home and abroad.

Questions later arose about whether Prime Minister Sharif had been briefed by his military commanders about the Kargil operation. His supporters argue that he had not been taken fully on board and briefings were provided only in general terms. General Musharraf writes, however, that the Prime Minister was continually briefed and kept updated – on 29 January, 5 February, 17 May, 2 June and 22 June.[14] He also argues that far from being a "debacle", the Kargil

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operation had put Pakistan in "a strategically advantageous position" and that with their focus on Kargil, Indian troops "were in no position to launch an all -out offensive on land, at sea or in the air."[15]

Even if this was correct, the fact remains that Pakistan's operation did not have international acceptance, especially since the conflict took place in a newly nuclearised South Asia and there was an increased danger of a nuclear confrontation. In this sense, the Kargil operation was strategically damaging for Pakistan and a gain for India. It enabled New Delhi to project itself as a 'responsible' nuclear weapon state that had shown 'restraint' in the clash with Pakistan.

One of the issues relating to Kargil that still remains controversial is the alleged role of nuclear weapons. Despite the intelligence information falsely claimed by Riedel and other American sources, Pakistani officials completely deny such reports. They have argued that at the time, Pakistan had not fully developed the capability to make nuclear weapons operational. Moreover, military skirmishes in remote mountain areas did not pose a dire threat to Pakistan's security that would warrant a nuclear response.[16] Personally, as Director-General for South Asia in the Foreign Office, while being fully involved in the Kargil crisis, I did not come across any evidence or discussion about the resort to nuclear weapons. Kargil was not even a full-fledged war and certainly nowhere near our nuclear threshold. Possibly, the US misread, or more likely, misused a press comment by Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad that Pakistan "would not hesitate to use any weapon in our arsenal to defend our territorial integrity"[17] which was more a reassertion of nuclear deterrence rather than readying nuclear weapons for use. More importantly, the Director-General SPD, General Khalid Kidwai, was at the time of the crisis not in Pakistan but meeting with an American delegation on 30 June in Geneva, and when asked about preparations for nuclear weapons use, pointed out correctly that he would not be out of the country if nuclear weapons were being prepared for deployment.[18] General Musharraf, who as Army Chief was at the centre of conducting military operations, later also wrote that "any talk of preparing for nuclear strikes is preposterous."[19]

Much more intriguing are reports that instead of Pakistan it was India that was preparing for use of nuclear weapons. Feroz Hasan refers in this context to a report by Indian journalist Raj Chengappa that at the peak of the crisis "India activated all three types of nuclear delivery vehicles to Readiness State 3 – meaning

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some nuclear bombs would be ready to be mated with delivery vehicles at short notice" and "at least four Prithvi ballistic missiles for possible nuclear strike..... and an Agni missile capable of launching a nuclear warhead, were moved to a western Indian state and kept in a state of readiness."[20] If true, these measures were more likely meant to invoke American fears about a nuclear clash so that the US would ensure that Pakistan agreed to de-escalate in Kargil.

The nuclear lessons for Pakistan from the Kargil crisis were in a sense contradictory. On the one hand, nuclear deterrence prevailed and prevented India from initiating a full-scale war to use its conventional weapons advantage over Pakistan. But, on the other hand, the crisis exposed Pakistan to the criticism that it had not behaved as a 'responsible' nuclear weapon state, a charge that would continue to be made by the US and its allies as well as India. Kargil also demonstrated that since Pakistan's planners of the Kargil operation had not factored in the nuclear dimension, and viewed the operation in purely conventional terms, they had not till then fully appreciated the strategic implications that had been brought about by the possession of nuclear weapons. According to Feroz Hasan, "it was their limited understanding of the meaning of the nuclear revolution that made the Kargil planners act as if nothing had changed.[21] From then on this nuclear revolution would require Pakistan's military planners to be on a steep learning curve.

Even before the damage from the Kargil crisis could be contained, another crisis broke out in October 1999, this time on the domestic front in Pakistan. Even though Prime Minister Sharif had won the last election with a convincing majority, he remained suspicious of the other power centres – such as the Army and the Judiciary. This led to unnecessary friction with both. He had already asked General Jahangir Karamat to resign for suggesting the creation of a National Security Council for coordination on security issues after the nuclear tests. Sharif viewed this proposal as a challenge to his authority. Following the Kargil episode, he was even more wary of his chosen Army Chief, General Musharraf, whom he blamed for the Kargil conflict. At the same time, rumours of a military coup began to circulate. The situation came to a head on 12 October 1999 when the Prime Minister appointed a new Army Chief while Musharraf was returning from a foreign trip and the pilot of the commercial flight was instructed not to land in Pakistan. This highly irregular means of replacing the Army Chief was resisted by the military top brass.

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Within hours the military leadership reacted by removing Sharif and enabling General Musharraf to land and take over control of the country. Pakistan was once again under military rule

By stark contrast, across the border,Vajpayee was re-elected as Prime Minister at about the same time. For the western democracies, this was the big difference between Pakistan and India – which also impacted their credentials as nuclear weapon states.

While the general public reaction in Pakistan was positive, since Sharif had become widely unpopular due to his high-handed behaviour and corruption, the reaction in the west, especially in the US, was largely negative. From the nuclear perspective, the coup raised concerns about nuclear weapons being in the hands of the military 'junta' in an 'unstable' country. Fears about instability were all the more intense due to the prevalent religious, sectarian and ethnic violence in the country along with charges of Pakistani support for terrorist groups in Afghanistan and in Indian-occupied Kashmir. To be sure, the Indians made full use of this opportunity to berate Pakistan internationally, projecting themselves once again as responsible stewards of nuclear weapons and as a stable democratic country.

Even so, Washington and other western capitals had little choice but to accept the change in Pakistan. General Musharraf also made a focused effort to project himself and his government as being liberal and tolerant, committed to overcoming religious extremism, sectarian violence and terrorism. He also undertook several measures to institutionalise Nuclear Command and Control as well as Safety and Security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal (Discussed in Chapter 7).

Despite these efforts, however, a clear distinction emerged in American, and therefore western, treatment of Pakistan and India, including on the nuclear issue. This differentiated approach became clear when Clinton decided to undertake his postponed trip to South Asia. While preparing for the trip, US intelligence agencies cited security concerns for the President not to visit Pakistan and proceed only to India. The dwindling group of Pakistan's supporters in the administration, however, argued that the President should not abandon Pakistan. President Musharraf was also keen that Clinton visit Pakistan and instructed Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi, whom he had reappointed as Ambassador to Washington, to persuade the administration. At Ambassador Lodhi's insistence, I was back in Washington as well, as the

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Deputy Chief of Mission. She made concerted efforts to this end with the White House, National Security Council, the State Department and the Pentagon. Eventually, the Ambassador's approaches paid off and the President decided to visit Pakistan as well. However, there was a major difference between his visits to Pakistan and India, underscoring the shift in US relations with the two countries. Clinton spent five days in India to highlight the importance that the US attached to India while spending barely five hours in a tight security controlled visit to Pakistan.

On 20 March 2000, just before Clinton's arrival in India, 35 Sikhs were mysteriously massacred in Chithisingpura village in Indian-occupied Kashmir which the Indians obviously blamed on Pakistan. Years later it was determined that this was a false-flag operation by Indian intelligence-sponsored 'militants' but at the time it had the desired effect for Clinton to implicitly blame Pakistan and stress that violence was not the way to settle the Kashmir dispute.

Clinton's declared purpose for his highly successful visit to India was to "start a new chapter" in Indo-US relations. This was achieved to a great extent by recasting the relationship as a natural alliance between secular democracies, despite the continuing Indian refusal to accept the American non-proliferation agenda.[22]

By contrast, Clinton's five hours in Pakistan were vastly different. He had no public interaction as in India nor was there any joint statement. Besides, the visit was shrouded in secrecy and security. In two hours of talks with Musharraf, Clinton berated Pakistan – calling for lowering of tensions with India over Kashmir while not recognising Indian atrocities against the Kashmiris; demanding that Pakistan end support for terrorist groups; pressure the Taliban to hand over Osama bin Laden and undertake unilateral non-proliferation measures such as signing the CTBT even if India did not do so.

While Pakistan's leadership was happy that Clinton did not skip a visit to Pakistan, the reality was that the visit signified the different trajectories in US relations with Pakistan and India. The two countries were no longer to be treated at par or on the basis of equally applied yardsticks but in a clearly de-hyphenated and discriminatory manner.

This boiled down to a differentiated US/western approach to nuclear issues. The balanced and even-handed approach professed by the US towards Pakistan and India following their nuclear tests had by now come to an end. Instead, the

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Clinton administration returned to its earlier objective of "Engaging India" as described by the Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, despite the fact that India had made no concessions to the US in its nuclear policy. Instead, India's nuclear doctrine had clearly drawn up the blueprint for a massive build-up of Indian strategic and nuclear forces. But the US decided to give up its non-proliferation priorities for the sake of partnership with India.

Pakistan's Response in the Nuclear Domain

Despite the obvious changes in American policy towards India in the nuclear domain, Pakistan had continued to proactively engage with the US. Apart from the eight rounds of talks between Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad and Deputy Secretary Talbott from June 1998 to February 1999, expert-level talks had been held in September 1998 and June 1999. Notwithstanding the Indian rejection of Pakistan's Strategic Restraint Regime offer of October 1998 as well as the 'benchmarks' that the US itself had put forward (as discussed in the previous chapter), Washington continued with its appeasement of New Delhi. Even as India announced its ambitious and aggressive nuclear doctrine in August 1999, the US scaled back on its demands, asking only for acceptance of the CTBT.

Sensing the shift in the American approach, General Musharraf, as Chief Executive after the coup, made conciliatory gestures to both the US and India. In his very first public address on 17 October, he said that "Pakistan has always been alive to international non-proliferation concerns," and that "in the new nuclear environment in South Asia, we believe that both Pakistan and India have to exercise utmost restraint and responsibility." Significantly, he added that "while preserving its vital security interests, Pakistan will continue to pursue a policy of nuclear and missile restraint and sensitivity to global non-proliferation and disarmament concerns." He also reassured the US and the west of his commitment to tackle terrorism and the spread of religious extremism in Pakistan. Addressing India, Musharraf called for both countries to "sincerely work towards resolving their problems, especially the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir," and announced a "unilateral military de-escalation on our borders with India and initiate the return of all our forces moved to the borders in the recent past."[23]

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Musharraf also took far-reaching measures to create the institutions for robust Command and Control such as approving the setting up of the National Command Authority (NCA) and the Strategic Plans Division (SPD) as outlined in the previous chapter. The SPD established an operational nuclear deterrent and integrated the nuclear weapons capability into Pakistan's defence posture as well as undertaking measures to translate Pakistan's nuclear doctrine of credible minimum deterrence into a development strategy. The infrastructure for the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal and its delivery capabilities was also put into place. Given overall responsibility for the country's nuclear programme, the SPD became the apex body with control over all strategic organisations including both the nuclear weapons programme and the civilian nuclear programme. This included control over the PAEC and the Khan Research Laboratories (KRL), which would prove to be a fateful step.

The KRL had functioned virtually autonomously under Dr A Q Khan and was named after him. Dr Khan had operated independently without checks or oversight in all areas, including financial expenditures, media comments and even contacts with foreign governments and business organisations. The control by the SPD, however, required pursuing standard operating procedures. SPD oversight also exposed several irregularities in KRL operations. As a result, Dr Khan was removed as Chairman of KRL in March 2001. But his activities in the international proliferation network continued through his informal and private contacts which would soon become a major embarrassment and a millstone around Pakistan's neck with which it is still burdened.

Meanwhile, even as Pakistan made rapid progress towards institutionalised control over its nuclear programme, the diplomatic challenges in the nuclear arena continued to intensify. General Musharraf convened an Envoys' Conference in mid-2000 to take stock of the nuclear issue as well as to consider Pakistan's options in relations with the US and India apart from dealing with the growing challenge of terrorism. On the nuclear issue, the conference recognised that despite the announcement of the Indian "draft" nuclear doctrine, envisaging a massive strategic build-up, and the Indian refusal to accept American benchmarks, the US and the west "were extremely reluctant to press India for nuclear or missile restraint." As evident during and after the Clinton visit to India, the American emphasis was on "engagement" with

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New Delhi. Other western countries as well, "attracted by India's commercial and economic opportunities" were also keen on improving relations with the Indians. In fact, Russia and France wanted a "strategic partnership" with India, including nuclear cooperation.

As American "engagement" with India progressed, there was a "parallel deterioration" in Pakistan-US relations. Instead of pursuing "equal restraint" by Pakistan and India, the US called for unilateral steps by Pakistan. Even worse, the US continued to apply relentless pressure on Pakistan to terminate its cooperation with China (and North Korea) in the nuclear and missile fields. Such pressure was also applied against China during visits to Beijing by American officials. But the most insidious aspect of the American campaign was to increasingly "link Pakistan's nuclear capabilities with the threat of Islamic militancy and terrorism." In this context, the US alleged that Pakistan's nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of Islamic extremists or terrorists and/or Islamic radical elements within the Pakistani system could get control over these weapons (so-called "insider and outsider threats"). Such charges were being made despite the efforts by Pakistan for robust Command and Control as well as Safety and Security.

It was against this backdrop, that the Envoy's Conference examined the various options before the country. It was recommended that in order to maintain credible deterrence against India, three elements were essential – i) sufficient fissile material stockpile for a second strike capability after enduring a pre-emptive first strike by India; ii) effective delivery vehicles including aircraft and missiles and subsequently by sea-based platforms (to complete the air, land and sea-based triad); and iii) a sufficient number of delivery vehicles, aircraft and missiles, to launch a second strike after sustaining a pre-emptive first strike. Recognising that deterrence based exclusively on nuclear weapons could not be credible at the lower rungs of the escalation ladder, the Conference further proposed i) Credible conventional defence capability; ii) Early warning intelligence and surveillance assets and iii) Effective air defence systems.

In terms of future nuclear diplomacy, the Envoy's Conference emphasised the need to distinguish between essential strategic capabilities for credible deterrence on which there could be no compromise, and those areas in which Pakistan could demonstrate negotiating flexibility. As such the US/

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western demands that could not be accepted included i) joining the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state; ii) rolling back of Pakistan's nuclear and missile capabilities; iii) acceptance of IAEA full-scope safeguards; iv) moratorium on fissile material production; v) unilateral acceptance of the CTBT, and vi) terminating or limiting the development and testing of ballistic missiles and cruise missiles. The areas of nuclear diplomacy where Pakistan could demonstrate flexibility included i) offering to accept the CTBT if India did the same while continuing to observe the unilateral moratorium on testing; ii) agreeing to open FMCT negotiations in the CD, provided China also agreed (since at that time China had blocked FMCT negotiations) and that the issue of fissile material stocks would be part of the negotiations; iii) mutual restraint with India on the mating, deployment and operationalisation of nuclear/missile systems; and iv) agreeing to export controls so long as these are accompanied by greater access for Pakistan to 'dual-use' and other advanced technologies that have been denied by the export control regimes such as the NSG and the MTCR.

In conclusion, the Conference recommended that: i) Pakistan must bargain hard for reciprocal benefits in exchange for restraint and responsibility; ii) seek restraints on strategic cooperation and assistance to India by the US, Russia, France and Israel; iii) access to peaceful uses of nuclear technology without application of full-scope safeguards; and iv) access to other dual use and high technology equipment. Moreover, it was recognised that despite the change in its status as a nuclear-weapon state, Pakistan should continue to adhere to its traditional positions in nuclear diplomacy to underscore its credentials as a responsible and non-aligned nuclear-weapon state. As such, it was recommended that Pakistan should continue to advocate its declaratory position on nuclear disarmament on a "non-discriminatory and equitable basis." It should also continue to advocate security assurances for non-nuclear weapon states (Negative Security Assurances) and, as a nuclear weapon state, extend such assurances to non-nuclear weapon states. Similarly, Pakistan could continue supporting Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZs) in various regions but oppose such a proposal for South Asia since this had been overtaken by events. The idea of no-first use of nuclear weapons was, however, rejected in the context of India since this concept suited India in view of its numerical advantage in conventional weapons and, more importantly, the Indian no-first

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use 'commitment' was unreliable. Instead, Pakistan would continue to pursue the objective of no first use of force.[24]

These and other positive signals that the Musharraf government tried to convey to the Clinton administration in the hopes of promoting a change in its attitude towards Pakistan on nuclear issues, proved to be largely unsuccessful since Washington had already decided on pursuing a differentiated policy towards India and Pakistan. Moreover, the Clinton administration itself failed to persuade a Republican-controlled Senate to ratify American acceptance of the CTBT which gave India a free pass on the issue – the last remaining demand that Washington had made to New Delhi. Coming to the end of his second term in office, Clinton also lost interest in pursuing the nuclear issue, leaving the American non-proliferation agenda to the next American administration that would take office in January 2001.

Terrorism and the Nuclear Issue

While Pakistan was still grappling with the negative fallout of the Kargil episode and the coup of 1999 on its nuclear credentials, the terrorism issue, which had so far been a secondary problem, burst onto the forefront in relations with the US, following the terrorist attack on a US naval vessel, the USS Cole, in Aden harbour on 12 October 2000. As in the case of the terrorist attacks on American embassies in August 1998, this attack was blamed by the US on al-Qaida from its base in Afghanistan. This increased pressure on Pakistan to act against the Taliban regime to hand over Osama bin Laden and help neutralise the terrorist threat posed by al-Qaida. It also gave rise to the American-led western narrative about the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, in turn leading to doubts about the legitimacy and responsibility of Pakistan's nuclear credentials. Since this terrorism issue continues to plague Pakistan even in the early 2020s, it requires a digression to fully comprehend its significance.

The origins of the terrorism challenge for Pakistan can be traced to several factors – both to internal developments and to external circumstances, which have combined to make Pakistan the "epicentre of international terrorism" according to western commentators.[25]

Internally, it was mainly General Zia's policy of "Islamisation" in the 1980s for cynical domestic political objectives that gave rise to religious orthodoxy

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and militancy in place of the broadly more prevalent tolerant "Sufi" Islamic tradition. This was compounded by the increasing exposure to the rigid and fundamentalist "Wahabi" school of Islamic theology in Saudi Arabia as a result of thousands of Pakistanis going to work in that country since the 1970s. The spread of militant Islam, especially after the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Islamic brotherhood movement in Egypt, permeating into the broader Middle East, also had a radicalising impact in Pakistan, especially among the youth.

Moreover, the Zia era witnessed the growth of ethnic violence, especially in the urban centres of Sindh province with the emergence of tensions between the Urdu-speaking population and other ethnic groups which became increasingly violent. This was partially, if not wholly, also due to Zia's policy of trying to break the hold of Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in Sindh after he had deposed Bhutto in 1977, by creating an opposing force of urban Urdu speakers whose families had migrated from India after independence. This group, the Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM), quickly became a rogue organisation, using violence and crime to gain influence that spun out of control.

Externally, after the Islamic revolution in Iran, the increasing clash between Iranian-led Shia militancy and Saudi-supported Sunni response for dominance over the Muslim world spread rapidly into Pakistan. Widespread clashes erupted in the country between Sunni and Shia groups along sectarian lines, with Saudi and Iranian support for their respective Pakistani collaborators.

But the most important external factor was the "Jihad" against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. With the collaboration of the US and Saudi Arabia, Pakistan became the base for funding, arming and training the Afghan Mujahedeen who were soon joined by volunteers from Pakistan and other Muslim countries. The number of these foreign fighters were estimated to be between 20,000 to 30,000. As a result of the Soviet invasion, Pakistan also faced an influx of over four million Afghan refugees who settled in the adjoining areas of the erstwhile tribal areas of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province and in Balochistan. The children of the refugees and the local population were educated in religious seminaries or 'Madrassahs' mostly run by the Arab-funded orthodox Deobandi school of Islam, which not only included formal religious education but also indoctrination for the "Jihad". Among the Arabs who joined this Jihad were individuals like Osama bin Laden

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and Aiman al Zwaheri, who would go on to become the founding leaders of al-Qaida, with their own radical agenda. Pakistani, Afghan and Muslim youth from other countries became closely involved with their ideology and their pursuit of Jihad, not only against the Soviets but against all 'oppressors' of the Muslims, including the US.

Once the Soviet Union retreated from Afghanistan in 1989, the US and its allies achieved their objective and abandoned Afghanistan as well as Pakistan to confront the lethal mix of the 'Jihadi' and the 'Kalashnikov' cultures. Moreover, while the Geneva Accord of April 1988 had facilitated the Soviet withdrawal, it had not led to an end to the fighting between the Afghan Mujahedeen and the Soviet supported government in Kabul. Even after this government collapsed in 1992, the Afghans were unable to agree on a peaceful transition in the country, leading to an extended civil war until the Taliban were able to exercise control over most of the country by 1996. The Taliban, a predominantly Pushtoon ethnic group was a product of the Deobandi seminaries and consisted not only of Afghans but also Pakistani Pushtoons from the tribal areas who had fought with the Afghans against the Soviets. Moreover, as Pushtoons, they shared religious as well as tribal and family ties. Pakistan, which had at first tried unsuccessfully to promote agreement among the warring Afghan Mujahedeen factions for a political settlement through the Peshawar and Islamabad accords, eventually decided to support the Taliban against the non-Pushtoon Northern Alliance, composed of Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras, who were supported by Iran, India and Russia. Apart from preventing the spread of Indian and Iranian influence in Afghanistan at Pakistan's cost, Islamabad was motivated by the consideration that the Taliban represented Afghanistan's Pushtoon majority population and had the potential capability to end the Afghan civil war. Another key factor was the close relationship between the Taliban and Pakistani Pushtoons. It should also be noted that apart from Pakistan, the US and Saudi Arabia at first viewed the Taliban as the best means of bringing about peace and stability in Afghanistan. In fact, the US even engaged with the Taliban leadership to establish the UNOCAL pipeline through Afghanistan.

But, as noted by President Musharraf, once the Taliban were in power, Pakistan lost any leverage that it had in the past.[26] One of the issues that demonstrated this reality was the refusal of the Taliban leader, Mulla Omar,

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to hand over Osama bin Laden, either to his own country, Saudi Arabia or to the US, after the attack on the US embassies in Africa and later following the attack on the USS Cole in Aden. Bin Laden, who had left Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal and returned during the government of Tajik leader Burhanuddin Rabbani and his Defence Minister, Ahmad Shah Masood, had actually been "inherited" by the Taliban. Moreover, Mulla Omar disagreed with Bin Laden's agenda to promote 'global jihad' and resented his influence within Afghanistan. Despite these differences, Omar is said to have argued that under the "Pushtoon-Wali Code", Bin Laden was under his "protection" and could not be surrendered. Reportedly, he offered to have Bin Laden tried by a group of Afghan Ulema but this did not resolve the problem. Apart from Omar's uncompromising stance on this issue, he unleashed his own obscurantist version of Islam, imposing restrictions on women and harsh punishments for violations of his 'Islamic' code of conduct among other reprehensive measures. The last straw was the Taliban's destruction of the historic Bamiyan Buddha statue. As a result, Afghanistan under the Taliban became an international "pariah" state. For Pakistan, its relations with the Taliban became toxic and counter-productive thereafter.

These growing differences between Pakistan and the US were a godsend to India, which had, since the popular Kashmiri uprising in 1990, blamed Pakistan for promoting terrorism against India. In 1993, India accused Pakistan of master-minding the terrorist bombings in Bombay, allegedly carried out by an Indian Muslim criminal mob leader, Dawood Ibrahim, in retaliation for the destruction of the Babri Mosque, which nearly placed Pakistan on the American list of countries sponsoring terrorism. In 1995, the kidnapping of western tourists in Indian-occupied Kashmir, including an American national, by a group called Al-Faran, was also blamed on Pakistan by India. Similarly, the hijacking of an Indian Airline plane to Kandahar in Afghanistan on 24 December 1999, to secure the release of several Pakistani members of a Jihadi group, Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen, such as Masood Azhar, was used to establish a link between Pakistan, the Taliban, and terrorist groups like the Harkat.

These Indian allegations against Pakistan were consistent with America's own narrative following the bombings in Africa and the attack on its naval vessel, for which reason the US and India developed yet another area of

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convergence and cooperation. It also led to the promotion of the American, Indian and Israeli narrative about 'Islamic' terrorism to demonise Islam and Muslims in the west. Most importantly, the terrorism label undermined the international legitimacy of the Kashmiri struggle and justified American endorsement of the Indian stance against Pakistan on Kashmir. There was little doubt now, even within some Pakistani circles, that Pakistani jihadi groups with close ties to the Taliban were operating in both Afghanistan and Indian-occupied Kashmir.

As a result, by the time President Musharraf undertook to contain and reverse the spectre of terrorism in late 1999, he was confronted by the dual threat of domestic militancy and terrorism as well as international opprobrium for terrorism emanating from Pakistan. The radicalisation of Pakistani society along ethnic lines by the MQM and others, coupled with sectarian Sunni-Shia violence by the Siph-e-Sahaba and Lakhshar-e-Jhangvi, was accentuated with the charge of Pakistani support for, or at least tolerance of, international terrorism. Apart from al-Qaida and the Taliban, Pakistan-linked groups like Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islamic and Jaish-e-Muhammad among others were blamed for terrorism against India and for close collaboration with al-Qaida and the Taliban, with alleged support from Pakistani intelligence agencies.[27]

Despite these challenges, Pakistan still cooperated with the US to apprehend and extradite terrorists like Ramzi Yousaf in February 1995 for the attack on the World Trade Center and Aimal Kansi in 1997 for killing CIA officials in Washington. But the US demanded more action.

While Musharraf recognised the dangers confronting Pakistan as a result of the stigma of terrorism and by his account banned a number of extremist groups in February 2001,[28] the dilemma for Pakistan was not to derail the tenuous relations with the Taliban while also avoiding a backlash in the country, especially in the tribal areas. As a result, Musharraf's efforts did not substantively change the ground realities nor reduce international pressure, both of which were about to get much worse.

From the perspective of the nuclear issue, the charge of terrorism had a significantly negative impact which largely continues to stigmatise Pakistan. American and western officials started to express concerns about the danger of Pakistan's nuclear weapons or materials falling into the hands of terrorists, or

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worse, that radicalised and extremist elements in the civilian and/or military leadership could gain control over the country's nuclear arsenal. Yet another perceived threat was that radicalised people within the loop of the nuclear programme could gain access to nuclear materials or plans that could either be shared with terrorist groups or misused by such individuals themselves. Broadly, these were termed 'outsider' and 'insider' threats to Pakistan's nuclear weapons. Such fears were given full exposure by the western media and think tanks, often on the basis of information leaked by American and other allied intelligence communities. This was done despite the fact that Pakistan had taken elaborate measures for the safety and security of its nuclear assets, especially after the 1998 nuclear tests, partly in cooperation with the US itself.

On the diplomatic front, Pakistan tried to dispel such concerns as best it could. The creation of the NCA and the setting up of the SPD, which had implemented robust safety and security measures, including the physical security of the nuclear weapons and delivery systems as well as personnel reliability programmes, were cited as examples of the efforts made by Pakistan. Both the Foreign Office and the SPD had also engaged with the US after the 1998 nuclear tests in several rounds of talks during which issues relating to nuclear safety and security were thoroughly discussed. Indeed, the US even advised the SPD to formulate its safety and security measures. But, more importantly, from Pakistan's perspective, the greater threat to its nuclear assets was not so much from terrorists but from the US, India or Israel, for which reason Pakistan had already taken stringent precautions on its own, much before the perceived terrorist threats had emerged. Even so, this issue came to dominate both official exchanges with the US as well as the western public discourse.

It is also noteworthy that while Pakistan was being accused of not taking effective action against the Taliban to hand over Osama bin Laden and shut down the al-Qaida network in Afghanistan, despite Pakistan's obvious limitations, the US and the west were also in denial about their own role in promoting and supporting individuals and groups during the war against the Soviets which had now turned against them. In fact, after the Soviet defeat, these western "assets" were promptly abandoned, becoming a problem for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Moreover, the US and its western allies failed to address and resolve the "root causes" that had radicalised Muslims globally and

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persuaded them to adopt terrorist tactics in response to the repression against the Palestinians, Bosnians and Kashmiris. As such the growing problem of international terrorism was actually beyond Pakistan's capacity to overcome and, in the view of many in Pakistan, it was being used as a scapegoat for western acts omission and commission that had fueled such terrorism in the first place. Even so, it must be acknowledged that Pakistan had a responsibility to combat terrorism within its territory.

Impact of 9/11

The high-profile terrorist attacks on American targets in 1999 and 2000 forced the Clinton administration to shift its focus from non-proliferation towards the growing terrorist threat. During his last few months as President, Clinton also came under severe criticism from the opposition Republicans, especially their Presidential candidate, George W Bush, for failing to effectively tackle terrorism. As a result, in the American dialogue with Pakistan, the nuclear issue was overtaken by concerns over terrorism, leading to extensive bilateral engagement on the subject. However, being a 'lame duck' administration, no substantive progress could be achieved.

When Bush won a controversial election and become President in January 2001, there was renewed hope in Pakistan that relations would improve with the Republicans in power since traditionally the Republicans were believed to be more favourably inclined towards Pakistan. While this was and remains a mistaken Pakistani assumption, the reality at that time was that the new administration was less interested than its predecessor in proliferation issues and more focused on addressing the terrorism challenge for which it needed Pakistan's cooperation. General Musharraf seized this opportunity and quickly established contacts with President Bush and his Secretary of State, Colin Powell. In his letter to Bush of 9 June 2001, Musharraf called for cooperation to address "diverse facets of the Afghan problem", including "combating extremism." He also asked the US to "play a constructive role in the process" to promote durable peace between Pakistan and India by "resolving the long-standing Kashmir dispute." Regarding the nuclear issue, Musharraf conveyed that "our primary objective is to preserve the credibility of our minimum deterrence vis-à-vis India" and pointed out Pakistan's concerns about "the huge increases in India's defence budget and its massive weapons purchases,

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including ABM systems from Russia, which point to an ambitious strategic programme." In his reply, Bush focused on terrorism – conveying that "we should work together to address Afghanistan's many problems. The most pressing of these is terrorism." He added that the "continued presence of Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida organisation is a direct threat to the United States that must be addressed." Bush went on to write that "I urge you to use your influence with the Taliban" to "bring Bin Laden to justice and to close the network of terrorist camps" in Afghanistan. Significantly, Bush made no mention of the nuclear issue.[29]

As a result of these exchanges, Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar visited Washington for talks with Secretary of State Colin Powell in June 2001. He also met National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Chairman Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Joe Bieden. As expected the American side focused on Afghanistan and the terrorism threat to the US even as they accepted Pakistan's difficulties in dealing with the Taliban. Foreign Minister Sattar argued that from Pakistan's perspective international engagement with the Taliban could moderate their behaviour and encourage them to cooperate on the terrorism issue. He maintained that while Pakistan was not "propping up the Taliban regime, it could not afford to have Afghanistan as a hostile neighbour." As a result of these talks, the two sides agreed to enhance counter-terrorism cooperation with increased exchanges between the intelligence agencies – the ISI and the CIA.[30] Once again, there was no substantive discussion on the nuclear issue. The US side, moreover, indicated that they were working to remove existing nuclear and other remaining sanctions from both Pakistan and India, most of which had already been removed by the Clinton administration under the Presidential waiver granted by Congress in 1999.

On 10 September 2001, the ISI Chief, General Mahmud Ahmed, and his team arrived in Washington for talks with the head of the CIA, George Tenet, and with members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. That evening at a dinner hosted by the Ambassador, the news was received that Northern Alliance leader Ahmad Shah Masood had been assassinated. The last obstacle to the Taliban rule had thereby been removed.

The next day, 11 September, General Mahmood, Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi, the Defence Attache in Washington, Brigadier Mujtaba, and the author

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as Deputy Chief of Mission in the Washington Embassy, were in a meeting with members of the Senate Intelligence Committee when we learnt that there had been a terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York, by two aircraft ramming into the twin buildings. The meeting was quickly adjourned and the Pakistani delegation left the Congress premises. Just then another aircraft hit the Pentagon building. Over the news there were reports of another missing aircraft which was later shot down or crashed. There was sheer pandemonium in Washington and in New York. America's war on terror had just started.

The ISI Chief immediately spoke on the phone to General Musharraf who was already aware of the developments. His immediate assessment, which he mentions in his book, that "America was sure to react violently, like a wounded bear" was absolutely correct. Equally correct was his view that if the Americans concluded that al-Qaida was responsible for these terrorist strikes, the US would not spare the Taliban and could also target Pakistan.[31] On advice from the Foreign Office as also from our Embassy in Washington, General Musharraf immediately went on television to publicly condemn these terrorist attacks and stated that, "We stood with America and would assist in any way we could."[32] This was timely as the reaction in the US, both official and public, was palpably against al-Qaida which was immediately blamed for the attack as well as against the Taliban and by extension against Pakistan. The Bush administration's position as it quickly evolved was "you are either with us or against us" – which was clearly conveyed to Musharraf by Powell the next day, just as it was conveyed to the international community at large.

Meanwhile, in Washington, General Mahmood met CIA Chief Tenet and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage on 12 September. He had already been instructed by Musharraf to convey Pakistan's readiness to help the US. In the meeting with Armitage, which included the Ambassador, the Defence Attache and myself, the Deputy Secretary began bluntly by asking whether Pakistan is with us or against us. Mahmud Ahmed was in a position to reassure Armitage of Pakistan's support. The assertion by Musharraf in his book that Armitage threatened to "bomb Pakistan into the stone age" is, however, incorrect as Armitage made no such threat.[33] Perhaps General Musharraf was misinformed later by General Mahmud. But our record of the meeting as well as our report to the Foreign Office made no reference about such a threat in the meeting.

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Thereafter, events moved rapidly as the Bush administration prepared to launch its "Global War on Terror". Having decided that the 9/11 attacks were perpetrated by al-Qaida under Bin Laden's direction, their primary target was Afghanistan to destroy the terrorist infrastructure and remove the Taliban government if it did not cooperate by handing over Bin Laden. Subsequently, of course, inquiries revealed that the 9/11 mastermind was Khalid Sheikh Muhammad and the 19 hijackers involved in the attack had lived and received training outside Afghanistan as well as fact that Bin Laden never directly or unambiguously claimed responsibility for the 9/11 attacks.[34] But at the time and even thereafter the US held Bin Laden responsible and launched the manhunt to "bring him to justice."

Since land-locked Afghanistan could be accessed most conveniently only through Pakistan, the US urgently sought Pakistan's cooperation for its planned intervention in Afghanistan. A list of seven demands was conveyed to us in Washington and to the Foreign Office in Islamabad on 13 September. These included: i) Stop al-Qaida operations at Pakistani borders, intercept arms transfers through Pakistan and end all logistical support to Bin Laden's network; ii) Provide US blanket overflight and landing rights for military and intelligence operations; iii) Provide transit access for military and intelligence operations, including use of naval ports, air bases and strategic locations on the border with Afghanistan; iv) Provide intelligence and security information relating to al-Qaida; v) Curb all domestic expressions of support for terrorism against the US, its friends and allies (which presumably included India); vi) Cut off the supply of fuel and other items including volunteers to the Taliban and viii) Break diplomatic relations with and end all support for the Taliban.

As General Musharraf maintains "some of those demands were ludicrous."[35] Pakistan could not agree to blanket overflight and landing rights nor curb all domestic support for "terrorism" since this depended on the definition of what constituted terrorism. Most importantly, some of these demands could jeopardise Pakistan's strategic assets, especially at a time when mutual suspicions had intensified. Accordingly, General Musharraf agreed to "only a narrow flight corridor that was far from the sensitive areas"[36] and the use of only two air bases, Shamsi in Balochistan and Jacobabad in Sindh, and that only for logistics and aircraft recovery. In Musharraf's words: "We gave no blanket permission for anything."[37]

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Owning to continuing concerns about American intentions relating to Pakistan's nuclear weapons, especially in the context of so-called outsider and insider threats to these assets, an immediate priority for Pakistan was to ensure the safety and security of its strategic capabilities. In the week of 11 to 19 September, not only were the armed forces put on enhanced readiness status but the SPD was also asked to secure all strategic weapons and delivery systems which were placed in dispersed hardened silos as a contingency.[38] Such concerns related not just towards the US but India and Israel as well, since all or one of them could try to exploit Pakistan's vulnerability at the time.

It is worth recalling here that even before the 9/11 attacks, I was informed by a friend from the Republican Party's inner circle in strict confidence that India and Israel were closely cooperating through their powerful lobbies in Congress and the Administration. Their objective was to have Pakistan declared a state sponsor of terrorism and sanctioned under the relevant law, to be placed in the company of "pariah" states like Iran and North Korea coupled with the neutralisation of its nuclear assets. This information confirmed the openly expressed views by conservative Republican think tanks like The Heritage Foundation and the CATO Institute, that Pakistan should be declared a terrorist state and deprived of its nuclear weapons since it posed a threat to the US and its friends – India and Israel. Years later, another American friend and former colleague from the State Department acknowledged that if it could, the US would have "taken out" Pakistan's nuclear weapons but since none of its contingency plans had a reasonable chance of success before, during or after the 9/11 crisis, these were never carried out. Such plans are also mentioned by David Sanger in his book *The Inheritance*, among other writers.[39]

The purpose of this recounting is to underscore the dangers that Pakistan was confronting from the "wounded bear" after the 9/11 terrorist attacks which validated the decision taken by General Musharraf at the time to support the US in its war on terror. He was correct in his assessment that this decision was in Pakistan's interest and one of the primary considerations for this was that otherwise "the security of our strategic assets would be jeopardised."[40] Even though Musharraf's decision was criticised at the time and in later years, especially for the impact that this counter-terrorism cooperation with the US had on promoting terrorist groups within Pakistan, such as the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the simple fact is that at the time Pakistan had no other choice.

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At first, Pakistan still tried to persuade the Taliban to hand over Osama bin Laden and cut-off links with al-Qaida. But Mulla Omar was adamant in his refusal to cooperate. Pakistan also tried to persuade the Americans that their objective should be to destroy al-Qaida, in which Pakistan would cooperate, but not to alienate all the Taliban by engaging with the 'moderate' elements since they represented the Pushtoon majority in Afghanistan and whose cooperation would be needed in future to stabilise the country. Moreover, General Musharraf advised the Americans that in their military operations in Afghanistan, which had started by 7 October in collaboration with the Tajik Northern Alliance, they should not allow the Northern Alliance to take over Kabul as this would further alienate the Pushtoons. However, the US disregarded this advice even as Musharraf was meeting Bush in New York during late October 2001.[41] Still, the US did ensure that a Pushtoon leader, Hamid Karzai, headed the Afghan Interim Government which was set up as a result of the Bonn Process in December 2001.

Within weeks after operation 'Enduring Freedom' was launched by US and NATO forces together with the Northern Alliance, the Taliban regime collapsed and the Taliban and al-Qaida leadership, together with most of their fighters, melted into the Afghan countryside and over the porous border into Pakistan's tribal areas. Two subsequent operations, Tora Bora in December 2001 and Anaconda in March/April 2002, close to the borders with Pakistan, failed to capture or kill the Taliban or al-Qaida leadership, though at one point, according to subsequent reports, Bin Laden was cornered in the Tora Bora caves. However, US troops and local mercenaries failed to capture him.[42]

In the nuclear context, the most important development was the discovery in early October 2001 by US troops and CIA operatives of documents in Afghanistan according to which two retired Pakistani nuclear scientists, Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood and Chaudhary Abdul Majeed, had met with al-Qaida and Taliban leaders in August 2001. This discovery intensified existing American concerns about terrorists gaining access to nuclear weapons or materials as well as about the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. A joint investigation with Pakistani intelligence was launched into the activities of these two scientists. Under interrogation, they admitted to meeting Mulla Omar and later with Osama bin Laden but maintained that these meetings were in connection with the humanitarian activities of their organisation,

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Ummah Tameer-e-Nau (UTN), which was a charity relief agency. They asserted that the UTN was working on Afghan economic reconstruction and proposed setting up a polytechnic institute in Kabul to Mullah Omar who had asked them to meet Bin Laden to fund the project. However, Bin Laden was not interested in funding the institute and more keen to know how Pakistan had achieved nuclear capability. According to Mahmood, he pointed out the complexities of pursuing a nuclear programme but denied any discussion about nuclear weapons or nuclear materials transfer. After their arrest on 23 October and interrogation, which involved both Pakistani and American officials, the two scientists were eventually released in January 2002.[43]

Despite their release, the Americans were not fully convinced by the account given by the two scientists leading to speculation and several wild allegations. One such claim was that the scientists had discussed radioactive and dirty bombs with the al-Qaida leaders and according to another that Bin Laden hinted to them about possessing enriched uranium. But Mahmood strongly denied these accounts.

The main reason for continued American paranoia was that this incident was consistent with the prevailing nightmare scenario in the US about Muslim terrorists carrying out an attack against the US or Israel with a crude nuclear bomb or radio-active nuclear material. Immediately after 9/11, there had already been a scare in Washington triggered by the mailing of letters containing Anthrax (which had been received by our Embassy as well). Even though the culprit turned out to be a deranged American citizen, the fears about a WMD terrorist attack spread rapidly across the country. These were most clearly articulated in a *The New York Times* article by Bruce Blair, a nuclear security expert, on 22 October 2001, who wrote that "the ultimate horror..... is the prospect of terrorists with nuclear weapons." More importantly, he asserted that "Even more pressing, given the American military campaign in Afghanistan and the ongoing protests by some in Pakistan against their country's cooperation, is ensuring the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal." He added that "there are radicals within the Pakistani government and military forces, and it is possible that insiders might collude to steal bombs and add them to the arsenal of Osama bin Laden or some other extremists."[44]

Such widespread panic in the US persuaded the Bush administration to launch its 'counter-proliferation' policy aimed at preventing so-called 'Loose

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Nukes' from falling into the hands of terrorists or other non-state actors. Such efforts had already been underway since the disintegration of the Soviet Union to secure nuclear materials from Soviet-era nuclear facilities spread out over its former territories under the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction programme. After 9/11, these efforts were intensified to cover not only Russian-origin 'loose nukes' but from elsewhere, including Pakistan. This involved assistance including equipment and sharing of information based on American experience which would help secure Pakistan's nuclear assets. Pakistan agreed to such cooperation under two conditions – one, that no American would set foot in Pakistan with regard to the assistance, and, two, that all safety and security measures would be chosen and conducted by Pakistan itself. The American offer, made personally to President Musharraf by Secretary of State Colin Powell, developed to include best practices for protecting fixed installations, mobile nuclear materials such as convoys transporting such materials, development of personal reliability programmes and export controls, including detection of radioactive, chemical and radiological materials. According to unnamed officials from Pakistan "we sought cooperation in a completely non-intrusive manner and education is always useful, and there are no limits to improving standards of nuclear management."[45]

Despite such cooperation which continued over the years, the issue of nuclear security remained on the American and western agenda. It was also taken up in the UN with several subsequent resolutions adopted on nuclear security as well as in bilateral talks. During President Musharraf's visits to the US in October 2001 and February 2002, it dominated his talks with administration officials in the National Security Council, the State Departments as well as the CIA. As a result, the issue of nuclear security became closely intertwined with the overall issue of Pakistan's role in the war on terror. It also dominated virtually every public exchange by President Musharraf, whether in Congress, the thinktanks or the media. The pressure on Pakistan was intense and it was about to get even worse.

The Confrontation with India and the role of Nuclear Deterrence

Even as Pakistan was coming to grips with the impact of 9/11 involving counter-terrorism operations in coordination with US forces on the western

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border with Afghanistan in which over 100,000 Pakistani troops were deployed, another crisis erupted on the eastern front with India following a militant attack on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001. The Indians blamed the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, a Pakistan-based organisation, for the attack in which nine people were killed.[46]

While fully endorsing the Indian charge against Pakistan, the US Ambassador in India, Robert Blackwill, compared this attack to the 9/11 attacks on the US, thereby highlighting the shared threat of 'Islamic' terrorism to the US and India.[47] The position taken by Blackwill without any evidence at his disposal obviously influenced the view of the Bush Administration, as our Embassy soon discovered in Washington. [48]

While Pakistan denied any involvement and offered a joint investigation into the incident, Prime Minister Vajpayee's government rejected this offer and by 15 December decided to mobilise and deploy Indian troops on the borders with Pakistan. As a result, Pakistan was faced once again with the nightmare scenario of a two-front confrontation, in the west with Afghanistan and in the east with India.

These developments took place in an environment that was already highly charged between Pakistan and India. After the breakdown in Indo-Pakistan relations due to the Kargil crisis, General Musharraf seized the opportunity provided by the earthquake in India's Gujrat state in early 2001 to mend relations by offering humanitarian assistance. This led to an invitation by Vajpayee for Musharraf to visit India in July 2001. Though their meeting in Agra at first produced positive results, the agreed Joint Statement approved by the two leaders was scuttled by Indian hardliners and the visit ended on a sour note. Subsequently, the Indians were also disappointed by the fact that, contrary to their expectations, the 9/11 attacks had led to Pakistan-US cooperation against terrorism rather than a breakdown in relations, due to the "unexpected" decision taken by General Musharraf to align with the US. Indian calculations to leverage their own greatly improved relations with the US, based not least on their common interests to combat 'Islamic' terrorism, seemed to have backfired as a result.

During the ensuing ten-month stand-off between Pakistan and India with troop deployments along the entire border and the LoC in Kashmir, the two countries were on the verge of another war. Operation "Parakaram", as it was

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called by India, deployed nearly 500,000 troops ready for offensive action. But given India's size, this deployment took time which was valuable for Pakistan to take counter-measures by matching the Indian mobilisation. The Indians accompanied their military escalation with other means of coercion such as recalling their Ambassador and asking for Pakistan's Ambassador to be withdrawn along with a 50 per cent reduction in embassy personnel. Overflights by Pakistani aircraft were stopped. Threats were issued to abrogate the Indus Water Treaty and stop the flow of rivers into Pakistan. India also presented a list of 20 alleged terrorists and demanded their extradition. A further military escalation took place in May with the deployment of five additional warships from India's eastern fleet to the Arabian Sea in an apparent attempt to blockade Pakistani ports. Earlier in January, India had deployed its new Agni I missile with a range of up to 900 kilometres and a payload of 1000 kg which was described as a "Pakistan-specific missile."

As a result of such coercive Indian measures, Pakistan was compelled to respond. Three back-to-back tests in May 2002 of the Ghauri, Ghaznavi and Abdali missiles were carried out, conveying a most explicit warning to India. Addressing scientists on 17 June, President Musharraf stated that "we were compelled to show them in May 1998 that we were not bluffing and in May 2002, we were compelled to show that we do not bluff." He added that we "need to ensure that the three basic ingredients of deterrence – capability, credibility and resolve – never get compromised."[49] However, Musharraf did not go to the extent of threatening the use of nuclear weapons. In fact, in an interview with CNN on 1 June, he said "Nuclear war is unthinkable for South Asia. I don't think either side is that irresponsible to go to that limit."[50] Even so, American and Indian observers interpreted the interview as conveying a veiled nuclear threat.

Another earlier and unrelated comment by the Director-General of the SPD, General Kidwai, was later projected by American and Indian observers as a nuclear threat. General Kidwai had told a group of Italian scientists in January 2002, in response to their query, that in his view if deterrence failed, then Pakistan could use nuclear weapons in four scenarios – i) India attacks Pakistan and occupies a large part of its territory; ii) India destroys a large part of Pakistan's land or Air Forces; iii) India enforces economic strangulation of Pakistan and iv) India promotes large scale internal subversion and domestic

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destabilisation in Pakistan.[51] These red lines were kept deliberately vague and imprecise in order to retain Pakistan's doctrine of strategic ambiguity. Since these comments were made public by the Italian group during the subsequent stand-off with India, they were projected as Pakistan's nuclear signalling.

In another interview with the German publication, *Der Spiegel*, on 6 April, Musharraf said "Nuclear weapons are the last resort.....Nuclear weapons could be used if Pakistan is threatened with extinction.... In a crisis, nuclear weapons also have to be part of the calculation."[52] These remarks were seen as a further escalation in Pakistan's position.

Another statement that rattled the Americans and the Indians was made by Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN, Munir Akram, who told the *Dawn* newspaper on 31 May that "we have the means, and we will not neutralise it by any doctrine of no-first use" (of nuclear weapons).[53]

It should be noted that on the Indian side as well there were references to nuclear weapons use. Indian Defence Secretary, Yogendra Narain, stated that "we do not know their (Pakistan's) nuclear threshold.....we will retaliate and must be prepared for mutual destruction on both sides.[54] But Indian Defence Minister, George Fernandez, maintained that "I don't agree with the idea that India and Pakistan are so imprudent and excitable that they will forget what nuclear weapons can do."[55]

In Washington, the possibility of an intentional or accidental outbreak of nuclear war caused extreme concern. In May, Pakistan sent a Special Envoy to the US as well as to European and Islamic countries to calm such fears as well as to defend Pakistan's position. Musharraf had also already banned groups based in Pakistan which were operating in occupied Kashmir at the American behest in return for assurances that the Bush administration would persuade India to cease human rights violations and resume dialogue with Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir dispute. This understanding was the outcome of hectic diplomatic exchanges, including visits to the region by Defence Secretary Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary of State Armitage during May-June. But American fears of nuclear weapons use continued to linger. David Sanger mentions being told by Secretary of State Colin Powell about the US taking up the issue with both Pakistan and India and ensuring that leaders from allied countries visiting the region also impress upon Pakistani and Indian leaders to back down from their thinly veiled threats about the use of nuclear weapons.

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According to Sanger, Powell spoke personally on the phone to President Musharraf and said "all this talk about nuclear weapons or means has got to stop" and "General, you are scaring the crap out of everybody, so you've got to cool it." In response, Musharraf reportedly laughed and said "I understand."[56]

Owing to such concerns about the escalation towards the possible use of nuclear weapons, the US also engaged with India to end the military stand-off with Pakistan. By 10 June, the first signs of de-escalation by India emerged with the lifting of the ban on Pakistani overflights and the withdrawal of Indian warships from the Arabian Sea. In Musharraf's words "the Indians blinked and quite ignominiously agreed to a mutual withdrawal of forces."[57]

While the outbreak of war was avoided, the Pakistan-India military confrontation of 2001-2002 provided an opportunity for nuclear learning by both sides. Despite western concerns and claims that Pakistan had made preparations for using nuclear weapons, General Musharraf later confirmed to Feroz Khan that "there was no plan to employ nuclear weapons."[58] This is also confirmed by others then in responsible positions, such as Director-General SPD, General Kidwai.[59]

What definitely did take place was deterrence signalling – by both sides – when India deployed the Pakistan-specific Agni I missile and Pakistan conducted tests of the Ghauri, Ghaznavi and Abdali missiles. From Pakistan's perspective, it was crucial to convey that it not only had aircraft but missile capability as well to deliver nuclear weapons if its security and territorial integrity was threatened. It also recognised that by keeping its threshold for using nuclear weapons ambiguous added to its deterrence capability. Feroz Hasan adds that the stand-off "allowed Pakistan to develop a subtle politico-military response by integrating three elements: conventional force deployment and rapid counter mobilisation; missile testing; and diplomatic offensive."[60] The crisis also validated Pakistan's reliance on nuclear weapons to negate Indian resort to bullying and blackmail by trying to use is numerical superiority in conventional weapons. Most importantly, it underscored the need for Pakistan to rapidly integrate its conventional and nuclear forces into a seamless deterrence posture that would be directly related to the Indian force posture and its military doctrines. Accordingly, it was during this crisis, that the existing nuclear Command and Control structure, the NCA and SPD, were further streamlined and the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) took its final

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shape, with the establishment of air and land nuclear forces and the creation of ballistic missile units. Later, with development of technological capabilities, this would also include the sea-based nuclear Command as part of the SFC.

The lessons for India resulting from its "Operation Parakaram" were equally profound, with far-reaching implications for its future military doctrine. As considered in preceding chapters, the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in 1998 leading to nuclear deterrence, had neutralised India's conventional weapons advantage over Pakistan. As a result, the Indians began to consider ways to reassert this advantage by seeking space for conventional war with Pakistan below the nuclear threshold. In 2000, Defence Minister Fernandez had claimed that India's doctrine would be to fight a "limited war under the nuclear umbrella." This echoed the view of Army Chief General Ved Prakash and the Indian defence establishment that space existed between full-scale conventional war and nuclear war and a limited conventional war would terminate before triggering a nuclear exchange. Such thinking had been encouraged by the Kargil crisis, and it was believed that India's larger conventional forces could overwhelm Pakistani forces before the latter could resort to using nuclear weapons, and, in any event, an assured "massive" nuclear response from India would dissuade Pakistan from using its nuclear option.[61] Another Indian consideration was that the force of international pressure, especially from their new ally, the US, would prevent Pakistan from using nuclear weapons.

However, the experience of the 2001-2002 confrontation disabused the Indians of such calculations. Firstly, India's sheer size required at least three to four weeks for full mobilisation of its three Strike Corps on the borders with Pakistan. This eliminated the element of strategic surprise which was essential for a short and swift strike against Pakistan and provided enough time for Pakistani forces to be counter-mobilised while also launching an effective diplomatic campaign. Secondly, Pakistan's smaller size and forward location of its cantonments enabled its mobilisation within a week or less. Thirdly, Pakistan's signalling by testing its missiles demonstrated its ability and willingness to respond if considered necessary with the use of nuclear weapons. In short, Pakistan refused to succumb to Indian coercion. The US also asked both sides to back down instead of focusing only on Pakistan, especially since it needed Pakistan's help on its western front in the "war on

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terror". It was in response to these considerations that India revised its military doctrine and came up with its Cold Start Doctrine in April 2004 to find space for limited conventional war below the nuclear threshold. This doctrine and its implementation changed the strategic dynamics in South Asia and further undermined strategic stability in the region. This is further examined in the next chapter.

The Nuclear Proliferation Challenge

President Musharraf recalls in his book that one of his most embarrassing moments when he was at a loss for words was in September 2003 when CIA Director George Tenet presented him with detailed drawings of Pakistan's P-1 centrifuges which had been recovered from the Iranians. While this design was no longer in use, it had been developed in the early stages of Pakistan's nuclear programme under Dr A Q Khan. While Musharraf undertook to investigate, he asked Tenet to keep the matter secret. However, later in 2003, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) also revealed evidence of Iran's construction of a pilot centrifuge facility at Natanz from where the evidence also pointed to A Q Khan's role in providing the blueprint of the Pakistani design. Thereafter, these discoveries were soon leaked to the media. As Musharraf wrote, "there could be no doubt that A Q Khan was peddling our technology" and that A Q Khan's past behaviour left me in no doubt."[62]

In fact, suspicions about A Q Khan's activities had arisen in early 2000. US National Security Advisor, Sandy Berger, had told former Foreign Minister Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, when he visited Washington as Musharraf's Special Envoy after the October 1999 coup, about American intelligence reports regarding A Q Khan's contacts with Iran and North Korea. US concerns in this regard were duly conveyed to the President and the Foreign Office. But more concrete information emerged when the NCA and the SPD were established and the SPD began to implement institutionalised oversight and control over all strategic organisations,[63] as mentioned earlier. Prior to this, there had been loose security controls, with security officials reporting directly to A Q Khan. This system was changed, including the security officials. Working in conjunction with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, the SPD tightened measures and streamlined procedures, including for meetings and overseas visits by all personnel of all the strategic organisations. A Q Khan resisted these measures,

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especially on his travel abroad, which had included visits to North Korea. He also resisted institutionalised oversight over his activities since over the years he had enjoyed complete freedom of action while acquiring the status of a national hero and "father" of the nuclear bomb – a reputation that he had largely promoted himself. Owing to these reasons Musharraf had removed him as Chairman of the Khan Research Laboratories (KRL) in March 2001. But even in his new position as Special Advisor, A Q Khan continued his clandestine activities, using the procurement network that he had earlier set up across the globe.

Following the revelations made by the Americans and the IAEA, Musharraf instituted an investigation into the Khan network in November 2003, which was conducted by Director-General, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), General Ehsan-ul-Haq, Director General SPD, General Kidwai, and the SPD head of security, General Bilal. The investigators were shocked to discover the extent and reach of the Khan network.[64]

It operated from a front office in Dubai, SMB Computers, which coordinated proliferation activities in Iran, North Korea and Libya. This proliferation did not involve built-up nuclear facilities but individual components and designs such as ring magnets, aluminium and maraging steel, vellum pumps etc. A Q Khan's illicit dealings with Iran began in 1987 and lasted till about 1999, during which time he provided drawings and calculations for a complete nuclear plant of 2,000 centrifuge machines. However, the P-1 centrifuge designs given to Iran were redundant and obsolete. With Libya, the cooperation took place from 1997 to 2003. It involved a contract for A Q Khan to manufacture centrifuge components and assemble them offsite. The collaboration with North Korea involved the transfer of 12 old centrifuges, drawings, technical data and depleted uranium hexafluoride among other items. The network eventually began to unravel by March 2003 when the Libyans decided to engage with the US and the UK to end sanctions imposed on them and acknowledged their clandestine programme. Thereafter, the Iranians also came under the non-proliferation efforts of the US and the IAEA.[65] High-profile incidents, such as the seizure of the German ship BBC China in the Mediterranean carrying nuclear equipment from Malaysia to Libya and the discovery of centrifuges by the IAEA at Iran's Natanz facility brought about full disclosure of the Khan network.

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By February 2004, the US and western media highlighted the discovery of the proliferation network and mentioned A Q Khan as its mastermind. President Musharraf shared the findings of the official investigations with the IAEA and the US, playing a critical role in this cooperation to dismantle the Khan network. Musharraf also asked A Q Khan to publically admit his activities and was placed under house arrest. However, given his role in developing Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability and the resulting national popularity, he was issued a pardon for his activities.

While the proliferation network is blamed exclusively on A Q Khan, the fact remains that nationals of over 20 countries were also involved in this "virtual nuclear Walmart" or "nuclear bazar" as described by Mohammed El Baradei, former Director-General of the IAEA.[66] According to Baradei and other sources, the persons involved in the network belonged to several countries, most notably from UAE, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, South Africa, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, Britain, France, Spain and even Israel and India.[67]

Even though the A Q Khan episode is closed as far as Pakistan is concerned, there remain lingering concerns over several aspects of the nuclear black market. One such issue is the role of the Swiss Tinner family which was involved in the network but was also providing information to the CIA. In May 2008, several years after the A Q Khan network had been exposed, the Swiss President acknowledged that his government had destroyed a huge trove of computer files and other materials documenting the dealings of Khan's associates, Friedrich Tinner and his sons, Urs and Marco, who were not prosecuted at the insistence of the CIA. This development revealed that the Tinners, while continuing to be part of the illicit network, had been working as moles for the CIA which had over four years paid them around ten million dollars. The US claimed that information provided by the Tinners helped to sabotage and eventually expose the Libyan and Iranian programmes as well as undo the Khan network. However, what remains inexplicable for the Swiss and the IAEA is the destruction of the files at American urging, which could have provided further insight into the network, as well as the demand that the Tinners be pardoned and not prosecuted under Swiss law as the Swiss government wanted to do. According to US officials, the CIA feared that a trial would reveal the Tinner's relationship with the US and raise questions about

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American dealings with nuclear smugglers. Another reason was that it could imperil efforts to recruit new spies by the CIA.[68]

Another controversy is about the identity of Khan's 'fourth customer'. From the material recovered during the investigation of the Khan operation, there are several references by the members of the network to the "fourth customer", in addition to Iran, Libya and North Korea. According to Olli Heinonen, the IAEA official who conducted the investigation of the Khan network, references to the fourth customer was in "code language" and the country was never named. Such concerns were also raised because records and documents turned up that did not correspond to anything recovered from Libya, Dubai, Malaysia or other locations involved. According to Heinonen, those "shipments were never found."

Putting together all the relevant documents and facts, noted nuclear expert, Joshua Pollack, came up with the argument that this fourth customer was India. He pointed out that India, which had initially developed nuclear weapons using the plutonium route, was also interested in acquiring centrifuge technology for the uranium route, which Pakistan had already taken under A Q Khan's direction. By 1986, when the Indians were ready to break ground on their main enrichment facility, Pakistan had been churning out weapons-grade uranium for at least three years. The Indians then started purchasing large quantities of super-critical centrifuge components from 1997 to 1999 and again from 2003 to 2006. A study in 2006 by the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security disclosed that Indian bids for centrifuge parts provided clues about the supercritical centrifuge technology being used by them. Despite some changes, the design is recognisable to the trained eye that it almost mirrors the G-2 centrifuge that A Q Khan had reproduced as Pakistan's P-2 centrifuge. Another piece of evidence uncovered by Pollack is from the record of a South African court according to which a member of the Khan network, German national Gerhard Wisser, provided centrifuge components and specialised equipment to India since the late 1980s for its centrifuge programme. According to Pollack "the timing is consistent with India's earliest known work on supercritical centrifuges" and that Wisser seems to have had access to these centrifuge designs (which) he tried to sell to the South Africans around the same time."[69]

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Pollack's account is supported by Jeffery Lewis, head of the East Asia Non-proliferation Programme at the James Martin Center on Non-proliferation studies, in a post for the blog Arms Control Wonk. According to Lewis, Pakistani officials, including Khan himself, have openly stated that India acquired centrifuge design information from the (Khan) network, usually blaming deceased individuals within the network for operating independently.[70] The Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), an organisation that tracks nuclear security threats, also gave prominent coverage to this issue, based on claims by Pollack and Lewis.[71] President Musharraf has also alluded to this possibility, stating in his book that "Ironically, the network based in Dubai had employed several Indians, some of whom have since vanished. There is a strong possibility that the Indian uranium enrichment programme may also have roots in the Dubai-based network and could be a copy of the Pakistani centrifuge design."[72]

As in the Tinner case, it is surprising to say the least, that the IAEA, the US and other western countries that have been hounding Pakistan till now have shown a remarkable lack of concern to pursue and uncover the identity of the 'fourth customer'. Perhaps the US and its allies already know that it is India but in view of their relations with India, they are unwilling to expose the truth. This amounts to the same cover-up of the CIA's activities in the Tinner case.

Another aspect of the A Q Khan episode that continues to be a source of speculation revolves around the allegations that Pakistani officials were involved in or approved the clandestine network. The former head of the IAEA, Mohamed El Baradei, has been among those making such claims. But neither Baradei nor his chief investigator, Olli Heinonen, were ever able to provide any proof to back up this charge. Baradei writes in his book, *The Age of Deception* that when he met President Bush in March 2004, he mentioned that "while A Q Khan may have been the ring leader, it was clear he was at least in some cases not working on his own. For example, in the case of Iran, elements of the Pakistan Army may have been involved, and in the case of North Korea, Khan may have been acting as part of state-to-state cooperation."[73] Baradei claims to have based his assessment on a letter written by A Q Khan which he had seen in which Khan claimed that he had been instructed by senior Pakistan Army officers to cooperate with Iran and North Korea. Baradei does concede, however, in a footnote that since Pakistan is not a member of the NPT or the NSG, it is not bound by the obligations of either regarding export controls. As

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for Bush, Baradei claims that he agreed that "there were definite signs pointing to other Pakistani actors,"[74] but even by Baradei's account, did not go so far as to implicate Pakistan army officials or the state.

In his account, President Musharraf strongly denies such allegations of official involvement. He maintains that "on the basis of the thorough probe that we conducted in 2003-2004, and on the basis of the information that has since been collected (and fully and truthfully shared with the IAEA and international intelligence agencies), I can say with confidence that neither the Pakistan Army nor any of the past governments of Pakistan was ever involved or had any knowledge of A Q Khan's proliferation activities. The show was completely and entirely A Q's."[75]

In an interview with the author, General Kidwai maintained that as head of KRL for several years, A Q Khan had used his position and authority to set up his own private and commercial network which was possible due to loose security measures, which in any case, were under his control. After setting up the NCA and the SPD, which implemented institutionalised controls, Khan's activities came under suspicion and he was removed. However, he was still able to use his commercial network from Dubai to conduct his proliferation activities. But at no stage, any Army or civilian official was in the loop of his operations.[76]

Aside from these authoritative denials, the simple but critical fact is that the voluminous evidence gathered by the IAEA and western intelligence agencies from Iran and Libya as well as other non-Pakistani sources, has not come up with any proof or even circumstantial evidence establishing a link with Pakistan Army or civilian officials with the A Q Khan network. Such evidence is also lacking in the most thorough account of the Khan network written by Mark Fitzpatrick of the International Institute of Strategic Studies, entitled *Nuclear Black Markets: Pakistan, A.Q. Khan and the Rise of Proliferation Networks*. He wrties,"However, no evidence has emerged that a clear directive was ever given to them to provide nuclear technology to Iran." He also states that, "the Khan network's sales to Libya of centrifuge equipment produced in Malaysia, Turkey, Europe and South Aftrica and transshipped in Dubai were almost exclusively a private business - transaction beyond state control."[77]

Another vital argument which is often overlooked is that the Pakistani establishment, whether military or civilian, considers nuclear weapons as the

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country's crown jewels and a capability that distinguishes Pakistan from other Muslim countries which they are not willing to share with anyone.

Counter Proliferation

Just as the Kargil crisis of 1999 and the political instability leading to the coup later in the same year had undermined Pakistan's efforts to gain legitimacy as a responsible nuclear power, the perceived involvement of Pakistani nuclear scientists with the Taliban and al-Qaida as well as the discovery of the A Q Khan nuclear proliferation network thwarted the possibilities for its nuclear normalisation despite improvement in relations with the US after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Unlike in the 1980s when Pakistan's cooperation with the US against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan had provided the strategic space for pursuing its nuclear programme, the post-9/11 alliance with the US could not be leveraged to acquire nuclear legitimacy due to the negative fallout of the claims that Pakistan was the 'Crossroads of Nuclear Weapons and Terrorism' and the 'world's most dangerous country'. On the contrary, in these circumstances, Pakistan was hardly in the position to convincingly argue its case as a responsible nuclear power. Instead, it was forced to ensure that the damage to its nuclear credentials is limited as far as possible and, more importantly, that its nuclear arsenal was protected, not only from the much-hyped threat by terrorists but more so from the danger of an American attack to neutralise its strategic capabilities – which was then a clear and present danger.

Fortunately, for its own strategic compulsions, the Bush administration decided to cooperate with Pakistan and help strengthen its safety and security measures as described above. The US also attempted to strengthen the international regime for the prevention of nuclear and other materials of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorists. For Pakistan, this presented a challenge – to ensure that it would be a partner and not the victim in these efforts. This required a most delicate diplomatic balancing act – to engage in cooperation while preventing intrusive access that could jeopardise Pakistan's strategic assets.

The American initiative, described as 'Counter Proliferation', was launched in October 2002, and was distinct from 'non-proliferation'. Whereas the latter relied on international treaties such as the NPT and institutions like the IAEA and the NSG, counter-proliferation relied on US and allied preemptive

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action along with international measures to prevent non-state actors and their sponsors from acquiring nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological materials, "in order to deter and defend against the threat before it is unleashed." To implement this national policy, the US ensured the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1373 in 2001 which required all countries to adopt national counter-terrorism laws, and imposed legally binding obligations on all states to adopt "appropriate and effective" measures to prevent the proliferation of WMD to non-state actors. This was followed up by the adoption of resolution 1540 by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which made the resolution legally binding and enforceable on all member states.[78] Its original draft, prepared by hard-liners in the Administration, such as John Bolton, the US Ambassador to the UN, sought highly intrusive measures which even surpassed obligations under the NPT. But, along with several other countries, including NPT member states, Pakistan played a key role in diluting the eventually adopted text.[79]

Even so, 1540 remains one of the most forceful decisions of the UN. Adopted in April 2004 by a unanimous vote, it establishes that proliferation and possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) by non-state actors is a "threat to international peace and security". It requires states to i) prohibit providing any form of support to non-state actors seeking to acquire WMD, related material or their means of delivery; ii) adopt and enforce laws criminalising the possession and acquisition of such materials by non-state actors as well as to assist or finance their acquisition; and iii) adopt and enforce domestic controls over nuclear, chemical and biological weapon, their means of delivery, and related materials, in order to prevent their proliferation. The Security Council also established the 1540 Committee to monitor the implementation of the resolution and states were required to report to the Committee on an annual basis on the actions they had taken. The tenure of the Committee has been regularly renewed and it continues to function to this day. Pakistan has consistently fulfilled its obligations and continues to submit its annual reports.

The work of the 1540 Committee has been complemented by several other US-driven initiatives such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) of 2003; the Amendment to the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials and Facilities (CPPNM) of 2005; the International Convention on

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Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism of 2007; Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICCNT) of 2007; and the Container Security Initiative (CSI) of 2007. Pakistan has actively participated in the implementation of these international arrangements, either as a member or as an observer. Later, when the Obama administration launched the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) process in 2009, Pakistan was an active participant in all four summits.

In addition to such international cooperation, Pakistan took a number of domestic measures to establish and strengthen its credentials as a responsible nuclear weapon state over the years, building upon existing measures and developing additional capabilities. Incorporating non-proliferation norms and working in conjunction with the IAEA, Pakistan ensured that its nuclear security regime is based on the three pillars of a legislative and regulatory framework; setting up of implementing institutions and organisations; and enforcement systems and measures. Under the legislative pillar, Pakistan added to the existing Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) Ordinance of 1965 by adopting the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Ordinance (PNRA) of 2001 to regulate the safety aspects of nuclear installations and radiation facilities. In 2004, the Strategic Export Controls Act relating to exports of goods, technologies, materials and equipment associated with nuclear and biological weapons and their delivery systems was adopted. The National Command Authority Act of 2010 formalised the role of the NCA as the apex body for decision-making on all nuclear matters. The institutional pillar involves such bodies as the NCA, the PAEC, the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA), the Strategic Export Control Division (SECDIV) and the PAEC to implement the legislative and regulatory framework. As regards systems and measures, Pakistan has ensured physical protection of nuclear facilities and materials through the NCA and SPD; established a National Nuclear Detection Architecture (NNDA) to regulate authorised imports and exports as well as to prevent illicit trafficking in these materials; ensured response and mitigation by the Nuclear Emergency Management Systems (NEMS); and put in place the Material Protection, Control and Accounting (MPC and A) programme.

In addition to these measures, Pakistan has more recently invested in capacity building for nuclear security by setting up the Pakistan Center of Excellence for Nuclear Security (PCENS) which offers state-of-the-art training in nuclear security with a focus on security, intelligence, counter-

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intelligence and technical training. Another institution is the National Institute for Safety and Security (NISAS), training technicians and managers in the fields of nuclear and radiation safety and security and has been established in accordance with IAEA standards. Another leading institute is the Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS) with conducts Masters level courses in nuclear security for engineers and scientists.

Perhaps the most important indigenous achievement of all has been in the area of nuclear Command and Control as well as Safety and Security by the development of Permissible Action Links (PALs), the series of codes for nuclear weapons launch by the NCA and the SPD. Since the development of PALs could not be shared with Pakistan by the US as part of its nuclear security cooperation due to American laws, as well as the fact that Pakistan itself did not want to cooperate in this area with the US owing to its own security concerns, the system was developed independently, which signifies a major achievement.

Unfortunately, Pakistan's counter-terrorism cooperation with the US and its achievements in counter-proliferation, including measures for nuclear safety and security, were not sufficient to overcome the stigma resulting from Pakistan's past links with the Taliban and the fallout from the Khan nuclear network. Consequently, Pakistan continues to remain under a cloud of suspicion in the West even after nearly 20 years. According to then-Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN, Munir Akram, "Pakistan's image has suffered an irreparable loss" and "is considered to be grossly irresponsible."[80] Former SPD official Brigadier Naeem Salik, writes that "No other country in the world has had to endure the kind of cynicism, doubts and concerns about the safety and security of its nuclear assets and no other country has had to perpetually strive to explain the viability of its safety and security systems and its commitment to ensure the maintenance of internationally recognised standards than Pakistan."[81] As a result, a pattern has emerged whereby American and western leaders would express satisfaction and even praise for Pakistan's efforts while a steady flow of leaks would be used to malign the country in the media, think-tanks and non-proliferation lobbies. Such tactics became the basis for continued discrimination against Pakistan on the nuclear issue which still persists.

In retrospect, it can be said that several of the challenges at the global and regional levels that impacted Pakistan's nuclear credentials as a responsible nuclear weapon state were beyond its control. But it is also true that acts of

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omission and commission by Pakistani leaders of the time contributed to these challenges. As a result, the opportunities that became available for Pakistan to pursue nuclear 'legitimacy' especially after 9/11 were squandered. This ensured that in the years ahead Pakistan would continue to face discriminatory American and western policies in the nuclear realm as compared to India. Such discrimination would be accentuated by American geo-political interests that would lead to even greater strategic instability in South Asia.

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[76] Author's interview with General Kidwai. op.cit. Also interview with Ministry of Foreign Affairs official involved in discussions with IAEA officials according to whom this issue was never raised by IAEA.
[77] Mark Fitzpatrick, *Nuclear Black Markets – Pakistan, A Q Khan and the Rise of Proliferation Networks*, International Institute of Strategic Studies, London, 2007
[78] Christine Kucia, Counter Proliferation at Core of New Security Strategy, Arms Control Today, quoting The US National Security Strategy, 2002, www.armscontrol.org
[79] Author's interview with Munir Akram, Pakistan's former Ambassador to the UN.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Naeem Salik, *Nuclear Pakistan Seeking Security and Stability*, The University of Lahore Press, Lahore, 2018, pp. 123-125.

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9 | Nuclear Discrimination Again

The terrorist attacks on the US in September 2001 and the consequent launch of its "war on terror" confronted Pakistan with double jeopardy, the effects of which continue to reverberate in the country even after 20 years. Due to its past association with the Afghan Taliban and militant groups operating in Kashmir, Pakistan was considered the "epicentre" of terrorism even though it had no links with al-Qaida. This was compounded by the allegations of contacts between Pakistani retired nuclear scientists and the al-Qaida leadership as well as the discovery of the A Q Khan nuclear proliferation network. (as discussed in the previous chapter). As a result, the public narrative about Pakistan that emerged in the US and the west generally projected it as the source of both terrorism and nuclear proliferation. This was aptly summed up by an American report at the time titled *Pakistan – The Intersection of Nuclear Weapons and Terrorism.*[1] For both reasons, Pakistan became a victim of US-led policies of nuclear discrimination once again whereas India gained recognition as a 'responsible' nuclear-weapon state. The resulting destabilisation of the strategic equilibrium in South Asia became the defining challenge for Pakistan's security and nuclear policy in the decades ahead.

Impact of the War on Terror

Initially, as discussed in the previous chapter, President Musharraf's decision to join the US and its allies in the 'war on terror' dramatically improved relations between Islamabad and Washington. The use of Pakistan's air and ground space, its air bases and sharing of intelligence, were crucial for the success of the operations against al-Qaida and the Taliban. The US Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Nicholas Burns, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "Pakistan plays a pivotal role in the prosecution of our war effort" and that Pakistan "serves our vital national security interests."[2]

When President Musharraf visited Washington in February 2002, he was praised by President Bush as "a leader with great courage and vision"[3] and Pakistan soon became the 'frontline' state against terrorism and a major non-NATO ally of the US. Over the next two terms of the Bush administration,

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Pakistan, therefore, received substantial military and economic assistance. Yet, from the beginning of the American invasion of Afghanistan, there were undercurrents of mutual suspicions, persistent recriminations and endless demands for Pakistan to do more. At the same time, this 'partnership' caused unprecedented internal destabilisation from which Pakistan has still not fully recovered. There were several reasons for this eventuality.

For a start, the "hammer and anvil" tactics, wherein American attacks against al-Qaida and the Taliban would be the hammer and Pakistan's operations along its border with Afghanistan would provide the anvil, to catch or kill terrorists fleeing Afghanistan, did not fully succeed. The two initial American operations, Tora Bora and Anaconda, in December 2001 and March 2002, essentially failed and a flood of over three thousand Arabs and thousands more of other nationalities, Uzbeks, Chechens and Uighurs, aligned with al-Qaida, poured into Pakistan's tribal areas across the porous border. In addition, were thousands of Afghan Taliban and their Pakistani supporters who also kept crossing back and forth. Many of these hardened fighters then infiltrated deep into the rural and urban areas of Pakistan.

Another mistake was that the US ignored Pakistan's advice and alienated Afghanistan's Pushtoon majority by enabling the Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara-dominated Northern Alliance to occupy Kabul and then virtually control the country. This incensed most of the Pushtoons on both sides of the border who were already determined to oppose the invasion of Afghanistan.

While President Musharraf had succeeded in convincing the majority of Pakistanis to support his decision to join the American war on terror and break links with the Taliban, the decision was intensely unpopular among the Pakistani Pushtoon tribes, the Islamic political parties and 'jihadi' groups which were already aligned with the Taliban for at least over a decade. They had been educated in the same Saudi-funded Madrassas as the Taliban and had fought with the Mujahedeen against the Soviets and then with the Taliban in the Afghan civil war. Besides these, those who subscribed to Taliban leader Mullah Omar's brand of Islam, were others linked to the Taliban through tribal and family ties based on the Pushtoonwali code. There was also the presence of over three million Afghan refugees who had been in Pakistan for more than two decades, most of whom were Pushtoons and many of them were sympathetic to the Taliban. Most importantly, the American presence

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in Afghanistan and counter-terrorism operations against the Taliban revived calls for waging Jihad, just as had been done against the Soviets. As a result, the US invasion of Afghanistan "triggered a massive political shift in Pakistan's northwest territories."[4]

In this environment, the Taliban and al-Qaida leaders found sanctuary in Pakistan's tribal belt, especially in North and South Waziristan agencies of the (erstwhile) Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). From there they spread to the other five agencies of FATA and beyond in the settled areas and even in Pakistani cities such as Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi. Under pressure from the US, President Musharraf launched several military operations in different areas of FATA, in contravention of the British colonial era understanding regarding the autonomy of the tribal areas. Soon resistance grew to the Pakistani military operations, eventually leading to the emergence of the 'Pakistani Taliban', the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which denounced Musharraf as an "American puppet" and waged war against the Pakistani state.[5] In this manner, America's war on terror in Afghanistan came to threaten Pakistan itself.

The first high-profile terrorist incident in Pakistan was the kidnapping and killing of American journalist Daniel Pearl in January 2002. Thereafter there were terrorist attacks on a Church in Islamabad and a Christian missionary school in Murree in the same year. Two failed terrorist attacks were carried out against President Musharraf himself in December 2003 and another terrorist attack that also failed targeted the new Prime Minister, Shaukat Aziz, in July 2004. A month earlier, an attempt was made to assassinate the Corps Commander in Karachi. Even more spectacular were the terrorist attacks on the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi in October 2009 and on the Naval base in Karachi in May 2011. These attacks were particularly significant because they prompted western allegations that Pakistan's nuclear assets were not safe and could fall into terrorist hands. This 'threat' was further highlighted when the Kamra Air Force base was attacked by terrorists in August 2012, where it was inaccurately claimed that Pakistan's nuclear weapons were located. But the most tragic terrorist incident was the assassination of Peoples Party leader, Benazir Bhutto, while campaigning in Rawalpindi for upcoming elections in December 2007. She had already been targeted by terrorists two months earlier in Karachi. These high-profile terrorist incidents accompanied

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by several hundred other attacks including on the Marriott hotel in Islamabad in September 2008, took an extremely heavy toll on Pakistan. These terrorist groups, including the TTP and its associates, were not only in effective control of several parts of FATA but also over the entire Swat valley and its adjoining areas. Eventually, following the Army Public School massacre in Peshawar on 16 December 2014, a concentrated military operation, Zarb-e-Azab, was launched which rolled back the TTP and the remnants of the group were forced to flee into Afghanistan (discussed later in this chapter).

Despite the heavy toll inflicted on Pakistan, some major successes were also achieved, especially against al-Qaida. Key leaders of the organisation like Abu Zubeida, Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, Abu Faraj el Libbi, Ammar al Bulochi, Khallad bin Atlash, Ahmed Khalifan Ghailani among others were apprehended and handed over to the US. Thousands of other al-Qaida fighters were also captured or killed. Some of those involved in the high-profile attacks, such as on Musharraf, Shaukat Aziz and Benazir Bhutto, were also apprehended or killed. In addition to these intelligence-led operations, Pakistan deployed over 80,000 troops and established nearly 900 military outposts along the Afghan border. These deployments, according to President Musharraf, carried out numerous counter-terrorism operations which broke the back of al-Qaida.[6]

Despite Musharraf's claim that "we have lost more men than any other country – and we fight on"[7] and the increasing incidents of terrorist attacks within Pakistan, the suspicions between the US and Pakistan persisted. From Washington's perspective, Islamabad was only targeting al Qaida but not Pakistani and Afghan Taliban that were supporting al Qaida. As a result, the American mantra of "Do More" became a recurring demand. For Pakistan, the dilemma was not to alienate the Afghan Taliban or their Pakistani allies as this could lead to a civil war within Pakistan. Moreover, it was seen to be in Pakistan's long-term interest not to antagonise the Afghan Pushtoons whose role would be crucial to stabilise Afghanistan in the future. In the Pakistani leadership's calculations, the American commitment to the future of Afghanistan and Pakistan was unreliable, as the experience of the post-Soviet phase had demonstrated. As in the past, Pakistan could be left in the lurch again to deal with the instability in Afghanistan once American objectives were achieved. In such a scenario, Pakistan would need to cooperate with the Afghan Taliban who could not be totally eliminated and would continue to remain a

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potent force. Yet another significant factor from Islamabad's perspective was the fundamental difference between the Taliban who were fighting against the American occupation and the al-Qaida which was pursuing 'global jihad' through the use of terrorism.

Besides, on the operational side, Pakistan-US differences began to surface when there was denial or delay in Pakistan's access to crucial US military hardware such as helicopters and night vision equipment for counter-terrorism operations. According to Musharraf "unfortunately, assistance did not materialise as promised from the United States."[8] It took a year for the helicopters to be provided and that was also only for daytime operations. Night vision equipment took another year to be delivered and also for limited periods in between which it was withdrawn for "inventory checking" purposes.

But by far the most fatal blow to the counter-terrorism efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan was the American decision to invade Iraq on spurious grounds in March 2003. Justified by American 'Neo-Conservatives' (Neo-Cons) to dismantle Iraq's alleged nuclear weapons programme and bring democracy through regime change against Saddam Hussein, the disastrous occupation of Iraq lasted till December 2011. By shifting its focus from the operations in Afghanistan, the US provided time and space for the Taliban to regroup and remerge as a potent force that steadily increased its influence within Afghanistan and put American forces on the defensive. Earlier gains on the ground were squandered and increasing reliance on inaccurate aerial operations including the use of drones in Afghanistan and Pakistan's tribal belt, caused numerous civilian casualties which further alienated the Afghan and Pakistani people.

From its national security perspective, America's 'war on terror', therefore, confronted Pakistan with an unprecedented threat arising from terrorists within its borders. Up to this point in its history, Pakistan's security imperative had been to neutralise the threat from India which it had largely ensured by establishing nuclear deterrence in May 1998. But nuclear weapons were meaningless against domestic militants and terrorists threatening the writ of the state. The government simply could not use nuclear weapons against its people. Even conventional military force had to be used in a measured and restrained manner to avoid civilian casualties. Moreover, the traditional role of the armed forces, especially of the Army, had to be re-calibrated from fighting a conventional war to counter-insurgency operations. As the country's security

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establishment recognised, the threat of terrorism to Pakistan's security had added to the threat from India.

Another aspect of this threat, highlighted by western sources, was about terrorists or 'insiders' sympathetic to their cause who could gain control over Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, a perceived danger that has been discussed in the previous chapter. The terrorist attacks on the GHQ, the Naval base in Karachi and the Air Force base in Kamra re-enforced such claims.

A further dangerous possibility was that Pakistan's internal vulnerabilities could be exploited by India at a time when the bulk of Pakistani forces was preoccupied with counter-terrorism operations on the western border with Afghanistan. This was Pakistan's worst-case scenario being played out. Such a threat had already become a reality during the 2001-2002 military confrontation with India. In the final analysis, it was Pakistan's nuclear deterrence that prevented the outbreak of full-scale war during this crisis. Accordingly, even as Pakistan was involved in counter-insurgency operations, maintaining credible nuclear deterrence remained the highest priority for the country. This was soon to be tested as a result of the growing partnership between the US and India, including in the nuclear domain.

Growing Indo-US Partnership

It was not surprising that India took full advantage of the situation emerging from the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the US to forge an alliance against the 'shared' threat of 'Islamic terrorism' which was used to build a multi-dimensional strategic partnership with the US. Movement in this direction had already started when the previous Clinton administration had decided to set aside its negative reaction to the Indian nuclear tests in May 1998 and jointly worked towards improvement in bilateral relations, including India's nuclear 'normalisation'. President Clinton's visit to India in March 2000 further strengthened this engagement when the two countries concluded the "India-US Relations: A Vision for the 21st Century" agreement.[9] Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Clinton agreed to create a "closer and qualitatively new relationship" between the "world's largest democracies," to "work together and with others for strategic stability in Asia and beyond." They undertook to "bolster joint efforts to counter terrorism" and to "strengthen the international security system." The two sides also agreed to prevent the

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proliferation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, reaffirmed their commitment to forego further nuclear tests and to work towards early commencement of negotiations on a treaty to end the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, apart from cooperating to strengthen export controls. Most importantly, they undertook to "narrow our differences and increase mutual understanding on non-proliferation and security issues." The impact of this understanding was to transform India from a nuclear 'outlaw' to a nuclear 'partner' of the US. Equally significant was the bilateral commitment to enhance economic and trade relations, facilitating Indian access to US markets, technology and investments.

Following up on this vision for the 21st century and taking advantage of the opportunity provided by the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Prime Minister Vajpayee met Clinton's successor, President Bush, at the UN in November 2001. India had already taken the unprecedented step of offering the use of its air bases and air space to the US for its counter-terrorism operations in order to highlight the 'shared' concerns arising from the 'common' threat from 'Islamic terrorism.' Vajpayee's meeting with Bush led to the commitment by both sides to evolve a "strategic partnership," involving cooperation on regional security in South Asia, space and scientific collaboration, civilian nuclear issues, security and expanded economic ties.[10] Shortly, thereafter, the US-India Defence Policy Group met for the first time since the Indian nuclear tests during November 2001 in New Delhi. Significant progress was achieved as a result in the area of security cooperation with an increasing focus on counter-terrorism, joint military exercises and arms sales. With the Bush administration dropping its predecessor's focus on nuclear proliferation and cemented by the shared objective of countering terrorism, Indo-US relations grew with unprecedented acceleration.

For India, the key objective was its nuclear 'normalisation' involving cooperation on nuclear issues with the US. Specifically, this involved pressing the US to ease restrictions on the export to India of dual-use high-technology equipment with military applications, as well as to increase civilian nuclear and civilian space cooperation. These three key areas came to be known as the "Trinity" on which Indian officials insisted progress was essential for the US to provide tangible evidence of a changed Indo-US partnership. Later the Indian demand for missile defence cooperation was included and the wish list became a "Quartet."[11]

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In January 2004, Vajpayee visited Washington and the Indian demands were accepted in principle by the US as part of an agreement termed the "Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP)." This involved expansion of cooperation in three specific areas; civilian nuclear activities, civilian space programme and high technology trade. The two sides also agreed to intensify their dialogue on missile defence. A Joint Implementation Group was set up to make progress in the implementation of the NSSP.[12]

By September 2004, the US State Department announced the conclusion of Phase One of the NSSP. This included the implementation of measures to address US proliferation concerns and to ensure Indian compliance with US export controls. As a result, the US modified its export licensing policies to foster greater cooperation in commercial space programmes and permit certain exports to nuclear power plants at safeguarded facilities. These modifications included removing the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) from the US Department of Commerce Entity list, enabling several hitherto banned dual-use items to be exported to ISRO. The US also approved the export of all dual-use items not controlled by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) for Indian nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards.[13] This decision by the US marked a major breakthrough for India which had till now been denied access to such items and technologies by the US due to its refusal to sign the NPT and as a result of its nuclear tests.

The Indo-US Nuclear Deal

As a consequence of these developments, the stage was set for the conclusion of the Indo-US nuclear deal, marking a major shift in the traditional American policy on nuclear proliferation. This was announced during the landmark visit by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who had replaced Vajpayee after the Indian elections, to Washington in July 2005. To coincide with Singh's visit, the State Department announced the successful completion of the NSSP, enabling expanded bilateral space cooperation and removal/revision of some US export control requirements for certain dual-use and civil nuclear items. This announcement was complimented by the US-India Defence Framework Agreement concluded earlier in June 2005, which envisaged moving forward on all four "Quartet" issue areas (referred to above). These understandings were then reflected in the Indo-US Joint Statement issued by Prime Minister Singh

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and President Bush. The two leaders agreed to establish a "global partnership" to work together to "provide global leadership in areas of mutual concern and interest." These included "promotion of democratic values internationally and to combat terrorism relentlessly," based on their "active and vigorous counter-terrorism cooperation." They undertook to "revitalise" Indo-US economic cooperation, strengthen energy security and deepen defence cooperation including in the field of defence technology.

But the most important outcome was the agreement on implementing the NSSP initiative on civilian nuclear cooperation. Bush expressed his appreciation for "India's strong commitment to preventing WMD proliferation" and stated that "as a responsible state with advanced nuclear technology, India should acquire the same benefits and advantages as other such states." Accordingly, he assured Singh that he will "work to achieve full civil nuclear energy cooperation with India." Bush also undertook to "seek agreement with Congress to adjust US laws and policies" to engage in civilian nuclear cooperation with India and to "work with friends and allies to adjust international regimes to enable full civil nuclear energy cooperation and trade with India."

As reciprocal measures, India agreed that it would be "ready to assume the same responsibilities and practices and acquire the same benefits and advantages as other leading countries with advanced nuclear technology, such as the US." Specifically, this would include separating civilian and military nuclear facilities and programmes in a phased manner; filing a declaration regarding its civilian facilities with the IAEA; placing its civilian nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards; signing and adhering to an Additional Protocol with the IAEA regarding its civilian nuclear facilities; continuing India's unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing; joining the US for the conclusion of the a multilateral Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty; secure nuclear materials and technology through adopting comprehensive export control legislation; refraining from the transfer of enrichment and reprocessing technologies to states that do not have them; and harmonising its laws and policies in accordance with NSG and Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) guidelines.[14]

From then on events moved rapidly. The two sides set up a group of diplomats and nuclear experts to negotiate the civilian nuclear cooperation agreement. By March 2006, when Bush visited India (and Pakistan), an

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agreement had been reached on India's plan to separate its civilian and military nuclear facilities. The administration sent its proposal to Congress and in June 2006, both the House and Senate passed modified versions of the proposal with procedural changes including Congressional oversight and requiring the administration to obtain future Congressional approval of a completed final nuclear cooperation agreement with India. Since this agreement was to be negotiated and finalised under Section 123 of the US Atomic Energy Act, it would henceforth be known as the 123 agreement. The revised proposal by the administration was sent to Congress and by December 2006 both houses of Congress approved the proposal, called the Hyde Act after Senator Henry Hyde who led the Congressional action. While this legislation was adopted by a wide bi-partisan majority, it did not enjoy consensus support. Some legislators tried to include conditionalities such as requiring India to freeze fissile material production and cease its military relations with Iran. But the administration and India supporters in Congress resisted these changes. On 18 December, President Bush signed the Hyde Act into law, now officially called the US-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act of 2006. The final hurdle to Indo-US nuclear cooperation had now been overcome, clearing the way for the conclusion of the bilateral 123 agreement which was finalised on 1 August 2007.

Described by the US State Department as a "historic milestone in the strategic partnership" between the US and India,[15] the 123 agreement is unique in the sense that it places India, as the recipient state, at par with its supplier and benefactor, the US, since it envisages cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy "on the basis of mutual respect for sovereignty, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, mutual benefit, reciprocity and with due respect for each other's nuclear programmes." It also reaffirms that "cooperation under this Agreement is between two states possessing advanced nuclear technology, both parties having the same benefits and advantages, both committed to preventing WMD proliferation." As such, the commitments under this agreement, to be in force for 40 years and renewable for 10-year periods thereafter, are "mutual and reciprocal."[16] Such language of the agreement virtually provided India the same status as the US as a nuclear weapon state. This concession to India was based on the justification expressed by then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that India "has a 30-

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year record of responsible nuclear behaviour on proliferation matters"[17] and by Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns that "despite India's outsider nuclear status, it had been a largely responsible steward of its nuclear materials and had played by the rules of a system to which it did not belong."[18]

In essence, the agreement states its purpose to "enable full civil nuclear energy cooperation" to include but not limited to: i) advanced nuclear energy research and development; ii) nuclear safety measures; iii) visits of scientists and exchanges for collaborative research; iv) full civilian nuclear cooperation activities covering nuclear reactors and all aspects of the associated nuclear fuel cycle, including technology transfer on an industrial or commercial scale; v) development of a strategic reserve of nuclear fuel to guard against any disruption of supply; vi) advanced research and development in nuclear science; and vii) controlled thermonuclear fusion in multilateral projects such as the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), an international nuclear fusion research and engineering project.[19]

Moreover, the agreement was to be implemented in a manner that it would not "hinder or otherwise interfere" with any other activities involving the use of nuclear material, including "military nuclear facilities"; that is the Indian (or American) nuclear weapons producing facilities. As such India agreed to place only 14 of its 22 nuclear reactors, which are designated as civilian nuclear reactors, under IAEA safeguards in line with its separation plan.[20] But it ensured exemption from safeguards for its existing and future civilian use of fast breeder reactors and reprocessing plants, which can also contribute to its nuclear weapons development programme. Also out of the loop is its massive nuclear facility to develop uranium-based thermonuclear weapons in Challakere, Karnataka.

The Agreement further underscores that to "facilitate nuclear trade," it is essential to ensure "reliability of supplies (of nuclear fuel and materials) to ensure smooth and uninterrupted operation of nuclear facilities." In case of any difficulties or differences over such supplies, the parties shall urgently hold consultations within 30 days to resolve the issue.[21]

The US committed to "work with friends and allies," beginning with the UK, France and Russia, to ensure fuel supplies to India, and, more importantly "to adjust the practices of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) to create the necessary conditions for India to obtain full access to the international

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fuel market." In turn, India would negotiate an India specific safeguards agreement with the IAEA for facilitating civilian nuclear cooperation with NSG countries, which would cover only the 14 nuclear facilities designated by India as being for peaceful purposes. Moreover, the agreement consented to the "reprocessing or otherwise altering in form or content nuclear material transferred to the recipient country."[22] This provided India enough space to reprocess nuclear fuel which could be used in both its civilian and weapons related nuclear facilities in case it wanted to do so in a clandestine manner.

Following the conclusion of the 123 Agreement, the next steps were for India to negotiate an India-specific Safeguards Agreement as well as an Additional Protocol with the IAEA and for the US to ensure an exemption or waiver from the NSG for India to engage in nuclear trade with NSG countries which had to be adopted by consensus in accordance with NSG rules.

Rationale and Response

For the US, the country-specific civilian nuclear cooperation agreement with India marked a major departure from its traditional non-proliferation policy. It was contrary to its own laws, specifically the Nuclear Non-proliferation Act of 1978. It also contravened American commitments under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968, especially articles I and III:2 of the treaty, despite the fact that the US (and the Soviet Union) had been the driving force behind the adoption of this treaty. It further violated UN Security Council resolution 1172, adopted after the May 1998 nuclear tests by India (and Pakistan) which prohibited any nuclear cooperation with the two countries. Given these American commitments, the rationale provided by the Bush administration to still engage in nuclear cooperation with India was largely unconvincing. It included arguments that bringing India into the "nuclear mainstream" would benefit US security; reduce pressures on the global energy markets; increase American jobs, especially in the nuclear industry; contribute to environmental protection by reducing India's carbon emissions; benefit US business interests, and contribute towards progress in the broader US-India "global partnership."[23] More tangible and realistic arguments were provided by Under Secretary Burns, an unabashed Indophile, that with the end of the Cold War, the global order was undergoing a "tectonic shift with India's emergence as a global force." For the US, India was a "stabilising force"

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for securing the "unstable" region of South Asia and its increasingly global role, "broadly congruent with US interests" which would contribute towards "ensuring that China's rise is peaceful……."[24]

At the time of this writing 13 years later, it is clear that India has become America's counter-weight to China but even in 2007, the US was already intent upon containing China by building up India despite the close Sino-US relationship at that time. This is also acknowledged by the Bush administration's National Security Strategy reports of 2002 and 2006 which stressed that "US interests require a strong relationship with India." Consequently, the 123 Agreement was and remains one of the geopolitical tools for both partners to contain and confront China, rather than to only meet India's energy needs or the commercial interests of the US.

For India, the agreement marked the successful culmination of its efforts to be recognised as a 'responsible' and 'mainstream' nuclear weapon state if not one of the five recognised nuclear weapon states under the NPT. It skillfully and tenaciously manipulated American global strategic interests and mobilised the large Indian-American community of nearly 10 million to reverse the opprobrium resulting from its 1998 nuclear tests to win broad support for its nuclear credentials from the US administration, Congress, media and think tanks. To sweeten the deal or more accurately as bait, the Indians also signed a letter of intent to buy 10,000 MW of nuclear power generating capacity from the US.[25]

Even the IAEA Director-General, Mohamed El Baradei, joined the leaders of the UK, France and Russia to support the agreement "as a milestone for ongoing efforts to consolidate the non-proliferation regime."[26] But to be fair to him, El Baradei also argued for a new approach in dealing with Israel, India and Pakistan, the three non-NPT nuclear weapon states, by engaging them as "nuclear partners and not pariahs."[27] However, the US chose to engage only with India and not Pakistan, while Israel, in any case, had always been treated as beyond reproach by Washington on nuclear issues.

Despite the widespread support in the US for the nuclear deal, there were some important voices that expressed opposition or concerns. Former President Jimmy Carter stated that the deal "is one more step in opening a Pandora's box of nuclear proliferation." He added that "India should…..pledge to cap its stockpile of nuclear bomb ingredients" but instead the agreement

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"would allow (India) enough fissile material for as many as 50 weapons a year."[28] Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger wrote that "the scope of the nuclear cooperation (with India) should avoid the rhetoric and the reality of a nuclear arms race in which China could be tempted to support nuclear programs in Iran and Pakistan as a counter-weight."[29] Other prominent American opponents of the deal included Congress members Edward Markey and Ellen Taucher, who warned that it "threatens to rapidly accelerate New Delhi's arms race with Pakistan" and that it also "threatens international security not only by undermining our nuclear rules, but also by expanding India's nuclear weapons programme." They also described India's nuclear history as "checkered at best", pointing out that the "country has never signed the NPT or the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), it misused civilian nuclear technology to produce its first nuclear weapon in 1974 and continues to manufacture nuclear weapons to this day," adding that "paradoxically, the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) was formed in direct response to India's illegal 1974 nuclear test."[30]

The leading American expert on India's nuclear programme, George Perkovich, warned that the "nuclear deal could significantly lower the costs in any Indian cost/benefit analysis of whether to resume (nuclear) testing," by building up a "stockpile (of nuclear) fuel to protect against the impact of sanctions."[31] The head of the Stimson Center, Michael Krepon, wrote that the "deal.....is likely to do far more harm than good for two essential institutions designed to prevent proliferation – the NSG and the IAEA."[32]

The Arms Control Association, a leading American nonproliferation advocacy group, wrote to members of the NSG and IAEA Board of Governors, co-signed by over 120 prominent personalities from several countries including the US, calling upon member states to ensure that "this controversial proposal" does not: further undermine the safeguards system and efforts to prevent the proliferation of technologies that may be used to produce nuclear bomb material; in any way contribute to nuclear proliferation and/or the expansion of India's nuclear arsenal, and grant India the benefits of civil nuclear trade without holding it to the same standards expected of other states parties of the NPT.[33] There were scores of other critical comments as well which are too numerous to be mentioned here.

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Indian Proliferation Record

Apart from criticism of the Indo-US nuclear deal itself, questions also arose about one of its most fundamental justifications – that India had an "impeccable" non-proliferation record owing to which it should be treated as a "responsible" nuclear-weapon state. The facts, however, belied this argument made by the Indians and the American administration. India had actually not just violated international non-proliferation norms itself but was also guilty of onward proliferation.

It was undeniable even by the Bush administration that India had illegally diverted nuclear fuel from its Tarapur civilian nuclear reactor, operated in collaboration with the US and Canada, to carry out its first nuclear test in 1974. This led to the creation of the NSG to prevent such clandestine diversion in the future. Prior to that, India had refused to sign the NPT in 1968. Later, it opposed the CTBT in 1996. In 1998, India again conducted additional nuclear tests, offering only a unilateral moratorium on further testing. The consequence of this was the nuclearisation of South Asia, as Pakistan was compelled to carry out its own tests in response to establish nuclear deterrence and ensure its security. India also turned down American efforts to convince it to sign the CTBT and freeze the production of fissile material in return for the nuclear agreement.

After its 1998 nuclear tests, India also pursued a major build-up of its strategic capabilities as envisaged in its 'draft' nuclear doctrine while rejecting Pakistan's proposals for strategic restraint. Apart from contributing to vertical proliferation, this build-up led towards further regional destabilisation. As pointed out by American critics of the Indo-US nuclear deal, this agreement enabled India to increase its nuclear weapons production by diverting all its indigenous fissile material towards weapons production while relying on imported fissile material for its civilian programme. As such, the Bush administration actually facilitated the Indian nuclear build-up and enabled Indian vertical proliferation.

The Indians had also engaged in missile proliferation, using international cooperation for its "peaceful" space programme to develop ballistic missile capabilities, such as the Prithvi and Agni missiles, while rejecting proposals by Pakistan and the US to prevent a missile race in the region.

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Besides its own blatant actions against non-proliferation norms, India indulged in lesser-known acts of onward proliferation for both nuclear and chemical weapons. At the time of its 1974 nuclear test, India had established a strategic relationship with Iraq which included nuclear cooperation. This involved exchange of scientists, training and technology transfers. Iraqi scientists worked and trained at India's fuel reprocessing laboratories when India separated plutonium for its first nuclear test. Later, these same scientists were leading the Iraqi nuclear fuel reprocessing unit supplied by the Italian company CNEN. The Indians also collaborated with Iraq to develop the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission's Computer Center for the use of nuclear computer codes.[34] Moreover, according to a CNN report, an Indian Company, NEC Engineers, helped Iraq acquire equipment and materials "capable of being used for the production of chemicals for mass destruction." Between 1998 to 2001, NEC also shipped 10 consignments of highly sensitive dual-use nuclear equipment including titanium vessels and centrifuge pumps to Iraq.[35]

India also engaged in extensive nuclear cooperation with Iran since signing a bilateral nuclear cooperation agreement in 1975. This included help in the completion of the Bushehr nuclear plant between 1980 to 1983 for which Indian nuclear scientists and engineers were sent to Iran in 1982. In 1991, India negotiated the sale to Iran of a 10-megawatt nuclear reactor, despite opposition from the US.[36] This reactor could produce weapons useable plutonium. In January 1995, *The Washington Times* carried a report, also picked up by the Indian press, based on classified German intelligence reports, that Indian companies were involved in supplying Iran with equipment for making chemical weapons. These companies, Tata Consulting Engineering, Transpek and Rallis India, had contracted to supply corrosion-resistant enamel reactors, pipes and pumps which were crucial in the chemical production process of poisonous gas.[37] In June 2006, Indian Minister Anand Sharma admitted to the Lok Sabha that the US had sanctioned two Indian scientists, Dr Y S R Prasad and Dr C Surender, for assisting the Iranian nuclear programme.[38] In August 2006, the US sanctioned two Indian companies, Balaji Amines Ltd and Prachi Poly Products Ltd, under its Iran Non-Proliferation Act, 2000, for supplying Iranian companies with banned materials for chemical weapons production.[39] The same year, even as the US removed sanctions on the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), as part of its cooperation with India,

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subsidiaries and affiliates of ISRO were retained on its Entity list of sanctioned organisations.[40] Moreover, as discussed in the previous chapter, there was strong evidence unearthed by Joshua Pollock and based on findings of the US Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), that India had been the unknown "fourth" customer of the A Q Khan proliferation network. This enabled India to develop its uranium-based centrifuge technology similar to that of Pakistan's P-2 reactor developed by KRL.

These Indian proliferation activities compelled some members of Congress to raise objections. In a letter by eight prominent Senators dated 19 April 2007, to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, India was asked to "suspend its military cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran."[41] Another letter of 30 April 2007 by Congressional leaders, Edward Markey and Ellen Taucher, to President Bush stated that "Indian apparent willingness to contravene its written pledges to observe US export control restrictions, raises serious questions about the sincerity of India's own export control efforts as well as India's pledge to harmonise its export control laws and regulations with international standards." They added that apart from "India's deepening formal defence ties with Iran", there were "Indian entities (which) have been repeatedly sanctioned by the United States for providing WMD related materials to Iran." The letter further pointed out that the "recent indictment of Indian individuals" which "identified an Indian government official working in the Indian Embassy in Washington DC,.....raises again the question of whether the information is being withheld from Congress.....relating to a possible opening up of civilian nuclear commerce to India."[42]

In fact, the Bush administration was not just withholding information from Congress but blatantly covering up Indian proliferation activities. It used the spurious argument that American sanctions had been imposed on Indian entities and "private" companies and not the Indian government, for Iran-related proliferation activities.[43] Another dubious argument used by Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Richard Boucher, among others, was that there was only a "reporting requirement" in the 123 agreement by the administration to Congress but that "doesn't impinge on India because it doesn't involve India."[44] This, of course, defied logic since it was India that was to be reported upon for nuclear and other strategic cooperation with Iran. Boucher went on to make another outrageous comment that the (nuclear)

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deal "doesn't involve the military side" of the Indian nuclear programme since its "a civil nuclear cooperation agreement", which is "a good deal for India and a good deal for the United States, a good deal for really the whole non-proliferation system."[45] But for the deal to be good for the whole non-proliferation system, it had to curtail Indian nuclear proliferation activities, which the 123 agreement itself claimed to do. As such, the comments by Boucher and others were really an attempt to cover up Indian proliferation. This demonstrated that the Bush administration was really not interested in preventing or punishing Indian proliferation but rather in only promoting American strategic and commercial interests.

International Reaction

As expected, the 123 agreement was welcomed by US allies, the UK and France, among others, who had all taken the cue from Washington on their nuclear policies towards India. Russia, owing to its decades of friendship with India from the Soviet days had already engaged in nuclear cooperation with New Delhi and as such also welcomed the agreement. More surprising was the reaction of some of the staunch advocates of non-proliferation, such as Canada, Australia and Japan, who also expressed support for the agreement. Apart from obvious American pressure on these countries, the lure of commercial gain through nuclear cooperation with India was a powerful incentive. However, a few principled countries such as the Nordic States and Switzerland were apprehensive about the agreement. Countries such as Brazil, Argentina and South Africa, which had given up their nuclear weapons programmes after 1990, were also unhappy with the exemption given to India.

The only major power to express open reservations about the deal was China. A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson stated on 2 September 2008 that the "NSG can resolve the relationship between non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy in a balanced way," and added that "China believes that all countries have the right to peacefully use nuclear energy and conduct international cooperation in line with the non-proliferation obligations..... cooperation should be conducive to safeguarding the completeness and effectiveness of the international non-proliferation system."[46] Accordingly, the Chinese laid down two benchmarks – that nuclear cooperation should be consistent with the international non-proliferation norms; and that "all

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countries" have the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy – that is; there should be no discrimination in this regard. Both points were extremely important for Pakistan.

A more direct criticism was expressed by the authoritative China Daily of 1 September 2008 which described the Indo-US deal as a "major blow" to non-proliferation and criticised the "multiple standards" followed by the US on non-proliferation.[47] It recalled that "thirty-three years ago, in order to deal with India's nuclear tests, it was the United States that advocated and established the NSG to restrict nuclear trade. Now it is also the United States, for the sake of geo-strategic and commercial interests, that has urged the NSG to open a backdoor for India."

China was obviously well aware that the underlying American motivation for the Indo-US nuclear deal was to evolve a strategic partnership with India in order to create a counter-weight to a rising China which could pose a strategic threat to the US in the future. The nuclear deal, in China's view, was, therefore, one of the elements of US policy to "contain" China through its alliance with India.

Pakistan's Response

Pakistan's concerns about the growing Indo-US partnership had been steadily increasing ever since the two countries agreed on a "Vision for the 21st Century" during President Clinton's visit to New Delhi in March 2000. Thereafter the relationship had grown in all areas, especially in counter-terrorism, security, and military cooperation as well as in nuclear, space, and missile defence domains in line with the NSSP (discussed above). The greatest prize for India was the 123 nuclear deal. These developments were taking place even as the US relied on Pakistan's counter-terrorism cooperation and designated Pakistan as a "major non-NATO ally." The Bush administration justified this dual approach as an "attempt to alter its long-held framework that tied and balanced (US) relations with India and Pakistan" and instead would "de-hyphenate our South Asian policy by seeking highly individual relations with both India and Pakistan."[48]

From Pakistan's perspective, however, such "de-hyphenation" could be a theoretical construct but in practical terms, it was impossible since any increase in India's power capabilities through US assistance would pose a potential threat to Pakistan. Consequently, in Pakistan's exchanges with the

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US in Washington and Islamabad, it was repeatedly stressed that Indo-US cooperation should not be at Pakistan's expense. But this was exactly what happened as a result of the Indo-US nuclear deal, apart from other areas of strategic cooperation between these two countries.

Accordingly, while this deal was being negotiated Pakistan began expressing strong concerns and reservations to the Americans. It argued that the US should pursue an equitable and non-discriminatory policy towards Pakistan and India regarding civilian nuclear cooperation and emphasised that Pakistan's energy needs were as urgent as those of India. However, Pakistan's diplomatic demarches were not heeded by the Bush administration.

Once the Indo-US agreement was concluded, a formal Pakistani response was issued on 17 March 2006, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This statement pointed out that "The grant of a waiver as a special case will have serious implications for the security environment in South Asia as well as for the international non-proliferation efforts." It argued that the "objective of strategic stability in South Asia and the global non-proliferation regime would have been better served if the United States had considered a package approach for Pakistan and India.....with a view to preventing a nuclear arms race in the region and promoting restraints while ensuring that the legitimate needs of both countries for civilian nuclear power generation are met." Regarding the specifics of the Indo-US agreement, the statement maintained that the "agreement, which keeps a large number of nuclear facilities and reactors including fast-breeder reactors outside safeguards, would only encourage India to continue its weapons programme without any constraint or inhibition." The statement went on to warn that "Pakistan would not accept any discriminatory treatment. While we will continue to act with responsibility in maintaining credible minimum deterrence and avoid an arms race, we will neither be oblivious to our security requirements, nor to the needs of our economic development which demand growth in the energy sector including civilian nuclear power generation."[49]

On 12 April 2006, the National Command Authority (NCA) discussed the US-India nuclear agreement. The press statement issued after the meeting noted "with concern the implications of the US-India Nuclear Agreement on strategic stability in South Asia." It stated that "in view of the fact that the agreement would enable India to produce significant quantities of fissile

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material and nuclear weapons from un-safeguarded nuclear reactors, the NCA expressed the firm resolve that our credible minimum deterrence requirements will be met." Moreover, "the NCA stressed that the energy needs of Pakistan, which include power generation, require international cooperation" and that "Pakistan is determined to pursue this legitimate requirement under IAEA safeguards."[50]

These statements were based on thorough analysis by the Foreign Office and the SPD which had followed the developments at every stage of the Indo-US negotiations. As mentioned above, Pakistani diplomats had consistently engaged with the Bush administration, members of Congress, and the American non-proliferation community, warning against the impact of an India-specific exemption from non-proliferation norms on South Asian security and seeking parity of treatment for Pakistan. Pakistan's growing energy needs were also cited as equal justification for a similar nuclear deal with Pakistan since the principal American argument for the agreement with India was its increasing requirements for energy. The option of opposing the nuclear deal was also considered but not pursued as it was judged that Pakistan lacked the leverage needed for this course of action, given its dependence on the US for economic and military assistance as well as counter-terrorism cooperation. However, there were some within the Pakistani decision-making system, especially within the security establishment and the Foreign Office, that favoured a more strident approach, advocating a linkage between Pakistan's support for the US in counter-terrorism to equal treatment with India on the nuclear issue. Unfortunately, they were overruled. By the time this approach was embraced by President Musharraf, it was already too late.

Implications of the Nuclear Deal

The importance that the Bush administration attached to the nuclear deal with India was evident from its reversal of traditional US non-proliferation policy and toleration of India's continuing acts of proliferation, even as the deal was being negotiated or after it was concluded. The administration also ignored some of the key provisions of the Hyde Act of 2006, the legislation that provided the framework for the agreement, since the final version of the deal signed in August 2007 simply side-stepped these requirements. For instance, the key benchmarks of the Hyde Act were: i) No nuclear testing by

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India; ii) Acceptance by India of permanent unconditional safeguards; iii) No assured nuclear fuel supply if the agreement is violated; iv) prohibition on reprocessing and enrichment by India; v) Nuclear cooperation would not assist the Indian nuclear weapons programme; vi) Encourage India not to increase production of fissile material; vii) Promotion of power sector nuclear fuel supplies be commensurate with reasonable Indian requirements, and viii) Secure India's full and active participation in US efforts to dissuade, isolate and sanction Iran to contain its proliferation activities. However, the 123 agreement essentially ignored these Congressional stipulations of the Hyde Act. Significantly, it contained no commitment by India not to test again; cease production of fissile material; face cessation of cooperation in case of violating the agreement; or cease nuclear/WMD cooperation with Iran. Most significantly, India would be allowed to develop a "strategic reserve" of nuclear fuel which in effect gave New Delhi the option to resume nuclear testing once it had built up this strategic reserve.

The American strategic objective that required such machinations by the Bush Administration was not simply to strengthen bilateral relations with India and promote American commercial interests. The underlying purpose was geopolitical - to eventually build up India as a counterweight to China, including by the enhancement of Indian nuclear capabilities. But at the time this was not clearly spelt out by either the US or India, even though both countries were alarmed by the rapid growth of Chinese economic and military power. As such the containment of China was still not declared American policy but it was certainly a primary strategic objective to prevent China from challenging America's global domination. The fallout of this emerging great power competition was on Pakistan's security as well owing to continuing Pakistan-India tensions. However, the US was not concerned by this eventuality.

From Pakistan's perspective, the Indo-US agreement posed several challenges. The most significant was that the deal would enable India to import nuclear fuel for its civilian reactors while using its indigenous fissile material for the production of nuclear weapons. This would enhance India's ability to increase the production of nuclear weapons, up to 50 weapons per year if it wanted to do so. The agreement also made it possible for India to clandestinely divert imported nuclear fuel for civilian use towards weapons purposes, as it had already done in the past since the safeguards agreement could always be violated

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secretly. Moreover, the strategic reserve of fissile material would enable increased weapons production apart from facilitating further nuclear testing once the reserves had been accumulated. Similarly, the acceptance of the agreement for India to continue building its fast breeder reactors and reprocessing facilities would also provide fissile material for nuclear weapons production.

Apart from the impact on Indian production of nuclear weapons, the agreement undermined the legal and political 'parity' between Pakistan and India which had come to exist since the nuclear tests by the two countries in 1998. The agreement in effect ensured the 'normalisation' of India's nuclear status and its virtual acceptance as a 'legitimate' nuclear-weapon state. The fact that this was done despite India's proliferation record and in contravention of existing non-proliferation norms, also undermined the international non-proliferation regime.

For all these reasons, Pakistan was justified in its assessment that the Indo-US nuclear agreement would accelerate a conventional and nuclear arms race between Pakistan and India, destabilise nuclear deterrence and undermine regional stability.

Discrimination Again

In order to address these challenges, Pakistan continued to argue for parity with India in its approaches to the Bush administration even after the agreement was concluded. However, the American response at every level was negative. At best, American interlocutors argued that Pakistan could eventually benefit from the exemption for India and advised that it should accept additional non-proliferation obligations and norms to qualify for equal treatment with India at a future stage. The more unvarnished American response was that due to the "trust deficit" arising from its "proliferation" record, such as the A Q Khan episode, there was no "appetite" in the American political system – the Bush administration, Congress, media, and the think-tank community, for a similar exemption for Pakistan. The real reason, of course, was that there was no strategic gain for the US to give the same treatment to Pakistan as there was for India. Moreover, from a commercial assessment, Pakistan was not as large and lucrative a market as India.

The issue of American civilian nuclear cooperation remained largely confined to official bilateral discussions until President Bush visited Islamabad

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in March 2006. President Musharraf raised the issue at the highest level and received the same negative response based on the American view that Pakistan and India had "different histories and trajectories." Then at a joint press conference Bush made the most definitive public pronouncement on the subject. In response to a question, Bush said that "we discussed a civilian nuclear programme, and I explained that Pakistan and India are different countries with different needs and different histories. So, as we proceed forwards, our strategy will take in effect those well-known differences."[51] The use of the word "histories" was, of course, an indirect reference to the A Q Khan proliferation network as a reason to deny civilian nuclear cooperation and treat Pakistan at par with India. But the real unstated reason was the absence of a long-term strategic convergence with Pakistan as there was with India.

The American argument about Pakistan's alleged proliferation also did not hold much credibility because the Khan network had been a private undertaking and not an officially sanctioned policy of the Pakistani state. Moreover, as elaborated in the foregoing paragraphs, Indian indigenous and onward proliferation activities were deliberately over looked by the Bush administration, even as it continued to sanction some Indian entities despite the waiver.

The Americans also did not have a clean non-proliferation record themselves. Apart from protecting the Swiss Tinner family from Swiss law for their involvement in the Khan network, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the US had clandestinely engaged in acts of WMD proliferation itself. The best known example was and remains American nuclear cooperation with Israel, including the persistent cover-up of its proliferation activities. An American scientist, Isidor Rabi, who had been a member of the American nuclear weapons development Manhattan Project, had helped develop the Israeli nuclear weapons programme. Taking just one source among several others, the Washington-based Institute for Research, reported in May 2012, based on information obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, that the officially controlled Nuclear Materials and Equipment Corporation (NUMEC) had diverted US government-owned 269 kilograms of highly enriched uranium to Israel, enough for dozens of nuclear weapons, between 1957 and 1968. The report further noted a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) inquiry into NUMEC providing sealed canisters of U-235 fissile material to Israel. Traces of this U-235 were picked up in Israel as confirmed by the American Atomic

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Energy Commission. In 1979, then National Security Adviser Brzezinski ordered that Senator John Glenn, the leading member of the American non-proliferation community in Congress, not be given access to a top-secret memorandum about missing nuclear material from NUMEC. A subsequent book, "Divert!", provided additional evidence that NUMEC "was originally established as a nuclear smuggling front."[52]

Much more surprising and inexplicable were American proliferation activities with Saddam Hussein's Iraq as reported by Gary Milhollin, head of the Washington-based Wisconsin Arms Control Project, in *The New York Times Magazine* in March 1992[53] and in his testimony to Congress in October 1992.[54] Such cooperation, which ceased after the first Gulf War against Iraq in 1991, was actually approved by the (senior) President Bush in October 1989 on the grounds that "normal relations between the United States and Iraq would serve our longer-term interests and promote stability in both the Gulf and the Middle-East." But just a month later, the CIA reported that "Baghdad has created a complex procurement network.....to acquire technology for its chemical, biological, nuclear and ballistic missile development programmes."[55] In his *New York Times* piece, Milhollin maintained that over forty American companies received more than one hundred licenses from the Commerce Department to supply sensitive dual-use equipment to Iraq. These were all for Iraqi nuclear weapons and ballistic missile sites. In his Congressional testimony, Milhollin stated that after the first Iraq war, UN inspectors unearthed evidence of American-supplied equipment for Iraq's WMD programme under Department of Commerce licenses that included an electron beam welder for making centrifuges; mass spectrometers to measure the quality of uranium enrichment to weapons-grade; vacuum pump oil to move uranium gas through the enrichment process for raising the uranium to weapons-grade levels; and air compressors, pressure and temperature regulators, power supply components and air filters among other components for use in Iraq's chemical weapons and missile programmes. Clearly, at the time, the US was building up Iraq's WMD capabilities when Saddam Hussein was an ally against Iran, which, of course, led to disastrous consequences for the US and the region subsequently. As for the evidence gathered by UN inspectors regarding the US involvement in Iraq, the author was told privately by a senior UN official that it had been "sealed and put in a bank vault in New York."[56]

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With such dubious proliferation credentials, the US was hardly in a position to pontificate on non-proliferation and become its global champion. It chose to do so selectively, again on the basis of its geo-political and strategic interests. Consequently, American denial to engage in civilian nuclear cooperation with Pakistan similar to its engagement with India amounted to blatant discrimination with little to do with Pakistan's nuclear "history" but was entirely dictated by its strategic interests. It had been due to these "strategic interests" that the US had turned a blind eye to Indian proliferation before and after the 1974 Indian nuclear test; while imposing multiple sanctions on Pakistan. When this discriminatory policy failed to prevent the nuclear developments by both India and Pakistan, leading to their nuclear tests in 1998, the US tried to pursue a balanced policy for a brief period. But global developments, particularly China's growing ability to challenge America's unipolar domination over the world, created the strategic necessity to build up India as counterweight to China. It was this strategic objective that led to a renewed policy of discrimination against Pakistan from 2006 onwards to the present. American arguments about Pakistan's proliferation record and the vulnerability of its nuclear arsenal were secondary justifications to cover up their discrimination.

But even from the perspective of American strategic interests, an argument can be made that promoting instability in South Asia by undermining nuclear deterrence between Pakistan and India and fueling a strategic arms race between them as a result of discriminatory policies, would not and has not served American interests. Pakistan was bound to follow through on its commitment to ensure the continued credibility of its nuclear deterrence and seek alternative options for civilian nuclear cooperation. By contrast, a balanced approach towards Pakistan and India would have been far more beneficial for the US over the long term. However, there was no such far-sighted thinking among US policymakers.

Pakistan-India Relations and the Cold Start Doctrine

While Pakistan's security challenges continued to intensify as a result of its counter-terrorism operations within the country and on the border with Afghanistan as well as due to the growing strategic partnership between the US and India, another potential threat began to emerge with changes in

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India's military doctrine by 2004. Dubbed by the Indian media and defence analysts as "Cold Start", this "Proactive Strategy" as described by the Indian military, sought space for conventional war below the nuclear threshold. The underlying objective of this "doctrine" was to overcome the neutralisation of India's numerical advantage in conventional military capabilities as a result of nuclear deterrence between the two countries. The implementation of this strategy threatened to undermine deterrence and further destabilise regional security. No doubt, India's growing partnership with the US encouraged New Delhi to contemplate and operationalise such an aggressive doctrine.

Ironically such changes in Indian strategic thinking were taking place at a time when Pakistan-India relations were improving. Keen to focus on the terrorism threat on Pakistan's western front with Afghanistan, President Musharraf realised the need to release pressure on the eastern front with India. The two countries had already experienced a tense ten-month confrontation in 2001-2002 which had fortunately de-escalated, largely due to the existence of nuclear deterrence. President Musharraf had already tried to break the ice with Prime Minister Vajpayee during the 2002 SAARC Summit in Katmandu. In 2003, he offered a unilateral ceasefire along the LoC in Kashmir. Later the same year, a bilateral accord was reached on an informal ceasefire along the LoC. This facilitated the Indian withdrawal of its objection to holding the next SAARC Summit in Islamabad which required a consensus decision by all member states. During Vajpayee's visit to the SAARC Summit in January 2004, bilateral talks were resumed which called for reviving the Composite dialogue process on several bilateral issues, such as Kashmir and Peace and Security, including strategic issues. Several Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) were also subsequently concluded including joint patrolling along the border, reduction in troops on both sides of the LoC, non-deployment of new military posts along the LoC, and periodic flag meetings. In 2005, the two countries also signed the "Advance Notice of Ballistic Missile Test Agreement."

The process of bilateral normalisation continued even after early elections in India when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of the Congress party replaced Vajpayee of the BJP. In September 2004, Musharraf met Singh in New York during the UN General Assembly session and then visited India in April 2005. Musharraf described this dialogue as "most productive" with in-depth discussions on resolving the Kashmir dispute through an "outside

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the box" solution.[57] He suggested a four-point proposal as his "personal" view. This essentially involved a joint management mechanism with limited self-governance on both sides of the LoC in Kashmir along with demilitarisation of the region.[58] A "back channel" was established to pursue this proposal. The lowering of tensions also allowed the Kashmiris to easily travel across the LoC for which a bus service was started along with trade between the two sides of Kashmir. But further substantive progress could not be made due to Singh's domestic political weakness and cautious approach. Musharraf also came under pressure at home after dismissing the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Consequently, the initiative on Kashmir eventually petered out by 2007.

In contrast to this generally positive trend in Pakistan-India relations, the Indian security establishment set upon developing and operationalising its 'proactive strategy' to fight limited conventional war below the nuclear threshold. This doctrine was driven by the objective, led mainly by the Indian military, to re-establish the salience of India's conventional weapons advantage over Pakistan which had been neutralised by the emergence of nuclear deterrence.

As long as deterrence had been based on conventional weapons, it repeatedly broke down as in 1948, 1965 and 1971 Pakistan-India wars. But after 1984, when Pakistan achieved a covert nuclear weapons capability, 'virtual' or non-weaponised deterrence came into existence. This prevented the outbreak of war during the crisis created by India's massive "Brass Tacks" military exercise in 1987-88 and following the military confrontation due to the Kashmiri uprising against India in 1990. In both instances, concerns about escalation to a nuclear exchange generated restraint on India's part, as well as international pressure, especially from the US, on both sides to de-escalate owing to fears that Pakistan may use nuclear weapons to ensure its security and territorial integrity. After Pakistan's nuclear tests in May 1998 in response to Indian tests, a situation of overt and weaponised deterrence came to prevail. The Indian numerical advantage in conventional weapons over Pakistan became clearly redundant during the Kargil crisis in 1999 and the confrontation between the two countries in 2001-2002, which underscored the credibility of nuclear deterrence and prevented a larger conflict. Also, the US and other major powers, fearing escalation towards the use of nuclear weapons, prevailed upon both sides to end hostilities and prevent further escalation. (These developments are discussed in detail in previous chapters).

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The experience of these two confrontations challenged the fundamental assumptions of the Indian nuclear doctrine announced after the 1998 tests that India would build up both its strategic and conventional forces and in the event of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would resort to "massive (nuclear) retaliation." However, neither the threat of massive retaliation nor the preponderance of India's conventional capabilities proved sufficient to 'intimidate' or 'coerce' Pakistan. Accordingly, following the Kargil episode, both Defence Minister George Fernandez and Army Chief V P Malik tried to address India's military predicament in early 2000 by declaring that nuclear weapons had not made war "obsolete" and that India was prepared to fight and win a "limited war at a time and place chosen by the aggressor" while preventing escalation to a nuclear conflict.[59]

Actually, even before the Kargil conflict and perhaps in recognition of the contradictions in the Indian nuclear doctrine, former Army Chief General K Sunderji, who had been responsible for the Brass Tacks misadventure, wrote in February 1999 that, "If conventional hostilities become inevitable, Indian conventional counter-offensives against Pakistan should be modulated in scope and depth of penetration into Pakistani territory, so that ingress can stop before Pakistan resorts to the use of nuclear weapons."[60] Sunderji's recommendations were important for two reasons: one, they indicated the existing thinking at the time among Indian military planners and in turn influenced their pursuit of the Proactive doctrine; and, two, Sunderji's views predated the Kargil crisis of May to June 1999 and the confrontation of 2001-2002. The timing of Sunderji's plan before these crises was important because this exposed the false contention by the Indians and their western advocates that it was due to Pakistan's Kargil operation that drove India to formulate its proactive strategy. In fact, the Indian military establishment was already thinking along these lines before Kargil and the 2001-2002 showdown. Therefore, in reality, the underlying purpose of the 'Cold Start' doctrine was and is to restore the salience of India's numerical advantage over Pakistan in the domain of conventional war-fighting after this advantage was neutralised by the 1998 nuclear tests. The subsequent experience of the two crises only added to the 'justification' for this 'new' doctrine of limited war below the nuclear threshold.

The additional argument used by the Indian military establishment as 'justification' for Cold Start has been to redress the problems encountered

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through the course of the 2001-2002 crisis, particularly the "concern focused on the very slow army mobilisation."[61] Since the 1980s, the Indian military strategy had planned massive armoured assaults by its three Strike Corps on Pakistan across the international border. However, the 2001-2002 Indian mobilisation proved to be "too slow and cumbersome"[62] for such a large force. In the three weeks that it took Indian forces to move to the border, Pakistan was able to counter-mobilise. As a result, the operation lost momentum and the element of surprise. Moreover, during the ten-month stand-off, the US and other international powers, alarmed by the possibility of a nuclear exchange, prevailed on both sides to de-escalate. To overcome such constraints in the future, "Indian strategists concluded that India needed a proactive strategy backed by armed forces equipped, organised, trained and postured to be able to launch punitive attacks on Pakistan, before Pakistan could mobilise its defence."[63] Such a rapid offensive was "also necessary to enable India to impose military pain on Pakistan before the US and other outside actors could intervene to try and prevent an escalation of fighting."[64] A third element of this strategy was to ensure that "Indian forces would need to be postured, supplied and operated so as to demonstrate limited military aims that would not pose a great enough threat to warrant Pakistani use of nuclear weapons."[65] All this was sought to be achieved by the Indian army developing the capability for "swift mobilisation beginning from a Cold Start instead of slow mobilisation."[66]

Announced by the Indian Army Chief in April 2004, the doctrine required "reorganising the Indian army's offensive power away from the three large Strike Corps into eight smaller division-sized Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) that combined mechanised infantry, artillery and armour,....to launch multiple strikes into Pakistan along different axes of advance." These IBGs would also be "integrated with close air support and naval aviation assets."[67] Moreover, these IBGs would be "backed by conventionally armed ballistic and cruise missiles able to strike targets deeper within Pakistan."[68] The IBGs would be further augmented by the Indian defensive "Holding Corps" which would become a "Pivot Corps" for undertaking limited offensives from defensive positions to create shallow bridge-heads into Pakistani territory."[69] These 'Cold Start' operations would be activated within 72 to 96 hours "following an alleged Pakistan-backed terrorist attack."[70] To ensure that the 'limited war' remained below Pakistan's nuclear threshold, the "Indian offensive would

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make shallow territorial gains, 50-80 kilometres deep, that could be used in post-conflict negotiations to extract concessions from Islamabad" rather than "deliver a catastrophic blow to Pakistan such as cutting the country in two" by exploiting its lack of territorial depth. Another related objective would be "to deliver a punishing blow to the Pakistan army."[71] The quick mobilisation and limited strikes, apart from benefiting from the element of surprise, would also prevent the use of pressure from outside powers to de-escalate before Indian objectives had been achieved to leverage captured territory for political concessions by Pakistan.[72]

Even as the Indian military made its Proactive Strategy public, the Indian government denied any change in its military doctrine, describing Cold Start as mere military planning. However, the fact that India went ahead from 2004 to create the IBGs and conducted five military exercises using the IBGs along with integrated air and naval operations in close proximity to Pakistan's borders from 2004 to 2007, left little doubt in Pakistan that the Proactive or Cold Start doctrine was being fully operationalised. It was much later, in January 2017, that Indian Army Chief, General Bipin Rawat, formally recognised the existence of the Proactive doctrine.[73]

While Indian public assessments praised the operationalisation of this doctrine, stating that "highly successful" simulations through the five military exercises have "validated India's new limited war doctrine," western commentators such as Walter Ladwig and others judged that "the Indian military demonstrated a moderate amount of success in developing elements of Cold Start."[74] The reasons were lack of effective integration, especially with the Indian Air Force and Navy, inter-services competition, particularly between the Army and Air force, lack of funding, and outdated military equipment.

But a much more serious flaw in the doctrine was at the strategic level. Simply stated, Indian military planners could never be sure where Pakistan's threshold was for the use of nuclear weapons. As considered in previous chapters, Pakistan's nuclear doctrine was kept deliberately ambiguous in this regard, and the red lines that had been informally set out by then Director-General SPD, General Kidwai, left considerable room for maneuver. Accordingly, "even with conventional military dominance, India could not guarantee that nuclear escalation would not occur."[75] Some perceptive Indian military officials, such as General V R Raghavan, highlighted this problem

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themselves as early as the statement by Defence Minister Fernandez in 2000. In response to Fernandez's assertion about fighting a limited war while preventing nuclear escalation, Raghavan stated that "The choice of keeping the war limited cannot entirely be in Indian hands. The threshold of tolerance which triggers the adversary's nuclear weapons choice will always remain a matter of conjecture."[76]

Since the very inception of the Cold Start doctrine, Pakistan recognised its negative impact on maintaining credible deterrence towards India, and by extension, on strategic stability in South Asia. After the 1998 nuclear tests by both countries, credible nuclear deterrence emerged leading to relative strategic stability based on the possession of large 'counter-value' nuclear weapons on either side. From Pakistan's perspective, India's Cold Start doctrine sought to undermine this nuclear deterrence by re-establishing the salience of its numerical superiority in conventional weapons and overcoming the negation of its conventional advantage. The dilemma for Pakistan was to find a way out of the stark choice between the risk of being overwhelmed by a larger Indian conventional force or unleashing nuclear Armageddon. Resource constraints and the limitations of geography – a hundred miles in depth plus the location of key cities like Lahore close to the border – made Pakistan especially vulnerable to a Cold Start-type offensive. Moreover, the growing Indian partnership with the US had not only encouraged India to opt for such aggressive policies to undermine deterrence, but Pakistan's reliance on the US to prevent Indian adventurism in the future became unreliable. While Pakistan's concerns were conveyed repeatedly to the US and other major countries, none of them could be relied upon to restrain India. In fact, there was even tacit American approval for India's Cold Start doctrine as a response to Pakistan's alleged 'proxy war' against India in Kashmir.

In such circumstances, Pakistan's security establishment realised that only a comprehensive strategic response would be able to ensure credible deterrence in future at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. This came to be known as Full Spectrum Deterrence. But for the operationalisation of Full Spectrum Deterrence, Pakistan needed to develop its technological and military capabilities. This was achieved over the next decade despite increasing American and western discrimination against Pakistan in the nuclear domain as discussed in the following chapters.

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10 | Betrayal

Even as Pakistan's multiple security challenges were increasing from 2004 onwards, resulting from the Indo-US nuclear deal, renewed discrimination by the Americans on the nuclear issue, the Indian pursuit of the Cold Start doctrine, and the continuing impact of the war on terror within Pakistan (as considered in the previous chapters), the country was convulsed by yet another bout of political crisis. A series of political mistakes by President Musharraf weakened his position, eventually leading to his resignation in August 2008. By then, Musharraf's efforts to salvage his position by relying on the Bush administration to broker a deal with his political opponents had led to unprecedented American influence within Pakistan. The incoming Peoples Party government, beholden to the US, was unable to withstand American pressure to reverse Pakistan's opposition to the Indo-US nuclear deal, especially the NSG waiver for India. This amounted to a betrayal of Pakistan's nuclear policy and dealt a serious blow to the country's security interests.

Growing Domestic Instability

When Musharraf had taken over power after the October 1999 coup, the incumbent Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, leader of one of the country's largest political parties, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), was exiled to Saudi Arabia under an arrangement with the Saudis that he would not return to Pakistan for ten years and would not take part in politics. The leader of the other major political party, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Benazir Bhutto, was already in self-imposed exile owing to differences with the Sharif government. Her husband, Asif Zardari, was also allowed to go abroad by Musharraf after he deposed Sharif.

All these leaders, including some of their party members, faced long-standing corruption charges, among other accusations. One of the major objectives of Musharraf's reform agenda was to tackle corruption and ensure good governance. Accordingly, these political leaders and several of their followers faced trials and imprisonment if they returned to Pakistan. As part of the political reforms,

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Musharraf also ensured that no political leader could serve more than two terms as Prime Minister, which automatically debarred both Sharif and Bhutto.

At first, Musharraf was able to stabilise the political situation and revive the economy. His partnership in America's war on terror also brought about sizeable economic and military assistance apart from projecting Pakistan as a major US ally. This upward trajectory lasted till about 2005. Thereafter, however, Musharraf made a number of errors that accumulated to undermine his position. In August 2006, a leading Baloch tribal leader, Akbar Bugti, was killed for which his supporters blamed the Musharraf government. This event set off a separatist uprising by Baloch dissidents, some of whom were supported by India. Meanwhile, Musharraf's support for American counter-terrorism efforts, which was opposed by radical 'Jihadi' groups, spread rapidly from Pakistan's tribal areas, especially after the formation of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in 2007, to areas such as Swat and cities such as Karachi and even Islamabad. Supporters of the TTP ideology took control of the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in Islamabad, challenging the writ of the state in the capital city. In July 2007, the government used force to take control of the mosque in which several hundred, mostly young people, were killed which led to widespread criticism of the government. This took place at a time when Musharraf was already faced with agitation by lawyers to protest against the President's dismissal of the Chief Justice, Iftikhar Chaudary, in March 2007. This lawyer's movement also had the support of the opposition political parties, especially the PML-N.

Meanwhile, Musharraf was under severe pressure from the Bush administration to 'do more' in the war on terror which was now facing a resurgent Taliban. The President's reluctance to act with full military force against the TTP and its allies, for fear that it would create a national backlash, convinced the Americans that only a popular democratically elected government could deliver. According to reports, Benazir Bhutto, who had been in the political wilderness till then, promised to do just that in a bid to return to power with American patronage. Musharraf, faced with growing political challenges and facing an election in 2008, also had his own reasons for asking his "friend", George Bush, in 2007 to broker a deal with Bhutto. An indicator of his desperation was his approval for the US to conduct drone attacks on

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terrorist targets within Pakistan – a major shift in Pakistan's counter-terrorism cooperation with America.

The result of American interference in Pakistan's internal politics was the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) of 5 October 2007. This arrangement granted amnesty to politicians, political workers and bureaucrats who were accused of corruption, embezzlement, money laundering, or even murder between 1 January 1986 and 12 October 1999. The other elements of the deal, as narrated by then US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in her book 'No Higher Honour,'[1] included power sharing between Bhutto as Prime Minister and Musharraf as President as long as Musharraf gave up the post of Army Chief and took off his uniform. Apart from extending the NRO, which cleared Bhutto and her husband as well as party members from corruption and other charges, Musharraf agreed to remove the condition on term limits for the Prime Minister's post, clearing the way for Bhutto to become Prime Minister for the third time.

But events did not go according to plan. Seen as an American stooge by the extremist groups, Bhutto's cavalcade from the Karachi airport after her arrival from exile was attacked on 18 October 2007. Then, on 27 December 2007, while campaigning for the coming elections, she was assassinated by terrorists. Musharraf and the US blamed the TTP. The PPP leadership, co-chaired by Benazir Bhutto's husband, Asif Zardari, and her son, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, after her assassination, implicitly blamed Musharraf's government, at least for negligence. Meanwhile, Nawaz Sharif also made a comeback which Musharraf viewed as a violation of the arrangement earlier brokered by the Saudis.

While Musharraf relinquished the post of Army Chief on 28 November 2007, the lawyers' movement continued to gather momentum, fueled now by all the opposition parties as well. As a result, Musharraf imposed a state of emergency on 3 November 2007, for which he faced even greater criticism across the political spectrum. It was under such tumultuous conditions that national elections were held on 18 February 2008, with the PPP emerging with a majority of seats in the National Assembly. On 22 March, PPP leader Yusuf Raza Gilani won a majority in Parliament to become Prime Minister. Now under the leadership of Asif Zardari and Nawaz Sharif, whose party had won the provincial elections in Punjab, the two main parties, the PPP and the PML-N, along with some smaller parties, agreed on 7 August to start

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impeachment proceedings against Musharraf unless he resigned as President. Having no other choice, he did so on 18 August 2008. The President's position was soon occupied by Asif Zardari when he was elected by the electoral college on 6 September 2008.

Since the Americans had helped pave the way for the PPP to return to power, both President Zardari and Prime Minister Gilani were deeply beholden to the Bush administration. The American ingress became so deep-rooted that national decisions on domestic and foreign policy issues, even appointments to official positions, came to be influenced by Washington. An indication of this influence clearly emerges from a cable sent by the US embassy in Islamabad dated 25 March 2008 which later became public by Wikileaks.[2] In a meeting with US Deputy Secretary of State Negroponte, Zardari is quoted as saying that "he was happy to have US support" and that "what would we do without you." Regarding Kashmir, Zardari reportedly stated that he "had been criticised for suggesting that he could put the Kashmir issue aside and concentrate on increasing trade with India" and that "Pakistan could not ignore India's huge market" nor its "potential as an investor." On the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline, which the Americans had opposed, he said that "this would be politically incorrect," while Negroponte remarked that the "US would be deeply dismayed to see Pakistan go forward with the Iran pipeline deal." On domestic issues, Zardari conveyed that he would insist upon naming the new Speaker of the National Assembly and would nominate the Foreign Minister though he would have to give the Finance Minister's post to the PML-N. He also conveyed that he would appoint the then Ambassador to Washington (General Durrani) as the National Security Advisor. Notably, in the discussion on energy, Zardari spoke about the need for power plants and the Iran pipeline, but did not raise the issue of civilian nuclear cooperation. This was only one example of the several reports in the public domain that demonstrate the extent of the new government's dependence on the US.

Betrayal

It was in this chaotic internal and external environment that Pakistan's Foreign Office had to deal with the repercussions of the Indo-US nuclear agreement and the discriminatory American policy denying similar treatment

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to Pakistan. Given the increasing dependence of Pakistani leaders on the US, Pakistani officials were left with very little room for maneuver.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Pakistan had repeatedly conveyed its concerns to the Bush administration that an India-specific exemption for civilian nuclear cooperation would unleash a nuclear arms race between Pakistan and India as well as undermine deterrence and strategic stability in South Asia. This was most clearly articulated in the statement issued by the Foreign Office on 17 March 2006 and by the NCA on 13 April 2006. Both pronouncements also called for a similar agreement with Pakistan to help meet its energy needs. But these arguments had not convinced the Americans and during his visit to Pakistan in March 2006, President Bush declined to treat Pakistan at par with India.

Given these irreversible developments, attention within the Foreign Office and the SPD turned towards the next steps that the US and India would take for India to conclude a safeguards agreement with the IAEA and obtain a consensus-based waiver for India to engage in civilian nuclear cooperation with NSG countries. There were two opposing views in the Foreign Office. A minority view, rather naive, was that the exemption for India would create a precedent that Pakistan could later use to seek a similar exemption. This view was largely based on advice given by the IAEA Director-General Muhamed El Baradei, that Pakistan should not oppose the waiver for India but use that as a basis for claiming similar treatment in the future. To his credit, El Baradei had also advocated that all three nuclear weapon states not party to the NPT-India, Pakistan, and Israel – should be brought into the nuclear fold. The problem was and remains that while the US and its allies were willing to treat India (and Israel) favourably for geo-political reasons, they were not prepared to extend the same consideration to Pakistan.

Accordingly, the majority view in the Foreign Office was to try and oppose the exemption for India, with the support of like-minded countries like China and some of the staunch supporters of non-proliferation. A summary along these lines was submitted to Musharraf's Prime Minister, Shaukat Aziz, whose government was in its last few weeks in office before the February 2008 elections. As Additional Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the Prime Minister's office, I submitted the summary with my own recommendation supporting the proposal by the Foreign Office. The summary was approved and returned

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to the Foreign Office to initiate action. This involved instructing Pakistan's Ambassador to the IAEA in Vienna to raise objections in the IAEA Board of Governors, of which Pakistan was a member at the time, with the support of like-minded countries. It was also decided to send a Special Envoy, Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, to China to elicit Chinese support, both in the IAEA and in the NSG.

Meanwhile, as India finalised the draft of its safeguards agreement with the IAEA Secretariat on 9 July 2008, which would be put to the IAEA Board of Governors (BOG) for adoption by a simple majority, the US was pushing hard on the Board to approve the safeguards agreement by consensus. The US was determined to ensure consensus adoption as this would facilitate the subsequent exemption by the NSG which had to be by consensus according to NSG rules. The American Ambassador in Vienna reported to Washington on 14 July 2008 that the safeguards agreement would have "the public blessing of IAEA Director-General Elbaradei" and the US Mission would "continue to encourage the DG to defend the agreement as technically sound, and help frame the debate (in the BOG meeting) in the broader context as a net benefit to the non-proliferation regime." He also conveyed that the Board Chair, Ambassador Skoknik of Chile would "use his consultations (with Board member countries) to orchestrate a consensus decision" and that he would "prefer to reserve member state statements until after the agreement is passed." In other words, the Board Chair would violate the normal rules requiring debate for consideration before the adoption of such a decision. No doubt this was to be done at the American behest in order to ensure a consensus decision.

The same cable also reported that while there was strong support in favour of India, especially among American allies, only Ireland and New Zealand had expressed concerns over the impact on non-proliferation. South Africa had also expressed reservations regarding the agreement's political impact on financing the Technical Cooperation Programme by the IAEA with developing countries. The cable further stated that a major obstacle could be China which "has expressed concerns in the past....and may complicate matters." But the US Ambassador shared the Indian view that "China will not block consensus, preferring to work through Pakistan to cause difficulty." He reported that both the Board Chair and the Indian Ambassador in Vienna had "identified Pakistan

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to us as the most likely potential spoiler" and undertook to engage with the Pakistan Ambassador while encouraging the DG to do the same.[3]

Once the India-IAEA draft safeguards agreement was finalised and made public on 9 July, non-proliferation advocates such as the Washington-based Arms Control Association, among others, raised objections and pointed out its flaws. These were reported widely, including by the journal *Nucleonic Week* which exposed both substantive and procedural inconsistencies in the draft agreement. For instance, that the preamble paragraphs "provoked concerns that they not conform with Infcirc-66, the model safeguards agreement for states, such as India, which are not parties to the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT)." Instead, India had claimed that, "the agreement contain provisions for so-called India-specific safeguards and corrective measures" which "implied that India can break off from IAEA safeguards at designated facilities at will if any of the NSG members were to cut off trade with India for political reasons." Nucleonic Week further pointed out that while "US law, governing the US-India cooperation agreement, requires that safeguards.....be applied in perpetuity", Indian officials had claimed "sovereign rights vis-à-vis IAEA inspectors" and that "the US-India deal called for India specific safeguards." Accordingly, India claimed the right to terminate IAEA safeguards if nuclear trade was cut off, which violated the Indian commitment to apply safeguards in "perpetuity." Regarding issues of procedure, both India and the US were pressing Board members to approve the draft agreement by consensus and without a vote. Moreover, the US demanded that the 45-day minimum period for the Board to consider the issue was not mandatory in this case and pushed for approval of the agreement in a Board meeting on 1 August 2008, which was within just 21 days. The American eagerness to push through a decision was based on the concern that the more time states had to study the draft agreement, the greater the chances would be for them to raise objections.

To highlight its concerns regarding the India-IAEA draft agreement, Pakistan's representative to the IAEA, Ambassador Shahbaz in Vienna, was authorised by the Foreign Office, after obtaining due clearance from the political leadership, to circulate a letter to member states of the IAEA Board of Governors and of the NSG. This letter, dated 18 July 2008, objected to the "efforts being made to rush the agreement through the IAEA and the NSG." Pointing out that the draft agreement, circulated to the Board of Governors

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on 9 July 2008, could be considered under the rules at the earliest after 45 days – that is on 25 August 2008-the letter stated that "there are no good technical or substantive reasons for the Board of Governors to waive the 45-day rule." Moreover, that "political exigencies of either India or the US are not sufficient reasons for the BOG to waive the 45-day rule" which was "designed to enable BOG members to carefully examine the context and implications of any agreement so as to ensure that it serves the purpose of credible verification of non-diversion for which it is concluded."

Additional issues of concern for Pakistan regarding the agreement were: i) it did not conform with any existing model, especially for non -NPT states, and was "a unique hybrid"; ii) required careful consideration as it would set a precedent for other non-NPT nuclear weapon states; iii) noted Indian separation of its civilian and military nuclear facilities which implicitly recognised and accepted India's nuclear weapons status; iv) facilities to be safeguarded were not listed and as such what would be the purpose of the agreement if the facilities to be safeguarded were not known; v) due to India's refusal to place its Breeder Reactors and its Thorium based programmes under safeguards, the agreement amounted to a "gratuitous legitimatisation" of potential nuclear proliferation and was contrary to the IAEA's objectives; vi) there were several ambiguous provisions regarding conditions for the termination of the agreement, for India's access to the international fuel markets and unspecified corrective measures which India would be allowed to take to ensure uninterrupted operations of its civilian nuclear reactors, all of which contravened the continuation of IAEA safeguards in perpetuity; vii) as a result of these inconsistencies, India would be able to buildup a strategic reserve of nuclear fuel and then terminate safeguards and divert part of the fuel for nuclear weapons; viii) the agreement could indeed provide an incentive to India to conduct further nuclear tests while not even ensuring termination of peaceful nuclear cooperation and the safeguards agreement in case India conducted further nuclear tests; ix) since the agreement allowed suspension of safeguards on "any parts of the facilities" for maintenance and repairs, this could enable India to divert nuclear fuel and advanced technology provided under the agreement towards weapons production; x) the agreement violated the IAEA statute which does not allow differentiation, and, therefore, an India specific agreement was unprecedented which should, if adopted, create a

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model for other non-NPT states; xi) the proposed agreement has no utility in advancing the cause of non-proliferation but, on the contrary, would enable and encourage proliferation, leading to a nuclear arms race in the region; and xii) the agreement, as well as the unjustified exemption for India by the NSG is "discriminatory and dangerous." The Ambassador's letter concluded by stating that "the overarching consideration.....should be to uphold the principles of non-discrimination and equity as well as regional and global peace and security."[4]

The arguments made by Pakistan's ambassador had a definite resonance among countries that were deeply committed to non-proliferation and those such as Brazil, Argentina and South Africa, which had abandoned their nuclear weapons programmes and joined the NPT. For these countries, granting special status to India and providing an exemption for civilian nuclear cooperation despite its record of proliferation and ongoing weapons programme, was unacceptable. But they lacked the political courage to oppose the US. The only country that could do so, apart from Pakistan, was China. But the Chinese did not want to be isolated in either the BOG or the NSG. In Pakistan's calculations, efforts were required to persuade the Chinese to support Pakistan for which Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, was asked to travel to Beijing. Once the Chinese came on board; and voted against the agreement in the BOG along with Pakistan, other states would be encouraged to also oppose or at least abstain. Ambassador Shahbaz had reported that several European countries had already told him that while they could not oppose the agreement due to American pressure, but if Pakistan voted against, they would abstain. In this case, the agreement could still be adopted to the BOG, but without consensus which the US and India wanted. This could then complicate the consensus adoption of the exemption for India from the NSG in accordance with its rules. In any event, Pakistani diplomats felt that, as a matter of principle it was important for Pakistan to register its opposition to the BOG, whereas it could not do so in the NSG since it was not a member and, therefore, relied on China.

The Americans had realised throughout this process with the IAEA that the key to a consensus decision would be to convince Pakistan to backdown. Efforts were already underway through their Embassy in Islamabad and Pakistan's Embassy in Washington, to exercise American leverage over the

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Pakistani political leadership. Immediately after Ambassador Shahbaz's letter was circulated in Vienna on 18 July, the then Acting Foreign Secretary and the concerned official in the Foreign Office were summoned by Prime Minister Gilani to his office. The Prime Minister berated the officials for "taking such a big step" (circulating the letter by Ambassador Shahbaz) without his approval. The officials pointed out that the decision had actually been approved by the Prime Minister after the earlier summary was re-submitted to him as the new Prime Minister. Even so, they were told that Ambassador Shahbaz should be instructed to withdraw his letter and cease opposing the Indian agreement as well as to call off approaches to China and other countries to oppose the NSG exemption for India. To vent his anger and frustration at being shown up, the Prime Minister turned on the Director level officer, the only one in the room with the most knowledge of the issue, and threw him out of his office, saying he was too junior to be in the meeting!

The Acting Foreign Secretary had no choice but to comply with the Prime Minister's instructions even though he had not been given these instructions in writing. He duly informed Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir who was on a visit abroad and conveyed the instructions to Ambassador Shahbaz in Vienna. Ambassador Munir Akram who was by then on his way to China was also asked to cancel his visit. The extent of American ingress at the time was further demonstrated by the fact that a US Embassy official sat in the Acting Foreign Secretary's office to ensure that instructions were conveyed forthwith while the American Ambassador, Anne Patterson, was constantly in touch over the phone to ensure compliance.[5]

To back up their demand, the Americans claimed that President Musharraf, during his last visit to the US in September 2007, had given an assurance to Under Secretary of State Nicolas Burns that Pakistan would not object to the Indian agreement with the IAEA or the NSG exemption for India. Since this was a restricted meeting, the only Pakistani official present was then-Foreign Secretary Riaz Muhammad Khan, who later confirmed to the Foreign Office that no such commitment had been given by Musharraf and the Pakistani record of the meeting makes no such reference. Such a unilateral American assertion is not surprising, since in earlier instances as well claims had been made about Pakistani leaders giving commitments, especially in restricted or one-on-one meetings, about which there was no Pakistani record. In several

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past instances, Pakistani leaders with little or no technical knowledge of an issue had been 'ambushed' by American officials to gain a commitment. This was done with Prime Minister Junejo during a visit to the US in the 1980s when the US alleged that he had given the assurance that Pakistan would not enrich uranium beyond three percent, or Prime Minister Sharif being confronted with 'evidence' of Pakistan preparing to use nuclear weapons during the Kargil conflict. Perhaps these same tactics were used by the Americans to mislead Prime Minister Gilani. Even so, a more informed decision should have been made by the Prime Minister with due deliberation, especially with the Foreign Office and the SPD. Failure to do so was nothing less than a betrayal of Pakistan's security interests.

The then-Director-General SPD, General Kidwai, later told the author that the SPD found out about the decision after the event when the deal of betrayal had been done. When asked by General Kidwai why the SPD had not been informed in time when he (General Kidwai) and Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Tariq Majeed, would have intervened with President Zardari, Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir said that he was under extreme pressure on this issue. This indicates that the political leadership deliberately kept the SPD out of the loop.[6]

Meanwhile in Vienna, Ambassador Shahbaz was forced to comply with his instructions but courageously refused to withdraw his letter of 18 July. This ensured that at the very least, Pakistan's objections remained on the record. Reporting to Washington on his meeting with the Pakistan Ambassador on 30 July, US Ambassador Schulte confirmed that Ambassador Shahbaz had received instructions to not call for a vote or block the passage of the Indian safeguards agreement when it came up for consideration on 1 August. However, despite being repeatedly pressed by Schulte to withdraw his letter to the Board, Shahbaz refused and also denied that there was any record of an understanding between Musharraf and Nicolas Burns. Shahbaz also conveyed that he would make a statement to the Board during consideration of the India-IAEA agreement and stressed that this would create a precedent that should also apply to Pakistan in future. Ambassador Schulte maintained that the agreement was India-specific. When the American Ambassador argued that "it would be a net benefit to bring India's civil reactors under safeguards, Ambassador Shahbaz replied "Big deal, look at what remains outside of safeguards."[7]

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On 1 August 2008, the IAEA Board of Governors approved the India-IAEA agreement by consensus. China, which had waited till virtually the last hour to finalise its position, went along with the decision after Pakistan had backed down. Still, in his statement Ambassador Shahbaz maintained that "a significant departure has been made from the standard norms pertaining to verification and global non-proliferation" and that the global non-proliferation regime must be strengthened by the "application of the norms on a non-selective, non-discriminatory and in an equitable manner." Referring to Pakistan's view that the agreement would set a new precedent, the Ambassador said that "we have noted the Director-General's remarks today that such an umbrella approach could also be used for the conclusion of other (such) 66 type safeguards agreements." He also called upon the Board members to "demonstrate their political will and moral authority to apply it (the new standard) in future equitably and on a nondiscriminatory basis." He then read out verbatim the statement earlier adopted by the NCA in response to the Indo-US nuclear deal which had been issued in April 2006. (See previous chapter). It stated that the NSG should adopt a criteria-based approach to enable Pakistan to access civil nuclear energy under IAEA safeguards; that the US-India agreement would have implications on strategic stability as it would enable India to produce significant quantities of fissile material and nuclear weapons from unsafeguarded nuclear reactors; and that the objective of strategic stability in South Asia and the global non-proliferation regime would have been better served if the United States had considered a package approach for Pakistan and India, the two non-NPT nuclear weapon states, with a view to preventing a nuclear arms race in the region.[8]

Armed with the consensus approval of the India-specific safeguards agreement by the IAEA Board of Governors, the US pushed through the NSG waiver for nuclear cooperation with India. Adopted on 6 September 2008, the NSG document entitled "Statement on Civil Nuclear Cooperation," provided a "clear and unconditional" exemption for nuclear commerce by the NSG countries with India – ironically the very country whose nuclear test in 1974 had led to the creation of the NSG. Amendments to the NSG waiver agreement proposed by several NSG states were overruled through American pressure and the agreement was bulldozed in record time.

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Within a few days of the NSG waiver, France became the first country to sign a civilian nuclear cooperation agreement with India on terms highly favourable to New Delhi, since the agreement did not include any provision for termination of cooperation if India violated the agreement, such as by conducting nuclear tests. It simply called for "consultations" between the two countries. Other states soon followed the French example, placing profit before their proliferation concerns. Most hypocritical was the willingness of self-professed champions of non-proliferation, like Canada, Australia and Japan, to enter into nuclear cooperation agreements with India despite their prior criticism of India for its past proliferation activities. To date, 14 countries have signed such agreements, including Argentina, Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Namibia, Russia, South Korea, United Kingdom, United States and Vietnam. But, in an ironic turn of events, the country that spearheaded the initiative for India's nuclear legitimacy, the US, has yet to fully implement a nuclear deal with India due to legal controversies that have emerged over the issue of liability for damages. Till 2020 these issues are yet to be resolved. Moreover, now India really does not need to sign an agreement with American companies since it has several better options. As a result, one of the main objectives for the US to sign the nuclear agreement with India-to benefit its nuclear industry-remains unfulfilled. To use an apt American phrase – India has taken the US to the cleaners.

Critique of the IAEA and NSG Agreements

Concluding the safeguards agreement and the accompanying Additional Protocol with the IAEA and being granted a waiver for nuclear cooperation with the NSG were major achievements of Indian foreign policy. No doubt geo-political factors, especially the American long-term objective of containing a rising China by building up India as a counter-weight, were immensely helpful for New Delhi to acquire nuclear legitimacy among other benefits. With these agreements, India was able to attain its goal of a 'responsible' and 'mainstream' nuclear weapon state, gaining access to civilian nuclear cooperation without compromising on its nuclear weapons programme. Although it could not become one of the five recognised nuclear weapon states of the NPT, being granted an India-specific safeguards agreement and NSG waiver was the next

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best thing. Thereafter, India has fixed its sights on becoming a member of the NSG itself for which it again relies on American support.

From the perspective of international non-proliferation norms, the treatment accorded to India had and continues to have deep-rooted flaws. These became clear even as the IAEA and NSG negotiated and approved these arrangements. The safeguards agreement and additional protocol between the IAEA and India were concluded even before India had complied with the required pre-condition of separating its civilian and military nuclear programmes and providing a list of the civilian nuclear facilities to be placed under safeguards to the IAEA and the NSG. Moreover, the separation was allowed to take place in a "phased manner" which could enable India to carry out weapons development activities in some facilities before these came under safeguards. It was also able to keep its under-construction reprocessing and fast-breeder reactors out of the safeguards list while being given the assurance of building up a strategic reserve of nuclear fuel – a concession that was seen by several experts as potentially enabling India to resume nuclear testing once this strategic reserve had been secured. The preamble of the safeguards' agreement also assured "reliable, uninterrupted and continuous fuel supplies.....to guard against any disruption of supply." In case of any "disruption", India was allowed to take "corrective measures to ensure uninterrupted operation of its civilian nuclear reactors." This issue of "corrective measures" raised the question whether the safeguards would continue in perpetuity or not? This was also in violation of the accepted template that all IAEA safeguards agreements would continue in perpetuity which implied that India was being given yet another concession from non-proliferation norms. Then there was the issue of definitions of what would constitute 'disruption' and 'corrective measures", regarding which India was given the right to apply its own interpretations with or without concurrence by the IAEA or the supplier countries. In return for India's undertaking that it would not use any imported nuclear materials or technologies for the development of nuclear weapons and use such imports for exclusively peaceful purposes, the IAEA undertook "not to hinder or otherwise interfere with any activities involving the use by India of nuclear materials, non-nuclear material, equipment, components, information or technology produced, acquired or developed by India independent of this agreement for its own purposes."[9] This provided India with a virtual 'Carte

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Blanche' to conduct nuclear activities that it deemed did not fall within the purview of its agreement with the IAEA.

Despite intense American pressure, a few countries had the backbone to point out these flaws in India's agreement with the IAEA. Unfortunately, Pakistan was not among them which indicates the extent of the sell-out by the then government in Islamabad. In a joint statement before the adoption of the agreement, Austria, Netherlands, Norway and Costa-Rica pointed out that the "proposed agreement is not a standard text" and that "a number of concerns remain." These concerns related to the terms 'corrective measures' and 'disruption' of supplies as mentioned above. They also raised the issue of 'perpetuity' of safeguards agreements which was lacking in the India agreement. They further pointed out that the Board of Governors was "expected to endorse the safeguards agreement now" but "India will at an undefined later stage decide autonomously whether it actually becomes applicable." Accordingly, the Board was "dealing with an empty shell agreement since the entities to be put under IAEA control will be defined by India only at a later stage in a phased manner." Therefore, these countries signalled that "the relevant facilities are not listed in the annex to the present agreement in a legally binding way" and that this would "diminish the concept of comprehensive verification," creating "issues of concern from a non-proliferation perspective."[10]

Under the Indo-US deal, India was also required to sign an Additional Protocol (AP) with the IAEA, a voluntary undertaking on additional non-proliferation measures required by the IAEA after the discovery of Iraq's WMD programme in 1990. A fixed template existed for non-nuclear weapon states of the NPT and individual country-specific APs for the Nuclear Weapon States – the P-5. The AP signed by India in March 2009 was the weakest among all the APs signed, even by the P-5. It only covered Indian nuclear exports to non-nuclear weapon states; designation of IAEA inspectors; and assurance of granting timely visas to them. Not surprisingly, an IAEA official later termed this Indian AP as a "Mickey Mouse Agreement"[11]

In the NSG, when a special meeting was convened to consider the special waiver for India, there were over 50 amendments proposed by supporters of non-proliferation. These sought clarity and additional commitments by India, such as signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and accepting a moratorium on fissile material production for nuclear weapons. Eventually,

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these amendments were withdrawn under American pressure. As a result, India achieved a 'clear and unconditional' exemption for nuclear trade with NSG countries. This included the transfer of 'trigger list' items, that is items used directly in manufacturing nuclear weapons; and nuclear-related 'dual-use' equipment, materials, software and related technology. Significantly, the arrangement only called for 'consultations' but not cessation of supplies or cancellation of agreements in case 'circumstances arise' such as violation of an agreement by either side – in particular Indian diversion of material towards weapons production. Reciprocal steps that India agreed to implement in return for the waiver were largely the same as those offered to the IAEA, which included: i) Separation of civilian and military nuclear facilities in a phased manner and filing a declaration regarding its civilian facilities to be placed under IAEA safeguards; ii) Conclude a safeguards agreement with the IAEA; iii) Refrain from the transfer of enrichment and reprocessing technologies to other states not possessing these technologies and supporting international efforts to limit their spread; iv) Instituting a national export control system on nuclear materials and technology; v) Harmonising its export control lists and guidelines with those of the NSG; vi) Continuing its unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing and, vii) readiness to work towards the conclusion of a multilateral Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).[12]

For these reasons, the NSG waiver for India marked a significant departure from the global non-proliferation norms. Motivated by geopolitical interests and commercial benefits, NSG members had ironically rewarded a country whose nuclear proliferation had led to the creation of the NSG in the first place. As such the NSG violated the very basis for its existence. Apart from this question of principle, the NSG waiver for India contributed to destabilising security in South Asia and provoking a nuclear arms race between Pakistan and India. This had already been pointed out by Pakistan as well as by independent nuclear experts since imported nuclear fuel for its civilian facilities would enable India to use all of its indigenous fuel exclusively for weapons production whereas earlier it had to use its limited stocks for both its civilian and military programmes. According to some estimates (as considered in the previous chapter), access to imported nuclear supplies could enable India to produce as many as 50 nuclear weapons per year. This would obviously force Pakistan to respond in order to maintain credible nuclear

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deterrence. Moreover, as discussed below, India could secretly divert imported nuclear material from its civilian to its military programme as it had done for the 1974 nuclear test. Another danger, as already mentioned, was that once India had built up a strategic reserve of nuclear fuel, it could be tempted to carry out further nuclear tests. Its refusal to sign the CTBT pointed in this direction as did the fact that its claimed test of a thermonuclear or Hydrogen bomb in 1998 had failed and it would want to test it again. As events would demonstrate within a few years of the IAEA agreement and the NSG waiver, there would also be a negative impact on international non-proliferation and disarmament efforts, especially regarding entry into force of the CTBT and start of negotiations on the FMCT.

Academic Assessments of the IAEA and NSG Agreements

There have been several academic studies on the broader aspects and impact of the NSG waiver for India and the India safeguards agreement with the IAEA, especially with regard to non-proliferation. Among these are three reports issued by Harvard University's Belfer Center that are particularly noteworthy as they provide detailed and objective analysis.

The first report, titled 'The Three Overlapping Streams of India's Nuclear Programmes' by Kalman A Robertson and John Carlson, was published in April 2016. It examines the Indian separation plan of October 2009 between its civilian and military facilities. The authors argue that the assumption of a clean and verifiable separation between Indian civilian and military categories is wrong. Instead, "the reality is that the (separation) plan has produced three streams: civilian safeguarded, civilian unsafeguarded and military." Moreover, that the "relationships and overlap between these three streams are not transparent. As a result, some civilian facilities under IAEA safeguards may contribute to India's stockpile of unsafeguarded weapons useable material." According to the report "Much of this complexity arises from the unique character of India's safeguards agreement with the IAEA." Accordingly, the separation plan accepted by the IAEA provides for safeguards only for some of India's civilian facilities such as power reactors, associated fuel fabrication and spent fuel storage sites but does not place safeguards on a member of nuclear facilities that serve civilian functions as claimed by India which may also be used in India's military programme. These unsafeguarded "civilian" facilities include

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eight Pressurised Heavy Water Power Reactors (PHWRs) and three heavy water production plants as well as India's Fast Breeder Reactors and Thorium fuel cycle programmes. These "are capable of producing unsafeguarded weapons useable material." As such "India has maintained the option of using the Fast Breeder Reactors to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons." More specifically, the report adds that the Fast Breeder Reactor that reached criticality in 2016 "is poised to introduce a new pathway for the production of both electricity and un-safeguarded plutonium." Moreover, several of India's PHWRs have "been used as sources of weapons-grade plutonium for India's military programme." Therefore, the report acknowledges that "Pakistan has reason to be concerned that India could use its unsafeguarded civilian PHWRs to produce more nuclear weapons in future."

Then there is the issue of India's current stock pile of reactor-grade plutonium from power reactors that is not under safeguards and could be used for India's weapons programme. Even India's "civilian safeguarded" stream could overlap with its civilian unsafeguarded stream since India's agreement with the IAEA "permits the transfer of nuclear material subject to safeguards into a facility in the civilian unsafeguarded stream, provided that the facility is placed under temporary safeguards while the material is present." Consequently, safeguarded nuclear material could contribute significantly to the production of un-safeguarded plutonium. This situation is complicated by the absence of adequate verification in the India agreement owing to which "there is no assurance that India is not building nuclear weapons with plutonium that has been exempted from safeguards." Another loop-hole is that India's safeguards agreement "also provides for the substitution of unsafeguarded nuclear material for safeguarded material with the IAEA's consent." This makes it possible for "India to remove weapons-grade plutonium from safeguards and use it in nuclear weapons, provided that it places an equivalent amount of reactor-grade plutonium under safeguards." These concessions in effect enable "India's safeguarded programme to contribute to nuclear weapons."[13]

The second report, 'India's Nuclear Safeguards: Not Fit for Purpose' by John Carlson, issued in January 2018, builds upon the arguments of the first report maintaining that the IAEA agreement "gives India flexibility to move safeguarded materials in and out of its unsafeguarded, strategic nuclear programme, and allows safeguarded nuclear material to be used

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for the production of un-safeguarded nuclear material." Consequently, this arrangement not only "contradicts India's commitment to separate its civilian and military nuclear programmes.....it also appears inconsistent with the IAEA's Statute, which requires the IAEA to ensure it does not further any military purpose." The report argues that in view of these facts, the Indian separation plan needs to be amended and the IAEA's agreement with India requires revision "to remove the loopholes that would allow safeguarded material and facilities to contribute to un-safeguarded activities."[14]

The third Belfer Center report, 'India's Nuclear Exceptionalism,' by Mansoor Ahmad, issued in May 2017, is also based on the findings of the first report of 2016. It maintains that India's Separation Plan and the nature of its agreement with the IAEA, enables India to pursue vertical nuclear proliferation and enhance its stockpile of nuclear weapons as well as stocks of weapons useable fissile material. This argument is based on India's own contention that its "strategic programme is an off-shoot of research on (the) nuclear power programme and consequently, it is embedded in a larger undifferentiated programme." This has created the "overlapping" between the so-called civilian and military programmes and the Indian refusal to clearly separate its two nuclear programmes.

As a result, the Indian Separation Plan "allowed it to retain much of its indigenous nuclear power and fuel cycle infrastructure on the ostensibly military list, outside safeguards." This also included over five tons of separated reactor-grade plutonium useable for nuclear weapons; eight indigenous Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs); Fast Breeder Reactor and Prototype Fast Breeder Reactors (under development); uranium enrichment facilities; spent fuel reprocessing; the 430 MW CIRUS reactor (shut down in 2010); and the 100 MW Dhruva-I production reactors; the Advanced Heavy Water Reactor; three heavy water production plants; and several military-related plants such as the naval nuclear propulsion reactor. Consequently, India's agreements with the IAEA and the NSG work in conjunction with its nuclear expansion and development programme, "providing it with the means and the justification to establish the wherewithal and facilities for the stockpiling of large quantities of weapons useable nuclear materials."[15]

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Implications for Pakistan

The nuclear exceptionalism granted to India at the behest of the US clearly had negative repercussions for Pakistan's security. The denial of equal treatment to Pakistan not only prevented access to civilian nuclear technology for its developmental needs, especially power generation capacity, but also confronted the country with a nuclear arms race which undermined credible nuclear deterrence with India. Since India had embarked on a nuclear weapons programme at least a decade before Pakistan, it had accumulated a much larger stockpile of nuclear weapons and weapons-grade fissile material stocks. The IAEA agreement and the NSG waiver further enhanced the Indian capability to increase its nuclear arsenal. At the same time, as considered in the previous chapter, India had started implementing its Cold Start military doctrine to be able to launch limited conventional military strikes against Pakistan despite the existence of nuclear deterrence. Faced with this dual threat to its security, Pakistan was compelled to respond by taking measures that would ensure the continuing credibility of its deterrence capability, such as the development of Tactical Nuclear Weapon, Nasr, and the full operationalisation of its long range ballistic missile Shaheen III and the Ababeel Missile with Multiple Independently-targeted Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) warhead.

The exceptionalism towards India and the discrimination against Pakistan in the nuclear realm also undermined international non-proliferation norms and the global disarmament agenda. Failure of the IAEA and NSG countries to gain Indian acceptance of the CTBT in return for the exceptionalism provided to it, ensured that this treaty could not come into force and that Pakistan as well as China would refuse to accept the CTBT unless India did so. Moreover, the fact that an asymmetry existed between Pakistan and India in stocks of fissile materials, which would continue to increase as a result of the NSG waiver for India, ensured that Pakistan could not accept FMCT negations that focused only on banning future production of stocks but not to reduce existing stocks.

Despite all the challenges considered in this chapter, betrayal by the political leadership, US-sponsored exceptionalism for India, and blatant discrimination against Pakistan, the security managers of the country were still able to safeguard its interests by pursuing a policy of strategic defiance in the years ahead.

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Notes

[1] Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honour*, Broadway Books, New York, 2011, pp. 606-611 ;The News, 15 December 2011.
[2] http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08ISLAMABAD 1330_a.html
[3] http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08UNVIEVIENNA392_a.html
[4] Letter from Ambassador Shahbaz to member states of the IAEA Board of Governors and the NSG, 18 July 2008. Author's papers.
[5] Briefing given to the Author by Foreign Office officials who are not named at their request. 8 September 2020.
[6] Author's interview with General Kidwai, 15 December 2019.
[7] http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08 UNVIEVIENNA 430_a.html
[8] Statement by Ambassador Shahbaz at the Meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors, 1 August 2008. Author's papers.
[9] Agreement with the government of India for the Application of Safeguards to Civilian Nuclear facilities, IAEA Board of Governors, Gov/2008/30, 9 July 2008.
[10] Statement of Austria, Netherlands, Norway and Costa Rica, 1 August 2008. Author's papers.
[11] http://wilileaks.org/plusd/cables/09 UNVIEVIENNA 87_a.html.
[12] NSG Statement on Civil Nuclear Cooperation with India, NSG-VEI/Ex-PLE-2. Author's papers.
[13] Kalman A. Robertson and John Carlson, The Three Overlapping Streams of India's Nuclear Programme, Harvard University Belfer Center, April 2016.
[14] John Carlson, India's Nuclear Safeguards: Not Fit for Purposes, Harvard University Belfer Center, January 2018.
[15] Mansoor Ahmad, India's Nuclear Exceptionalism, Harvard University Belfer Center, May, 2017

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11 | Defiance

The growing Indo-US strategic partnership, symbolised by their nuclear cooperation agreement and subsequent NSG waiver for India had dramatically transformed Pakistan's security environment. The Indian pursuit of their Cold Start doctrine, seeking space for conventional war below the nuclear threshold, made this situation worse. Pakistan could not remain oblivious to these developments undermining credible deterrence and, therefore, strategic stability in the region. It had warned as much as when the discriminatory Indo-US deal had been concluded (as discussed in Chapter 9). In these circumstances, Pakistan's strategic community was compelled to pursue a policy of defiance on nuclear issues in order to ensure credible deterrence. Such a policy was undertaken despite the challenges of continued domestic instability, increasing incidents of terrorism, deteriorating relations with the US and India as well as the growing competition among the major powers, especially the US and China, which also impacted the stability in South Asia. Eventually, this policy of defiance was successful in ensuring the country's security over the next decade since the conclusion of the Indo-US nuclear deal in 2005. Appreciating the significance of this achievement requires a comprehensive assessment of the factors involved.

Global and Regional Developments

As President Bush completed his second term in office, his self-proclaimed legacy of bringing 'freedom and democracy' to the 'greater Middle East' was in tatters. When America's 'war of choice' in Iraq had started in March 2003, and superior American firepower had quickly brought about regime change, justified by false allegations that Saddam Hussain possessed nuclear weapons, Bush had bragged about "mission accomplished." But the President and his neo-conservatives, or 'Neo-Cons,' Vice President Cheney, Defence Secretary Rumsfeld and Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz failed to realise that the Iraq war had just begun and would prove to be a disaster. Blinded by their hubris based on unchallenged American global power, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, and motivated by the sanctimonious conviction that American values of 'freedom and democracy'

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are universal, the Neo-Cons arrogated to themselves the right "to remake the world in.....America's image" as a "providentially assigned purpose."[1] As such, "Hubris and sanctimony (had) become the paramount expressions of American statecraft" and "after 9/11, they combined to produce the Bush administration's war of no exits and no deadlines."[2] Indeed, the 'war on terror' anywhere and everywhere, pursued through 'unilateralism" and 'preemption," became a 'permanent condition' and a 'generational war.' Rumsfeld clearly articulated this by telling Americans to "forget about exit strategies; we are looking at a sustained engagement that carries no deadlines."[3]

However, as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrated, superior American military and economic power could not guarantee victory in asymmetric conflicts. Instead, these conflicts have demonstrated that "the United States is ill-prepared to wage a global war of no exits and no deadlines. The sole superpower lacks the resources – economic, political and military – to support a large-scale, protracted conflict without, at the very least, inflicting severe economic and political damage to itself. American power has limits and is inadequate to the ambitions to which hubris and sanctimony have given rise."[4]

To judge by financial costs alone, American operations in Iraq by 2007 were costing up to three billion dollars per week and the overall cost for 2007 was over 500 billion dollars. By the time the US withdrew from Iraq in December 2011, the estimated cost of the war for the US was above two trillion dollars.[5] This was apart from the cost of American and Iraqi lives and the colossal damage to Iraq as a country from which it is still suffering. In addition, the American war on terror in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Pakistan has from 2001 to 2019 cost upwards of 6.4 trillion dollars,[6] an amount that continues to increase as some of these conflicts are still raging. Moreover, according to American financial experts, the Iraq war partially if not wholly triggered the financial crisis of 2007-2008 which spread from the US to affect other western economies as well.[7] As a result, President Bush ended his tenure with a legacy of military failure in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as an economic meltdown for his successor, Barack Obama.

During his campaign for the Presidency, Obama had denounced the Iraq war as a "war of choice" that must be brought to an end, but to demonstrate that he would not compromise on American security, he supported the war in Afghanistan as a "war of necessity."[8] To a large extent Obama's views on the

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Afghan campaign were influenced by the Pentagon and the CIA. As a result, Obama committed to spending more money and sending more troops to Afghanistan to defeat the Taliban and al-Qaida while "building up Afghanistan as a strong democratic state capable of standing up to terrorism."[9] A month after becoming President in January 2009, Obama announced his first troop surge in Afghanistan, sending an additional 17,000 troops to augment the 36,000 US and 32,000 NATO troops already present there. Then in December 2009, Obama announced a further troop buildup with the deployment of additional 30,000 troops by early 2010. This was part of a war strategy that the US would conduct in Afghanistan and the tribal areas of Pakistan, where the Taliban and al-Qaida allegedly maintained sanctuaries, termed Afghanistan-Pakistan or 'Af-Pak' operations. The purpose was to "disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaida in Pakistan and Afghanistan and to prevent their return to either country in future."[10] It also involved the use of drones on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghan border, a policy started by Bush towards the end of his presidency and strongly advocated by him to his successor.[11]

Since Obama's surge plan also involved an eventual 'draw down' of American troops by July 2011, he focused on building up the economic and military capabilities of the Afghan government while exploring the possibility of talks with the Afghan Taliban for which he appointed one of his leading diplomats, Richard Holbrooke. The objective was to enable the Afghan government forces to play an increasingly larger role in counter-terrorism operations while reduced numbers of US and allied troops would take up training and advisory roles. However, the US-Afghanistan strategic partnership agreement of July 2012 ensured that the US would continue to retain its military bases and a limited number of troops in Afghanistan in the future, at least for the 10-year duration of the agreement. The Pentagon and the CIA in particular argued for maintaining such an "enduring presence" in Afghanistan to "assure that the counter-terrorism architecture remained in place." Another reason was because "American forces in Afghanistan had a role..... if Pakistan and its nuclear arsenal, appeared to be coming apart at the seams."[12]

Obama's Afghan policy, therefore, indicated that despite his criticism of the Bush administration's 'war of no exits' and notwithstanding the change in rhetoric, he was determined to pursue the same underlying approach towards his 'war of necessity.' However, this dual policy of pursuing a military solution

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through the troop surge while seeking a dialogue with the Taliban proved to be mutually exclusive. Neither approach gained traction, causing confusion about American objectives. Besides, having given a deadline for the drawdown only encouraged the Taliban to wait out the Americans. Eventually, by the end of Obama's second term, the US had reached a military and political stalemate in Afghanistan, a situation that was described as achieving only an "Afghanistan good enough" objective.[13]

Nevertheless, Obama's interventionist policy did not remain confined to Afghanistan – he intervened in Libya in 2011 and Syria in 2014 to bring about regime change in both countries. He also deployed US troops in several African countries for counter-terrorism purposes. As with Bush, such interventions were justified by Obama on the grounds of fighting terrorism as well as promoting 'freedom and democracy.'

From this perspective, American policy continued to be driven by the same impulses of hubris and sanctimony that had guided the Neo-Cons of the Bush administration with the clear objective of ensuring American hegemony in the post-Cold War world. As such, Obama continued to pursue a "Bush lite"[14] policy at the global and regional levels that would sustain America's position as the world's superpower and contain the emergence of any competition from other powers such as China or Russia to evolve a multipolar rather than a unipolar global dispensation dominated by the US.

A far-reaching consequence of this approach has been the growing US competition and confrontation with China. In a paradoxical coincidence, just as the US was undergoing the economic crisis of 2007-2008, China achieved the major milestone of becoming the second largest global economy, overtaking Japan and challenging the US for the top position. According to some yard-sticks, such as manufacturing output, infrastructure development and power generation, China had already overtaken the US. Besides, the military stalemates in Iraq and Afghanistan had exposed the limits of American power. In these circumstances, the US viewed China as the most potent potential threat to its global dominance.

Even before this stage was reached, American assessments of the challenge from China had become a part of the strategic discourse in the US. Among the several analyses, two can be considered here as indicators of the evolving American thinking. An article in the Atlantic by Robert Kaplan in 2015

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maintained that "China constitutes the principal conventional threat to America's liberal imperium," especially in the Indian and Pacific Ocean, since the Chinese "require that they safeguard sealanes for the transport of energy resources from the Middle East and elsewhere." To contain the Chinese, the article called for creating a "functional substitute for NATO of the Pacific" which "already exists..... the US Pacific Command, known as PACOM", whose "domain stretches from East Africa to beyond the International Dateline and includes the entire Pacific Rim." Kaplan argued further that to "deter China," PACOM should be enlarged to include "major allies such as Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and India."[15]

The second article, "String of Pearls: Meeting the Challenge of China's Rising Power Across the Asian Littoral" by Christopher J Pearson, for the US Army War College in 2006, claimed that "China is building strategic relationships and developing a capability to establish a forward presence along the sea lines of communication that connect China to the Middle East." The "Pearls", according to the author, are "a nexus of Chinese geo-political influence or military presence stretching from the South China sea, across the Indian ocean to the Persian Gulf, including states such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. Even though the study recognised that "China's evolving maritime power suggests that (it) is concerned with protecting sea lanes of communication....to safeguarding and ensuring uninterrupted transport of energy resources." it argued that "China's behaviour should alarm Washington," and recommended that the "best strategy for achieving long term security in Asia is for the United States to maintain strong ties with all the powers of Asia." Specifically, the study proposed that "the United States must bear the cost of maintaining superior military power to guarantee security and serve as a bridge against a possible future threat," including to "partner with others whose military capabilities complement our maritime power." Among the countries mentioned as partners in this proposal was India, which "should also be a priority for US efforts," owing to shared "ever closer common interests regarding opposition to radical extremism, nuclear non-proliferation and integrity of ASEAN."[16]

Apart from academic circles such thinking about the 'threat' posed by a rising China also resonated in the US government and Congress. The Pentagon's 2006 Quadrennial Defence Review maintained that among the

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"major and emerging great powers, China has the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States and field disruptive military technologies that could, over time, offset traditional US military advantages." This was claimed by the Pentagon despite recognising that the Chinese military budget at the time was less than 20 per cent of American defence spending.[17] The Bush administration's Secretary of Defence also warned that "The rapid non-transparent nature of (China's) buildup contributes to uncertainty", [18] and the Deputy Secretary of State, Robert Zoellick, asked China to "openly explain its defence spending, doctrine and military exercises to ease concerns about its rapid military buildup."[19] In Congress as well there was an unusual bipartisan consensus against China, with the liberal Democrats critical of China for its alleged human rights violations while the conservative Republicans opposed Chinese communism on ideological grounds while both being determined to contain China for geopolitical reasons.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the US launched its policy to contain China even before the Chinese had the capability to project their power in the Indian and Pacific oceans or to compete with the US militarily in this region. In fact, the Chinese had, even after becoming the world's second-largest economy in 2008, every reason to avoid confrontation with the US. Apart from their vast economic and trade relations with the US, the Chinese were fully aware that American military power was far greater than their capabilities. They, therefore, spoke of China's 'peaceful rise', accepted the US-dominated international 'rules-based order' and sought 'win-win cooperation' with the US and its allies.[20] For sure, it was imperative for China that its sea lanes of communication from the Pacific Ocean to the Persian Gulf would remain open since its access to oil and its trade were dependent on this. But China at the time neither had the intention nor the capability to challenge US interests in this or other regions of the world.

This demonstrated that American policy towards China from the end of the Cold War and the emergence of the US as the sole superpower, was driven by its zero-sum approach aimed at preventing the emergence of any competition to the US-led unipolar world order. As American power began to decline due to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well its economic malaise, while China was growing economically and militarily, the urge to contain and confront China

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became a strategic imperative. In short, the US was determined to ensure its continued global hegemony, leading eventually to a new Cold War with China.

Since the Bush administration, this policy was already manifested by evolving a strategic partnership with India, underwritten by the US-India nuclear deal and growing defence relations to buildup India as a counterweight to China. Existing military alliances with Japan and Australia were also strengthened while other regional powers like the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, India, Singapore and South Korea were more firmly co-opted into the American sphere of influence. This objective was enhanced by the fact that the Philippines, Thailand, India and Vietnam were already involved in their own territorial disputes with China.

President Obama took this containment of China policy even further, even as he described ties with China as the most important relationship of the 21st century and 'welcomed' the rise of China. Despite such rhetoric, the Obama administration launched its 'Pivot to Asia' or 'Rebalancing to Asia' policy in 2011, involving the deployment of 60 per cent of US naval and air force assets to the Asia Pacific region. Earlier, in 2007, America's reliable ally, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, while speaking to the Indian parliament, had already suggested creating an 'arc of democracy' comprising Japan, India, Australia and the US. Later, with American encouragement and leadership, this group became the Quadrilateral Security dialogue and then the Quadrilateral Alliance or the 'Quad'- an Asian equivalent of NATO with the ostensible purpose of 'ensuring freedom of navigation' and a 'rules-based order' in the Asia Pacific region. Then in 2016, the US pursued the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, a massive trading bloc in the Asia-Pacific, which notably excluded China, the region's largest economy. The purpose of these initiatives was to isolate, contain and eventually confront China. These developments were accompanied by a hardening of the American and western rhetoric against China which increasingly focused on alleged Chinese human rights violations and religious persecution such as in Hong Kong, Xinjiang, Tibet and elsewhere in the country.

The American pivot to Asia and the emergence of the Quadrilateral Alliance triggered a strong Chinese response in order to avoid American containment and protect their access to global trade, especially after President Xi came to power in 2013. China began constructing islands in the South China Sea to

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consolidate its presence, increased military spending, especially on its naval power, and launched the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a strategic option for access to international markets over land. China also began cooperation with Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Bangladesh for the building of ports for use by Chinse shipping.

American policy towards the other major global power, Russia, followed the same trajectory of containment, eventually leading to confrontation. According to Dimitri Simes, a noted American scholar on Russia and President of the Nixon Center: "Although Russia's newfound assertiveness and heavy-handed conduct at home and abroad have been the major causes of mutual disillusionment, the United States bears considerable responsibility for the slow disintegration of the relationship as well." He adds that, "Washington's self-congratulatory historical narrative (about winning the Cold War) lies at the core of its subsequent failures in dealing with Moscow in the post-Cold War era" and that "Washington's crucial error lay in its propensity to treat post-Soviet Russia as a defeated enemy;" ever though, as Simes points out, "the Soviet Union/Russia had never been defeated by the US as in the case of Germany or Japan."[21]

The US also expanded NATO to Russian borders, which Moscow viewed as an attempt to contain Russia and undermine its geopolitical interests.[22] Such NATO expansion included former Soviet Baltic Republics in an attempt at "bringing as many post-Soviet states as possible under Washington's wing".[23] Moreover, even as Russia offered its cooperation to the US in counter-terrorism, especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the US, American ingress into the Russian sphere of influence continued with US bases being set up in some of the Central Asian states, in defiance of Russian influence in the region. Moscow's concerns further deepened when the US unilaterally withdrew from their bilateral Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty in 2001. American encouragement of Georgia's claims against Russia over the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossitia as well as offering NATO membership to Georgia eventually led to the military clash between Russia and Georgia in August 2008. Equally disruptive was American support for anti-Russia forces in Ukraine such as Viktor Yushchenko's Orange Revolution, as well as pressure on a divided Ukrainian leadership to seek NATO and EU membership.

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In these circumstances, even as the Russian leadership, now under a more assertive President, Vladimir Putin, agreed to a 'Re-set' in the relations with the US in March 2009, and concluded the New START treaty in April 2010, the dye had been cast for continued confrontation between the two major powers. The US-led NATO intervention in Libya in March 2011 and continuing support for Ukrainian opponents of Russia, who came into power with American and European backing, proved to be a turning point in relations. The Russians invaded Ukraine in February 2014 and took over control of Crimea to retain Russia's Black Sea naval facilities, thereby initiating a protracted conflict with Ukraine. In September 2015, the Russians intervened in Syria after the US and its European and Middle Eastern allies attempted to remove Bashar al-Assad's government by supporting Syrian dissident groups. These Russian actions demonstrated that Moscow would no longer remain on the sidelines as it did when the western powers intervened in Iraq or later in Libya to bring about regime change. The consequence of these developments has now been the reassertion of Russian power globally in defiance of the US, the most obvious example of which is the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022,

The emergence of such great power rivalry between the US and China and the US and Russia has led to a growing strategic partnership between Beijing and Moscow, beginning with the Treaty of Good-Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation of 2001. The express purpose of this growing Sino-Russian relationship has been to oppose a US-dominated unipolar world and seek to evolve a multipolar order. Apart from promoting bilateral political, military and economic cooperation, the most significant development has been the creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in June 2001, designated as a political, economic and security alliance which also includes Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In June 2017, Pakistan and India also joined the SCO.

Clearly, by 2008 America's unipolar moment in history had passed. Instead of accepting this transformation and cooperating with China and Russia to evolve a stable world order, the US decided to prolong and pursue its objective of global domination through destabilising alliances, especially in Europe and Asia, leading to greater confrontation rather than cooperation with its competitors, who have been jointly pushing back against such American policies. This has created a profoundly detrimental impact across the world, especially on security

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and stability in South Asia, where the interests of four nuclear powers collide in the strategic chain involving the US, China, India and Pakistan.

The American Nuclear Agenda

Apart from the continuing pursuit of American global pre-imminence, the Obama administration unveiled an ambitious American-led nuclear agenda. In this context, it revised the policies of the previous Bush administration that had given a low priority to nuclear issues – setting aside American ratification of the CTBT, abandoning pursuit of the FMCT and rejecting nuclear arms control and disarmament objectives. By contrast, Obama placed the highest priority of his administration on these objectives. Within months in office, he presented his nuclear agenda in a grandiose speech made in Prague on 5 April 2009.

Claiming to address the "future of nuclear weapons in the 21st century", Obama stated that as a nuclear power the "United States has a moral responsibility to act" and committed "to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." While recognising that this objective could "not be achieved quickly, perhaps not in my lifetime," Obama promised to pursue it with "patience and persistence." As a first step, he committed that "we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy" and urged others to do the same. But, he qualified this by stating that as long as nuclear weapons existed, "the United States will maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal to deter any adversary and guarantee the defence of our allies." Even so, he committed to reducing the US nuclear arsenal and undertook to negotiate a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia. Among other measures, Obama declared his intention to achieve a global ban on nuclear testing and "pursue ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)" by the US Senate and "seek a new treaty that verifiably ends the production of fissile materials intended for use in nuclear weapons (FMCT)." Placing emphasis on strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Obama also stressed the need to "ensure that terrorists never acquire nuclear weapons," which he described as the "most immediate and extreme threat to global security." In this context, he called for turning "efforts such as the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism into durable international institutions."[24] And, as the crowning step of his agenda, Obama

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announced launching his Global Summit on Nuclear Security which over the next few years became the Global Nuclear Security Summit process.

Obama's speech raised great hopes in the American and western non-proliferation and disarmament community and became a major reason for him to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the first time perhaps when the award has been given for a 'resounding speech of intent' rather than a lifetime achievement in the pursuit of peace! He also succeeded in concluding the strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia, the New START accord in 2010 as part of the "re-set" in bilateral relations. The Nuclear Security Summit process also led to focused international efforts at national levels for the safety and security of nuclear installations and materials. In the Conference on Disarmament (CD) the US and its allies launched a concentrated effort to start FMCT negotiations.

However, despite the repeated attempts by the Obama administration, the Republican-dominated US Senate continued to reject American ratification of the CTBT throughout his eight years in office. As a result, other nuclear powers, such as China, India and Pakistan, could not be persuaded to join the Treaty, preventing it from coming into force. Neither could any headway be made towards beginning the nuclear disarmament process which was essential for Obama's stated objective of a world without nuclear weapons. The essential reason for this failure to make progress in these areas was that Obama's nuclear agenda failed to take into account the underlying security compulsions of states possessing nuclear weapons. The other reason was the persistence of American double standards on nuclear issues. This was most glaringly displayed, for instance, by continuing the nuclear cooperation with India which had been launched by the earlier Bush administration. This became one of the key factors for the American failure to ensure the start of FMCT negotiations in the CD owing to opposition by Pakistan in order to protect its security interests as discussed later in this chapter.

Continuing Indo-US Strategic Partnership

The rising trajectory of the India-US strategic partnership that began with the Clinton administration and continued during the succeeding Bush administration was further promoted by President Obama. While American leaders formally justified this embrace as a 'natural' partnership between the 'world's largest

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democracies' and the potential economic and trade benefits offered by the large Indian market, the underlying strategic compulsion was to build up India as a counterweight to China in the emerging great power rivalry with China (as considered above). This perfectly suited Indian strategic objectives not only as a means of countering China with which India had lingering territorial disputes but also because it furthered Indian ambitions for regional domination and great power status. Such complementarity in Indo-US interests continued to shape their bilateral partnership during the Obama presidency, with India being designated as a 'net security provider' in the Asia-Pacific.

The key role accorded to India by the US was manifest in the numerous high-level visits between the two countries. Beginning with the first of several visits by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to India in July 2009, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited the US in November 2009 followed by Obama's visit to India in November 2010. When Narendra Modi of the BJP was elected Prime Minister, the US quickly set aside the ban on the issuance of a visa to him which had been imposed due to Modi's role as Chief Minister of Gujarat state in the massacre of Indian Muslims in 2002. This enabled Modi to visit the US in September 2014 which was followed by an unprecedented second US presidential visit to India by Obama in January 2015 as the Chief guest at India's Republic Day parade. In addition, there were several exchanges at the ministerial and official levels, most notably by Defence Secretary Leon Panetta in June 2012.

From the start of the Obama Presidency, both countries "committed to building an India-US strategic partnership," and "agreed to strengthen the existing bilateral relationship and mechanisms for cooperation." Moreover, while "Recognising the new heights achieved in India-US relations over the last two Indian and US administrations, they committed to pursuing a third and transformative phase of the relationship." In specific terms, they renewed the Defence Cooperation Framework Agreement of 2005 for another ten years; committed to continuing the annual India-US Strategic Dialogue; undertook to "increase mutual security against the common threat posed by international terrorism;" address the "challenges of global nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism;" and seek reform of global institutions to ensure Indian membership of the UN Security Council.[25]

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During the Summit level exchange of visits, the US declared India an "indispensable partner" in the 21st century. That the US was committed to building up India as a counter-weight to China was clear from Obama's statement welcoming "India's role not just in the Indian Ocean but in the Asia-Pacific region." Moreover, the US appreciated "India's leadership in expanding prosperity and security across the region" and both sides "reaffirmed the importance of maritime security, unimpeded commerce, freedom of navigation.....and peaceful settlement of maritime disputes,"[26] which was a veiled reference to China's growing presence in the Indian and Pacific Oceans as well as to the territorial disputes in the South China Sea between China and the other Littoral states.

Such reassertion of the Indo-US strategic partnership was meant to be dove-tailed into the Obama administration's 'Pivot to Asia' which was announced in 2011 by Obama while addressing the Australian parliament. Then, in a major step towards building up India to counter China, the US elevated India to the status of a 'Major Defence Partner' in June 2016, a status accorded to no other non-NATO country, involving access to the latest US defence technology and equipment available only to treaty partners. Also in 2016, the two countries signed the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), the first of the four 'Foundational Agreements' that the US has signed with its alliance partners, and would go on to do the same with India during the Trump administration. Under LEMOA, the two sides would cooperate in providing logistics support, supplies and services between the American and Indian militaries. This agreement took forward military cooperation that had started in 2002 under the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) for safeguarding information shared by the Pentagon with India's defence establishment.

Just as the Obama administration tried to out-flank China on the sea routes of the Indian and Pacific Ocean through its Pivot to Asia policy and the creation of the Pacific Rim trading bloc excluding China, it proposed a similar approach over land in Asia through its 'New Silk Roads' proposal. Not surprisingly, this initiative was launched by Secretary of State Clinton in Chennai, India, on 20 July 2011. Describing relations with India as "one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century," she endorsed "India's growing leadership role in the world" and, with "India straddling the waters from the

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Indian to the Pacific Oceans", she called for India to cooperate with the US as "a steward of these water-ways," to "use our shared commitment to make sure that we have maritime security and freedom of navigation." To ensure the "success of this first element in our approach," Clinton called for it to be "paired with a strategy to increase economic ties that connect all the countries of the region." Recalling in this context the historic Silk Road connecting nations of South and Central Asia, Clinton called on India to "work together to create a new Silk Road – not a single thoroughfare but an international web and network of economic and transit connections."[27] What was left unstated but was implicit in this proposal was that such a network would be dominated by America's partner, India, at the cost of Chinese interests.

Expounding on the defence aspects of the Indo-US strategic partnership, US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta spoke at the Indian Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses on 6 June 2012. Stating that a "central feature" of the new American defence strategy for the 21st century is "rebalancing towards the Asia-Pacific region" which would require the US to "expand our military partnerships and our presence in the arc extending from the Western Pacific and East Asia into the Indian Ocean region and South Asia" for which "Defence cooperation with India is a linchpin in this strategy." Both countries, he added, "share a commitment to open access by all to our shared domain of sea, air, space and cyberspace" as well as a "commitment to resolving disputes without coercion or the use of force and in accordance with international law", in order to "promote international stability and peace for the world." Focusing on bilateral defence cooperation, Panetta called for "expanded military exercises, defence sales, intelligence sharing....and co-production" of weapons. He noted that the "defence sales relationship (had increased) from nothing early in the last decade to sales worth well over 8 billion dollars today." Turning to India's role, Panetta called for "a peaceful Indian Ocean region supported by growing Indian capabilities." These comments were indirectly but clearly addressed towards the containment of China. But the US Defence Secretary also welcomed India's role in Afghanistan and the larger South Asian region, while stating that both "India and the United States will need to continue to engage with Pakistan, overcoming our respective and often deep differences with Pakistan to make all of South Asia peaceful and prosperous." India, he

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added "is at the crossroads of Asia" and the "United States will stand with India at those crossroads."[28]

In addition to enhancing defence cooperation with India as part of the US strategy to contain China, Obama also persisted with the Bush policy of promoting nuclear cooperation with India, an objective that was given the highest priority by New Delhi. In fact, such nuclear cooperation had become the Indian prerequisite for their partnership with the US in order to gain legitimacy as a nuclear weapon state. This was the price that the Bush administration had been prepared to pay for India's cooperation, especially in the context of containing China, despite serious reservations by the American non-proliferation community. Even though several people in the Obama administration were among those who had opposed the India-US nuclear deal concluded by Bush, they retracted their opposition as Obama also decided to persist with such nuclear cooperation with India for the sake of the larger Indo-US strategic partnership. Among these was Congresswoman Ellen Taucher who had vehemently opposed the nuclear deal and the US-sponsored NSG waiver for India but once she became the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and Disarmament in the Obama administration, she gave up her opposition. Similarly, Robert Einhorn, who had been a staunch advocate of non-proliferation and opposed "rewarding" India for its proliferation of nuclear weapons, such as the 1998 Indian nuclear tests, withdrew his opposition once he became an Adviser in the Obama nuclear team. Even Obama himself, as a Senator, had tried to move an amendment to the American legislation (Hyde Bill) relating to nuclear cooperation with India, in order to impose stringent restrictions to prevent further Indian proliferation but had been eventually persuaded to drop his amendment.

Moreover, the nuclear agenda announced by President Obama in Prague, stressing on American non-proliferation and disarmament objectives, was in principle contrary to the continued support by his administration for nuclear cooperation with India in view of that country's proliferation record as well as the free pass that the nuclear deal and the NSG waiver had given to India for its nuclear build-up. But the Obama administration chose to overlook India's proliferation track record (outlined in the previous chapter). As a result, Indo-US nuclear cooperation continued and, more ironically, India became a valued American partner to pursue Obama's nuclear agenda.

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President Obama as well as his Secretaries of State and Defence, in addition to other American officials, stressed upon the 'shared interests' of the two countries in the nuclear sphere. The joint statement issued by President Obama and Prime Minister Singh at the time of the former's visit to India in 2010, affirmed their "shared commitment to a world without nuclear weapons" and to "forge a strong partnership to lead global efforts for non-proliferation and universal and non-discriminatory global nuclear disarmament in the 21st century." They also supported "strengthening of the six-decade-old international norm of non-use of nuclear weapons" – an endorsement of India's questionable commitment on No First Use of nuclear weapons. For the Americans to endorse this concept marked a departure from traditional US policy which had consistently rejected China's No First Use policy.

The two sides further agreed to "play a leadership role in promoting global non-proliferation objectives" and to "work together to strengthen the global export control framework and further transform bilateral export control regulations and policies to realise the full potential of the strategic partnership between the two countries." It was in this context that the US undertook to ensure Indian membership of the NSG as a follow-up to the NSG waiver in utter disregard of the fact that it was the 1974 Indian nuclear test that had led to the creation of the NSG in the first place. As such, the American commitment amounted to once again rewarding India for its proliferation. The US also committed to facilitate Indian membership of the other export control arrangements, such as Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Wassenaar Arrangement covering conventional weapons; and the Australia Group relating to Chemical and Biological Weapons.

As part of their cooperation in multilateral forms, the US and India agreed to support negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) in the Conference on Disarmament, ensure nuclear safety and security through Obama's initiative for the Nuclear Security Summit process and prevent illicit nuclear trafficking and smuggling, especially to prevent terrorists and non-state actors from acquiring nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction.

As regards their bilateral nuclear cooperation, the US and India agreed to the participation of US nuclear energy firms in India's civilian nuclear programme "on the basis of mutually acceptable technical and commercial terms and conditions." This was in reality a diplomatic fix for overcoming

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Indian reservations on tariff rates and liability issues that had so far prevented American investments in India's nuclear sector. This was ironic because it had been the US that had pushed for international nuclear cooperation with India, partly in the anticipation of contracts for American companies. One of the initiatives to encourage such bilateral cooperation was to begin consultations on reprocessing arrangements and procedures. But, since the Indians had already achieved what they wanted as a result of the NSG waiver, they were not overly keen to accommodate the US.

Counter-terrorism increasingly became yet another area of convergence between the US and India which New Delhi actively promoted as a shared threat from Islamic terrorists allegedly supported by Pakistan. When India accused Pakistan of masterminding the attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, which led to the Pakistan-India military confrontation of 2001-02, the US did not openly condemn Pakistan but was largely sympathetic to the Indian claim even as it tried to defuse the situation. But when terrorist attacks took place in Mumbai in November 2009, in which some Americans were also killed, the US began its open support for India's terrorism charges against Pakistan. Thereafter, counter-terrorism cooperation between the US and India greatly increased, accompanied by repeated American endorsement of the Indian accusations against Pakistan in virtually every Indo-US joint statement while also being repeatedly raised by the US in its engagement with Pakistan.

Implications for Pakistan

The strengthening of the Indo-US strategic partnership, given concrete shape by the Bush administration and taken forward by President Obama has had significant security implications for Pakistan. In the undeclared new Cold War between the US and China, which started in earnest during Obama's tenure, Pakistan was increasingly confronted by a double jeopardy – the buildup of India's strategic capabilities by the US to counter China which could also be used against Pakistan and as such Pakistan had to respond to Indian capabilities; while at the same time, Pakistan's own strategic relations with China became increasingly at odds with Pakistan-US relations. This global and regional transformation increased the security challenges for Pakistan, not just in terms of growing Indian military capabilities but also by widening the divergence in relations with the US.

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Already Pakistan-American relations had become frayed over Afghanistan and the related terrorism issue. At the heart of the problem, as mentioned in previous chapters, was the difference between the two countries over policy towards the Afghan Taliban. The US wanted Pakistan to act with military force not only against al-Qaida but also against the Taliban whom they blamed for collaborating with al-Qaida to target American/NATO and Afghan government forces. The American military and intelligence community was further convinced that their Pakistani counterparts were actually supporting the Taliban, especially the Haqqani network, and that the Taliban leadership was being given sanctuary in Pakistan, such as in Quetta and Peshawar. Moreover, the US was convinced that the Pakistani military was unwilling to take effective action against the Pakistani Taliban, the TTP, which was operating from Pakistan's tribal areas, not only to carry out terrorist operations within Pakistan but also assisting the Afghan Taliban and al-Qaida. This belief existed even though the Pakistani forces had conducted numerous operations against the TTP and its affiliates in FATA and Swat.

From the Pakistani perspective, the American approach not to distinguish between al-Qaida and the Afghan Taliban from the start of America's 'war on terror' was wrong and counter-productive. While al-Qaida could be 'disrupted, dismantled and destroyed' as it was not indigenous to Afghanistan and its objective was to target the US and its allies, the Taliban had extensive local support, especially among the Pashtuns on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghan border, and were fighting against the 'occupation' of their country. As such there was no military solution against the Taliban who could continue to fight indefinitely in their own country. Therefore, Pakistan had consistently advocated a political solution through dialogue with the Taliban while focusing on eliminating the terrorist threat by al-Qaida. More important for Pakistan was the outcome of America's end game in Afghanistan leading to eventual withdrawal. When that happened, the Taliban could prove to be a strategic asset for Pakistan, especially in view of India's growing influence in Afghanistan underlined by its strategic cooperation agreement with the Afghan government. For these compelling reasons, Pakistan was unwilling to alienate the Taliban by using military force against them, even at the cost of the disruption this caused in relations with the US. This reality was accurately assessed by the US Ambassador in Islamabad, Anne Patterson, who conveyed

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to Washington in 2009 that "The Pakistani establishment, as we saw in 1998, with the nuclear tests, does not view assistance to their own entities as a trade-off for national security."[29]

Even so, Pakistan continued to provide vital support to the American counter-terrorism operations since 9/11 against al-Qaida through eliminating or apprehending scores of al-Qaida terrorists including some of its key leaders. It also provided crucial intelligence cooperation and use of its air bases as well as air and ground passage through its territory. Moreover, Pakistan bore the brunt of TTP terrorist attacks in retaliation for its cooperation in America's war on terror, which by 2010 was estimated to have caused over 50,000 casualties and more than 60 billion dollars in economic losses. In fact, the losses suffered by Pakistan were second only to those suffered by the Afghans.

But such sacrifices were meaningless for the Americans who continued to maintain the mantra for Pakistan to 'do more'. They wanted their pound of flesh for the economic and military assistance that they were giving to Pakistan. They also came to the conclusion towards the end of the Bush administration that a 'civilian' government would be in a better position to generate Pakistani public support for more enhanced cooperation with the US, especially against the Taliban. Perhaps this was also the message they were receiving from some of Pakistan's political leaders who were keen to obtain American support for their bid to gain power. As a result, President Musharraf was compelled to eventually relinquish his position as the reins of power passed into the hands of President Asif Zardari of the PPP, a civilian leadership beholden to the US, which also received promises of political and economic support.

This policy was thereafter continued by the incoming Obama administration from 2009 to 2011 during which bilateral relations seemed to be on the mend. In September 2009, the Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill was approved by the US Congress to provide 7.5 billion dollars of assistance to Pakistan over the next five years – the first all-civilian aid package. But the bill had several limitations, mainly relating to security/military assistance. No security-related assistance or major defence sales could be provided until the Secretary of State under the direction of the President made a certification to approve such assistance. This would depend on several measures that Pakistan would need to take on a continuous basis – continuing cooperation with the US in efforts to dismantle supplier networks relating to the acquisition of nuclear weapons-related

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materials; sustained commitment to and making significant efforts towards combating terrorist groups, including progress made by elements within the Pakistan military or intelligence agencies towards terminating support to extremist and terrorist groups that have conducted attacks on US or coalition forces in Afghanistan or against a neighbouring country (India); preventing al-Qaida, the Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad from operating from Pakistani territory; closing terrorist camps in FATA and dismantling terrorist bases in other parts of the country such as Quetta and Muridke; and that Pakistani security forces are not materially and substantially subverting the political and judicial process of Pakistan. Moreover, to prevent any military involvement in the control of financial assistance, the law required that any direct cash security-related assistance or non-assistance payments could only be provided to the civilian authorities of Pakistan. Another 'Sense of the Congress' stipulation of the Bill was that .... "achievement of United States security goals," required "coordination and cooperation with other concerned governments (Afghanistan and India)", and that it is "critical to Pakistan's long-term prosperity and security to strengthen regional relationships among India, Pakistan and Afghanistan." Yet another requirement was for semi-annual Monitoring Reports by the administration to evaluate steps taken by Pakistan on counter-terrorism and other measures required under the Bill.

Most significant for Pakistan's nuclear policy was the requirement for "a detailed description of Pakistan's efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear-related material and expertise" and an "assessment of whether the assistance to Pakistan has directly, and indirectly, aided the expansion of Pakistan's nuclear programme, whether by the diversion of United States assistance or the re-allocation of Pakistan's financial resources that would otherwise be spent on programmes and activities unrelated to its nuclear weapons programme." Such monitoring went to the extent of even reporting "the extent to which civilian executive leaders and parliament exercise oversight and approval of military budgets, the chain of command, the process of promotion for senior military leaders, civilian involvement in strategic guidance and planning, and military involvement in civil administration."[30]

While the Kerry-Lugar bill was described as a major 'concession' for Pakistan by the Americans and their Pakistani supporters, in effect it was much worse than even the Pressler sanctions of the 1990s. It was not just intrusive

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and infringed on Pakistani sovereignty, its declared purpose—to enhance Pakistani civilian control over policymaking—was really a means to create a rift between the civilian government and the military. Moreover, it sought to interfere with Pakistan's national security policies, especially with regard to the country's nuclear programme. Even worse was the Sense of the Congress' requirement that assistance be coordinated with India and Afghanistan and that its continuation would be dependent on Pakistan's relations with these countries, which gave a virtual veto to India and Afghanistan over American cooperation with Pakistan.

Despite these limitations, the Zardari government accepted the Kerry-Lugar bill which became the centrepiece of Pakistan-US relations during the initial two years of the Obama administration. These relations were conducted under the broad ambit of Obama's Afghanistan-Pakistan or 'Af-Pak' strategy, which treated Afghanistan and Pakistan as a joint inter-related problem for the US for which Pakistani collaboration in counter-terrorism was considered essential to defeat al-Qaida and the Taliban. Primary responsibility for implementation of this policy was given to the leading American diplomat, Richard Holbrooke, who advocated greater engagement with Pakistan, involving not only economic assistance but also a broad-based strategic dialogue. This was accompanied by a surge of US troops in Afghanistan in an effort to achieve military victory while the Afghan forces were buildup to increasingly take up responsibility for security operations so that the US could begin withdrawal of American and allied forces by 2014. This was also accompanied by increasing US use of drones for targeting terrorists as well as deployment of increased numbers of CIA operatives and private security contractors, such as Black Water, in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Holbrooke also tried to initiate a dialogue with the Taliban but owing to the American announcement of a withdrawal deadline, the Taliban had no interest in a dialogue and decided to wait out the US.

While Pakistan welcomed the 'improvement' in relations with the US, and tried to provide as much counter-terrorism cooperation as possible, it was not ready to jeopardise its long-term strategic interests in Afghanistan. It viewed these interests through the Indian prism and, therefore, was not willing to completely alienate the Afghan Taliban, especially when the Indian role in Afghanistan was steadily increasing with American encouragement. To make matters worse, US drone strikes, which were not as accurate as

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claimed, began to cause heavy 'collateral' damage due to which hundreds of innocent people, including women and children, were killed. There was also increasing resentment in Pakistan over the presence and role of a large number of American intelligence personnel and security contractors. On the American side as well, the Pentagon and the CIA were not fully convinced by the State Department's 'engagement' approach led by Holbrooke. Besides, it was convenient for them to use Pakistan as a scapegoat for their failure to defeat the Taliban. Therefore, as written by Vali Nasr, "Obama's relations with Pakistan between 2009 to 2011 ran on two tracks".[31] The Pentagon and CIA track focused on counter-terrorism cooperation in which Pakistan was repeatedly asked to do more and the State Department's diplomatic track tried to promote comprehensive cooperative relations. But "the two tracks were not complimentary."[32] After Holbrooke died in December 2010, the White House cut off the State Department from Af-Pak policy and "decided that a policy of coercion and confrontation would better achieve (US) goals in Pakistan."[33]

Thereafter, followed a series of disastrous events that brought Pakistan-US relations to a breaking point. The slide had already started in May 2010 when a Pakistani-born US citizen, Faisal Shahzad, was involved in an attempted truck bomb plot in New York City in retaliation for American drone strikes in Pakistan. In January 2011, a CIA contractor, Raymond Davis, shot and killed two Pakistanis in Lahore whom he claimed were trying to target him. He was released after the US paid 'blood money' to the families of the deceased, much to the annoyance of the Pakistani public. The CIA also had to agree to revised rules of operating in Pakistan which severely strained bilateral relations. In March 2011, a massive drone strike in Datta-Khel village in North Waziristan on a tribal Jirga, in which several Taliban were claimed to have been killed, also caused dozens of civilian casualties. Then on 1-2 May, American helicopter-borne special forces attacked and killed Osama bin Laden at a house in Abbottabad which raised a firestorm on both sides. Pakistanis were incensed at the violation of their territorial sovereignty in an operation about which Pakistan was not informed, while the Americans accused Pakistan of providing sanctuary to the 'mastermind' of the 9/11 attacks. Though both governments tried to contain the fallout, there was no doubt about the anger on either side, with the American military and intelligence community

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accusing their Pakistani counterparts of either being complicit in hiding Bin Laden or inept in finding his hide-out. In any event, the incident caused massive damage to bilateral relations. Another blow came in September 2011 when the US Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, who had earlier described Pakistan "a steadfast and historic ally",[34] told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Taliban's Haqqani network that had been attacking Afghan and US troops, was "in many ways, a strategic arm of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (ISI)."[35] Then on 26 November of the same year, came the worst blow – a coordinated American ground and air attack on a Pakistani military post at Salala along the Afghan border in which 24 Pakistani soldiers were killed. The US claimed the incident was a mistake as its troops were chasing a Taliban group and the Pakistani forces, who returned fire, were mistaken for the Taliban. The Pakistan military argued, however, that the attack continued for several hours even after the US had been informed that its forces were targeting Pakistani soldiers. Since the Americans refused to publicly acknowledge their mistake or apologise for the incident, the backlash from Pakistan was to curtail all counter-terrorism cooperation and among other measures deny the use of Pakistani air and ground space to the US for access to Afghanistan as well as demand an immediate cessation of drone attacks in Pakistani territory.

The combination of these successive negative developments brought about a rupture in Pakistan-US relations, perhaps the worst since the two countries had established bilateral ties. For Islamabad, it became clear that the US was not only blaming the Pakistani military and intelligence services for its failure in Afghanistan but that it was now prepared, for the first time, to directly attack Pakistani forces. The Pakistani military now viewed the US not as a partner but as a threat. In Washington, official and public opinion turned from treating Pakistan as an ally to a 'frenemy' and accused it of playing a 'double game'. *The Atlantic* monthly journal called Pakistan "The Ally from Hell" in a cover story.[36] The Pentagon and the CIA accused their Pakistani counterparts of 'duplicity' and openly stated that they did not want relations with Pakistan but just demanded counter-terrorism cooperation. But Pakistan's refusal to "reward coercion with cooperation," ensured that the American policy relying only on pressure became a "non-starter."[37]

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Denied access to Afghanistan through Pakistan, the US tried using routes through Central Asia with Russian assistance. However, when this option proved to be far costlier and time-consuming, Obama preferred offering an apology and fixing relations with Pakistan. However, as Holbrook's successor, Marc Grossman, admitted publicly, "this would be a transactional relationship"[38] – a reality that most Pakistanis already knew very well. Pakistan-US relations never fully recovered after that.

The India Factor

The major beneficiary of the growing confrontation between the US and China and the increasing tensions between the US and Pakistan, was India. The Indo-US strategic partnership against China helped India to further enhance its conventional and strategic military capabilities which could also be used against Pakistan. At the same time, India's role as a 'net security provider' in the Asia-Pacific, which the Indian leadership enthusiastically embraced, fulfilled its ambition for regional hegemony from South Asia to the Indian Ocean and beyond to the Pacific region. Besides India was now able to demonise Pakistan on the terrorism issue with full American support.

As a result, New Delhi was increasingly in a position to enhance its strategic capabilities. This included expansion of its nuclear arsenal and development of a triad of nuclear delivery capabilities based on land, sea and air. This involved aircraft as well as short, medium and long-range missiles. Indian nuclear powered submarines were also to be armed with submarine-launched ballistic missiles, to provide a sea-based second strike capability. Moreover, India started developing a Ballistic Missile Defence system (BMD) with assistance from the US, Israel and Russia. In addition, it began acquiring the latest generation of conventional weaponry from the US, France and Russia among other suppliers.

Such enhancement of Indian power projection capabilities further encouraged the implementation of India's Proactive or Cold Start doctrine – the ability to engage in a limited conventional war against Pakistan below the nuclear threshold (discussed in the previous chapter). As envisaged in this doctrine the Integrated Battle Groups, involving the army, navy and air force, were operationalised over the next decade to carry out several rapid and simultaneous conventional attacks against Pakistan, while massive nuclear

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retaliation was threatened if Pakistan resorted to using its nuclear weapons in response to an Indian conventional attack. As a result, Indian policy towards Pakistan became even more belligerent and aggressive – leading to the 'surgical strike' that India claimed to have carried out on 29 September 2016 across the Line of Control in Kashmir. Though this was no more than intensified heavy artillery shelling to which Pakistan responded in equal measure, it marked a departure from the stated Indian policy of maintaining 'strategic restraint' against Pakistan in response to terrorist attacks allegedly sponsored by Pakistan.

Such a transformation in Indian doctrine and strategy would not have been possible without the Indo-US strategic partnership which not only provided India with political support but more importantly the opportunity to enhance its strategic capabilities and modernise its conventional forces, including operationalisation of the Cold Start doctrine. As considered in previous chapters, of particular significance was the impact of the NSG waiver which enabled India to substantially increase its nuclear weapons production. Moreover, since there was an overlap between Indian civilian and military nuclear facilities and the safeguards agreement with the IAEA was too weak, there was every likelihood that the imported fissile material would be diverted from civilian to military use. In these circumstances, increases in the Indian triad of delivery systems, especially missiles of short, medium and long-ranges, raised concerns in Pakistan that these could be used to carry nuclear and not just conventional payloads, otherwise such heavy expenditure on missile development would not be cost-effective. Equally important was the Indian focus on the development of a Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system as well as submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) designed to provide India with a credible second or third-strike capability. With these capabilities, the Indians would feel more confident about launching a Cold Start-type conventional offensive against Pakistan while its strategic capabilities would be used to threaten "massive retaliation" in order to deter Pakistan from using its nuclear weapons.

Clearly, the operationalisation of the Cold Start doctrine along with the enhancement of Indian strategic and conventional capabilities backed up by the Indo-US strategic partnership changed the dynamics of deterrence for Pakistan. The 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan established nuclear deterrence between them based on large 'counter-value' nuclear weapons

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threatening the destruction of each other's cities as the basis of mutually assured destruction. This neutralised India's numerical advantage over Pakistan in conventional weapons. It was to re-establish the salience of Indian conventional weapons advantage that New Delhi had evolved its Pro-active or Cold Start doctrine backed up by enhanced strategic capabilities to threaten massive retaliation in order to deter Pakistan's use of its counter-value nuclear weapons and thereby ensure that any conventional attack on Pakistan would not escalate to the nuclear level. In such a situation, Pakistan quickly recognised the 'gaps' in its deterrence posture based only on counter-value nuclear weapons – facing a choice between being overwhelmed by a numerically larger conventional attack or risking mutual nuclear annihilation. Moreover, from the operational perspective, the gap between the two sides was steadily increasing with the rapid growth of the Indian army, navy and air force as well as Indian missile capabilities, BMD and sea-based second strike capability. In such circumstances, Pakistan's credible minimum deterrence doctrine relying on countervalue nuclear weapons could no longer suffice to prevent war with India, especially a conventional Cold Start type attack.

Despite these emerging challenges to its security, Pakistan tried to seek normalisation of its relations with India to release pressure from both New Delhi and Washington. From 2008 to 2018, the succeeding governments of President Asif Zardari and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif tried to resume the 'Composite Dialogue' with India and offered counter-terrorism cooperation by taking action against groups such as Jaish-e-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba which were accused of terrorism against India. India was also asked to share evidence about the Mumbai attacks and other terrorist incidents to prosecute 'terrorist' group leaders such as Hafiz Saeed. However, the Pakistani authorities complained that no substantive evidence was shared by India to ensure the conviction of the accused. Moreover, Pakistani leaders argued that terrorists on both sides should not be allowed to derail bilateral relations and pointed to Pakistan's decision not to disrupt engagement with India following the terrorist attack on Pakistan's Samjhota Express in India in February 2007 in which several Pakistani nationals were killed.

For the first time after the Mumbai attacks of November 2008, the Prime Ministers of the two sides met in 2009 at a Non-Aligned Summit in Egypt, to resume the suspended dialogue. This was followed by talks between

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the Foreign Secretaries and Foreign Ministers in February and July 2010. The major outcome was an agreement to liberalise trade in 2012, but the agreement could not be implemented due to political changes in India when Prime Minister Modi of the BJP replaced Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of the Congress. By this time Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had also come into power in place of Preident Zardari. Sharif visited New Delhi for Modi's swearing-in ceremony in May 2014 and both leaders agreed to take bilateral relations forward. This was followed by Modi's surprise 'personal' visit to Lahore to meet Sharif on a social occasion. But these tentative moves were suspended when an Indian base in Pathankot was attacked by terrorists in September 2016 for which India blamed Pakistan, even though the Pakistani side asserted that it had forewarned India about the attack in keeping with its counter-terrorism cooperation. The Pathankot incident led to the so-called 'surgical strike' later the same month as mentioned above. Since then relations went into a downward spiral.

In the nuclear context, the only positive outcome during the temporary thaw in relations was the renewal in 2012 for five years of the 2007 bilateral agreement on "Reducing the Risk from Accidents Related to Nuclear Weapons", one of the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) between the two sides. This was again renewed in 2017. But thereafter expert-level talks on CBMs remained frozen due to the deadlock in overall Pakistan-India relations.

Internal Challenges

In addition to these external threats, Pakistan continued to face multiple internal challenges throughout the years of the Zardari and Sharif governments. By far the most destabilising factor was terrorism – not just by the TTP and its affiliates in reaction to Pakistan's support for America's war on terror, but also along ethnic and sectarian lines that took a heavy toll on the lives and property of the people. The updated cost of this internal strife was estimated to be at least 70,000 casualties, both civilian and military,[39] and nearly 45 billion dollars[40] in terms of the destruction caused due to more than 10,000 terrorist incidents till 2014. The terrorist tide began to turn after the military launched the 'Zarb-e-Azb' operation against the TTP and other terrorist groups following the terrorist attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar on 16 December 2014 as mentioned previously. Several hundred terrorists

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were killed and scores of their bases, especially in the erstwhile FATA, were destroyed. But several TTP leaders and their followers managed to escape and hide in border areas of Afghanistan from where they continued to infiltrate into Pakistan for carrying out terrorist attacks. The fact that the TTP could establish its presence in Afghanistan in well-known locations and continue to carry out terrorist attacks indicated that they received support from the Afghan and Indian intelligence agencies – a concern that was repeatedly raised by Pakistan with the Afghans, Indians and Americans. Another significant impact of counter-terrorism operations by Pakistan was that nearly a third of its military forces had to be deployed on the western border with Afghanistan, thereby reducing the force deployments on the eastern border with India.

Apart from terrorism, the country also suffered from political volatility due to continuing confrontation between the political parties, decisions of a proactive judiciary and rampant corruption accompanied by bad governance. Differences between Zardari's Peoples Party government and the Judiciary led to the dismissal of Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani in April 2012. Then, in July 2017, the Muslim League Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by the Supreme Court on lingering corruption charges that came to a head after the publication of the Panama papers that provided evidence of his corruption. Such charges of corruption and rigging of elections gave rise to massive political rallies and Dharnas (sit-ins) by Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) party that lasted for months, further contributing to political instability.

The combination of these negative internal and external factors took a heavy toll on the national economy – rampant inflation, falling growth rates from six per cent (during the Musharraf period) to two per cent (during the Zardari and Sharif governments); growing trade deficit and increasing unemployment. Pakistan was, therefore, forced to seek external borrowing and bail-out programmes from the IMF which came with severe conditionalities. The result was increasing dependency on external "benefactors" and shrinking space for independent national policies.

Defiance

It was in this toxic combination of internal and external challenges, that Pakistan's security community had to navigate its way toward ensuring the country's security interests. The primary challenge was to prevent any dilution

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in Pakistan's ability to maintain credible deterrence against India. Apart from the constraints on funding due to domestic reasons, multiple external threats to Pakistan's security had to be overcome. The most serious threat to credible deterrence was posed by the Indo-US strategic partnership involving nuclear cooperation, the NSG waiver for India and the Indian aspiration for regional domination as America's 'net security provider'. This enabled Indian conventional and strategic military build-up while also promoting operationalisation of its Cold Start doctrine. These developments underscored the 'gaps' in Pakistan's deterrence posture based on 'counter-value' nuclear weapons (as considered above). Therefore, an adjustment in both doctrine and capabilities was required for ensuring credible deterrence.

Consequently, the need to ensure continuing credible deterrence in a rapidly changing strategic environment became the driver for necessary technological developments and refining the doctrine of credible minimum deterrence. It is remarkable that Pakistan's strategic community, led by the SPD and diplomatically supported by the Foreign Office, achieved this goal, despite internal and external challenges, within a relatively short span of time from the conclusion of the Indo-US nuclear deal in 2005 to the actualisation of Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence capability in 2011. This achievement was an exercise of Pakistan's defiance against all odds. A vital contribution to this achievement came from three main sources – the SPD for the conceptualisation, planning, over-sight and funding; the scientists, engineers and technicians for the technological implementation and the diplomats for creating the political space that was required to achieve these goals. Specifically, this combined effort involved simultaneous progress on parallel tracks – on conceptualising the strategy to respond to India's Cold Start warfighting doctrine to ensure credible deterrence at all levels of the threat spectrum; the development of weapon systems required for this purpose; and deflecting international pressure against the development of these capabilities. Successes in these three areas eventually led towards overcoming the gaps and re-establishing credible deterrence against India. This in sum constituted Pakistan's policy of strategic defiance.

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Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD)

To re-cap from previous chapters (7-10), the Indo-US strategic partnership established unprecedented cooperation in the nuclear, defence, missile and space domains, which was augmented by the American-sponsored NSG waiver for India. Such collaboration was taken further by the next Obama administration, which also promoted India's regional role, thereby endorsing Indian ambitions for domination of its South Asian neighbourhood and beyond into the Asia-Pacific region. Simultaneously, India put into operation its Cold Start doctrine to be able to launch conventional attacks against Pakistan below the nuclear threshold while developing its strategic capabilities to threaten Pakistan with "massive" nuclear retaliation if it resorted to the use nuclear weapons.

These developments destabilised the deterrence which emerged after the 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, which was based on Mutual Assured Destruction through the possession by both sides of large counter-value or 'city buster' nuclear weapons. Both sides also claimed to adhere to the doctrine of credible minimum deterrence, that is deterrence at the minimum levels that was credible to deter each other. But they still recognised that deterrence was a dynamic concept that could change due to developments in technology and strategy. This deterrence relationship worked effectively, not only leading to bilateral confidence-building measures, but more importantly, to prevent larger conflicts during the 1999 Kargil crisis and the 2001-2002 military confrontation. However, ever since the 1998 nuclear tests, India realised that its numerical advantage over Pakistan in conventional weapons had been neutralised by the emergence of nuclear deterrence and its defence leaders, especially the Army, were determined to re-establish the salience of Indian conventional weapons advantage. This objective became even more important due to the lessons of the 2001-2002 military stalemate with Pakistan when India's larger conventional forces took too long to be mobilised, thereby providing sufficient time for Pakistan to counter-mobilise, and, more importantly, the larger conventional Indian forces could not launch an offensive owing to the fear that the conflict could escalate beyond the nuclear threshold. Such concerns also compelled the international community, especially the US, to press both sides to end their confrontation.

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As a result, in 2004, the Indian Army adopted the Proactive strategy, the so-called Cold Start doctrine, for the creation of Integrated Battle Groups involving the army, air force and navy, for rapid mobilisation to carry out coordinated limited attacks against Pakistan to capture territory and deliver a devastating blow to the Pakistani forces, which could then be used to bargain for Pakistani acceptance of Indian demands. In the Indian calculation, such operations could be carried out without breaching Pakistan's "threshold" for use of nuclear weapons, and, in any case, Pakistan would be threatened with massive retaliation with nuclear weapons if it did resort to the use of its nuclear weapons. Over the next five years, the capability to launch a Cold Start offensive was tried and tested by India with the development of its Integrated Battle Groups. After denying the existence of the Cold Start doctrine or downplaying its importance for years, the Indian Army Chief, General Rawat, finally acknowledged the doctrine in January 2017.[41] Perhaps this was because by then India had fully operationalised the doctrine.

Pakistan, however, took the doctrine seriously from the start in 2004, which, coupled with the Indo-US nuclear and defence relationship, presented a clear and present danger for Pakistan's security. Irrespective of Indian intentions, Pakistan had to deal with Indian capabilities, which were steadily growing. Cold Start and the India-US relationship, especially in the nuclear context, had changed the dynamics of deterrence and enforced a change in Pakistan's strategic calculus.

Pakistan had fore-warned India and the US soon after the conclusion of the Indo-US nuclear deal that this agreement would "have serious implications for the security environment in South Asia" and that Pakistan would not "be oblivious to our security requirements....." This was stated both by the Foreign Office on 17 March 2006[42] and the SPD on 12 April 2006.[43] The nuclear deal in conjunction with the Cold Start doctrine made the threat to Pakistan even more menacing, confronting Pakistan with a critical dilemma – either capitulation against a numerically larger conventional Indian force or nuclear annihilation if it resorted to the use of nuclear weapons. Moreover, as pointed out by noted scholar and former SPD official, Air Commodore Adil Sultan, "Pakistan's earlier posture of responding massively with nuclear weapons to cause unacceptable damage appeared to be a disproportionate response, especially against limited incursions by Indian troops." Accordingly, from the Pakistani perspective, there were "gaps at the operational and tactical levels

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(which) needed to be plugged – to deny India the space to launch limited military operations in the form of Cold Start Doctrine."[44]

One of the options for Pakistan was to build up its conventional forces to match India and thereby blunt Cold Start. But Pakistan's limited financial resources and smaller population negated this possibility. Moreover, Pakistan's access to advanced conventional weaponry was becoming increasingly restricted due to policies of supplier states such as the US which, for instance, had denied the use of the F-16 aircraft sold to Pakistan against India. Then there was the problem posed by counter-terrorism operations which required nearly a third of the Pakistan Army to be deployed on the western border with Afghanistan. Pursuing this option would also force the country to fall into the Indian trap of economically bleeding Pakistan.

Therefore, other viable and cost-effective options had to be found. The SPD took the lead in this effort. According to General Ausaf, then Director General Operations and Plans in SPD, such examination of options had started soon after the Indians began to develop the Cold Start doctrine in 2004.[45] Speaking at an international conference at the Carnegie Endowment in Washington in 2015, General Khalid Kidwai recalled that as the then Director-General of SPD in 2004, he and his colleagues "worked for deterrence to be strengthened" and "those who thought that there was space for conventional war, despite the nuclear weapons of Pakistan.....what was probably encouraging them..... was the absence of a complete spectrum of deterrence. Because war was being brought down under the Cold Start doctrine to the tactical level."[46]

It was as a result of this realisation that Pakistan's deterrence posture which had been based on deterrence only at the strategic level through counter-value nuclear weapons, had to be adjusted to provide credible deterrence at all levels – strategic, operational and tactical. This led to the formulation and implementation of Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD). In specific terms, this required the ability to deter India at the tactical level, constituting its armoured brigades and infantry divisions; at the operational level, involving mechanised/armoured divisions, strike corps and corps-plus size forces and at the strategic level, comprising two or more corps-backed up by Indian nuclear weapons.[47]

Apart from the need to cover the gap at the tactical level posed by Cold Start, Indian development of medium and long-range missiles in the Prithivi

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and Agni series, including submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and the evolving ballistic missile defence systems, presented additional gaps in Pakistan's deterrence capabilities. Given the larger Indian land mass compared to Pakistan, its long-range and sea-based missiles could be positioned beyond the range of Pakistani aircraft and missile delivery systems while its missile defence system could block incoming Pakistani missiles.

This compelled Pakistan to upgrade and develop both its nuclear weapons designs and missile ranges so that smaller nuclear weapons could be mated with short-range missiles for use at the tactical level while comparatively larger weapons could be used on medium to long-range missiles, keeping in consideration that a lighter but more efficient weapon could enhance the range of the missile. Pakistan also needed to develop a sea-based deterrent and the ability to penetrate Indian missile defences.

All these factors had to be taken into account to operationalise a credible FSD. This placed a heavy responsibility on the country's scientists, engineers and technicians. The strategic organisations that were tasked by the SPD in this regard were the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) to develop the nuclear devices required including the production of plutonium as fissile material in addition to highly enriched uranium from KRL, and the National Engineering and Scientific Commission (NESCOM) to develop the various types of missiles required.

Technological Developments

The vital technological developments undertaken by Pakistan's scientific community were not only significant for the country's deterrence capability but all the more laudable because this was achieved with meagre resources and under restrictive conditions due to western sanctions and denial of technology. What is more, they relied on indigenous materials and resources using innovative means to achieve their objectives in record time.[48]

One of the primary targets was to develop smaller nuclear warheads through the 'miniaturisation' of nuclear weapons for use at the tactical level. Also known as "counter-force" weapons, these were crucial for responding to India's Cold Start doctrine, as their purpose was to neutralise invading Indian armoured formations and related assets. Since miniaturisation required nuclear weapons using plutonium as the fissile material, the PAEC was tasked

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to expand the Khushab nuclear facilities that had been developed for the production of weapons-grade plutonium as distinct from the uranium-based larger nuclear weapons produced by the Kahuta Research Laboratories. It should be recalled from earlier chapters, that during the development phase of Pakistan's nuclear weapons in the 1980s, a dual track had been followed using both the uranium and plutonium routes. As international attention had focused on the former route, limited progress was made in the latter option with the first Khushab plutonium facility becoming operational in 1999. Thereafter, from 2000, SPD started work on additional plutonium facilities, Khushab III and IV, with the fourth becoming 'critical' – that is production of weapons-grade plutonium – by 2013. By the same time, the construction of a Reprocessing Plant at Chasma and Nilore was started. Through the development of the smaller and lighter low-yield nuclear weapons by 2006, the gap presented by the Cold Start doctrine at the tactical level was plugged.[49] This was achieved with the plutonium from the Khushab reactors used in the development of miniturised nuclear devices, after Cold tests and simulations, to be mated with the short range Nasr missiles by 2011.[50]

An equally important and related achievement was the development of the short-range Nasr (Hatf IX) missile by NESCOM by 2011 as the delivery vehicle for the low-yield nuclear weapons. This solid-fuel surface-to-surface missile with a range of up to 70 km and capable of carrying a conventional or nuclear warhead of 0.5 to 5 kilotons has four barrels, mounted on an eight-wheeler Transporter Erector Launcher (TEL). Developing this indigenous missile system was a challenging task with the first test in 2009 proving to be unsuccessful. NESCOM worked hard to remove the glitches while being pressed on by the Director-General SPD, General Kidwai. It managed to conduct a successful test in 2010. Then, the single barrel of the launcher was increased to two and then four barrels for a multiple missile launcher platform. After undergoing additional tests, the system was operational by April 2011. Armed with a low-yield nuclear warhead, the Nasr closed the gap at the tactical level which India had sought to exploit for conventional war under its Cold Start doctrine. In a statement by the SPD regarding the Nasr test on 19 April 2011, Director-General Kidwai stated that "the test was a very important milestone in consolidating Pakistan's strategic deterrence capability at all levels of the threat spectrum."[51] Speaking later at a Carnegie Endowment

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Conference in 2015, General Kidwai stated that "Nasr had poured cold water over Cold Start."[52]

The development of smaller low-yield nuclear weapons had far-reaching implications as these could also be mated with other missiles developed to close the gaps presented by India's ballistic missile defence systems and its sea-based nuclear-armed missile capabilities. It enabled Pakistan to arm the Babur surface-launched and the Raad air-launched cruise missiles with nuclear warheads instead of conventional warheads. The Babur surface-launched missile was first tested in 2005 with a range between 450 to 700 km carrying a conventional or nuclear warhead of 400-700 kg. The sea-launched version, known as Babur III and the Raad air-launched version, have ranges from 350 to 600 km and can carry a 500 kg nuclear or conventional warhead, which was first tested in August 2007. Since these cruise missiles use stealth technology – low altitude, terrain hugging and high manoeuverability features – they are capable of penetrating Indian ballistic missile defences, including their S400 system.

To close the gap with India in terms of range, especially in view of Indian medium and long range Agni missiles including sea-launched versions, Pakistan undertook to develop missiles with increased ranges and payload (warhead) capacity. These surface-launched missiles include the Shaheen I with a range of 450-600 km, the Shaheen II with a range extended to 1500 Km and the Shaheen III with a range of over 2750 km. These three missile variants went through trials and tests from 1999 to 2014 and can carry a conventional or nuclear warhead of at least 1000 kg. Their specific purpose, especially of Shaheen III, is to reach every part of India including its Andaman and Nicobar Islands from where the land-based long-range Agni missiles can be launched to give India a second strike capability if not covered by Pakistani missiles.

The latest and most advanced achievement by Pakistan in the development of missiles has been the Ababeel missile – a MIRV-capable (Multiple Independently targetable Re-entry Vehicle) missile that was first tested in January 2017. This is the first 'MIRVed' missile in South Asia that can carry multiple conventional or nuclear warheads, with an operational range of over 2200 km. It has a dual-use purpose in the sense that it can close the gap with India in terms of range and more effectively penetrate its ballistic missile defence system since it carries multiple warheads.

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With the development of low yield nuclear weapons and short, medium and long range missiles of various capabilities – air, ground, sea launched, cruise and MIRVed, Pakistan has become confident that it has achieved the capabilities required for Full Spectrum Deterrence horizontally and vertically. According to General Kidwai, speaking at a conference in Islamabad on 7 December 2017, Pakistan had achieved Full Spectrum Deterrence with the possession of "full spectrum of nuclear weapons in all three categories – strategic, operational and tactical – with full range coverage of the large Indian land mass and its outlying territories." He significantly added that now "India had no place to hide."[53]

The Grandfather Clause

When the Indo-US nuclear agreement was concluded in 2005, Pakistan had asked for equal treatment in its official statements and bilateral contacts with American leaders and officials. Its argument was that the justification for American civilian nuclear cooperation with India to meet that country's energy requirements, also applied to Pakistan. Moreover, there should be no discrimination in this regard by the US against Pakistan. Similarly, Pakistan sought equal treatment when the US pressed for a NSG waiver for India in 2008, maintaining that such a waiver should be on the basis of equitable and non-discriminatory criteria. However, the US refused to take such a non-discriminatory approach, with President Bush maintaining that "Pakistan and India are different countries with different needs and different histories" and that "our strategy will take in effect those well-known differences."[54] (For a detailed account see Chapters 9 and 10).

In these circumstances, the only option available to Pakistan for enhanced civilian nuclear cooperation was China. The two countries had already engaged in such cooperation since the late 1970s. In September 1986, they signed a formal agreement for wide-ranging civilian nuclear cooperation under international safeguards. On the basis of this agreement, China set up two nuclear power plants at Chasma beginning from 1991, Chasma I which was completed in September 2000 and Chasma II in December 2005, with a capacity of 345 MW each. Both are Pressurised Water Reactors (PWR) and have been placed under IAEA safeguards.

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In 2003, Pakistan and China agreed in principle on setting up additional power reactors before China joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in 2004. Chinese willingness to enhance such cooperation with Pakistan increased after the Indo-US nuclear agreement was signed in 2005. For both countries, it was important to demonstrate that they too could engage in such cooperation. For Pakistan in particular it was critical for internal and external reasons to ensure that it had the option for increasing its power generation capacity through Chinese cooperation even if the US and its western partners were not willing to extend the same opportunities to Pakistan as they had given to India. General Kidwai recalled that as the then-Director-General SPD, he convinced President Zardari to make the funds available for the additional Chinese reactors as a strategic imperative to demonstrate to the world that Pakistan had a strategic partner – China and that Pakistan could not be isolated despite the NSG waiver for Inida.[55] As a result, in 2010, when the President visited China, an agreement was signed for the construction of two more Pressurised Water Reactors at Chasma of 345 MW each, under IAEA safeguards, called Chasma III and IV. Beijing offered this assistance on extremely generous terms and stated that this agreement was in pursuance of the 2003 agreement between the two countries on civilian nuclear cooperation.[56]

Since, as a NSG member after 2004, China was required to abide by NSG rules against nuclear cooperation with non-NPT countries like Pakistan which had also not been given a NSG waiver like India, China informed the NSG that the contracts with Pakistan were under the earlier 2003 bilateral agreement concluded before China joined the NSG. As such, these contracts came under the 'Grandfather' clause of the NSG. Under this clause, states that have entered into contracts before joining the NSG are allowed to fulfil their commitments. While some NSG members sought 'clarifications' from China during the 2010, China responded simply that all exports to Pakistan would follow NSG guidelines. The IAEA and NSG member states had no choice but to accept the China-Pakistan deal of 2003 as a fait accompli and in March 2011, the IAEA approved the safeguards agreement with Pakistan for the Chasma III and IV reactors, which became operational in 2016 and 2017.

Meanwhile, in 2013, Pakistan and China concluded another contract for two 1100 MW reactors near Karachi for which construction started with groundbreaking in 2013. Located near the earlier KANUPP reactor (K1),

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these two reactors have been called K2 and K3. Both are also under IAEA safeguards and were completed by 2020 and 2021 respectively. These reactors also fall within the ambit of the Grandfather clause.

In 2017, Sino-Pakistan nuclear cooperation was further extended with an agreement to build a fifth nuclear reactor at Chasma, C5, of 1100 MW.

By 2022, the operational civilian nuclear reactors would be able to provide vitally needed nuclear power to the national grid of about 3,350 MW. The planned objective is 8800 MW or 20 per cent of the total national energy requirement, which, in view of increasing needs, may have to be revised upwards.[57]

While Pakistan-China civilian nuclear cooperation has forged ahead, several attempts have been made, especially by American and Indian commentators to inject controversy into the issue. China has been blamed for flouting the international non-proliferation regime and its obligations under the NSG by extending nuclear cooperation to a non-NPT state like Pakistan. China has rebutted these claims by stating that the US and some other NSG countries are also engaging in nuclear cooperation with India which is not a signatory of the NPT either. Moreover, Beijing has insisted that its cooperation with Pakistan is under IAEA safeguards and that it is permissible under the NSG's Grandfather clause.

Despite their fulminations, the Americans and their allies that had supported the nuclear exemption for India in the NSG, realised that they were hardly in a position to pontificate to China or Pakistan. They were the ones that had opened the door for nuclear trade with a non-NPT country like India for strategic and commercial gain and could not restrain others from doing the same. The Chinese, for their part, who could have been cautious about nuclear cooperation with Pakistan after becoming a member of the NSG, were emboldened after the Americans had concluded their nuclear deal with India. The growing Indo-US strategic cooperation aimed against China was also a major factor in Beijing's decision regarding nuclear cooperation with Islamabad.

From Pakistan's perspective, the 2003 nuclear cooperation understanding with China was a pre-emptive and far-sighted move. For, by this time, India and the US had concluded their Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) agreement which clearly envisaged a civilian nuclear cooperation arrangement between them, apart from other areas of strategic cooperation. It was only a matter of time before all the pieces were put in place to conclude and

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implement the Indo-US nuclear deal and the promised NSG waiver for India. On the other hand, China was moving towards joining the NSG and once it became a member it would not be able to engage in nuclear cooperation with Pakistan. It was as a result of these considerations, that Pakistan realised the need to conclude the 2003 nuclear agreement with China as a pre-emptive move. The credit for this goes largely to Pakistan's Ambassador in China at the time, Riaz Muhammad Khan, who alerted the Foreign Office and the SPD to conclude a nuclear agreement with China at the earliest before it joined the NSG. With approval from Islamabad, he approached the Chinese side and fortunately received support for his initiative from the Chinese Foreign Office and the nuclear establishment. When concluding the agreement, China asked that the understanding be kept secret and that Pakistan should entrust China to manage the issue in the NSG. As a result, the Pakistan-China nuclear cooperation agreement was already in place by the time that the Indo-US nuclear deal was formally approved and the NSG waiver procured for India by the US in 2008. It was, therefore, to the great surprise of the Americans and the Indians when Pakistan and China announced the C3 and C4 agreement in 2010 and China informed the NSG of their Grandfather arrangement. Since then, of course, additional nuclear agreements have been concluded with China as mentioned above. This has forcefully demonstrated that the US and its partners cannot isolate Pakistan in the nuclear domain. The SPD, the PAEC and the Foreign Office can be justly proud of their persistence against all odds in keeping Pakistan's Civil Nuclear Energy Objectives on track.

Another notable fact about the civilian nuclear cooperation agreements of India and Pakistan is that, unlike India, all of Pakistan's civilian nuclear facilities are under IAEA safeguards. As such, there is already a clear separation between Pakistan's civilian and military nuclear facilities with no overlapping between the two streams as is the case with India.

Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT)

One of the issues on President Obama's nuclear agenda that he had presented in Prague in April 2009 was the conclusion of a treaty banning the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. Such a treaty had earlier been advocated by the Clinton administration but at that time Washington had been more focused on concluding the Comprehensive

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Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and decided to take up the FMCT at a later stage. But, after the CTBT was concluded in September 1996, negotiations on the FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) were stalled, mainly due to Chinese objections since China (and Russia) preferred to negotiate a treaty on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS), one of the other issues on the CD's agenda. After Clinton, the Republican administration of George Bush had no interest in pursuing a disarmament agenda and the FMCT was virtually shelved for the next eight years, on the pretext that it was unimplementable since it could not be credibly verified. It was again revived by Obama's administration in the CD in April 2009.

The Geneva-based CD is the world's 'sole' or only body mandated to negotiate non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agreements. Originally set up in 1979 as the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament, it became the Conference on Disarmament in 1984. Working on the basis of consensus, it now has 65 members. While formally independent of the UN, it submits its annual reports to the UN. The Director-General of the UN office in Geneva (UNOG) serves as its Secretary-General and the UN can adopt resolutions recommending specific action to the CD. The CD determines its own rules of procedure and working methods and meets in three sessions annually. At the beginning of each year, in January, it is required to adopt a programme of work and a schedule of activities. Each member of the CD holds the rotating Presidency of the body in alphabetical order for one month. Its work is conducted through Plenary meetings and in specific working groups or Ad-Hoc Committees. The 65 members have informally set up three groups of states among themselves – the Group of 21 consisting of non-aligned/developing countries; the Western and allied group; and the East European Group. China is not a member of any group. Each group also holds informal meetings and each has its own broad preference for the work of the CD. As stated above, all substantive and procedural decisions are taken by consensus. Negotiations on any issue can only take place when there is consensus on such negotiations. Otherwise, the CD engages in 'discussions' on various agreed issues and holds Plenary meetings for statements by member states.

The current agenda of the CD includes four 'core issues' – Nuclear Disarmament; Negative Security Assurances (NSAs-assurances by nuclear weapon states that they will not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear

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weapon states); Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS); and FMCT under the rubric of the agenda item 'Prevention of Nuclear war, including all related matters.' Other items on the agenda include New types of Weapons of Mass Destruction including Radiological Weapons; Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament; Transparency in Armaments; and the Conclusion and adoption of the annual report to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Since its creation, the CD has negotiated and concluded the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 1993; and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996. Earlier, the predecessors of the CD concluded the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in1968 and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in 1972. Since 1996 there has been no consensus in the CD to negotiate any additional agreement and this stalemate continues to persist.

The main reason for this deadlock is that the CD does not operate in a vacuum and despite the usual rhetoric about supporting nuclear disarmament, all member states act on the basis of their national security interests. As a result, there are differing interests among CD members on which agenda items they would want negotiations to take place. For instance, the G-21, composed of non-nuclear weapon states (with the exception of Pakistan and India) prefer to negotiate a treaty on Nuclear Disarmament or Negative Security Assurances; China and Russia want negotiations on PAROS and the Western Group believes that now the FMCT is 'ripe' for negotiations. Another reality is that most countries, especially the major powers, are only willing to conclude treaties on issues that would not affect their national security. Accordingly, the BWC and CWC were concluded because these weapons of mass destruction had become redundant since these powers also possessed nuclear weapons. The CTBT was acceptable since the five 'recognised' nuclear weapon states had already conducted several hundred nuclear tests and could give up further testing.

Similarly, after building up huge stocks of fissile materials for nuclear weapons, these countries, especially the US, UK and France, are willing to forego further fissile material production. For others that benefit from the extended nuclear deterrence or nuclear umbrella from the US, such as Australia, Japan and the NATO countries, accepting the FMCT is cost-free. It is also meaningless for the large number of non-nuclear weapon states since they do not produce weapons-grade fissile material in any case. Israel with its

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large nuclear arsenal of 200 weapons and a nuclear umbrella from the US can also accept the FMCT. Russia, too, can go along but would prefer to negotiate PAROS as would China. The Chinese were initially opposed to the FMCT as their fissile material stocks were comparatively much less than those of the US or Russia but after 2009, they took a more nuanced position on the FMCT (as discussed below). India, for its part, would have preferred not to accept the FMCT but went along with the US as part of the trade-off for the nuclear deal with the US and the NSG waiver. Besides, Indian fissile material stocks, being built up since before its 1974 nuclear test, are far larger than those of Pakistan. After receiving the NSG waiver, India is also in a position to build up its 'strategic reserves' and potentially divert imported fissile material from civilian to weapons use. As such, the actual impact of the FMCT would fall mainly on Pakistan which continues to face an asymmetry in fissile material stocks with India – which, in turn, undermines its security.

Pakistan had raised the issue of stocks in the CD and in bilateral discussions with the US even before the 1998 tests by India and Pakistan because it was aware that India had been building up its fissile material stocks since before its first nuclear test in 1974. As Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme started much later, there was already an increasing gap between the Indian and Pakistani stocks of fissile material. Partly due to Pakistan's efforts in the mid-1990s, supported by some non-nuclear weapon states, there was a partial attempt in the CD to address the stocks issue through the so-called Shanon mandate. Ambassador Shanon was the Canadian Ambassador to the CD and was appointed as Special Coordinator by the CD to consult with member states on all issues relating to the FMCT. In March 1995, his report based on these consultations (document CD/1299) called for the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee in the CD to negotiate the FMCT, and stated that "It has been agreed by delegations that the mandate for the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee does not preclude any delegation from raising for consideration in the Ad Hoc Committee any of the issues."[58] In this manner, the Shanon mandate circumvented the issue of whether or not stocks should be part of the negotiations on FMCT. While the Americans and their partners viewed the Shanon mandate as a means of resolving the stocks issue, Pakistan was not satisfied with just being able to 'raise' the problem of stocks. It wanted a clear acceptance by the CD that FMCT negotiations would not just seek

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to ban future fissile material production but also seek to address the issue of asymmetry in stocks. At that point, however, the negotiations could not take place due to objections by the Chinese and later after 2000 by the Bush administration for the next eight years.

By the time the Obama administration revived the FMCT issue in April 2009, the security environment for Pakistan had further deteriorated. Apart from the impact of the nuclear tests of 1998, the Indo-US nuclear deal had been concluded in 2005 and India had been given a NSG waiver in 2008, thereby increasing India's ability to further expand the gap in fissile material stocks with Pakistan. Besides, Pakistan's expectation that Obama may rethink nuclear cooperation with India in view of his nuclear agenda did not materialise with his administration reasserting such cooperation and taking it forward with the promise to ensure Indian membership of the NSG.

When appointed as Ambassador to the UN and CD in Geneva in November 2008, my instructions were not to agree to the start of FMCT negotiations without the inclusion of stocks but also to ensure that Pakistan was not isolated in the CD. For this, we hoped to rely on support from China and other countries in the G-21 which like Pakistan wanted the inclusion of stocks in the negotiations. However, it became clear even before the CD started in January 2009, from my discussions with the Chinese Director-General for Disarmament, who was visiting Geneva at the time, that China had decided not to oppose the start of FMCT negotiations but to opt to protect its interests during the negotiations. I argued that this would be highly risky because the US may be ready with a draft treaty that it would push through the CD and even if the CD did not accept it, the US and its allies could take the draft to the UN for adoption, as they had done with the CTBT despite objections from India. But my Chinese colleague was not persuaded. At most, he said, China would try to help Pakistan by maintaining the position that while it was ready to start FMCT negotiations, it wanted the security concerns of all states to be taken into consideration by the CD. So, it was without the direct support of our major ally that Pakistan prepared to confront the US when the CD started its work in January 2009.

Meanwhile, during a visit to Islamabad, I updated the Foreign Office on these developments and suggested that a meeting of the National Command Authority (NCA) be convened to decide formally that Pakistan should oppose

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the FMCT negotiations from starting. Only a NCA decision could prevent any reversal of Pakistan's position as had happened in Vienna regarding the Indian safeguards agreement with the IAEA and the NSG waiver for India (discussed in Chapter 10). However, the Foreign Office was not willing to ask for convening the NCA meeting.

During the April-May 2009 Presidency of Algeria's Ambassador Idriss Jazeri, a draft programme of work was circulated which called for negotiations on FMCT "on the basis of document CD/1299 (the Shanon mandate), which did not 'preclude' the issue of stocks from being raised. Almost all CD members accepted Jazeri's programme of work contained in document CD/1864.[59] Within a few days, Pakistan was the only country that had not given its concurrence. We were isolated in the CD. Our daily cables to Islamabad giving updates on the evolving situation went unanswered. Finally, I wrote that unless otherwise instructed by the Foreign Office, I would accept the Algerian draft in order not to be isolated in the CD in keeping with my instructions. Since there was still no response, we accepted the programme of work on 29 May. This jolted the Foreign Office out of its slumber, with the SPD also questioning how Pakistan had agreed to start FMCT negotiations despite the fact that the SPD had written a formal letter to the Foreign Office not to allow negotiations to proceed because of the need to close the gap in fissile material stocks with India. It was only then that the Geneva Mission was told to retrieve the situation – but through procedural means and not an outright rejection of FMCT negotiations by rejecting the Algerian proposal. As a result, procedural means were used to prevent the implementation of CD-1864.

These instructions were reaffirmed during consultations in Islamabad at the beginning of June 2009, although I argued for a clear rejection of CD/1864 rather than relying on procedural tactics which could not suffice for long. These consultations also demonstrated that there were leadership-level political compulsions at work preventing the adoption of a forthright and clear-cut position perhaps due to the unwillingness of the government to alienate the US. Fortunately, procedural means were still available as the CD was yet to adopt a Schedule of Activities for the year which would enable the Programme of Work to be implemented and FMCT negotiations to begin. It was here that Pakistan blocked consensus and prevented the start of FMCT negotiations, by arguing that all issues on the CD's agenda should be treated equally in terms

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of time allocation and that the other three core issues – Nuclear Disarmament, NSAs and PAROS – should also be given a negotiating mandate like FMCT. This argument was largely supported by the G-21 countries as a result of Pakistan's lobbying with them. Still, I realised that for a sustainable policy we could not continue to rely on procedural tactics but needed a clear rejection of FMCT negotiations. Moreover, Pakistan had a solid case to oppose the FMCT on grounds of its national security – an argument that several countries had been using in the CD to oppose negotiations on other items on its agenda such as Nuclear Disarmament and NSAs. Even so, with the use of procedural tactics Pakistan was able to delay the implementation of the Programme of Work till the end of the CD session in September 2009 despite the extreme pressure and severe criticism heaped on us by the US and its supporters.

Fortunately, this tenuous situation changed when the SPD decided to convene a NCA meeting in January 2010. Called to Islamabad to participate in the meeting, I was summoned to brief the Prime Minister, Yousaf Raza Gilani, before the start of the NCA meeting on 13 January. In essence, I told him that the FMCT would freeze the gap between Pakistan and India in fissile material stocks which would give India a permanent advantage over Pakistan; that accepting the start of FMCT negotiations would prove to be a slippery slope as the US would push through the treaty text in the CD and have it adopted in the UN as it had done with the CTBT; and, most importantly, it would mean the end of Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme for which his party's founder (Pakistan Peoples Party), Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, had given tremendous sacrifices. I suspect the last argument was the most persuasive for the Prime Minister.

In his opening remarks to the NCA meeting, the Prime Minister stated that "My government remains committed to the vision of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the founder of Pakistan's nuclear programme, to make the defence of our country impregnable." Maintaining that "we will continue to pursue the objectives of peace and strategic stability in South Asia", he added that "However, at the same time, we cannot remain oblivious to developments which can upset the strategic balance in the region." Coming to the crux of the NCA agenda, the Prime Minister stated that "Pakistan shares the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation. These objectives cannot be pursued in isolation of regional security dynamics and requisite strategic compulsions. Policies that create imbalance at the regional level neither serve the objectives of

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disarmament and non-proliferation nor promote regional peace and stability. Pakistan will not accept any paradigm prejudicial to its national security."[60]

The main presentation in the NCA was made by the Director-General SPD, General Khalid Kidwai. While the details remain secret, the publicly known elements of his presentation were that the existing gap or asymmetry in fissile material stocks between Pakistan and India would increase further as a result of the Indo-US nuclear deal and the consequent US-backed NSG waiver for India to avail of civilian nuclear cooperation with NSG countries. As a result, India would be able to build up its strategic reserve and be guaranteed assured supplies of fissile material through its civilian nuclear cooperation agreements. This would enable India to divert its entire indigenous fissile material stocks towards weapons production, thereby being capable of producing 60 to 100 warheads per year. At the same time, India's Cold Start doctrine was being implemented to find space for conventional war below the nuclear threshold. In these circumstances, Pakistan needed to continue production of fissile material in order to ensure credible Full Spectrum Deterrence at the strategic, operational and tactical levels, as well as to attain a credible second strike capability. Consequently, the FMCT was a red line for Pakistan.[61]

The presentation by Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir, which had been prepared with my inclusion in its drafting, focused on the political and diplomatic aspects. He recalled that since 1995, Pakistan had opposed a FMCT that would only ban future production of fissile material and did not undertake to reduce existing stockpiles, since this would freeze the asymmetry in stocks between Pakistan and India. The issue of asymmetry in stocks had become even more serious since the Indo-US nuclear deal and NSG waiver for India. While China, Russia and the US had earlier for their own reasons opposed FMCT negotiations, now under the Obama administration, the US and its allies were pressing for the negotiations to start in the CD. The other nuclear powers, Russia, China, France, the UK, India and Israel, were willing to go along as they had already built up sizeable fissile material stocks. For the non-nuclear weapon states members of the CD, the FMCT had no impact. As such, the FMCT would now only impact Pakistan. So far, during 2009, Pakistan had used procedural means to block progress on FMCT, but these could only buy time. In view of the country's security imperatives, on which there could be no compromise, we could not agree to the start of the FMCT

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negotiations even if we had to do so on our own. The only option available to Pakistan was to take a clear position opposing commencement of FMCT negotiations, even if this resulted in increased American pressure on Pakistan by the US and its partners.[62]

Before a decision was taken, Army Chief, General Ashfaq Kayani, made a very pertinent interjection. He reminded the meeting that when India's safeguards agreement with the IAEA had come up for a decision in 2008, Pakistan's policy to oppose this agreement had been reversed by the political leadership due to American pressure. Such pressure would again be exerted on Pakistan over the FMCT. Therefore, it should be clearly recognised by the NCA that once a decision was taken to oppose the FMCT, there would be no reversal of this decision. The Prime Minister and his cabinet members present in the meeting agreed that the decision would be irrevocable.

As a result, the NCA decided that in view of the increasing threats to Pakistan's security following "the India-specific NSG exemption enabling India to produce substantial qualities of fissile material for nuclear weapons" and the "massive buildup of Indian strategic and conventional capabilities assisted by some external quarters", as well as its "offensive doctrines like Cold Start", Pakistan will "not support any approach or measure that is prejudicial to its legitimate security interests." As such, Pakistan's position on FMCT "will be determined by its national security interests and the objectives of strategic stability in South Asia." Moreover, "selective and discriminatory measures that perpetuate regional instability, in any form or manner, derogate from the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and, therefore, cannot be accepted or endorsed."[63]

Thus, the dye was cast. Armed with this irreversible NCA decision, I was finally in a position to express a clear and unambiguous rejection of the FMCT in the CD. This I did at the first opportunity when the CD began its 2010 session during a Plenary meeting on 18 February 2010. I emphasised Pakistan's security compulsions as enunciated in the NCA's discussions, especially the discriminatory India-specific NSG waiver enabling Indian expansion of its nuclear arsenal and thereby increasing the gap with Pakistan of fissile material stockpiles, India's growing conventional and strategic capabilities with external support and its aggressive Cold Start doctrine.

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My statement also addressed the arguments that had been made by the US and its partners to question Pakistan's opposition to FMCT negotiations. One of these arguments was that the FMCT would benefit Pakistan as it would limit further Indian production of fissile material to which we replied that India's safeguards agreement with the IAEA was not fool-proof and as such could not prevent the diversion of imported fissile material from civilian to military uses, especially since the Indian separation of its civilian and military nuclear facilities was not clearly defined and had overlapping operations. Also that there were no adequate provisions within India's nuclear cooperation agreements with several countries to either prevent or detect such diversion. Besides, once India was able to achieve its objective of building up its strategic reserves of fissile material through these agreements, it could break-out of even these perfunctory commitments and from the FMCT itself. In any event, Pakistan's pursuit of Full Spectrum Deterrence and a credible second strike capability required the build-up of its fissile material stocks.

Another argument was that Pakistan could address the issue of stocks during the FMCT negotiations which we dismissed on the grounds that the mandate for these negotiations only envisaged 'raising' the issue of stocks (in accordance with the Shanon mandate) but did not actually accept the reduction of stocks. Moreover, the definition of fissile material as envisaged for the FMCT negotiations included only highly enriched uranium and weapons-grade plutonium but not reactor-grade plutonium and enriched uranium for naval propulsion which could also be used for nuclear weapons, stocks of which India possessed in significant and increasing quantities.

Some CD members maintained that the CD did not have the responsibility to address the security concerns of individual states. This was a fallacious argument since, as I pointed out, it was precisely due to the security interests of some individual countries that negotiations in the CD had not been possible on some issues on its agenda such as Nuclear Disarmament, NSAs or PAROS. Clearly, the CD did not operate in a vacuum but on the basis of existing realities relating to the security concerns of its member states. That was the reason for its decisions to be taken by consensus.

Yet another ploy used by a few states was that if Pakistan blocked the FMCT in the CD, negotiations could be taken out of the CD to another forum. This was an empty threat because not only Pakistan but the other nuclear weapon

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states, including the US, were averse to this option, since only the CD provided for consensus decision-making. Besides, such a precedent could also be used to negotiate treaties on Nuclear Disarmament, NSAs or PAROS, which the US and its allies did not want and for this reason opposed establishing such a precedent.

After having blocked FMCT negotiations, Pakistan's secondary objective was to build up an understanding and endorsement of its position in the CD. China was most helpful in this regard by stating that it fully appreciated Pakistan's security concerns and that the CD must take into consideration the security concerns of all member states. Several countries in the G-21 group and China joined Pakistan in arguing that the FMCT was not 'ripe' for negotiations as claimed by the Western Group and called for negotiations instead on Nuclear Disarmament as the 'raison d'etre' of the CD. China and Russia, for their part, said that while they were ready for FMCT negotiations, their preference was to first negotiate a treaty on PAROS.

To deflect the complaints about the deadlock in the CD, Pakistan also took the initiative for holding substantive 'discussions' instead of negotiations on all CD agenda items, including the FMCT, provided this was done through equal treatment of all agenda items. Since these would be discussions only and not negotiations, they would be non-binding and would have no legal implications. As such, this was a safe option for Pakistan to pursue. So much so that we even put forward a substantive proposal for discussions on a Fissile Material Treaty (FMT) in August 2015 that addressed the issue of existing stocks instead of a FMCT that only sought a ban on future production of fissile material. This option generated considerable interest and support, especially among the G-21 countries as well as some western countries, such as Switzerland and Ireland. To be sure, such a 'discussion' mandate was already a usual practice in the CD following the conclusion of CTBT negotiations since thereafter consensus could not be reached on negotiating any other agenda item.

Meanwhile, some western countries proposed taking the FMCT negotiations out of the CD. We decided to call their bluff knowing that the nuclear weapon states including the US and India would not agree. Pakistan stated that if the negotiations were taken to another forum, it would not stand in the way but would not participate in these negotiations. Hence, the proposal made no headway. This also reconfirmed our view that western eagerness to start FMCT negotiations was meant to only target Pakistan.

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Confronted with these developments, the most ardent supporters of the FMCT, led by Canada, tried another option. During the 2013 UN General Assembly, they modified the traditional resolution on the FMCT by including a proposal for setting up a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to make recommendations for ensuring progress toward FMCT negotiations, leading to an eventual treaty. Pakistan was also invited to participate in this GGE. While some colleagues in the Foreign Office were of the view that Pakistan should participate in order to protect its interests, I argued against it as this would undermine our position of principle opposing the FMCT and because participation in this process could prove to be a slippery slope for us. Besides, without Pakistan's participation, the work of the GGE would be meaningless. Eventually, with the concurrence of the SPD, the decision not to participate prevailed and proved to be correct as the outcome of the GGE's work a year later had no bearing on the prospects of starting FMCT negotiations. A similar approach was tried in 2018 with the creation of an Expert Preparatory Group which also proved to be equally ineffectual.

In any case, with Donald Trump becoming US President in January 2017, the Republicans again controlled the White House, and the US lost interest in pursuing the FMCT any further. Pakistan's defiance to protect its security interests in the CD had succeeded as we managed to prevent the start of FMCT negotiations for nearly eight years.

Pakistan – US Strategic Dialogue

Pakistan's opposition to FMCT negotiations from February 2010 onwards became yet another issue in the largely negative environment characterizing bilateral engagement between Pakistan and the US.

While the 'strategic dialogue' started by the Obama administration involved some non-controversial issues such as economic and trade cooperation as well as educational and scientific collaboration, these paled in comparison to the acrimonious issues – the consistent American demand for Pakistan to 'do more' on counter-terrorism; it's criticism of Pakistan's growing nuclear and missile programme, seen as destabilising by the US; and American concerns about Pakistan's nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorists or radical 'insiders'. Pakistan's rejection of FMCT negotiations, which was a key objective of the Obama administration, added to the animosity in bilateral relations.

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From Pakistan's side, the concerns related to America's continuing strategic cooperation with India, especially in the nuclear, defense and space areas which were seen as destabilising regional security and undermining deterrence between Pakistan and India. To make matters worse, the US refused to recognise Pakistan's legitimate security interests that had led to the development and enhancement of its capabilities such as low-yield nuclear warheads, the short-range Nasr missile and the long-range Shaheen missile, in pursuit of Full Spectrum Deterrence. Moreover, while the US asked Pakistan to demonstrate 'restraint' by "freezing" its strategic programme, it made no such demands on India. On the contrary, the US assisted the Indian conventional and strategic military build-up and virtually condoned India's Cold Start doctrine.

Even so, Pakistan agreed to engage with the US and under the overall umbrella of the strategic dialogue participated in the Security, Strategic Stability and Non-Proliferation (SSSNP) talks, which started in February 2010. The eight rounds of these talks were held on a roughly bi-annual basis and continued till May 2016, in London, Islamabad and Washington D.C. While the US wanted to focus these talks exclusively on the FMCT, nuclear safety and security and strategic restraint, Pakistan insisted that these discussions also include strategic stability in South Asia, civilian nuclear cooperation and all items on the CD's agenda.

American tactics from the start were to entice Pakistan with the possibility of eventual civilian nuclear cooperation and recognition of Pakistan as a 'responsible nuclear weapon state' if Pakistan agreed to 'restraints' on its nuclear and missile programmes while also allowing the start of FMCT negotiations. During a meeting with the Pakistani leadership in March 2010, Secretary of State Clinton and Secretary of Defense Gates conveyed that the Obama administration "would be prepared to begin addressing civil nuclear cooperation within the context of a bilateral discussion of a range of nuclear and strategic issues, including the status of Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme and regional strategic restraint." Gates also said "the US could discuss a path to nuclear legitimacy for Pakistan" but stressed that `` this would not be an easy path." Moreover, that "the United States does not believe conditions exist for pursuing civil nuclear cooperation in the near term" but that "we would be prepared to discuss the kinds of conditions that would be necessary to obtain

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support of the US Congress and Nuclear Suppliers Group for civil nuclear cooperation with Pakistan." In the Administration's view, the Congress and the NSG would not approve nuclear civil cooperation with Pakistan on the same basis as they supported such cooperation with India, "in large part because of the past record of nuclear technology transfers from Pakistan." In order to gain support in the Congress and the NSG, "would require strong demonstration of Pakistan's willingness to take concrete steps to strengthen the non-proliferation regime," including such steps as "measures of nuclear restraint, ending production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, as well as effective implementation of rigorous controls on exports of nuclear equipment and technology."[64] Such discussions, the two Secretaries maintained, could start after the NPT Review Conference in May 2010.

While some in Pakistan's political leadership were taken in by this American 'offer,' those in Pakistan's strategic community were not deceived. They correctly assessed that the US was trying to mislead Pakistan into taking unilateral steps towards 'strategic restraint' without any matching steps by India, and that too in return for vague promises that the Obama administration would try to encourage the US Congress and the NSG to agree to civilian nuclear cooperation with Pakistan. The offer was, therefore, a non-starter.

Meanwhile, a month earlier, on 1st February 2010, the first round of the senior officials level SSSNP talks had taken place in London. The Pakistan delegation was led by Additional Secretary (UN) Munawar Bhatti and the American delegation by Under Secretary Ellen Tauscher and included the Special Advisor on Disarmament Affairs, Robert Einhorn, both of whom had opposed the Indo-US Nuclear deal during the Bush administration but had changed their position since Obama also supported this deal. I was also a part of the Pakistan delegation as Ambassador to the CD, since these talks were to focus on the FMCT issue. The discussions were largely a replay of the debates in the CD. Einhorn said that FMCT was a top priority for President Obama and was the third pillar of his nuclear disarmament agenda. The US "appreciated Pakistan's core international security interests" which could be addressed during the FMCT negotiations, including the issue of asymmetry in stocks. He added that the early conclusion of the FMCT would help Pakistan by narrowing the asymmetries with India. In my response, I recalled the NCA decision that the FMCT posed a security threat for Pakistan unless the issue of

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the gaps in stocks between Pakistan and India was addressed. The CD did not operate in isolation and every country's position in the CD was determined by its national security interests. The American-sponsored NSG waiver for India had enabled several nuclear cooperation agreements that provided additional fissile material to India without adequate safeguards. Consequently, India could divert its already large stocks of indigenous fissile material for nuclear warheads while also clandestinely using imported fissile material for weapons purposes. This further increased the asymmetry in stocks between Pakistan and India. Moreover, Indo-US strategic relations had not only enhanced its conventional and strategic capabilities but had also encouraged its adventurous policies such as Cold Start for conventional war under the nuclear threshold. As such, while the FMCT was President Obama's highest priority, it posed an existential threat to Pakistan.

The rest of the discussions covered the security environment in South Asia, nuclear safety and security, biological and chemical weapons, CTBT, conventional weapons and CBMs between Pakistan and India.

In the next SSSNP dialogue, held in Islamabad in June 2010, the issue of civilian nuclear cooperation once again came up for discussion. The American side referred to a decision taken by the recently held NPT Review Conference that "new supply arrangements" for the transfer of fissile material or equipment would require a pre-condition by the recipient country's "acceptance of full scope IAEA safeguards and international legally binding commitments not to acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices." As such the bar had been raised for civil nuclear cooperation beyond the terms that had been adopted for civilian nuclear cooperation with India. We in the Pakistani delegation already knew that the bar had been raised by the NPT with American connivance – to require terms that the US knew would not be acceptable to Pakistan. Moreover, the Americans repeated the assertion that US Congressional support and NSG concurrence for civilian nuclear cooperation with Pakistan "is not feasible at this time" in view of the "past record of nuclear technology transfers from Pakistan."

Furthermore, they argued that "Pakistan is currently engaged in substantial expansion of its nuclear weapons programme," and that "whatever the motivation for Pakistan's pursuit of a substantially increased capability (such as the regional security imperatives), there are strong international

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concerns, including in the United States, about entering into a civilian nuclear cooperation agreement with a country seen to be expanding substantially its military nuclear programme." Coming to the crunch, the Americans added, however, that "we are prepared to discuss...the kinds of Pakistani steps that would be necessary to gain support of the Administration, the Congress and the NSG for moving ahead in the future...the steps that would put Pakistan on a path of nuclear legitimacy." Such a path would "require concrete steps by Pakistan to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime," a "consistent and sustained track record of effective implementation of rigorous controls on exports of nuclear equipment and technology;" the "continued conscientious and effective efforts to ensure the security of Pakistan's nuclear assets; and "measures of nuclear restraint including the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons." While claiming, "we know such steps...would not be easy for Pakistan," the Americans still maintained that they had other steps in mind as well – but did not elaborate.[65] As in the case of the March 2010 'offer' made by Secretaries Clinton and Gates, this latest version once again sought to use the ploy of offering possible civilian nuclear cooperation on the precondition of nuclear restraint and compliance with US objectives by Pakistan. But, not only did the Americans lack credibility with Pakistan, there was absolutely no chance of Islamabad sacrificing its national security interests for the sake of a civilian nuclear cooperation agreement even if Washington's offer was genuine. Besides, as several of us argued in our internal deliberations, Pakistan already had the option of civilian nuclear cooperation with China due to the Grandfather clause and did not really need a NSG waiver. As for 'legitimacy,' Pakistan did not need such a certificate from the US or any other country. Needless to say, the second round of SSSNP talks made no progress at all – and on their core issue of the FMCT – the Americans went back empty-handed. Their gambit to lure Pakistan into making concessions had failed again.

This trend continued till the 8th and final round of the SSSNP talks in May 2016. With Pakistan's steadfast refusal to drop its opposition to the FMCT, the Americans realized the futility of trying to change Pakistan's position. This was reflected in their acceptance of 'discussions' rather than negotiations on the FMCT in the CD as proposed by Pakistan, which continued till the end of the Obama administration.

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Still, the Americans did not let up on their efforts to secure nuclear and missile restraint by Pakistan, which diverted the focus of the bilateral talks from the FMCT to Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence policy. The SSSNP talks from 2012 onwards were then used by the US to raise concerns about Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, which they termed as the "fastest growing in the world"; production of low-yield nuclear weapons; development of the short-range Nasr missile; and the testing of the long-range Shaheen missiles. It was repeatedly claimed that Pakistan's "tactical nuclear weapons" – the low-yield nuclear warheads for use with the Nasr missile – were destabilising the strategic environment in South Asia by lowering the threshold for nuclear war and by delegating the authority to use these weapons to battlefield commanders, thereby undermining Command and Control by the NCA. A further, even more far-fetched argument, was that such smaller nuclear weapons posed a direct threat to the US since these could fall into the hands of terrorists. Regarding the long-range Shaheen missiles, developed to cover the whole of Indian territory, the US raised concerns that these missiles posed a threat to American interests and those of its allies such as Israel due to their range. All these developments, being part of Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence doctrine, were, according to the Americans, contrary to its policy of Credible Minimum Deterrence.

In response, we stated that Pakistan had been compelled to react to developments in India in order to ensure credible deterrence. The increase in nuclear weapons was necessitated by the Indian ability to increase its nuclear arsenal due to the American-sponsored NSG waiver. While we did not seek parity in nuclear weapons with India, Pakistan still needed enough for a credible second strike capability, which, given the continuing Indian nuclear build-up, could not be kept at a static level. The American contention that Pakistan had the fastest-growing nuclear weapons programme was also rejected on the grounds that Pakistan simply did not have as many weapons production facilities as India which was also able to increase its arsenal due to the NSG waiver.

As regards Pakistan's low-yield nuclear weapons mated to the short range Nasr missiles, it was pointed out that these were not 'tactical weapon. but meant to deny India the space it sought for war at the conventional level. By preventing the outbreak of war, these weapons served a strategic purpose,

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and could not, therefore, be termed as 'tactical weapons'. The Command and Control of these weapons had not be delegated but remained with the NCA, which controlled all strategic decisions for nuclear use.

As for the contention that Pakistan's nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of terrorists, it was emphasised that Pakistan maintained a multi-layered system of nuclear safety and security and its nuclear weapons, including the low-yield weapons, were kept in separated non-weaponised state, and as such these could not fall into the hands of terrorists or even unauthorised persons.

Regarding the long-range Shaheen missiles, we stated that Pakistan's requirement was to match the development of Indian Agni missiles that could target Pakistan from anywhere in India or from the high seas. In response, Pakistan needed the capability to reach every part of India, including its Andaman and Nicobar Islands. But these missiles should not be viewed as threatening the US or its allies since Pakistan's objective was only deterrence against India, a policy that had been repeatedly stated. In any case, it would be foolhardy for Pakistan not to develop long-range missiles to deter India just because their range covered US bases in the region or Israel.

As for Pakistan's nuclear doctrine, developments in Indian capabilities and doctrine such as Cold Start required credible deterrence at the tactical, operational and strategic levels, covering the full spectrum of threats. But in pursuing Full Spectrum Deterrence, Pakistan would still adhere to its requirements at the credible minimum level, while recognising the dynamic nature of deterrence.

While responding to these American 'concerns' about Pakistan, our side also questioned as to why the US was not raising such concerns with India. For instance, the US viewed the Shaheen III missiles with a range of 2750 kilometres as a threat to itself and its allies but had not raised any concerns over India's Agni ICBMs with ranges over 10,000 kilometres. Similarly, the US viewed the short-range short range Nasr missile mated with low-yield nuclear weapons as destabilising but did not criticise Indian development of low-yield nuclear weapons and short-range missiles such as the Prahaar and Pragati. Moreover, the US had expressed concern over control of Pakistan's low-yield nuclear weapons but not about Indian control over their similar nuclear weapons or on their naval vessels while on the high seas, such as India's nuclear submarines, which involved even greater problems of command and control.

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Besides, Washington had concerns over Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence but had not opposed India's Cold Start or Proactive Doctrine for warfighting and not deterrence, and as such, was far more destabilising. Every time these arguments relating to India were raised by Pakistan in the bilateral dialogue, the Americans deflected the discussions, saying that these issues could be taken up "on another occasion." That occasion never came.

By the middle of 2015 as the Obama administration reached the end of its second term, the US tried another attempt to bait Pakistan into showing 'restraint.' The Senior Director of the National Security Council, Peter Lavoy, visited Islamabad to seek "assurances" regarding the "safety, security and responsible stewardship" of Pakistan's strategic assets. He proposed that as a "responsible state in possession of nuclear weapons", Pakistan should "address concerns of the United States about how specific weapons are seen as a direct threat to US interests." To do so, Pakistan was asked to give assurances that "Pakistan will not acquire, develop, test or induct any rocket or cruise missile with ranges beyond 2,750 kilometres." In effect, this meant an assurance that Pakistan would not develop missiles with ranges more than those of Shaheen III--in other words, accept a freeze on Pakistan's long-range missile development. The second assurance related to freezing Pakistan's battlefield weapon systems beyond the short-range Nasr missile, by "not producing, developing, testing, acquiring or inducting nuclear artillery projectiles, atomic demolition munitions, depth bombs, air defence weapons or battlefield rockets."[66]

By implication, the US was signalling its acceptance of the Shaheen III long-range missile and the short-range Nasr missile but sought assurances that Pakistan would freeze these capabilities and not go beyond in either category of weapon systems. Even though Pakistan was not pursuing such developments, it was not in a position to accept unilateral restraints and foreclose its future options in the absence of a matching commitment by India, which the US was not seeking from New Delhi in any case. Accordingly, Lavoy was told that Pakistan could not accept any such unilateral restraints.

The issue of assurances was again taken up by the US Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and Disarmament, Rose Gottemoeller, and Peter Lavoy in September 2015. The American officials maintained that the "US had already fully acknowledged Pakistan's core security concerns" and believed that "Pakistan's need for a core deterrence is entirely justified given your

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security environment." This recognition "has been a considerable step forward on the part of the US." The US was "also quite impressed by the remarkable progress made by Pakistan on export controls and strengthening nuclear safety and security." However, they argued that the "acceleration" of Pakistan's strategic programme – long-range missiles with ranges beyond South Asia and multiplicity of short-range systems available to battlefield commanders – go "way beyond the requirements of credible minimum deterrence." Accordingly, as a "responsible" nuclear weapon state, Pakistan should demonstrate restraint by implementing the assurances that Lavoy had conveyed earlier, which should be "considered as restraints and not constraints." Moreover, Pakistan should also "un-block" FMCT negotiations in the CD, where the US was willing to take Pakistan's concerns into consideration. A third step that Pakistan should take would be harmonisation of its export controls with NSG standards and unilateral adherence to NSG guidelines. In return, while the US could not deliver NSG membership by itself, it was willing to issue a "Presidential statement in support of Pakistan's candidature for NSG (membership)," which would, "mark a sea change in our approach and will be an enormous step forward," lending "our authority and support to your case."

In response, the Pakistan side pointed out that Pakistan's Credible Minimum Deterrence had always been a dynamic concept, in which there was the element of 'credibility' and the element of 'minimum.' Since India continued to raise the threshold of what constitutes minimum, it required Pakistan to respond to "a dynamic and evolving threat." It was also conveyed that Pakistan had already harmonised its export control list with NSG standards. This raised the question whether the US proposal suggested that Pakistan should accept all the obligations relating to the NSG without obtaining any waiver for civil nuclear cooperation as had happened in the case of India?[67] The American officials had no response since they continued to adhere to their discriminatory policy towards nuclear cooperation with Pakistan and India.

These exchanges demonstrated that the US was engaged in a blatantly transparent exercise in deception. It sought unilateral restraints by Pakistan in the absence of any matching restraints by India, in return for a meaningless Presidential statement endorsing Pakistan's NSG membership under conditions unacceptable to Pakistan. Not surprisingly, under such circumstances, the

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Pakistan-US dialogue failed to make any headway, coming to an inconclusive end when the Obama administration's term expired.

P-5 Plus 2 Forum

Another forum in which the US engaged with Pakistan was the dialogue between the P-5 nuclear weapon states plus Pakistan and India, which they first proposed in early 2011. Their purpose was two-fold – to try and break the deadlock on FMCT negotiations in a smaller forum involving only nuclear weapon states; and to demonstrate some 'progress' on the issue to convince their partners not to take FMCT negotiations outside the CD. At first Pakistan was reluctant to join this process due to its singular focus on the FMCT. However, owing largely due to China's advice, we agreed to participate on the condition that the talks would cover all items on the CD's agenda and not focus exclusively on the FMCT. Following American concurrence, five rounds of the P-5 Plus 2 dialogue were held from October 2011 onwards. However, no progress could be made on any of the CD's agenda items. Pakistan continued to state its objections to the FMCT and instead proposed negotiations on other issues such as Nuclear Disarmament, NSAs or PAROs in order to break the stalemate in the CD. Russia and China stressed their priority for negotiations on PAROs and even India insisted that the P-5 Plus 2 process could not be a substitute for the CD. Eventually, the US lost interest and this process was abandoned by 2014.

The Nuclear Security Summit Process

The American initiative to launch a Nuclear Security Summit process was announced by President Obama during his 5 April 2019 Prague Speech in which he outlined his nuclear agenda. Describing the danger of terrorists acquiring nuclear weapons as "the most immediate and extreme threat to global security," he called for a "new international effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear materials around the world within four years." For this purpose, he declared convening a Global Summit on Nuclear Security to "set new standards, expand cooperation, and pursue new partnerships to lock down the sensitive materials." This new initiative would also turn efforts such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) into "durable international institutions"[68] – which

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had hitherto been voluntary multilateral efforts initiated by the previous Bush administration after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The first nuclear security summit was held in Washington in April 2010. It was followed by additional summits in 2012 (Seoul), 2014 (The Hague), and 2016 (Washington). Initially, 47 countries including Pakistan were invited to participate in the process, which was later expanded to include 53 countries. Iran and North Korea were excluded from this process. Russia did not attend the last summit. Each summit adopted a communiqué by consensus which broadly addressed the threat of nuclear terrorism by minimising and securing weapons-usable nuclear materials, enhancing international cooperation to prevent the illicit acquisition of nuclear materials by terrorists and non-state actors and strengthening the global nuclear security system.

The core objectives of the summit process were elaborated in the first Washington summit communiqué, which stated in its first operative paragraph that it was the "fundamental responsibility of states…to maintain effective security of all nuclear materials which includes nuclear materials used in nuclear weapons and nuclear facilities under their control; to prevent non-state actors from obtaining the information or technology to use such material for malicious purposes; and emphasise the importance of robust national legislative and regulatory frameworks for nuclear security." The communiqué further called for "support of international nuclear security instruments," and referred to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials as amended (CPPNM) and the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, in addition to others, as "essential elements of the global nuclear security architecture." The IAEA was designated for performing its "essential role" and carry out its "mandated nuclear security activities." The communiqué also envisaged "capacity building" for nuclear security and cooperation at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.[69] Significantly, at Pakistan's initiative, the Washington meeting also included the need to secure radiological materials in the overall context of nuclear security, since such materials were more likely to be obtained by terrorists and non-state actors rather than nuclear materials.

Subsequent summits led to the adoption of the practise of states offering 'gift baskets,' which were voluntary pledges by individual states on specific measures by them, such as updating national laws and regulations, taking steps

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to combat trafficking, or holding trainings for nuclear security personnel. The last summit in 2016 agreed to five action plans for international organisations such as the UN, IAEA, Interpol, GICNT, and the Global Partnership (of seven states) to take forward the work of the security summits.

Initially, there was some apprehension in Pakistan about this American initiative as it could be used to put the spotlight on Pakistan owing to its terrorism challenges. There were already allegations in Western official and media circles about Pakistan being the 'crossroads of nuclear proliferation and terrorism' (as discussed in earlier chapters). There was also concern that the process could lead to demands for intrusive inspections and monitoring of Pakistan's nuclear facilities apart from implicit if not explicit pressure for curtailing nuclear weapons production. These latter concerns also existed among other nuclear weapon states such as Russia, China and India, which did not want any international mechanism to interfere with their national nuclear programmes. However, it was decided that the better course of action would be to participate in the nuclear security summit process to protect Pakistan's interests from within along with other like-minded countries. As a result, it was ensured that this process would not be Pakistan or country specific nor would there be any attempts at ingress into its national policies. In fact, the fundamental aspect of this initiative became 'voluntary national actions' instead of international measures and decisions by consensus.

One of the key issues that emerged at the first Washington summit was the scope of the nuclear materials to be included. Some Western official circles and non-governmental organisations, which were playing an important role from the sidelines of the summit, insisted on the inclusion of all nuclear materials – which was reflected in operative paragraph 1 of the Washington communiqué as "materials used in nuclear weapons and nuclear facilities." However, the inclusion of materials in nuclear weapons or designated for nuclear weapons purposes was not acceptable to any nuclear weapon state – including the US. This contradiction was circumvented by the clause in the Washington communiqué designating the IAEA to play its "essential role" in the implementation of the summit decisions since the IAEA's mandate remains limited to nuclear materials not meant for weapons purposes.

In these circumstances, Pakistan was able to play an important role in the nuclear security summit process, and at the Seoul summit offered a

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'gift basket' for the training of personnel in nuclear security at its Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security in Chakri. This step was highly appreciated by the US administration and the IAEA. Pakistan also joined the amended CPPNM in 2016 while having already become a part of GICNT in 2007, both of which are key parts of the nuclear security architecture. Pakistan was also instrumental in ensuring the inclusion of radiological materials in the purview of the nuclear security process as mentioned above. Overall, Pakistan's active participation in the nuclear security summit process served to enhance its credentials as a responsible nuclear weapon state, strengthening its case for 'nuclear legitimacy' while also negating to some extent the allegations about its nuclear assets being vulnerable to 'outsider' and 'insider' threats.

NSG Membership

As mentioned in previous chapters, the Nuclear Suppliers Group or NSG had been created in response to the Indian nuclear test in 1974 as a result of the realisation in the US and other advanced nuclear-capable states that the then-existing IAEA machinery was insufficient to prevent the diversion of nuclear materials from civilian to weapons use as had been done by India. The principal role of the NSG was therefore to function as a cartel to prevent such diversions in the future by strictly controlling the trade in nuclear materials and equipment, especially "dual use" items that could be used for acquiring nuclear weapons capability. Ironically, however, under the 2005 Indo-US nuclear deal, the US committed to facilitating an India-specific exemption from the NSG, which was accepted by the NSG members in 2008. Subsequently, the Obama administration went a step further during the US President's visit to India in November 2010 by declaring that the US intends to support India's full membership of the NSG as well as the other export control regimes – MTCR, Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement. Thereafter, the Obama administration took the lead to facilitate India's NSG membership, which was given the highest priority by India.

A number of countries that had already entered into a civilian nuclear cooperation agreement with India following the NSG waiver, most notably the UK, France, Russia, Canada, Australia and Japan, fully supported the Indian bid for NSG membership. However, a major obstacle was that there is no provision within the rules governing the NSG about the unprecedented

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case of a non-NPT nuclear weapon state like India to be granted membership since membership is confined to only NPT members. Under the relevant NSG 'guidelines' regarding membership, contained in its Information Circular or INFCIRC/539, an applicant state had to fulfil five 'factors' – i) ability to supply items relating to nuclear technology, especially dual-use items as contained in NSG guidelines; ii) adherence to NSG guidelines and action in accordance with them; iii) enforcement of export control laws and regulatory framework in keeping with NSG guidelines; iv) adherence to the NPT and/or membership of one or more of the Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (Treaties of Pelindaba, Rarotonga, Tlatelolco, Bangkok, Semipalatinsk), or an equivalent nuclear non-proliferation international agreement; and v) support of international efforts for non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles. While India could arguably claim to fulfil four of these preconditions, it certainly did not qualify for the 'factor' relating to membership of the NPT or any of the nuclear weapon-free zones.

The Americans argued that India's membership should be granted on the basis of its so-called 'impeccable' non-proliferation record and the commitments it had already given for the NSG waiver such as its Safeguards Agreement and the Additional Protocol with the IAEA and the separation of its nuclear facilities, among other steps. American officials also argued with Pakistan and other countries that after having been given a waiver, granting India membership of the NSG was not a major step. This was a deceptive and disingenuous argument because in reality, Indian inclusion in the NSG would amount to its recognition as a legitimate nuclear weapon state without becoming a member of the NPT, as was required of other NSG members. Besides, if this was 'not such a big deal' as some US officials claimed, then there was no justification for the US and India to expend the time and effort that they did to gain NSG membership for India.

Ever since the Indo-US nuclear deal, Pakistan had asked for equal treatment and described the US policy as discriminatory. When the NSG waiver was granted to India, Pakistan again demanded equitable treatment. Similarly, it argued that the NSG membership to non-NPT nuclear weapon states should be extended on the basis of equitable and non-discriminatory criteria. As mentioned in the preceding pages, the American response was that Pakistan and India had different nuclear non-proliferation 'histories' and 'trajectories'

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and owing to the A Q Khan nuclear proliferation episode, Pakistan did not qualify for the NSG waiver or NSG membership. Instead, the US held out the prospect of eventual nuclear 'legitimacy' in order to extract unilateral 'restraints' from Pakistan. It was, therefore, very clear to Pakistan that the US had no intention of according Pakistan a NSG waiver or NSG membership.

Apart from the bilateral dialogue with the US where Pakistan had raised these issues, it had taken up the matter of NSG membership in the CD to underscore how American and Western discriminatory policies towards Pakistan had undermined Pakistan's security and led to its rejection of FMCT negotiations. In a statement on 25 January 2011 to the CD, I stated that extending membership of the NSG and other export control regimes to India would further destabilise strategic stability in South Asia, while fundamentally altering the very basis of the international non-proliferation regime. Pointing out that since India clearly did not qualify for NSG membership because it was not a party to the NPT, would require evolving new criteria tailor-made to accommodate India. This would deepen the discrimination against Pakistan. In such circumstances, I said that Pakistan's opposition to FMCT negotiations would be further strengthened. I also cabled Islamabad to convey that henceforth, Pakistan's focus should shift from the FMCT to the NSG. We had already succeeded in blocking FMCT negotiations and now the need was to tackle Indian membership of the NSG.

Fortunately, Pakistan had already taken several steps to strengthen its credentials for NSG membership. It had four decades of experience in the safe operation of nuclear power plants and was one of the few countries that had mastered the complete nuclear fuel cycle. It had expertise in manufacturing nuclear and dual-use items. All its civilian nuclear facilities were under IAEA safeguards. It had set up an elaborate export control regime, legislative framework and comprehensive regulatory administrative measures, while its Export Control Lists were harmonised with IAEA and NSG guidelines. These included the setting up of the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) in 2001; the adoption of the Export Control Act in 2004, covering equipment related to nuclear and biological weapons and their delivery systems; and the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Ordinance in 2000 and its implementation in 2010. As regards nuclear safety and security, Pakistan had taken legal, regulatory and administrative measures in collaboration

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with international institutions, especially the IAEA. The Pakistan Centre of Excellence on Nuclear Security (PCENS) was set up as a hub for regional and international security training. The Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS) became a top-ranking university-level institution focusing on nuclear safety and security. A third institution, the National Institute of Safety and Security (NISAS), operating under the PNRA, had been providing training for professionals, technicians and managers in the fields of nuclear safety and security. In terms of international cooperation relating to non-proliferation, safety and security of nuclear materials, and the nuclear regulatory framework, Pakistan demonstrated its credentials by not only placing all its civilian nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards but also declared a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing after its 1998 tests, proposed a Strategic Restraint Regime in South Asia and supported negotiations on Nuclear Disarmament, NSAs, PAROS, and a Fissile Material Treaty to reduce stocks and ban future production of fissile materials in the CD. Apart from participating in the Nuclear Security Summit process, Pakistan also joined the Conventions on Nuclear Safety, Early Notification of Nuclear Accidents, Assistance in Case of a Nuclear Accidents or Radiological Emergency, Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials, and the Global Initiative On Combatting Nuclear Terrorism.

Armed with these credentials, Pakistan began its outreach to the NSG in early 2011 with the first meeting with the NSG Troika (past, present and future NSG Presidents) in Vienna. This was followed by meetings in 2013 (Ankara) and 2015 (Vienna). It also maintained an ongoing dialogue with NSG members, called Participating Governments (PGs). In these exchanges, Pakistan conveyed that it possessed the requisite credentials for NSG membership in the event that such membership was offered to non-NPT nuclear weapon states. Its participation in the NSG would further the NSGs non-proliferation objectives by the inclusion of a state with complete nuclear fuel cycle capabilities, 40-year experience in safely managing nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards, and its adherence to NSG guidelines. In short, it would be better for the NSG to have Pakistan within its fold than outside it. Eventually, in May 2016, Pakistan formally applied for NSG membership as was also done by India.

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Pakistan's simultaneous bid for membership with India upset the American-Indian plan, which was to push through India's membership by adopting of India-specific criteria. But now there were two non-NPT nuclear weapon states asking for membership for which the NSG members had to agree on criteria by consensus. In its outreach, Pakistan again stressed the need for equitable and non-discriminatory criteria, a position which, in principle at least, could not be rejected by NSG member states. Pakistan also maintained that it did not oppose Indian membership but wanted the same standards to apply to it as well. A number of states led by the US were in favour of India's membership but did not want to support Pakistan's candidature. They argued that the basis on which India had been given the NSG waiver was sufficient to accept India as a member. Apart from being discriminatory, such a course would enable India to use the NSG's concensus decision-making rule to block Pakistan's entry into the NSG in perpetuity. However, several countries, especially those which were strong supporters of non-proliferation, such as Switzerland, Ireland and New Zealand, wanted prior agreement on equitable criteria to consider the applications of both non-NPT countries, or at least wanted India to take additional measures such as joining the CTBT, which India had consistently refused. Pakistan took the position that it could join the CTBT if India agreed to do so as well.

China adopted a tough and forthright stance, stating that there were no provisions in the NSG guidelines for membership by non-NPT nuclear weapon states and, therefore, the basis for making such a decision should first be agreed upon in a two-step approach to the decision on membership of India and Pakistan. In talks with Pakistan, the Chinese regretted that their position also affected Pakistan but assured us that in case new criteria was developed, they would ensure that these would not discriminate against Pakistan. Turkey took the line that if membership was to be extended to India, it should also be extended to Pakistan.

At the NSG's plenary meeting in Seoul in 2016, discussions on the sidelines regarding membership by non-NPT states essentially accepted China's two-step approach and agreed to first identify the criteria for membership based on technical, legal and political considerations. This task was entrusted to Argentina's Ambassador to the NSG and IAEA, Raphael Grossi. In December 2016, the NSG chair, Ambassador Song of South Korea, shared Grossi's

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proposals with the NSG members. These proposals were highly biased in favour of India – setting the proposed criteria along the conditions already accepted by India for its NSG waiver. These included: the separation of civilian and military nuclear facilities; a declaration to the IAEA identifying all existing and future civilian nuclear facilities; safeguards agreement with the IAEA; signing of an Additional Protocol with the IAEA; a commitment not to transfer any items from a NSG country to unsafeguarded facilities; a commitment not to conduct nuclear tests; and a commitment to support and strengthen the multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament regime. To further accommodate India, three additional criteria were suggested by Grossi. These included a proposal calling for a "clear description of the (non-NPT applicant's) intentions, plans and policies in support of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) on becoming a Participating Government." This was meant to circumvent the Indian rejection of the CTBT. The second was that "due to the unique nature of the non-NPT applications, the non-NPT applicant would join the consensus of all Participating Governments on the merits of any non-NPT application." This was not meant to actually address Pakistan's concerns that giving NSG membership to India first would enable India to use the consensus rule to block Pakistan's membership in the future, but to use such an 'understanding' to de-link the membership of India from that of Pakistan. By using this proposed clause, Indian supporters in the NSG, such as the US, would be able to argue that India should be given membership before Pakistan whose application could then be considered later on the assurance that India would not oppose it. Given the lack of credibility of such an understanding, this criterion was absolutely unacceptable to Pakistan and its supporters. To further complicate Pakistan's membership, Grossi's proposals injected the third caveat that even if Pakistan acquired NSG membership, it would still require a NSG waiver for nuclear cooperation with other NSG members. In other words, even membership in the NSG would not be sufficient for Pakistan to enter into civilian nuclear cooperation agreements with other NSG member states. It was not surprising that the blatantly biased Grossi proposals did not attract consensus support within the NSG.[70]

Thereafter, the issue was pursued by the US and India in subsequent NSG meetings, but mainly due to the positions taken by China, Turkey and some other countries, no progress could be made. Eventually after the Obama

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administration completed its tenure, the succeeding Trump administration realised that the issue was deadlocked and gave up any serious effort to push for India's NSG membership.

Pakistan's Defiance in Retrospect

With the advantage of hindsight, it is clear that Pakistan's policy of defiance was successful in ensuring credible deterrence against India. Despite its growing strategic partnership with the US and the buildup of its conventional and strategic capabilities, India was unable to implement its Cold Start doctrine or intimidate Pakistan. The space that India had sought for conventional war below the nuclear threshold, while threatening massive nuclear retaliation, was denied by Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence posture. This could only have been possible by Pakistan's development of its technological capabilities to produce low-yield nuclear weapons and short-range missile delivery capabilities as well as its long-range missiles and capability to penetrate Indian missile defence capabilities. Pakistan's diplomacy to prevent FMCT negotiations and reject American pressure for unilateral restraint also played a major part in ensuring credible deterrence. From Pakistan's perspective this led to relative strategic stability in South Asia. But the challenge was to ensure the continuation of this strategic stability in the coming years.

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12 | Dangerous Destabilisation

From Pakistan's perspective, the operationalisation of its policy of Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD), which was formally announced by the National Command Authority (NCA) in September 2011 restored strategic stability in South Asia by neutralising India's Cold Start or Proactive doctrine that had sought space for limited conventional war below the nuclear threshold. By establishing credible deterrence across the entire spectrum of threat – from the operational to the tactical and strategic levels – FSD negated the possibility of any space for war. As considered in the previous chapter, Pakistan's scientific and technological advancements, in particular the development of the short-range Nasr and the longer-range Shaheen missiles, together with the production of low-yield nuclear weapons, had made the pursuit of FSD possible. Pakistan's defiance in the diplomatic arena also provided the time and space for the implementation of FSD. As a result, nuclear deterrence, which emerged between Pakistan and India after their nuclear tests in 1998 but which had been put into question by India's Cold Start doctrine, was once again the basis for regional strategic stability due to FSD. Unfortunately, however, India has not accepted this strategic reality as the basis for an enduring stable relationship with Pakistan. On the contrary, India has continued its massive militarisation programme in the conventional and strategic domains which threatens to once again destabilise the region. Among the multiple factors that have contributed to this trend are India's domestic developments, increasing confrontation with Pakistan as well as China and the growing Indo-US strategic partnership aimed at containing and confronting China, which in turn has promoted Indian regional hegemony. As a result, not just South Asia but the entire Asia-Pacific is now increasingly confronted by dangerous destabilisation.

The Infernal Triangle

The triangular relationship between Pakistan, India and the US has been the source of almost continuous consternation for the three countries ever since the independence of Pakistan and India. Both countries have viewed the other's relations with the US as a zero-sum game. The Cold War driven Pakistan-

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US "partnership" was replaced by Washington's "de-hyphenated" relationship with Islamabad and New Delhi after the collapse of India's strategic ally, the Soviet Union, which opened up vast possibilities for engagement between the US and India in the post-cold war world. The subsequent emergence of China as a strategic competitor of the US further strengthened the Indo-US entente starting with the Bush Administration and its successors intent on using India as a counterweight to a rising China. As a result, India and the US are now not just strategic partners to contain China but India has become a 'net security provider' for the US in the entire Asia Pacific. In this situation, American 'de-hyphenation' between Pakistan and India has actually become a ploy to cover up American discrimination in favour of India against Pakistan. It is against this backdrop that the 'infernal' triangular relationship between Pakistan, India and the US has been unfolding.

Ironically this has happened even as Pakistani governments since President Musharraf have tried to improve relations with India while also cooperating with the US to tackle terrorism and pacify Afghanistan. But, with India, Pakistan's repeated attempts to resume the bilateral dialogue have continued to be negated by four critical issues – Indian repression in Occupied Kashmir, the repeated Indian charges against Pakistan of supporting terrorism, the Modi Government's pursuit of "Hindutva" or Hindu nationalist policies discriminating against Indian Muslims since 2014 and India's increasing militarisation posing a growing threat to Pakistan's security.

On Kashmir, President Musharraf continued to push for a solution despite the terrorist attack in India on the Samjohata Express, the Pakistani train service to India, in February 2007 in which 68 Pakistani nationals were killed. These peace efforts were reportedly close to a solution based on 'soft borders' but the momentum was lost once Musharraf resigned from office in August 2008. The succeeding government of President Zardari tried to keep the process alive and following his meeting with the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, agreement was reached to open new trade routes in September 2008 followed by starting trade across the LOC. However, these positive developments were soon derailed by the terrorist attacks in Bombay (Mumbai) in November 2008 for which India and the US blamed Pakistan and India discontinued the bilateral dialogue. By February 2010, talks resumed again, first at the Foreign Secretary level and then in July between the Foreign Ministers. As a result, the

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two countries came close to a free trade agreement which, however, had to put on hold as India approached national elections and the opposition BJP party asked that the agreement be concluded after the Indian elections.

These elections in 2014 brought into power a BJP-led coalition headed by Prime Minister Modi who had earlier as Chief Minister of Gujarat State been implicated in the massacre of thousands of Muslims in riots by fanatical Hindus in February 2002. For his role, the US had imposed a ban on grant of visa to him but following his election as Prime Minister, quickly withdrew the ban. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who had by then came into power in Pakistan, also decided to overlook Modi's role in the Gujarat riots and his links with the extremist Hindu nationalist organisation, the RSS, and made the controversial decision to participate in Modi's inauguration ceremony. Sharif continued to maintain contact with Modi and even invited him to a social occasion in 2015.

While Modi was elected on the platform of providing good governance and economic revival, his government emboldened his supporters in the Hindu nationalist 'Sangh Parivar', or Hindu Family, consisting of the RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal and others, to unleash a pogrom against Indian Muslims and other minorities. Hindu vigilantes targeted and killed Muslims on charges of eating beef or slaughtering cows, marrying Hindus or simply on suspicion of being pro-Pakistani. Modi also unleashed a reign of terror in occupied Kashmir where he sought to crush the freedom movement through the Indian army and paramilitary forces, which were given immunity for their repression by Draconian laws. Even women and children were not spared in this campaign including the use for the first time of pellet guns that killed and maimed hundreds.

The legitimate resistance by the Kashmiris was blamed on Pakistan's alleged sponsorship of terrorism and as part of Modi's 'muscular' foreign policy, a deliberate attempt started to 'isolate' Pakistan internationally. Using India's growing influence as a strategic partner of the US, Modi used every opportunity provided by meetings with American and pro-American leaders to berate Pakistan and promote charges of sponsoring terrorism against India. The US and its allies, for their part, despite all their rhetoric about human rights, turned a blind eye to Modi's human rights violations in occupied Kashmir and against Indian Muslims. These countries also remained oblivious to the

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possibility that Indian repression would give rise to an armed reaction by the Kashmiris that could lead to a confrontation between Pakistan and India.

In September 2016 this is precisely what happened. Following an attack on an Indian military base in Pathankot which was blamed on Pakistan, a 'surgical strike' was launched by India across the Line of Control in Kashmir. This was no more than intense shelling by heavy artillery but the Modi Government projected it as a muscular response to Pakistan's alleged terrorism and an end to India's earlier policy of 'strategic restraint'. Though the fall-out of this incident was contained and Pakistan, while denying any responsibility, offered to cooperate in investigating the attack, Indian belligerence continued to increase. The US and some western countries also expressed their support for India's accusations against Pakistan. Despite Indian failure to provide any tangible evidence to back up their charges, Pakistan still took action against groups like Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and Jaish-e-Mohmmad which had been accused by India and the US for acts of terrorism, by trying some of their leaders in court and freezing their assets. However, these measures were considered inadequate by the Indians and their American friends.

The continuing Indian repression in occupied Kashmir led to another incident in February 2019 with much more serious repercussions that brought Pakistan and India to the brink of war. The attack on an Indian military convoy in Pulwama on 14 February in which nearly 40 security personnel were killed was immediately blamed by India on Pakistan. Modi threatened retaliation even as Pakistan once again denied any involvement and offered to cooperate in investigating the Indian charges. Prime Minister Imran Khan's policy of reaching out to normalise relations with India after he was elected to power in July 2018 was now in tatters. Modi's belligerence was further encouraged by statements from Trump Administration officials such as National Security Adviser John Bolton, who expressed 'understanding' for any Indian retaliation against Pakistan. On 26 February, India carried out an air strike near Balakot across the international border, the first time this had happened since the 1971 Pakistan-India war. While the Indians claimed to destroy a seminary building in which several hundred people were allegedly killed, in fact the Indians missed their target and merely destroyed a few trees as was confirmed by Pakistani and international media observers. Pakistan's declared determination to retaliate suddenly activated the Trump Administration which had till now

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virtually endorsed the Indian offensive, with efforts to defuse the situation. Even so, on the next day, Pakistan carried out limited air strikes against Indian military targets which deliberately avoided casualties but demonstrated the political willingness and the military capability to respond. On the same day, two Indian aircraft were shot down and one of the pilots was captured by Pakistani troops to be returned a few days later as a goodwill gesture. The Indians then contemplated carrying out missile attacks to which Pakistan warned that its response would be three times greater. India also conducted a naval patrol with its nuclear-powered submarine, perhaps equipped with nuclear weapons, near Pakistan's territorial waters but wisely withdrew after being detected.

A significant development in this escalating situation was the convening of a National Command Authority (NCA) meeting, the body that controls Pakistan's nuclear decision-making, as means of signalling to the Indians to refrain from any further escalation. Speaking to the media, the Director General, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the spokesperson of the Armed Forces, stated on 27 February that "I hope you (Indians) know what the NCA means and what it constitutes. I said that we will surprise you. Wait for that surprise. You have chosen a path of war without knowing the consequences for the peace and security of the region."[1] As correctly assessed by the Washington-based Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, "The skirmish escalated into the nuclear realm when it triggered a convening of Pakistan's National Command Authority".[2] This messaging was, therefore, clear to both New Delhi and Washington with the latter now hectically engaged in ensuring de-escalation instead of encouraging the Indians. (The strategic implication of the Pulwama-Balakot crisis are considered in detail below)

Even as this crisis dissipated, Modi used the incident to whip up nationalist hysteria by distorting the ground realities through the use of the largely pliable and jingoist Indian media. Projecting the Balakot attack as a major victory and having "called Pakistan's nuclear bluff," he rode a frenzied patriotic wave to an unprecedented electoral victory for his second term in office in the May 2019 elections. Noted British writer of Indian origin, Pankaj Mishra, wrote in his *The New York Times* article, 'How Narendra Modi Seduced India with Envy and Hate', that the Prime Minister "has won re-election on a tide of violence, fake news and resentment."[3] This 'victory' made Modi's India even more belligerent

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towards Pakistan and even more intolerant towards the Kashmiris and Indian Muslims.

On 5 August 2019, the special autonomous status of Occupied Kashmir in the Indian Constitution was revoked along with the withdrawal of the provisions of article 35A that non-Kashmiris could not settle or acquire property in the disputed state. Modi's objective was clear: he sought to fully absorb Kashmir into India and thereby reject its internationally recognised disputed status, while seeking to change the Muslim-majority demography of the occupied territory. This was accompanied by placing the entire region under a state of siege, enforced by increased numbers of troops numbering over 90,000, imposition of curfew, media blackout, disconnection of Internet and cell phone services and mass arrests of politicians, including those who were pro-Indian. Even journalists, lawyers, doctors and teenage children were incarcerated. Travel to and from occupied Kashmir was also banned. Moreover, the occupied state was tri-furcated into Kashmir, Jammu and Laddakh, each of which was made a Union Territory directly controlled by New Delhi. With some minor relaxations, such as the release of pro-Indian politicians and partial restoration of social media services, this state of siege still continues. Meanwhile, administrative and legal measures have been implemented to enable non-Kashmiris to settle in the region in order to reduce the Muslim majority of the occupied state, including confiscation of Muslim properties. This amounts to a policy of ethnic cleansing, war crimes and genocide.

The other far-reaching step taken by the fascist Modi clique was to change the national citizenship laws in December 2019, which discriminate against Muslims by precluding them from citizenship on the basis of their religion. Another law, the Citizens Registration Act, so far applied in the state of Assam but which would apply nationally, would effectively require Muslims to prove their Indian origin. Yet another law, adopted so far in India's most populous state, UP, bans marriages between Hindus and Muslims while in Andhra Pradesh girl students are banned from wearing the hijab. Opposition to these developments by Indian Muslims has been met with brute force, applied through collaboration between the Indian police and Hindu vigilantes from the BJP and the RSS.

Even the last bastion for justice sought by Indian Muslims, the Indian Supreme Court, displayed its communal character when it set aside historical

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and legal facts to uphold the claim of Hindu fanatics for building a temple on the site of the 16th century Babri Masjid (Mosque) on the spurious grounds that it was the birthplace of the mythical Hindu god Ram. As pointed out by Pankaj Mishra, Modi's seduction of India had permeated into the Indian state, including the judiciary. Other national institutions like the armed forces, police and bureaucracy have been similarly co-opted. Aside from a few notable exceptions, the Indian media has also jumped on to Modi's nationalist bandwagon.

Ironically, while the intentional media and human rights bodies as well as the UN's Human Rights Council and the UN secretary General have severely criticised the Modi government for these policies, western leaders such as President Trump, maintained a deafening silence. This was clearly evident when Trump visited India in February 2020 while New Delhi was aflame due to Hindu violence against Muslims, but the American President chose to ignore this mayhem.

The fact that Modi was able to greatly benefit from the Pulwama/Balakot crisis to win a second term with a thumping majority, even as some earlier state-level elections had indicated declining fortunes for his BJP, has led to valid speculation about the crisis bring the result of a 'false-flag' operation. More recently, in January 2021, some inadvertent disclosures provide substance to such speculations. An Indian online newspaper, The Print, disclosed that the Mumbai police, while investigating charges of manipulation of TV ratings, had recovered a WhatsApp communication between Republic TV anchor, Arnab Goswami, a hyper-nationalist journalist with close BJP contacts, and the Chief Executive of the Broadcast Audience Research Council, Partho Dasgupta, in which Goswami claimed that the Modi Government had planned a strike against Pakistan just before the Indian elections. Commenting on this development a spokesperson of the Pakistan Foreign Office stated that these "latest revelations further confirmed what Pakistan had consistently pointed out: The BJP government stages false flag operations to malign Pakistan with terrorism-related allegations, stokes hyper-nationalism and deviously manipulates nationalist sentiment in its bid to win elections."[4]

America's unqualified support for India, not just on the terrorism issue but across the board, has been one of the key factors that has encouraged the belligerence and hostility of the Modi Government towards Pakistan. In this environment, there is no room for any Pakistan-India dialogue to resolve

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outstanding issues, including the Kashmir dispute or to ensure strategic stability. Meanwhile, the continuing differences between the US and Pakistan further encourages Indian bellicosity towards Pakistan, adding to the toxic nature of the triangular relationship.

Pakistan-US relations which had already reached their lowest point towards the end of the Obama Presidency (as considered in the previous chapter) turned into open American hostility after Donald Trump became President in 2017. During the election campaign, Trump had been aggressively courted by the powerful Indian-American lobby with massive funding for his campaign. When questioned about Pakistan's nuclear weapons, he stated that he would depend on India to take care of them.[5] Trump also appointed several advisors from conservative Republican think tanks who had hard-line views on Pakistan for its alleged support for the Afghan Taliban against the US or were die-hard anti-communist China baiters for whom India was a useful tool to confront Beijing. Trump himself famously tweeted that the US had been rewarded with "nothing but lies and deceit" for "foolishly giving Pakistan more than 33 billion in aid in the last 15 years" and that "they give safe heavens to the terrorists we hunt in Afghanistan, with little help. NO more."[6] Trump's Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, an Indian-origin American, went further to charge that "Pakistan has been playing a double game", and threatened to cut off all assistance to Pakistan.[7] Shortly thereafter Trump stated that "Pakistan does not do a damn thing" to help the US in Afghanistan and announced the suspension of 1.3 billion dollars in assistance[8] including withholding 300 million of the Coalition Support Funds, which was actually the amount spent by Pakistan from its own resources to help the American counter-terrorism efforts.[9]

Before becoming President, Trump had criticised America's costly wars in Afghanistan and Syria while stating that the US was losing the war in Afghanistan and that the Commander of American Forces there, General Nicholson, should be fired. But his national security team led by Defence Secretary General Mattis and National Security Adviser, General McMaster, along with senior Pentagon officials, convinced Trump that American failure to win in Afghanistan was due to the support being given by Pakistan to the Taliban.

As a result, the regional strategy on Afghanistan and South Asia announced by Trump on 21 August 2017 was severely critical of Pakistan. In his speech, Trump claimed that "20 US designated foreign terrorist organizations are

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active in Afghanistan and Pakistan" and that "for its part, Pakistan often gives safe heavens to agents of chaos, violence and terror". He added that "the threat is worse because Pakistan and India are two nuclear-armed states where tense relations threaten to spiral into conflict." Among American interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Trump mentioned stopping the "resurgence of safe heavens that enable terrorists to threaten America" and to "prevent nuclear weapons and materials from coming into the hands of terrorists." He stressed the need "to change the approach in how to deal with Pakistan" and that "we can no longer be silent about Pakistan's safe havens for terrorist organisations...that pose a threat to the region and beyond." Turning to India, Trump mentioned that a "critical part of the South Asia strategy for America is to further develop its strategic partnership with India" which he described as "a key security and economic partner of the United States" and appreciated "India's important contributions to stability in Afghanistan." Trump went on to state that "we are committed to pursuing our shared objectives (with India) for peace and security in South Asia and the border Indo-Pacific region."[10] On the primary issue of his Afghan policy, Trump backtracked from his earlier criticism of America's costly and unwinnable war in Afghanistan and went along with his generals who advocated a further American troop buildup to 'win' the war against the Taliban and other 'terrorists' in that country.

While the official reaction to Trump's speech by the Nawaz Sharif Government was cautious, pointing out the country's valuable contributions to America's war on terror which had cost Pakistan nearly 70,000 lives and over 100 billion dollars by then, the public reaction was by contrast angry and defiant. Opposition leader and soon-to-be-elected Prime Minister, Imran Khan, stated that "we must reject being made a scapegoat for US policy failures."[11] Other prominent commentators such as journalist Rahimullah Yousafzai, an expert on Afghanistan, stated "how can Trump ask us to do more while inviting our number one enemy to the table." He added, echoing the popular opinion, that "just as India blames Pakistan for the indigenous Kashmiri uprising when these are a result of its own failed policy of military repression in Indian-held Kashmir, the US again blames Pakistan for its deeply flawed and failed Afghan policy stretching over a decade."[12]

Sensing the negative fallout in Pakistan, especially over the American attempt to involve India more deeply in Afghanistan, which crossed a

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Pakistani red line, while still being dependent on Pakistan's cooperation for intelligence sharing and access to Afghanistan, the Trump Administration tried to limit the damage. The then Secretary of State, Tillerson, and the Defence Department's spokesperson tried to 'clarify' the American President's statement, asserting Pakistan's importance for the US and American desire for continued cooperation. A mid-level American delegation was also sent to Islamabad for damage control. But these lame efforts neither convinced the Pakistani leadership nor brought about a change in Pakistan's policy. While the Afghanistan-related cooperation continued, Pakistan repeatedly maintained that there could be no military solution in Afghanistan. This position was even more forcefully articulated by Imran Khan after he was elected Prime Minister in July 2018.

Eventually, after about 14 months of unsuccessful military operations, Trump realised that despite his troop surge, he could not win the war in Afghanistan as the Pentagon had promised and started looking for a political solution that required a direct dialogue as demanded by the Taliban. For this, he had no choice but to ask for Pakistan's help in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table. Following visits to Islamabad by Secretary of State Pompeo and Trump's appointee for talks with the Taliban, Zalmay Khalilzad, direct negotiations between the US and the Taliban started in October 2018 with Pakistan's facilitation. Finally, an agreement was concluded in Doha, Qatar, on 29 February 2020. According to the agreement, the US began a phased withdrawal from Afghanistan to be completed by 1 May 2021 in return for commitments by the Taliban to sever links with Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups in Afghanistan as well as to start an intra-Afghan Peace Process which started in Doha on 12 September 2020, albeit after several obstacles. While these negotiations dragged on, political changes took place in the US with Trump losing a controversial presidential election to the Democrat candidate, Joe Biden. The new president, though personally in favour of withdrawing from Afghanistan, was persuaded by his advisors to 'review' the accord with the Taliban.

While Pakistan's facilitation of the US-Taliban Agreement did contribute to some improvement in Pakistan-US relations, including a visit by Prime Minister Khan to Washington to meet Trump in July 2019, and the resumption of some American assistance under the International Military Education

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and Training (IMET) Programme, the overall bilateral relationship remains tenuous. This has been largely due to the continuing strategic relationship between the US and India. Even as Trump was welcoming the Pakistani leader in Washington and went to the extent of offering to mediate a solution to the Kashmir dispute, Washington continued to build up its military cooperation with India at the cost of Pakistan's security. Moreover, the US persisted in exerting pressure on Pakistan at India's behest on the terrorism issue, not just bilaterally but through the UN's Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) which threatened to put Pakistan on its so-called 'Black List.'

Unlike with the Obama Administration, the nuclear issue did not figure prominently during Trump's presidency. This was more by default than by design. Trump was not interested in non-proliferation, arms control or disarmament. He even withdrew from the INF Treaty with Russia while stalling talks with Moscow on renewing the New START Treaty. The Americans argued that such arrangements were insufficient to ensure their security unless China was included in these agreements, which China refused, citing the disparity in its nuclear arsenal compared to the huge numbers of nuclear weapons possessed by the US and Russia. With Pakistan, apart from the occasional concerns expressed about the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear assets, there was no resumption of the bilateral dialogue that had taken place during the Obama period. Nor were there any attempts to push for negotiations on the FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament. After some initial attempts to hold talks on only nuclear safety and security, which Pakistan rejected and called for comprehensive talks as before to also discuss regional security and stability, the Trump Administration abandoned its efforts. The only forum in which Pakistan joined the US was the American initiative on Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND) which was announced in June 2019. Its main purpose was to counter the criticism of the US for Trump's nuclear policies and to diffuse the momentum among non-nuclear weapons states in favour of a nuclear ban treaty concluded through UN negotiations. However, the CEND initiative did not go beyond a few rounds of talks and remained inconclusive.

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The China Factor

The single most important factor that began to impact on strategic stability in South Asia ever since the Bush Administration was the growing rivalry between the US and China. This had already led to the Indo-US strategic partnership in Washington's attempt to build up India as a counter-weight to China and contain the growing Chinese challenge to American dominance in the Asian Pacific region. This American zero-sum containment strategy against China was further reinforced by the Obama and Trump Administrations leading to an increasing confrontation between the two countries. This affected Pakistan's security not only because of the American support for India's military buildup against China which threatened Pakistan as well, but also because it impacted Pakistan's own close relations with China.

The Trump Administration's National Security Strategy announced in December 2017 identified "three main sets of challenges – the revisionist powers of China and Russia, the rogue states of Iran and North Korea and transnational terrorist organisations, particularly jihadist groups." It blamed previous Administrations of "strategic complacency" in relations with China (and Russia) in the context of an American-backed international rules-based order and argued that great power competition had returned as "China and Russia are re-asserting their influence, regionally and globally." It specifically asserted that "China seeks to displace the United States in the Indo-Pacific region, expand the reaches of its state-driven economic model and reorder the region in its favour." The strategy further maintained that with increasing development (by China and Russia) of nuclear weapons, both horizontally and vertically, as well as the emergence of new technologies such as cyber and artificial intelligence, apart from the race for domination of outer space, "deterrence today is significantly more complex to achieve than during the Cold War." Accordingly, it argued that deterrence must be extended across all these domains – land, air, sea, space and cyberspace – and must address all possible strategic attacks, which required a strategy for "building weapons systems that clearly over-match the capabilities of both competitors." As regards the Indian role in US strategy, the document advocated to "deepen the strategic partnership with India and support its leadership role in Indian Ocean security and throughout the broader region." The US, it added, "will help South Asian nations maintain their sovereignty as China increased its influence

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in the region." With regard to the "Indio-Pacific" region, the strategy welcomed "India's emergence as a global power and a stronger strategic and defence partner," while also stressing Washington's "increased quadrilateral cooperation with Japan, Australia and India." Moreover, the strategy committed to "expand our defence and security cooperation with India, a major defence partner of the United States, and support India's growing relationships throughout the region." By contrast, the Trump Security Strategy was highly critical of Pakistan, claiming that the "US continues to face threats from transnational terrorists and militants operating from within Pakistan" and that the "US seeks a Pakistan that is not engaged in destabilizing behavior." It also sought to "encourage Pakistan to continue demonstrating that it is a responsible steward of its nuclear assets."[13] The differentiation in the American security strategy between Pakistan and India could not be more stark.

The growing American confrontation with China was also highlighted in the US Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) announced in February 2018 which called for a further build-up of American nuclear capabilities to respond to "global threat conditions (that) have worsened markedly since the most recent 2010 NPR," and signalled the "return of great power competition between the US and China and Russia," since these countries "seek to substantially reverse the post-Cold War international order and norms of behaviour." The NPR claimed that China and Russia "have added new types of nuclear capabilities to their arsenals, increased the salience of nuclear forces in their strategies and plans and engaged in increasingly aggressive behaviour, including in outer-space and cyberspace." As such the NPR asserted that the US faced "an unprecedented range and mix of threats, including major conventional, chemical, biological, nuclear, space and cyber space threats, and violent non-state actors," and, accordingly, outlined "tailored responses" to these diverse threats. Regarding Chinese strategic modernisation, the NPR referred to new developments including mobile Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), a multi warhead version of silo based ICBMs, advanced ballistic missile submarines armed with ballistic missiles, a new nuclear capable strategic launcher and nuclear capable precision guided intermediate range ballistic missile. In addition, the NPR mentioned China's growing space and cyber warfare capabilities. Apart from "threatening American assets and armies in the region," Chinese capabilities could also threaten the US itself according

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to the NPR. In terms of China's strategic objectives, the NPR claimed that "China's military modernisation and pursuit of regional dominance posed a major challenge to US interests in Asia." It also alleged China's "increasingly assertive posture in disputes with its neighbours which were American allies or partners," which included "China's claim to contested island territories, and an island-building campaign in the South China Sea." In response to these Chinese capabilities and policies, the NPR maintained that the US will "maintain the capability to credibly threaten intolerable damage as Chinese leaders calculate costs and benefits, such that the costs incurred as a result of Chinese nuclear employment, at any levels of escalation, would vastly outweigh any benefit."[14]

As can be expected, the Chinese forcefully criticsed the American National Security Strategy, maintaining that it demonstrated a "Cold War mentality" and a resort to a zero-sum game.[15] The Russians also decried the strategy as demonstrating the "imperialist character of the US and denied that Russia poses a threat to the US.[16] Trump's Nuclear Posture Review also invited Chinese and Russian criticism, both countries accusing the US of seeking to wage nuclear war and lowering the threshold for a nuclear exchange.

Taking into account American and Chinese defence spending and force levels, both American policy documents highly exaggerated the Chinese 'threat' as well as Chinese policies. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), China's annual defence spending is about 228 billion dollars whereas the US spending is around 649 billion dollars, indicating that China spends about 40 per cent of that of the US. Moreover, according to SIPRI, the American military budget is larger than that of the next 10 countries combined which includes China, Russia and India.[17] In terms of military capabilities, the Chinese have an advantage in the size of its land forces with 2,300,000 troops as compared to America's 1,281,900, but the US Air Force has 12,304 aircraft as compared to China's 4,182. The Chinese Navy has more ships in total, 780 as compared to 437 American ships, but the US has 20 aircraft carriers as compared to two Chinese aircraft carriers and 85 Destroyers to China's 36.[18] As regards nuclear weapons, there is a huge difference, with 5,800 American nuclear weapons to China's arsenal of 320 nuclear weapons.[19] In terms of modern warfare technology, China is believed to have an edge in Artificial Intelligence-based weapons but the US has a significant lead in outer space and

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cyberspace while also being the first country to set-up a dedicated Space Force as the fifth arm of its defence forces during the Trump Administration.

As regards China's external policy, which American and western sources have described as 'expansionist' and 'aggressive', a more balanced assessment is provided by noted Singapore diplomat and scholar, Kishore Mahboobani, who maintains that as China becomes more powerful, it will become more assertive but that is different from being aggressive. He points out that of the five great powers that are members of the UN Security Council, only China has not gone to war over the past 40 years, whereas the US has been at war every year. He adds that China has "restrained itself from military aggressive behaviour," instead "using non-military means to project its power." Nevertheless, China's "assertiveness" will be used to protect Chinese interests, especially regarding its internal affairs.[20]

In stark contrast to his policies to reduce America's military commitments abroad, including asking America's NATO allies to spend more for their defence, Trump even more aggressively carried forward the policies of his predecessors to contain China to the extent that this approach has moved from containment to outright confrontation. This has involved increased political, diplomatic, economic, trade and military pressure on China.

The Chinese Communist Party and President Xi's government have been accused of 'repressing' the Chinese people, violating democratic rights in Hong Kong and persecuting Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang which Secretary of State Pompeo described as "genocide" and a "crime against humanity."[21] Moreover, all these dissident groups have been openly encouraged to challenge the Chinese government through official American statements and hostile media campaigns. The traditional American 'One-China' policy has also been upended with increased diplomatic support and military assistance to Taiwan.

Moreover, accusing China of "unfair" trade practices and violation of intellectual property rights, the Trump Administration has imposed sanctions and trade barriers against China while leading Chinese companies like Huawei have been confronted with legal action and prevented from marketing its latest 5G technology in the US and Europe, along with restrictions on access to computer chips made by using US technology.

The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) including its flagship CPEC project with Pakistan has been described as using 'predatory' economic

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leverage to expand Chinese political influence while raising the debt burden for the poor recipient countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. For instance, American officials have repeatedly warned Pakistan that CPEC has incurred a crushing debt burden whereas in fact 80 per cent of Pakistan's debt is owed to the IMF, World Bank and western donors, not to China. Even this debt has in most cases been converted into grants by China. Trump Administration officials have also endorsed the Indian claims that CPEC passes through Indian territory as part of the effort to derail this project.

US officials such as Defence Secretary Mattis, have also accused China of "intimidation and coercion" especially against its neighbours while trying to usurp their rights, for instance in the South China Sea. As a result, in the military domain, the Quadrilateral alliance, involving the US, Japan, Australia and India, which had been created among the 'democracies' of the Asia-Pacific in 2007, has been further strengthened through defence cooperation, including integrated military/naval exercises such as the Malabar Naval exercises off the Indian coast. While the ostensible purpose of the Quadrilateral alliance has been to ensure 'freedom of navigation' in the Indian and Pacific oceans as well as to promote a 'rules-based order' in this region, the alliance can also be potentially used to interdict Chinese shipping through this maritime region. Since 80 per cent of Chinese trade depends on these sea lanes, any American-backed blockade would have a devastating impact on China. The Quadrilateral alliance could also be used to challenge Chinese territorial claims in the South China and East China seas. Such Chinese concerns have been further aggravated by the Trump administration's enhancement of American military capabilities in this region. Following up on President Obama's 'Re-balancing' or 'Pivot' to Asia that involved shifting 60 per cent of the American military/naval assets to this region, Trump's Defence Secretary Mattis announced in 2018 that the US would spend 1.5 billion dollars annually for military operations in the Asia-Pacific, signalling that 'the US is here to stay.'

This confrontational policy has recently led to incidents of actual confrontation. Chinese aircraft and naval vessels have faced off with American warships and planes that have operated in waters and airspace claimed by China, such as in the South China Sea. In these operations, India has been encouraged to play an increasingly active role, not just in the Indian Ocean but also in the Pacific Ocean including the South China Sea. In a symbolic gesture to underscore Indian

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involvement in this confrontation with China through the Quadrilateral alliance, the US announced in May 2018 that its US Pacific Command was being renamed as the Indo-Pacific Command. Both countries also soon thereafter initiated the 2+2 dialogue involving their foreign and defence ministers.

Towards the end of the Trump Administration, the National Security Adviser, Robert O'Brien, made public a secret internal document on 15 January 2021 that clearly outlines the American strategy in the so-called Indo-Pacific.[22] According to this document, the American objective is "to maintain US strategic primacy in the Indo-Pacific region" and "preventing China from establishing…spheres of influence." As such it maintains that "strategic competition between the United States and China will persist." To implement this strategy, the US would "align our Indo-Pacific strategy with these of Australia, India and Japan", with the "aim to create a quadrilateral security framework" with these countries.

A special place and role is assigned to India on the grounds that "a strong India, in cooperation with like-minded countries would act as a counter-balance to China." In this context, the "desired end state" of the strategy is that "India's preferred partner in security issues is the United States" and they "cooperate to preserve maritime security and counter Chinese influence," as well as that "India maintains the capacity to counter border provocations by China." Moreover, the document envisages American policies to ensure that "India remains prominent in South Asia and takes the leading role in maintaining Indian Ocean security……" To enable India to do so, the strategy commits to "actuate India's raise and capacity to serve as a net provider of security and Major Defence Partner" and "solidify an enduring strategic partnership with India under-pinned by a strong Indian military able to effectively collaborate with the United States and (its) partners in the region." In specific terms, this involves "stronger foundation for defence cooperation and interoperability; expansion of defence trade; transfer of defence technology; cooperation on shared regional security concerns; Indian engagement beyond the Indian Ocean region; support Indian membership of the NSG; and support to India through diplomatic, military channels to help address continental challenges such as the border dispute with China as well as support India' aspiration to be a leading global power." Beyond such cooperation, the strategy document proposes to "partner with India on cyber-space and space security and

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maritime domain awareness," apart from expanded "intelligence sharing" and "creating a more robust intelligence partnership."

While the Trump Administration was the first to make public this secret document on US strategy in the Indo-Pacific to contain and confront China, such a policy is neither new nor unique to the Trump Presidency. As considered in previous chapters, American efforts to pursue their dominance in the Asia-Pacific by containing a rising China, including through the building up of India as a counter-weight to China, has been implemented at least since the Bush Administration. Since successive American governments have viewed this as a strategic objective in pursuit of their zero-sum approach to China, it is very likely that the new Biden Administration will also persist with this policy, including with the strategic partnership with India. Indications to this effect have already been given by senior officials of the new Administration, underscoring that this policy has bi-partisan support in the US. For instance, Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, stated in his Senate confirmation hearing that "There is no doubt that China poses the most significant challenge of any nation-state in the world to the United States," while endorsing his predecessor, Pompeo's, description of Chinese treatment of Uyghur's as "genocide". He also claimed that "democracy is being trampled in Hong Kong". Biden's Treasury Secretary, Janet Yellen, alleged in her confirmation hearing that China was guilty of "horrendous human rights abuses" and "promised" to take on China's "abusive, unfair and illegal practices", which according to her included "creating trade barriers, stealing intellectual property and illegal subsidies to corporations".[23] To deal with the 'Indo-Pacific', Biden has appointed Kurt Campbell, a former State Department official who was responsible for President Obama's Pivot to Asia strategy, as the Indo-Pacific Coordinator, a newly created position in the National Security Council. Earlier, in 2018, Campbell had written that the previous American policy of engagement with China had been a failure, which is an indicator of the policy to follow.

Regarding relations with India to counter China, the Biden team has been as supportive as its predecessors over the last two decades. In fact, Biden's policies towards India and China are the rare exceptions of convergence with the previous Trump Administration. Secretary Blinken in his Senate testimony was categorical in stating that "India is a bipartisan success story." He remarked that "during the Obama Administration, we deepened cooperation with

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India…and I think the Trump Administrating carried that forward, including with this concept of an Indo-Pacific and to make sure that we were working with India so that no country in the region, including China, could challenge its sovereignty…" Moreover, he made clear that strategic relations with India will remain strong, especially on the Indo-Pacific and there will be continuity in dealing with China's "aggressive" actions from the Trump Administration.[24]

India has successfully played the 'China card' in Washington ever since it tried to justify its 1998 nuclear tests as deterrence against China. India's democratic credentials and its large market have also been instrumental in forging close relations with the US. But the most important factor that has come to propel the Indo-US strategic partnership has been the American objective of using India to counter-balance China. More recently, since June 2020, the Sino-Indian confrontation in Laddakh's disputed Galwan valley has further augmented American support for India. Even so, New Delhi still professes to pursue a policy of 'strategic autonomy', much as it had claimed to be non-aligned after signing a Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union in 1971. Nevertheless, India has managed to greatly benefit from American largesse while still acquiring S-400 missiles and other armaments from Russia and retaining its trade relations with China, which is, despite current bilateral tensions, still India's largest trading partner. From the Indian perspective, this 'autonomy' has increased Indian leverage much to America's (privately expressed) chagrin. It remains to be seen whether under such circumstances, the US will react negatively, for instance by applying sanctions on India for acquiring the S-400 missiles as required under its Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions bill (CAATSA). So far Washington's warnings have been ignored by New Delhi, perhaps in anticipation that the US will issue a waiver in view of its strategic interests with India.

While the escalation in the Sino-Indian dispute since mid-2020 in Laddakh has further strengthened American support for India, its geopolitical implications for India are still dangerous. Laddakh as a part of the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory between Pakistan, India and China. Especially after the Indian decision to change the status of this territory in 2019, tensions have increased not only between Pakistan and India but also between China and India. The latest Sino-Indian tensions are rooted in this development. As a consequence, India is now effectively confronted by a two-front challenge in

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Kashmir-against Pakistan along the Line of Control and China along the Line of Actual Control. Meanwhile, within the occupied state India is faced with a freedom movement since 1990 which it has failed to overcome despite repeated bouts of brutality and repression. As a result, Indian security in this region has become highly fragile, especially in view of the strategic partnership between Pakistan and China. Increased Indian reliance on the US in these circumstances will further destabilise the South Asian region.

Indo-US Defence Cooperation

As mentioned in previous chapters defence cooperation between the US and India started on a sustained basis during the Bush Administration with the conclusion of the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in September 2004. It included cooperation in areas such as nuclear, space and defence. Later missile defence was added as a fourth area of cooperation. This was followed by the new framework for India-US Defence Relationship Agreement in 2005 when the Bush Administration also undertook to secure the NSG waiver for New Delhi. Thereafter, President Obama concluded the ten-year Defence Framework Agreement in January 2015 which led to the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) in June 2015.The DTTI envisaged defence trade as well as joint research and development for co-development and co-production of defence equipment, including four "Pathfinder Projects" for aircraft carriers and jet engine technology among others.[25] In 2016, the US designated India as a "Major Defence Partner" which opened up the possibility for India to be given Trade Authorization Tier-1 status in 2018, a status reserved for American Treaty Partners, which enabled India to receive license-free access to a wide range of military and dual-use technologies. As a result, defence trade between India and the US shot up from zero in 2008 to over 20 billion dollars in 2020. This was conducted both through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and the Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) process. Apart from the one million dollars given to India annually for the International Military and Education Training (IMET) Programme since 2003, the FMS and DCS facility enabled India to obtain at that time equipment such as the MH-60R Seahawk helicopters, Apache helicopters, Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasure and the MTCR Category-I unmanned aerial system – the Sea Guardian UAS. The US also proposed availability of latest generation

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fighter aircraft such as the F-21, F/A Super Hornet and the F-15 Ex Eagle for future Indian acquisition. Other state-of-the-art equipment offered to India included military electronics, fire control, laser imaging and guidance equipment.[26] In order to institutionalise the growing defence and security cooperation, the two countries set up the 2 plus 2 format of talks between the Defence and Foreign Ministers. Three rounds have taken place so far, in 2018, 2019 and 2020. In February 2020, during President Trump's visit to India, defence cooperation was further elevated to a 'Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership' – signifying India's role as a strategic partner not just in the so-called Indo-Pacific but also at the global level, a recognition of India as a global power from the American perspective.

More importantly, the US and India have concluded four so-called 'Foundational Agreements' that the US maintains with treaty partners and allies. The first, General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), signed in 2002 as the military cooperation started, enables sharing of military intelligence and protects each other's classified information. In 2016, as the military relationship gathered further momentum, the Logistics Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) was concluded, permitting the militaries of either side to use the other's bases for re-supply and repairs. Then after considerable negotiations a special arrangement for India was crafted called the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) in 2018, an India specific variant of such cooperation with other US allies for sharing secure communications and exchange information on military exercises and operations. This was signed during the first 2 plus 2 dialogue. The fourth and perhaps most important agreement, the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA), was concluded in 2020 during the last 2020 2 plus 2 meeting. BECA allows the US to share its military Geographic Information System (GIS) with India, comprising topography, terrain and weather information as well as US satellite data, video imagery, GPS military resolutions and data-sets from airborne American assets. Such critical information would be a force multiplier for India to accurately strike its opponent's targets with pinpoint accuracy with its missiles, armed drones, aircraft and other over-the-horizon stand-off munitions. As such, through BECA, the US will share its satellite data which has digitally mapped the entire world, thereby providing India with precise coordinates of enemy targets.

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This capability will also enable midway course correction of missiles to align properly to their targets in the terminal approach for precise destruction. Since the US has digitally mapped the entire world, BECA will provide targeting data to India for use not only against China but also Pakistan.

Driven by the objective to build up Indian military capabilities against China, Indo-US military cooperation is bound to expand in future, including in the new emerging technologies for warfare. Accordingly, US policymakers advocate that India should "expand its installed base of US origin defence platforms" such as combat aircraft, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) systems and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)." Also joint military operations will require interoperability and defence systems "that can be networked across domains" while relying "on vast reservoirs of real-time data." To discourage India from going ahead with its procurement of the Russian S-400 air defence system, which could trigger American sanctions, as well as to acquire Russian SU-30MKI fighter aircraft, the US has offered its more enhanced aircraft such as the F-35 and its own ballistic missiles defence (BMD) capability, the Integrated Air Defence Weapons System (IADWS) as well as armed UAVs. As part of the DTTI (mentioned above), India has also pressed for the transfer of sensitive US defence-related technologies which Washington would now be willing to provide, including Directed Energy Weapons such as lasers and quantum sensors for navigation in "denied" or "hostile" environments.

Other areas of cutting-edge American defence research, such as cyber weapons, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, Lethal Autonomous Weapons, and Machine Learning (ML) could become available for India as well. The US National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence recently proposed the creation of a US-India Strategic Technology Alliance to support joint research on AI and ML. Such collaboration could also involve India in the research and development of AI with other American partners like Australia, Japan, South Korea and Israel.

In addition, Indo-US cooperation is steadily growing in the space and cyberspace domains. In view of this, the US did not criticise the Indian anti-satellite weapon (ASAT) test in March 2019. This indicates that the US and India will collaborate in space to threaten China's space-based assets as well as to degrade its command, control, communications, intelligence, surveillance

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and reconnaissance (C4ISR) capabilities. This threat would also apply to Pakistan. In the cyber domain, the US and India have maintained close cooperation starting from the Obama Administration, with regular exchanges between the cyber coordinator in the American National Security Council and the Indian counterpart in the National Security Council Secretariat. Such cooperation has covered shared cyber-related security issues and the development of sensitive cyber defence collaboration. In 2018, India created the tri-service Defence Cyber Agency (DCA) which is now the counterpart of the American Cyber Command.[27] While publicly the two sides have acknowledged cooperation in cyber defence capabilities, it is quite likely that they are cooperating in cyber offence measures as well, given the history of American cyberattacks on Iranian nuclear facilities (Stuxnet virus) that was developed with Israel, and against the North Korean missile programme.

Notably, India is also collaborating in the cyber domain with Israel which is known to be highly advanced in hacking and disruptive malware technologies. Since both India and Israel maintain close relations and are strategic partners of the US, trilateral cooperation among them in cyber and other high-tech areas is also definitely possible.

While the rapidly growing Indo-US military cooperation has been projected as being aimed against China, Pakistan has consistently argued that these Indian capabilities can also be used against Pakistan. Accordingly, it is not India's intentions but its capabilities that undermine Pakistan's security, deterrence and regional strategic stability. However, successive American governments have largely ignored Pakistan's concerns, while advocating unilateral restraint by Pakistan (as considered in the previous chapter). As such the US bears a heavy responsibility for the dangerous destabilisation that is now taking place in South Asia as a result of facilitating the unprecedented Indian military buildup and aggressive behaviour.

Indian Military Buildup

With the support of the US and its allies, especially over the last 15 years, India has been able to greatly expand its military power in both the conventional and strategic spheres. Cooperation with Russia, India's traditional defence partner, has also been a major contributing factor. France, with its colonial hangover and pretensions for great power status, has become a major source

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of military cooperation as well, providing India with the latest generation weaponry including the Rafale fighter jets. Israel has been yet another source in view of its close strategic partnership with both India and the US. India's own rapid economic development due to the economic reforms initiated by the Manmohan Singh government has provided the funding for India's military buildup. Even though the Indian economy has now slowed down, mainly due to the Covid pandemic, its military modernisation programme still continues apace.

According to Ashley Tellis, an American scholar of Indian origin and a strong proponent of the Indo-US strategic partnership, India today possesses the world's second largest army, complemented by the world's largest paramilitary forces. Its air force is the fourth largest and navy the seventh largest in the world. Indian defence spending by 2019-20, though a third of China's defence budget, is over five times that of Pakistan's defence spending.[28] While Tellis acknowledges that Indian defence spending "reveals significant problems" in allocations between the three services, he concludes that "the Indian military is currently superior to the militaries of China and Pakistan in their respective spheres.[29]

In terms of actual military spending by India, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) provides the most updated and reliable data. According to SIPRI, India's military expenditure grew significantly by 259 per cent over the last 30 years from 1990 to 2019 and by 37 per cent over the decade 2010-2019.[30] SIPRI also mentions that India is among the world's top five military spenders – fourth in 2018 and third in 2019 with a 6.8 per cent higher defence spending of 71.1 billion dollars as compared to 2018. By contrast, Pakistan ranked 20th in the world with 11.4 billion dollars in 2018.[31] For 2020-21, India's defence allocation has been announced as 4,71,378 crores in Indian rupees equal to about 65.86 billion US dollars, an increase of around 7 per cent over the previous year.[32]

As regards arms imports, India was continuously the world's largest arms importer for the last ten years (2009-2018) with total imports of over 32 billion US dollars. This has included purchase of aircraft (18.03 billion dollars), Naval ships (3.7 billion dollars) and missiles (3.3 billion dollars).[33] These imports were mainly from Russia, the US, France and Israel for India's

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military modernisation. Since 2011, this modernisation drive has registered an increase of 67.5 per cent on military equipment acquisitions.[34]

In terms of future procurements for its military buildup, India intends to spend 130 billion dollars over the next five to seven years to acquire 114 multirole fighter aircraft for its air force; 2,600 infantry combat vehicles and 1,700 future-ready combat vehicles for the army while the Indian Navy has plans to acquire 200 ships, 500 aircraft and 24 attack submarines over the next three to four years. India has already purchased 36 Rafael fighter jets from France which can also be used to deliver nuclear weapons in a deal estimated to be worth 9.4 billion dollars. All these aircrafts are to be delivered by the end of 2021. India is also negotiating with American companies to acquire the F-21 aircraft from Lockheed Martin and F/A Super Hornet fighter planes from Boeing for the Indian Navy.[35]

The stated and implicit objectives of India's military buildup are to acquire a two front military dominance and capability against China and Pakistan, to develop a joint continental and maritime military capability and to project Indian power beyond its borders, including in the so-called Indo-Pacific maritime zone, consistent with India's great power ambitions. All these objectives are consistent with and supported by the US.

For the pursuit of these objectives, India not only launched the buildup of its conventional forces but, more importantly, the enhancement of its strategic capabilities. According to the latest report by the American Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, "India continues to modernize its nuclear weapons arsenal and operationalize its nascent triad" of delivery systems.[36] It is estimated to have produced approximately six hundred kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium sufficient for about 200 nuclear warheads as estimated by the International Panel on Fissile Material.[37] The Bulletin of Atomic scientists maintains that all this fissile material may not have been converted into nuclear warheads and calculates that on the basis of India's nuclear delivery force structure, it has produced about 150 nuclear warheads.[38] However, these estimates do not take into account India's weapons usable reactor grade plutonium amounting to 6.5 tones[39] which is being provided by its unsafeguarded pressurised heavy water reactors and provides a further nuclear weapons stockpile.[40] Besides, since the 1980s, India has also embarked on producing highly enriched uranium (HEU) for nuclear weapons, a programme that received a major boost following the

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NSG waiver for India in 2008, enabling India to import uranium, for instance from Australia.[41] This has allowed India to use its domestic uranium resources for exclusive weapons production while using imported uranium for power generation. Given the opaque nature of its nuclear facilities separation plan and the weak safeguards agreement with the IAEA, India can also divert substantial quantities of imported uranium into its weapons programme. As a result, it is estimated that by 2020 India had accumulated 4.4 tons of weapons-useable highly enriched uranium (HEU).[42]

In addition to the 100 MWt Dhruva reactor located at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) producing weapons-grade plutonium, which is among the eight unsafeguarded Indian reactors, the Indian Rare Metals Plant near Mysore in Karnataka is producing enriched uranium, including for weapon purposes. The size and capacity of this nuclear complex have raised concerns that India is also undertaking the development of thermonuclear or hydrogen bomb capability.[43] Furthermore, India plans to build at least one more plutonium reactor in addition to the Dhruva reactor to augment its weapon-grade fissile material stocks and increase the number of nuclear warheads. Currently, a 500-megawatt prototype fast breeder reactor is also under construction at the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research near Kalpakkam which is expected to reach criticality by 2020. Six more fast breeder reactors are expected to come online in the next 15 years for which construction is expected to begin in 2021. All these facilities will be unsafeguarded. As such, using the plutonium and enriched uranium routes, India's stockpiles of weapons-grade fissile material and, therefore, number of nuclear warheads, is arguably much higher than estimated by the International Panel on Fissile Materials or the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. Given the secrecy surrounding these programmes, it is difficult to make correct estimates but according to some analysts, Indian strategists and Defense Ministry officials have stated that for India to pursue a two-front strategy against China and Pakistan, and to provide warheads for its growing triad of delivery systems, India would require between 350-400 nuclear weapons.[44]

The Indian triad of nuclear weapons delivery systems includes air, land and sea-based missiles – both on surface ships and submarines. The aircraft include about 32 Mirage-2000 and 16 Jaguars, comprising three to four squadrons based in Maharajpur in Madhya Pradesh, Nal in Bikaner, Ambala in Haryana,

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Gorakhpur in Utter Pradesh and Jamnagar in Gujarat. A naval version of the Jaguar is presumably based on India's aircraft carriers.[45] Recently, in 2021, India has received the first batch of 36 Rafael aircraft from France which are also useable as nuclear weapon delivery platforms. These are to be located at bases in Ambala and Hasimara in West Bengal. If India opts to purchase/co-produce the American F-21, this would add to its nuclear delivery capability. From the location of most of the air bases where India's squadrons of nuclear delivery capable aircraft are located –Nal, Ambala, Gorakhpur and Jamnagar – it is clear that the concentration is and will continue to be against Pakistan, despite the Indian claims about countering China.

The Indian inventory of land based missiles include the short range Prithivi-II and Agni-I with the Prithivi-II having a range of 250 kilometres and the Agni-I has a range of 700 kilometres. In July 2011, India introduced the Prahaar short range or tactical missile with a range of 150 kilometres after Pakistan's development of the Nasr missile, but this Indian acquisition has largely gone unnoticed with western focus remaining exclusively on the Nasr.[46] For longer ranges, India has developed the Agni-II with a range of 2,000 kilometres and the Agni-III with a range of more than 3200 kilometres. Both these missiles have been developed for use against China but can also be used against Pakistan from Southern parts of India. India is also developing the Agni-IV missile with a range up to 3,500 plus kilometres and the Agni-V, an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) with a range of more than 5000 kilometres. The Agni–V has already been flight tested seven times since 2018. An important aspect of the Agni-V is that, unlike other missiles, it is carried in a sealed canister on the missile launcher. This 'canisterisation' mode will drastically reduce the time…" just a few minutes from stop to launch,"[47] which marks a major escalatory step. According to Indian reports, the Agni-V will also be equipped with multiple warheads or even Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicles (MIRVs).[48] Yet another variant of the Agni missile series currently under development is the Agni-VI, an ICBM of ranges from 8,000 to 10,000 kilometres which is stated to be adaptable for launch from land and sea.[49]

India has also made considerable progress towards achieving an operational triad by developing ship launched and submarine launched ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. The Dhanush, with a range of 350 kilometres, has been designed to be launched from specially configured surface

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missiles of the Indian Navy. The Dhanush is actually a ship-based variant of the Prithivi-III. The submarine-based platforms are India's two nuclear-powered submarines acquired from Russia, the Arihant and the Arighat. These submarines are to be equipped with the 700 kilometres range Sagarika or K-15 ballistic missile. Another submarine-launched missile, the K-4 with a range of 3,500 kilometres, is being developed and has been tested six times in 2020. India claims that the K-4 is highly accurate with near zero Circular Error Probability. According to Indian official claims, yet another sea-launched missile, a naval variant of the Agni-V is currently being developed with a range of 5,000 kilometres which would enable Indian nuclear-powered submarines to target all of Indo-Pacific including the South China Sea, and parts of Africa and Europe as well. Both the existing nuclear-powered submarines have four missile tubes each and can, therefore, be armed with four nuclear capable ballistic missiles each. According to Indian claims the Arihant and Arighat submarines will be supplemented by two more submarines designated as S4 and S4* which are stated to enter service before 2024. An even more advanced version, the S-5, is claimed to be under development and would enter service in the late 2020s.[50]

A sea-based, especially nuclear-powered submarine-based nuclear weapons capability is considered by strategic analysts as the most credible second strike capability. As such, India has focused on acquiring this capability which it has effectively established by obtaining the used Russian nuclear-powered submarines and developing its submarine-launched ballistic missile capability (SLBMs). To demonstrate this newly acquired capability, India conducted its first month long sea-based nuclear deterrence patrol in November 2018, using the Arihant submarine.[51] Since such deterrence patrols by the major nuclear powers are conducted with submarines equipped with nuclear-armed missiles, it is possible that the Indian deterrence patrol also involved the submarine being equipped with missiles armed with nuclear warheads. If so, this development marked a major escalation in the region. To underscore India's newly acquired capability, Prime Minister Modi described the naval deterrence patrol as a "fitting response to those who indulge in nuclear blackmail"[52] - clearly a threat to Pakistan.

Apart from acquiring an operational nuclear triad, India has made significant strides in several other areas as part of its military modernisation

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and build up. One of these areas is the development of a Ballistic Missile Defence capability (BMD). This is based on three layers - the indigenously developed Air Defence System consisting of Prithivi missiles, the Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) being acquired from the US and the Russian S-400 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) system which is to be deployed from 2021. While such diverse systems would create operational complications and difficulties for interoperability, thereby failing to provide an effective national missile defence capability, it could still lead to a false sense of security or invulnerability which would be dangerously destabilising for regional security.

Another destabilising development is the Indian test of an Anti-Satellite (ASAT) weapon in March 2019 by destroying one of its satellites in space. The Indian leadership boasted that India had joined an 'exclusive club' of countries such as the US, Russia and China that have ASAT capabilities. Using the traditional ploy to deflect international criticism for this escalatory step, the Indians described the test as demonstrating a 'defensive capability' just as their first nuclear test in 1974 was described as a 'peaceful nuclear explosion'. However, such a 'defensive capability' to allegedly 'protect Indian assets in space' cannot hide the fact that this test provides an offensive weapon that can target satellites and other space objects belonging to Indian opponents, such as Pakistan, which, so far, does not have ASAT capability, and therefore, does not have the means to deter use of such weapons. Given the increasing reliance of countries, including Pakistan, on space satellites for communications, early warning and missile guidance, the offensive nature of India's ASAT capability to destroy satellites and degrade command and control systems of the opponent, has further destabilised the regional strategic environment. It has also opened up a new domain, space, for strategic competition with Pakistan. Moreover, the Indian ASAT test has dented the international regime to prevent an arms race in outer space, contributing to the further militarisation of this domain, in contravention of Indian claims about supporting the peaceful uses of outer space.

The ASAT test marks just the beginning of India's plans for space warfare. In June 2019, India announced the setting up of a Defence Space Research Agency (DSRO) with the task of "creating space warfare weapon systems and technologies" according to Indian Defence Ministry sources.[53] The DSRO

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would be providing research and development support to the Defence Space Agency (DSA) which has been in existence for several years and consists of members from the three armed services. The objective is to develop both kinetic and directed energy space weapons.

The March 2019 ASAT test used India's ballistic missile capability, developed for its BMD programme, involving a three stage missile with two solid fuel rocket boosters.[54] This demonstrates the coordinated and interdependent development of India's BMD and ASAT capabilities, both of which are contributing in significant ways to destabilise deterrence in South Asia.

Additional destabilising steps by India include the development of a new generation of missile systems such as supersonic and hypersonic Cruise missiles. Since 1998, India and Russia have collaborated to develop the supersonic BrahMos PJ-10 with speeds up to Mach 2.8 to 3 and range of about 500 kilometres. It can be launched from land, air or sea and can carry both conventional and nuclear warheads. An additional feature of an upgraded BrahMos Missile is that it can be used for a vertical deep dive against tanks and ships at supersonic speed. India and Russia are also co-developing a hypersonic version of the Brahmos with a speed of more than Mach 7 and a range of over 600 kilometres that can also be deployed on land, air and sea platforms, while carrying both conventional and nuclear payloads. In July 2019, India carried out a flight test of a" Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle" which was claimed to be successful. However, according to some reports, this test proved to be a failure. Even so, it is only a matter of time that this missile would become operational for "both defensive and offensive uses". In September 2020, India claimed to have carried out another successful test of this missile described as a "landmark achievement."[55] Among the cruise missile series, India is also developing the Nirbhay, a sub-sonic multiple platform long range cruise missile with a range of up to 1,000 kilometres and can carry a 300 kg conventional or nuclear warhead. Successful flight tests are said to have been carried out in November 2017 and April 2019.

Yet another high-tech weapon under development is the "air-launched Flexible Asset Drone" which uses AI (artificial intelligence) and is designed to be used in swarms of multiple drones against static or mobile targets. Powered by batteries for flights up to two hours, they operate at 100 kilometres per hour

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speed. Currently at the testing stage, these drones are expected to become operational within a decade.[56]

India's Dangerous Delusions

India's military expansion and modernisation programme starting from 2003-2004, coinciding with and encouraged by the growing strategic partnership with the US against China, was essentially motivated by three interlocking factors. The first has been India's ambition to become the regional hegemony and global power. The second is to acquire the capability to more effectively counter China. And the third is to break out of the 'paralysis' imposed on India's conventional weapons advantage over Pakistan as a result of Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD). To achieve the third objective has required India to try and attain a conventional and strategic superiority over Pakistan to credibly threaten Pakistan with a 'disarming' preemptive first strike that would destroy Pakistan's nuclear assets. Such a capability, in the Indian calculation, would dissuade Pakistan from using its low-yield nuclear weapons against an Indian conventional attack. Consequently, India would be able to re-establish the salience of its Cold Start doctrine for waging limited conventional war below the nuclear threshold by overcoming Pakistan's FSD. Such Indian thinking is a dangerous delusion.

In the words of two American experts on South Asian nuclear issues, Christopher Clary and Vipin Narang, the reason "why India has devoted considerable resources.....to develop and acquire capabilities that exceed what is required for a strictly retaliatory nuclear arsenal", is that "these developments are an early indication of India's exploration and development of options to target Pakistan's strategic nuclear system in a conflict". They add that this "shift to incorporating nuclear counter force options may be an attempt to escape India's strategic paralysis following Pakistan's development of tactical nuclear weapons"[56] (the Nasr missile).

From Pakistan's perspective, its FSD policy in response to India's Cold Start Doctrine contributed to establishing deterrence stability by negating the possibility of a limited conventional Indian attack and thereby risking a larger full-scale war that could escalate beyond the nuclear threshold. But instead of accepting this equation as the basis of strategic stability, India has opted to seek the capability for a 'disarming' preemptive first strike to destroy

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Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. As a result, India has contributed to the dangerous destabilisation that is currently under way in South Asia. It is for this reason that India's ongoing militarisation poses an unprecedented threat to Pakistan's security as well as regional stability. Given Pakistan's own ability to respond effectively to neutralise an Indian preemptive first strike, the emerging Indian strategy is dangerously unrealistic and escalatory.

India has not officially claimed a shift in its nuclear doctrine from the self-proclaimed policy of No-First-Use (NFU) of nuclear weapons towards a preemptive first strike against Pakistan, but its ongoing military buildup is a clear indication of this change. Moreover, even as India will not officially acknowledge such a shift, numerous Indian officials, both serving and retired, have either tried to reinterpret the NFU 'commitment' or called for its review. This underscores India's enduring strategic dilemma since the emergence of nuclear deterrence between Pakistan and India in 1998 based on Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD).

It should be recalled that the 'draft' Indian nuclear doctrine of 1999 claimed that India would pursue a credible minimum deterrence posture envisaging nuclear weapons use for 'retaliation' only. It further asserted that any nuclear attack on India would result in 'punitive' retaliation with nuclear weapons to inflict "unacceptable damage" on the aggressor. Most notably it also stated that India would not be the first to initiate a nuclear strike.[57] This posture was modified in the subsequent official nuclear policy announced by India in January 2003. The earlier position of 'punitive' retaliation was changed to 'massive' retaliation, which would be invoked not only in case of a nuclear attack on India but was now extended to a nuclear attack on 'Indian forces outside Indian territory'. This can only be interpreted as India using nuclear weapons if its troops were subjected to a nuclear attack while invading or occupying foreign (Pakistani) territory. As regards NFU, the updated 2003 policy qualified this commitment by asserting that India would use nuclear weapons first if the country or its forces were attacked by biological or chemical weapons. But, even before this qualification of the NFU 'commitment' in 2003, statements by Indian leaders had raised serious doubts about its credibility. For instance, as early as 2000, shortly after the Kargil crisis, Prime Minister Vajpayee had declared "we are being threatened (by Pakistan) with a nuclear

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attack. Do they understand what it means? If they think we would wait for them to drop a bomb and face destruction, they are mistaken."[58]

With the ongoing development of India's preemptive first-strike capability, the questioning of its NFU policy has become even more strident and explicit. In November 2016, the then-Indian Defence Minister, Manohar Parrikar, stated in his "personal capacity" that India should not declare whether or not it has a No-First-Use policy. He went on to describe the Indian nuclear doctrine as "only a guideline" and stated that unpredictability had to be a part of any strategy.[59] More recently, on 16 August 2019, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh stated that "till today, our nuclear policy is no first use. What happens in the future depends on the circumstances."[60]

Several Indian military and civilian officials who have served in senior positions have also called for revision or reinterpretation of the NFU pledge. General B S Nagal, a former Strategic Forces Commander who was subsequently Adviser to the Prime Minister on Nuclear Issues, recommended that India should explicitly abandon NFU and instead pursue a policy of "ambiguity" which would include the preemptive 'first-use' of nuclear weapons or launch on warning.[61] Subsequently, General Nagal wrote that "on the doctrinal side, India should favour placing itself in the driving seat rather than reacting to adversaries. The policy adopted should be assertive and preemptive to ensure escalation control in any crisis and in the worst case of war." He added that "Doctrinally, India should adopt a policy of ambiguity on the employment of nuclear weapons. The present No-First-Use policy is flawed."[62] For his part, former Indian diplomat and National Security Advisor, Shivshankar Menon, wrote while reinterpreting the NFU doctrine that "There is a potential grey area as to when India would use nuclear weapons first against another NWS (Nuclear Weapon State). Circumstances are conceivable in which India might find it useful to strike first, for instance, against a NWS that had declared it would certainly use its weapons, and if India were certain that the adversary's launch was imminent."[63] As such, Menon argued that if Pakistan uses its low-yield nuclear weapons or even contemplates their use in response to a Cold Start-type Indian attack, India would be free to launch a "comprehensive first strike."[64] This is significant because it evokes, as Christopher Clary and Vipin Narang point out, noted American strategist Herman Kahn's notion of a

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"Splendid First Strike", which involves the total destruction of the opponent's strategic capabilities.[65]

Based on these arguments, Vipin Narang postulated in a Washington seminar on 20 March 2017 that contrary to "conventional wisdom", nuclear war in South Asia would not start by Pakistan using its tactical nuclear weapons in response to a conventional Indian attack which would lead to massive retaliation by India using its counter value nuclear weapons. Instead, he argued that "There is increasing evidence that India will not allow Pakistan to go first "and that "India's opening salvo may not be conventional strikes to pick up Nasr batteries in the theatre but a full comprehensive counterforce strike that attempts to completely disarm Pakistan of its nuclear weapons so that India does not have to engage in interactive tit for tat exchange and expose its own cities to nuclear destruction". Narang further argues that there has been a "decoupling" of Indian nuclear strategy between China and Pakistan and that the force requirements that India needs in order to credibly threaten assured retaliation against China may allow it to pursue aggressive strategies – such as escalation dominance or a "Splendid" first strike against Pakistan. While acknowledging that India did not yet possess the capability for such a splendid first strike against Pakistan, Narang pointed out the undergoing development of the requisite capabilities such as a broad range of more advanced and accurate missiles with longer ranges, MIRVed missiles and Ballistic Missile Defences, which would enable India to achieve this capability.[66]

For Pakistan this debate about a change in India's no first use doctrine has been mere sophistry. It has never accepted the Indian NFU as a serious nuclear posture nor has Pakistan based its deterrence strategy on self-proclaimed commitments by its adversary. Pakistan has always recognised India's No-First-Use pledge for what it really is – an attempt to project India, especially in the West, as a 'responsible' nuclear weapons state. But, as noted above, Indian leaders and officials have themselves put this commitment in doubt from the very beginning of nuclear deterrence in South Asia. Pakistan has, therefore, worked on the basis that the no-first-use doctrine is a public relations sham. Now, India's military buildup and modernisation programme have itself exposed the duplicity of the so-called No-First-Use policy and as such several Indians have themselves abandoned this pretence.

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According to the Indian calculus, the rapid expansion and qualitative upgrade of their conventional and strategic capabilities can be used or threatened to be used to carry out a disarming or splendid preemptive first strike to destroy Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. According to Clary and Narang this "logic is seductive: Pakistan's strategic nuclear force is currently small enough that India might believe it could be disarmed or neutralised with combined strikes on Pakistan's launchers and its command and control system, and that any remaining Pakistani nuclear weapons could be intercepted with missile defences."[67] Moreover, India would also have its sea-based, especially submarine-based, second strike capability intact to neutralise a Pakistani response. In such a scenario, India's overwhelming conventional and strategic capabilities could be used to compel Pakistan against using its low-yield nuclear weapons to escalate beyond the nuclear threshold in response to a conventional Indian attack. This would, in effect, re-establish the salience of India's Cold Start doctrine and neutralise Pakistan's FSD policy. Such Indian calculations may have 'seductive logic', as claimed by Clary and Narang, but they need to take into account Pakistan's ability to respond.

Pakistan's Response

Pakistan has not remained oblivious to the Indian military build-up and modernisation programme nor to the emerging Indian threat of a preemptive splendid or comprehensive first strike. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Pakistan has anticipated these Indian developments and has taken steps to maintain continuing credible deterrence.

Pakistan has been increasing the numbers of its nuclear warheads, both low yield and strategic weapons, in keeping with its comprehensive threat assessment. As mentioned above, while India has the capability to greatly increase the number of warheads due to the NSG waiver, Pakistan will ensure credible deterrence through effective first and second strike capabilities.

Pakistan has also enhanced its own triad of delivery systems involving aircraft such as the F-16s, Mirages and the JF-17s as well as short, medium and long-range missiles with greater accuracy, payload capacity and ranges that can be launched from air, land or sea. These include the short-range Hatf-2 Abdali and the Nasr. Pakistan's longer-range missiles include the Ghaznavi and the Ghauri as well as the Shaheen series which can reach any target in India.

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In addition, Pakistan has developed the Babur series of air, land and sea-launched Cruise missiles and the air-launched Raad Cruise missiles as well as the Ababeel, which is a MIRVed medium-range ballistic missiles. The Ababeel and the Babur and Raad cruise missiles are specifically meant to penetrate India's ballistic missile defenses. By adapting surface ships and submarines as sea-based ballistic missile platforms, Pakistan has also achieved a credible second strike capability.

Moreover, to ensure the survivability of its strategic assets, Pakistan has developed hardened storage silos including underground facilities, while also widely dispersing its warheads and maintaining them in a mobile state. Precautionary measures to safeguard Pakistan's Command and Control centres have also been implemented, including against cyber-attacks.

Besides these countermeasures taken by Pakistan, the fact remains that in terms of nuclear warheads and delivery systems, India does not currently have the overwhelming superiority over Pakistan required for a disarming first strike. It is still in the process of achieving this capability. Moreover, India lacks the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities needed to launch a disarming first strike. Then there is the problem of geographical proximity between Pakistan and India, owing to which any Indian nuclear first strike would create substantial fallout that would also contaminate Indian territory.

For all these reasons, most strategic analysts argue that carrying out a preemptive strike to destroy Pakistan's nuclear capabilities is not a viable option for India. According to Clary and Narang "India would have difficulty disarming the current Pakistani force, let alone one that rapidly expands and disperses to account for counter-force fears."[68] In essence, therefore, the Indian pursuit of a disarming first strike or preemptive capability in order to restore their Cold Start option amounts to a dangerous delusion that has only served to undermine strategic stability in the region for the foreseeable future.

Testing Deterrence: Lessons of the Pulwama/Balakot Crisis

It is in this rapidly deteriorating regional strategic environment that the lessons of the Pulwama/Balakot crisis of February 2019, referred to earlier in this chapter, require a more detailed examination. This crisis brought two nuclear-armed countries to the brink of a full-scale war with the danger that it could have escalated beyond the nuclear threshold. The lessons that both sides

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have drawn from this crisis will have serious implications for future strategic stability in South Asia and beyond.

On 14 February 2019, a young Kashmiri in Indian Occupied Kashmir, Adil Ahmad Dar, drove a vehicle packed with explosives into an Indian Paramilitary convoy on the heavily guarded Srinagar-Jammu highway near Pulwama. In the explosion more than 40 Indian troops were killed. According to media reports, Dar had been a victim of Indian brutality and had been shot in the leg some months earlier when participating in a peaceful protest when Indian troops opened fire on the protestors.[69] His suicide attack was an act of revenge for which the Jaish-e-Muhammad claimed responsibility. The Indian Government immediately blamed Pakistan for this attack. While denying Pakistan's involvement, Prime Minister Imran Khan stated in a televised address that India should stop blaming Pakistan without any proof or evidence and urged the Indian authorities to share actionable intelligence for Pakistan to investigate these Indian charges. The Prime Minister also warned against any retaliation from India, saying "if you think that you will launch any kind of attack on Pakistan, Pakistan will not just think about retaliation, it will retaliate."[70] But the Indian leadership rejected this offer of cooperation while launching a tirade against Pakistan and vowing retribution.

For Prime Minister Modi, facing re-election within a few weeks of the incident, it became critical to rally public opinion by giving a robust response in keeping with his 'muscular' policy towards Pakistan. Among other threats, he declared that he had given a free hand to his military commanders to retaliate. Recognising this danger, Pakistan also reached out to the international community, especially the US, to advise Modi to act with restraint. However, at this stage, the Trump Administration leaned in favour of India, with National Security Adviser, John Bolton, conveying to his Indian counterpart, Ajit Doval, that "we support India's right to self-defence."[71] Outreach efforts by Pakistan's senior Military Officials to their American counterparts also went unanswered.[72]

Driven by these factors, India conducted an aerial attack on Pakistan near Balakot 12 days later, on 26 February, the first time it had done so across the international border since the 1971 war. India described this attack as a "non-military" aerial surgical strike on what it claimed were several buildings of a religious seminary in which 350 people were killed. In fact, the Indian planes missed their target, which was an abandoned building in any case, as the Spice

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missiles destroyed some trees on a hillside near Balakot. As Pakistan had warned at the outset of the crisis, it responded the next day with carefully calibrated air strikes which struck with precision on unmanned flanks of three military ground targets in the Rajauri sector of Indian Occupied Kashmir across the LoC and did not across the international border as India had done. It did so in order to avoid casualties and deliberately spared the senior Indian military hierarchy that was present at one of the targets. The Pakistani Air Force also shot down two Indian Air Force planes and one of the pilots was captured and was soon returned as a goodwill gesture to de-escalate tensions. India then threatened missile attacks on Pakistan which raised the question of whether these would be armed with conventional or nuclear warheads. Pakistan responded by threatening retaliatory missile strikes three times more than the number of Indian strikes, if carried out. Pakistan's Navy also detected an Indian submarine close to Pakistan's territorial waters and warned of retaliatory action after which the Indian submarine withdrew. Since this submarine was part of the Indian Naval assets deployed in the Arabian Sea, which includes the nuclear-powered Arihant submarine possibly equipped with cannisterised nuclear missiles, this action constituted a serious escalatory step. It raised the possibility that the Indians were contemplating the use of their second strike platform for launching a first strike against Pakistan, as pointed out by Pakistan's former Director General, Strategic Plans Division (SPD), General Khalid Kidwai.[73] In this escalating environment, Pakistan also convened a meeting of its highest nuclear decision-making body, the National Command Authority (NCA), chaired by the Prime Minister, as a means of nuclear signalling to India. Speaking to the media, the Spokesman for the armed forces stated "I hope you know what the NCA means and what it constitutes."[74]

Interestingly, in a complete reversal of its stance before the Indian attack on Pakistan, the US called on both countries to show restraint and de-escalate their confrontation. Similarly, American military leaders who had not taken calls from the Pakistan military, made frantic calls after the Indian attack for Pakistan not to retaliate.[75] But it was only after Pakistan had responded to the Indian attack that Islamabad was willing to de-escalate and itself offered to do so, while warning that it would retain escalation dominance through a "quid pro quo plus" response.[76] Eventually, the Modi Government backed

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down and the crisis was diffused. However, the lessons to be drawn from this crisis remain widely divergent on the Pakistani and Indian sides.

With the collaboration of a pliant and jingoistic Indian media, Modi convinced most Indians of having carried out a successful surgical strike against Pakistan and for exposing Pakistan's "nuclear bluff." He also claimed to possess the "mother of nuclear bombs" and that India's nuclear weapons were not for "Diwali" (the Hindu fireworks festival). Such belligerent rhetoric and distortion of facts earned Modi an unprecedented electoral victory a few weeks later in the 2019 elections. As mentioned earlier, this outcome has raised doubts whether the crisis was the result of a false flag Indian operation orchestrated for Modi's electoral victory. Even if this was not the case, the fact remains that the Pulwama incident was used as an opportunity by Modi to enhance his political fortunes by risking a war with Pakistan, which was a highly irresponsible venture. Moreover, the Indian armed forces were compliant in this ill-advised confrontation which risked "playing with fire at the lower end of the nuclear spectrum and Armageddon at the upper end."[77]

Impervious to such concerns, however, Modi went further to exacerbate tensions with Pakistan when in August 2019 he abrogated articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution, not only withdrawing the limited autonomy granted to occupied Kashmir but also allowing non-Kashmiris to settle in the region in order to demographically change the Muslim majority of the occupied state. This change was enforced through increased deployments of Indian troops, imposition of curfew, censorship, media blackout, closure of social media and widespread arrests including of children. The Indian government also divided Kashmir into three Union Territories, Kashmir, Jammu and Laddakh, to be ruled directly from New Delhi. This change also caused tensions with China in view of the Sino-Indian dispute over areas in Laddakh.

To make matters worse, Modi then aggressively and blatantly pushed the Hindu nationalist or Hindutva agenda of the RSS with adoption of a law denying citizenship to Muslims and by pursuing legislation that would effectively require Indian Muslims to prove their nationality. Opposition to these changes by Indian Muslims was put down through excessive use of force by the police and RSS/BJP Hindu vigilantes. The cumulative impact of these measures has been to increase alienation among Indian Muslims and

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especially among the people of Occupied Kashmir where the unprecedented repression can and will lead to violent reactions, such as the Pulwama incident. This could spark yet another spiral of confrontation with Pakistan.

Unfortunately, the Indian leadership seems oblivious to such an eventuality. Perhaps, it seriously believes that by developing the option for a preemptive first strike capability, India can call Pakistan's nuclear 'bluff'. This is apparent from the increasing crescendo of bellicose statements by Indian political and military leaders about taking over (Azad) Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan from Pakistan, targeting and destroying Pakistan's nuclear weapons, pursuing a two-front war capability (against Pakistan and China.) among other threats. But, judging from the fact that the Modi Government quickly backed off after Pakistan's response, indicates that such belligerent rhetoric is largely meant for domestic public consumption rather than an expression of serious policy objectives.

From Pakistan's perspective, the Balakot/Pulwama crisis was crucial to demonstrate that not even a conventional first strike or surgical strike can be established as a 'new normal' by India, let alone a nuclear first strike. Pakistan's FSD has ensured seamless integration between nuclear strategy and conventional military operations to ensure deterrence across the entire spectrum of the military threat from India. A single air strike during the Balakot/Pulwama crisis and that too a strike that did not cause any significant damage, did not constitute an attack that would trigger a nuclear response by Pakistan and was effectively rebuffed by conventional military means. In fact, as General Kidwai has pointed out: "while developing operational plans, the Indian planers make deliberate efforts to skirt around the Pakistani nuclear capability and nuclear thresholds." He added: "that India chose not to proceed further in February is a testimony to the cold calculation that nuclear weapons could come into play sooner rather than later." This, he went on to stress, "is nuclear deterrence at work and not nuclear bluff."[78] It is also noteworthy that at no stage during the crisis, did India try to launch a conventional attack in line with its Cold Start doctrine, again owing to Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD). This demonstrates that FSD is critical for credible deterrence and strategic stability.

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Conclusion

While nuclear deterrence prevented a major conflict in February 2019, strategic stability in the region still remains fragile. Indian occupied Kashmir is aflame and can cause another dangerous confrontation at any time. Such a confrontation may not be only between Pakistan and India but also between China and India. Modi has unleashed a nationalist hysteria in the country which could compel him to be even more adventurous and irresponsible during the next crisis. The Indian military buildup and modernisation in partnership with the US and its allies can also create a false sense of invulnerability, encouraging Indian political and military leaders to take greater risks in the future. Such risks could include a preemptive first strike. India's strategic partnership with the US and participation in the Quadrilateral alliance would also encourage greater Indian belligerence. At the same time, the increasing confrontation between the US and China with its impact on South Asia makes the regional situation even more volatile. For all these reasons, the dangerous destabilisation of South Asia is likely to continue in the future.

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13 | Future Challenges

Given the multiplicity and complexity of the issues involved, it is hazardous to make predictions about the future challenges that would confront Pakistan's security. Nevertheless, this concluding chapter attempts to identify some of the more obvious factors that would impact Pakistan's security environment in the years ahead based on existing realities and emerging trends. Among these is the reality of continuing tensions between Pakistan and India, especially over the Kashmir dispute, which is likely to persist over the foreseeable future. The Indo-US strategic alliance against China, that has encouraged and enabled Indian belligerence, is likely to expand, posing an increasing threat to Pakistan. The difficult Pakistan-US relationship, which seemed to have stabilised during 2020, following Pakistan's facilitation of the Trump administration's deal with the Taliban, could hit a rough patch again as a result of the new Biden administration's decision to 'review' this deal. Moreover, as the incoming Biden presidency has indicated, Sino-American tensions are unlikely to subside, which could have negative repercussions for Pakistan in view of its close relations with China and participation in the CPEC project.

Another important challenge would be the induction of new cutting-edge warfare technologies by India along with its pursuit of preemptive first strike capability (as considered in the previous chapter). In addition to these external factors, Pakistan's security would also continue to be greatly influenced by internal developments especially the challenges posed by terrorism, the prospects for domestic political stability and economic performance. Already the country, along with the rest of the world, has vastly suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic that started in the spring of 2020, which has caused thousands of deaths and a significant downturn in its economy, even though the impact of the pandemic has been comparatively less severe in Pakistan than in some other countries.

The Geo-Political Context

As in the past, Pakistan's future security will continue to be influenced by global developments, especially the emerging geopolitical trends that indicate

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continuing rivalry between the US and China as well as tensions between the US and Russia which, in turn, will further strengthen the strategic cooperation between China and Russia. These developments would impact Pakistan in two significant ways – one, the Indo-US strategic partnership against China would further deepen, thereby accentuating the security challenges for Pakistan in its relations with India; and two, Pakistan's own relations with China (and Russia) could heighten complications in its relations with the US, as has already happened with the outgoing Trump administration, especially over the CPEC project. Simply stated, the geopolitical equation, in which the US and India are strategic allies against China whereas Pakistan and China have serious differences with India, is likely to continue in the foreseeable future.

As considered in previous chapters, the US-China rivalry that began in earnest after China became the world's second largest economy in 2008, is rooted in their geopolitical competition, driven by their respective strategic interests. The American strategic objective ever since it emerged as the sole superpower with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, is to preserve its unipolar status by preventing the emergence of any strategic competitor. Accordingly, US policy since the past three presidents has been to contain and where necessary to confront a rising China. This zero-sum American approach has been pursued globally but with a much greater focus on China's neighbourhood in the Asia-Pacific. This American 'Pivot to Asia' started by the Obama administration, involving redeployment of nearly 60 per cent of US naval and other military assets to Asia, complimented the earlier Bush administration's policy of strengthening regional allies such as Japan and Australia while building new partnerships with countries such as India. The Trump administration took this policy even further with the operationalisation of the Quadrilateral alliance or the "Quad" involving the US, Japan, Australia and India. The ostensible purpose of this alliance is to ensure 'freedom of navigation' and a 'rules-based order' in the vast area now called by them the 'Indo-Pacific.' Of particular importance is to challenge Chinese territorial claims in this region, especially in the South-China Sea. But another potential outcome, which especially worries China, is American control over the sea lanes of the 'Indo-Pacific' through which nearly 80 per cent of Chinese maritime trade is conducted. In effect, this would ensure the containment of China. To make matters worse, the US has increased pressure on China,

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especially during the Trump administration, by imposing trade sanctions and accusing China of human rights violations, even 'genocide' and 'crimes against humanity' such as against the Muslims in Xinjiang and violating the 'democratic rights' of the people in Hong Kong. Another American allegation is that China is enticing developing countries into a 'debt trap' by offering loans for infrastructure development which they cannot repay and thereby ensuring Chinese 'control' over these countries. Moreover, the US has unambiguously supported India in the recent flare-up of the Sino-Indian territorial dispute in Laddakh while aggressively backing Taiwan in contravention of its One China policy. But potentially the most destabilising American policy that was articulated by Trump's Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, has been to advocate regime change in Beijing by attacking the Chinese leadership and the Chinese Communist Party. This not only amounts to interference in China's domestic affairs but also introduces an ideological clash in the Sino-American rivalry between American 'democracy' and Chinese communist 'totalitarianism' – a clash that previous American governments since the Nixon administration had studiously avoided.

When President Biden defeated Trump in the controversial 2020 elections and assumed office in January 2021, there was considerable speculation about the direction of his China policy. Some expected him to adopt a more mature and balanced approach to lower tensions and seek common ground with China for mutually beneficial cooperation. However, even as Biden has described relations with China as the most important for the US and committed to cooperating with Beijing on global issues such as addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, he and his cabinet colleagues have made it amply clear that the geopolitical competition with China will continue. In his two-hour telephone conversation with Chinese President Xi, Biden underscored his policy for "preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific", while also raising concerns about Beijing's "coercive and unfair economic practices, the crackdown in Hong Kong, human rights abuses in Xinjiang, and increasingly assertive actions in the region, including towards Taiwan."[1] US Secretary of State Blinken, while speaking to Yang Jiechi, China's top foreign policy official, conveyed that the US would "work with allies to hold China accountable for its efforts to threaten stability in the Indo-Pacific including.....the Taiwan Strait and its undermining of the rules-based international system."[2] Blinken also

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endorsed Trump's China policy, stating in a television interview that "I think in fairness to President Trump, he was right to take a tougher approach to China."[3] The National Security Advisor, Jake Sullivan, for his part, stated that the US will join hands with a "chorus of voices" that can "drive the argument that says we are going to stand up for a certain set of principles in the face of aggression and the steps China is taking."[4]

Another indicator of the Biden administration's thinking is the report of the influential Atlantic Council of January 2021, which claims that "the single most important challenge facing the United States in the 21st century is the rise of an increasingly authoritarian China." It goes on to refer to China as a "totalitarian police state" and a "revisionist power", while advocating "a full-fledged global ideological battle in defense of political, economic and societal freedoms against China's authoritarian state capitalist model" in cooperation with America's "major Asian and European treaty allies so that their combined critical mass (economic, military and technological) is deployed in common defense of the US-led liberal international order." The report also calls for a "rebalance" in US relations with Russia, aimed at "dividing Russia from China." But the most outrageous recommendation is to effectively bring about regime change in China by isolating President Xi and his supporters within the Communist Party. Accordingly, the "overriding political objective should be to cause China's elite leadership to collectively conclude that it is in the country's best interests to continue to operate within the existing US led liberal international order rather than build a rival order."[5] While such an 'academic' report may not constitute official policy, there is no doubt that think tanks such as the Atlantic Council serve as sounding boards for official policy options and their reports, such as this one, are written by former or serving officials and members of Congress. In any event, what is clear is that there is bipartisan support in the US for the continuation of the policy to contain and confront China in the future to maintain American hegemony by preventing the emergence of China as a strategic competitor. Since this policy has bipartisan support, it is likely to continue in the foreseeable, irrespective of which party is in power.

The Chinese response, which has been considered in earlier chapters, had all along been measured and restrained but is now becoming more assertive. The Chinese leadership had spoken of a 'peaceful rise' of their country and

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offered mutually beneficial 'win-win' cooperation to the US and its allies. With President Xi's rise to power, China has become comparatively more assertive in defence of Chinese interests with pursuit of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which not only aims at the expansion of China's global role but also pursues the geopolitical objective of preventing American containment through control over maritime routes in the 'Indo-Pacific'.

Objective studies in the US itself have exposed that the American charges of a Chinese 'debt trap' are a 'myth', since beneficiaries of Chinese loans in Asia and Africa, such as Sri Lanka or Pakistan, are more in debt to the IMF and other donors instead of China.[6] To demonstrate its transparent and mutually beneficial international cooperation, China has recently concluded two major agreements with Asian and European countries – the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RECP) with 14 leading Asian economies including Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand; and the China – EU Comprehensive Agreement on Investment, which includes most of America's NATO partners. A major outcome is to circumvent American trade sanctions and the containment of China policy. As a result, the spokesman of the Chinese Ministry of National Defence stated in January 2021 that any attempt to contain China is "mission impossible" and the Americans "will only end up shooting themselves in the foot."[7]

In a virtual address to the World Economic Forum (WEF) in January 2021, President Xi called for international cooperation to "jointly promote strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth of the world economy." He further stressed that states should "abandon ideological prejudice and jointly follow a path of peaceful coexistence, mutual benefit, and win-win cooperation" – an oblique reference to the US. In another such reference, he stated that "Difference in itself is no cause for alarm" but "what does ring alarm is arrogance, prejudice, and hatred" while trying "to force one's own history, culture and social system on others."[8] In a more direct rebuttal, Yang Jiechi, State Commissioner and Politburo Member responsible for foreign policy, told US Secretary of State Blinken in a phone conversation that the US should "correct recent mistakes, and work with China to promote the healthy and stable development of China-US relations by upholding the spirit of non-conflict, non-confrontation mutual respect and win-win cooperation." He further warned that "Each side should focus on taking care of its own

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domestic affairs. China will firmly continue down the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics and no one can stop the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation."[9] As noted earlier, the Chinese have also described the Quadrilateral alliance as an Asian NATO and accused the US of seeking to start a new Cold War. Striking an even more defiant note, President Xi told Communist Party officials that "The biggest source of chaos in the present day world is the United States" and that "the United States is the biggest threat to our country's development and security."[10]

With their growing economic and military power, the Chinese are, therefore, now more confident and defiant against the US than ever before. The fact that China has also emerged more successfully than the US from the COVID pandemic and is now the major driver of the global economy, gives further momentum to its emergence as a great power. In these circumstances, China will increasingly resist American attempts at its containment and will forcefully challenge American attempts for global supremacy. It will also more aggressively push back against American attempts to interfere in China's internal affairs. As a result, the Sino-American rivalry is likely to continue and intensify in the foreseeable future.

Similarly, the American rivalry with Russia is likely to increase under the Biden administration. Russia has not only been accused of trying to influence American domestic politics but also of several cyber-attacks against American institutions and business organisations. Several sanctions have been imposed on Russia while a number of Russian diplomats have been expelled. President Putin has been described as an 'authoritarian' leader even as his political opponents have been openly supported by the west. The UK has also accused the Russian President of trying to assassinate his critics in Britain and elsewhere. But the most important area of confrontation between the US and Russia would be in Europe where the continuing efforts to expand NATO and the European Union eastwards, such as in Ukraine, would cross a Russian redline for its security. As Moscow has already demonstrated in 2014 by attacking Ukraine and occupying Crimea to prevent its inclusion in the western orbit, it could do so again if a similar situation arises.

American tensions with both China and Russia are likely to further deepen the strategic partnership that already exists between them. They are determined to prevent continuing unipolar hegemony by the US and seek to ensure the

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emergence of a multipolar global order. Accordingly, Beijing and Moscow are going to strengthen their strategic cooperation to challenge Washington. This would pose a twin threat to the US while also forcing American allies to sacrifice their interests linked to their relations with China and Russia, thereby creating complications in the western bloc. The consequence would be a tense and polarised global environment.

The South Asian Scenario

The continuation and intensification of the geopolitical competition between the US and China will further prolong the negative impact on South Asia in the future. This would pose continuing security challenges for Pakistan owing to increasing Indian military capabilities as a strategic ally of the US and a key member of the Quad alliance against China.

The frozen state of Pakistan-India relations is likely to continue at least until Prime Minister Modi and his RSS driven BJP is in power. Even though Modi's government seems to have lost some of its popularity due to mishandling of the COVID pandemic, which has also caused an economic downturn, apart from the discriminatory treatment of Indian Muslims, there is no viable political opposition that can defeat the BJP at the polls. Besides, the appeal of Hindu nationalism has galvanised India's Hindu majority and provided overwhelming support to the RSS-BJP, remains a strong political platform. Other BJP leaders, such as Amit Shah, the Home Minister, or Yogi Adityanath, the Chief Minister of UP, who could replace Modi in the future, are even more rabid proponents of Hindu fascist nationalism than he is. Alternatively, even if the next Indian election in 2024 is won by the opposition Congress party or a coalition of opposition parties, they would still be under pressure to pursue the 'muscular' BJP policy towards Pakistan which, as the last election demonstrated, is a winning formula in a revanchist India determined to become a great power.

Therefore, the possibilities for Pakistan and India to resolve the underlying reasons for their tensions, the Indian pursuit of great power status and the volatile Kashmir dispute, are minimal at best. Even in the best-case scenario where a solution to Kashmir is found, there is no possibility at all that India would abandon its quest for regional domination. As a result, the strategic competition between Pakistan and India would continue, fuelled by India's

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strategic alliance with the US against China. Pakistan, would therefore, be forced to ensure continued credible deterrence in order to protect its security and maintain strategic stability in South Asia.

Moreover, the strategic environment in South Asia would remain tenuous as long as India persists with its repressive policies in occupied Kashmir. In such circumstances, a recurrence of a Pulwama-type incident cannot be discounted, which would inevitably lead to another military crisis between Pakistan and India as happened in February 2019. Pakistan has also raised concerns about an Indian false flag operation leading to a "surgical strike" for domestic political reasons which would again lead to a military confrontation between the two countries. The frequent exchange of firing between Pakistani and Indian troops along the LoC in Kashmir may provide another reason for escalation towards a larger conflict. A positive development, nonetheless, took place on 25 February 2021, following contacts between Pakistani and Indian Director-Generals Military Operations (DGMOs) who agreed to a ceasefire along the LoC and pledged to adhere to the ceasefire undertaking reached in 2003 which had held for several years. They also "agreed to address each other's core issues and concerns which have a propensity to disturb the peace and lead to violence."[11] However, it remains to be seen how long this ceasefire understanding will last and whether it would lead to further steps towards the reduction of bilateral tensions. In any event, India will not abandon its quest for strategic supremacy over Pakistan, which will remain the underlying problem.

The election of President Biden had raised hopes in some Pakistani circles that under his leadership the US would be more proactive in promoting dialogue between Pakistan and India including on a Kashmir solution as well as helping to end Indian repression in the occupied valley. Indeed, the US has already called for a resumption of the Pakistan-India dialogue and is believed to have worked behind the scenes to have facilitated the 25 February ceasefire agreement. Biden may also push harder on India to respect human rights in Kashmir. However, it is highly unlikely that Biden will push India to change its Kashmir policy and accept the Kashmiri right of self-determination because his administration would not be willing to jeopardise the strategic partnership with India for the sake of the Kashmiris or Pakistan.

Moreover, India's Kashmir problem will not remain restricted to differences with Pakistan but has already led to the reactivation of tensions with China

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in the Laddakh area of Indian-occupied Kashmir. This territorial dispute over demarcation of the border dating back to the 1950s, which led to the Sino-Indian war of 1962, has again been the source of clashes between the two sides since the summer of 2020. While views differ on which country is responsible for the renewed confrontation, the undeniable fact is that the Modi government's ill-conceived decision to change the status of occupied Kashmir in August 2019, triggered tensions with both Pakistan and China. It was largely as a result of Chinese efforts that the Kashmir dispute was raised twice so far in the UN Security Council for the first time after the 1965 Pakistan-India war. While India has tried to play down the military clashes with China and recently the two sides managed to conclude an agreement to cease hostilities, this border dispute will continue to linger in the future.

These developments have placed India in a precarious strategic dilemma as it faces Pakistan along the LoC in Kashmir and China along their Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Laddakh - which is in effect a two-front confrontation. Even though the Indian military leadership has claimed to be prepared for a simultaneous two and half-front war – with Pakistan, China and the Kashmiri insurgency – in reality, the Indians have not even succeeded in overcoming the Kashmiris, despite trying for more than three decades. In this scenario, India will become increasingly dependent on the US for its security, especially against China. The US has already responded positively by expressing full support for India's "sovereignty and territorial integrity" as stated by Secretary of State Blinken.[12] While it remains to be seen how far the US will go to support India against China in case of renewed military clashes between them, what is clear is that this issue will further strengthen the Indo-US partnership in the future.

Even as Indo-US relations are likely to surge based on their strategic convergence, relations between Pakistan and the US are unlikely to improve in any substantial manner. Perhaps they may even deteriorate further due to the impact of worsening US-China relations and the continuing stalemate in Afghanistan. As mentioned earlier in this book, Pakistan has never been of importance for the US in and of itself but only for 'transactional" reasons when it has been in the American interest to cooperate with Pakistan, such as against the Soviet Union during the Cold War or against terrorism after 9/11. As such, tactical and not strategic reasons have shaped Pakistan-US relations.

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Islamabad has been a 'valued partner' when it has suited Washington while at other times the American approach has been one of benign neglect at best or active hostility at worst. This pattern is likely to continue in the future due to a lack of strategic convergence between the two sides. The best that Pakistan can expect is American cooperation and assistance in 'soft' areas such as limited economic and trade relations, climate change mitigation, renewable energy, and health issues, especially related to the COVID pandemic. As far as the 'hard' issues are concerned, Kashmir, Indian militarisation, and nuclear deterrence, among others, the US will be more inclined to favour India.

For the short to medium term, however, the US will still need Pakistan's cooperation to end its 'forever war' in Afghanistan and in the related context of counter-terrorism. As stated by Biden's Secretary of Defence, General Austin, "Pakistan is an essential partner in the peace process in Afghanistan" and that "we need to work with Pakistan to defeat al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Khorasan (ISIS)."[13] For these reasons, he underscored his intention to work with Pakistan's military for which he advocated the continuation of the International Military Education and Training (IMET) programme. But both these issues of common interest are double-edged problems.

Regarding Afghanistan, Pakistan facilitated the American dialogue with the Afghan Taliban during the Trump administration which led to the US-Taliban agreement of February 2020. However, even as Biden himself has been in favour of an American withdrawal, his advisors, especially from the Pentagon, have advised a 'review' of the Taliban deal on the grounds that the Taliban have not fulfilled their commitments and in order to preserve the 'gains' of the last twenty years in Afghanistan. Therefore, the deadline for troop withdrawal by May will not be met as Biden committed to withdraw by 11 September, 2021. Since this will happen without the concurrence of the Taliban, the US-Taliban deal could collapse. Further complications for Pakistan could also emerge if the Afghan peace process itself breaks down and there is a return to a full-scale civil war in Afghanistan. In such a scenario, Pakistan would not only continue to face the consequences of Afghan in-fighting, including a renewed influx of refugees but also the danger of a surge in terrorism, including by the TTP.

The resumption of Taliban attacks on US and NATO forces could also revive the American charges against Pakistan of supporting Taliban 'terrorists',

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despite the obvious dichotomy that the US sought Pakistan's assistance to engage with these 'terrorists' and concluded an agreement with them.

Moreover, in the American narration, repeated recently by General Austin, Pakistan is expected to crack down on 'terrorists' attacking India, regarding whom "Pakistan's progress is incomplete."[14] This clearly indicates that Pakistan will continue to face American pressure over 'terrorist' activities against India and Afghanistan.

Still, the American reliance on Pakistan in the context of Afghanistan and counter-terrorism does provide some leverage to Pakistan. Pakistan would need to use this leverage going forward to protect and enhance its interests. At a minimum, Pakistan should ask the Americans for greater compensation for use of its air and ground space for America's Afghan operations and to enforce an end to Indian sponsored terrorism against Pakistan from Afghan soil. This is one of the opportunities that Pakistan must use in the years ahead.

Another issue that would become contention between Pakistan and the US in the future would be Washington's renewed interest to start negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) in the CD. President Biden has already stated his priority focus on nuclear issues and to revive the Obama administration's nuclear agenda which had been abandoned by President Trump. Biden has, accordingly, renewed the New START agreement with Russia and seeks further arms control arrangements with Moscow, while indicating preference for similar agreements with Beijing, which has so far demurred. He is also keen to revive the nuclear deal with Iran, the JCPOA, which Trump had rejected. Seeking also to reactivate the American non-proliferation and disarmament agenda at the multilateral level, Secretary Blinken, in his speech to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on 22 February stated that "As a first step, its finally time to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons."[15] For Pakistan, however, a fissile material cut-off treaty or FMCT still remains unacceptable owing to the continuously growing Indian nuclear arsenal and its increasing stocks of fissile material. As considered in previous chapters, the FMCT proposed by the US and its allies only envisages a ban on future production of fissile material for weapons but does not take into account the asymmetry in the amounts of existing stocks. Since India has comparatively larger stocks than Pakistan which are growing, a FMCT would freeze this disparity to Pakistan's permanent disadvantage.

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Given these differences between Pakistan and the US on the FMCT issue, there is a strong possibility that this divergence would again become a challenge for Pakistan in the future.

It is also likely that the Biden administration would revive the earlier American narrative about Pakistan's 'fastest growing' nuclear weapons programme, the 'destabilising' effects of its so-called tactical nuclear weapons and the development of long-range missiles. Pakistan could once again be called to demonstrate 'restraint' while no such restraint would be demanded from India in view of the Indo-US strategic partnership. This discriminatory American approach, is, therefore, likely to continue in the years ahead.

The regional impact of the Sino-American rivalry has already been manifest in the US and Indian opposition to CPEC as part of China's BRI during the Trump administration. Apart from warning Pakistan about falling into a 'debt trap' with China, Washington and New Delhi have opposed CPEC on the grounds that it 'violates' Indian 'sovereignty' in Gilgit-Baltistan. India has reportedly also sponsored terrorist attacks against Chinese workers involved with the CPEC project such as in Karachi, Gwadar and other areas in Baluchistan.[16] Since the BRI and its key CPEC project undermines the American objective to contain China by controlling its maritime routes, it is possible that the Biden administration will also oppose CPEC as was done by Trump. This will obviously cause problems for Pakistan in its relations with the US.

On the other hand, the Indo-American confrontation with China in the foreseeable future will provide increasing opportunities for Pakistan to benefit from enhanced cooperation with China. Such cooperation could go well beyond the current levels of Sino-Pakistan political, security, economic and trade engagement. Pakistan's focus should be on Chinese assistance and investments in high-tech areas for both civilian and military applications. Such China-Pakistan collaboration could help to neutralise the growing Indo-US security challenge to both sides. China (along with Russia) will also continue supporting Pakistan's advocacy of a political transition in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of American troops. Another political opportunity for Pakistan would be to leverage its partnership with China to improve relations with Russia, given the strong alliance between these two countries against the US.

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Changing Nature of Warfare

A major challenge to Pakistan's security in the future will be posed by the increasing application of scientific and technological developments toward the evolution of new weapon systems. Already the use of such developments has led to the emergence of 'fifth generation' warfare capabilities which continue to be developed and deployed. Since there is no international regime in place to control or ban such weapons, nor are there any serious efforts to do so, countries that are left behind in this race will become increasingly vulnerable. While Pakistan has recognised this challenge, it is still far behind the curve and needs to quickly catch up, especially since India has already started investing heavily in 'smart weapons' technologies.

The development of computers, especially supercomputers, and the Internet, has brought about a technological revolution that is just as important as the industrial revolution was in the last century. The result is that now virtually every national system of every country increasingly relies on these technologies. But, while such technologies have facilitated progress, they have also enabled the development of advanced weapon systems and made the lesser advanced countries more vulnerable. Today cyber warfare has emerged as a major new domain for conflict in addition to land, air, sea and space. By using cyber malware and ransomware, both state and non-state actors, are operating in cyberspace to hack or disable the target's operating systems using computers, including banks, electrical grids, nuclear facilities among a host of other computer reliant systems. The US, Russia, China and Israel are among the world's cyber warfare leaders, but countries like India are also moving rapidly in this field. The most well know cyber-attack was ten years ago when the US and Israel introduced the 'Stuxnet' virus to disable Iran's nuclear facilities. The US also claims to have used a cyber-attack against North Korea's missile programme. Russia and China have also been accused of cyber-attacks against American organisations including government agencies. Indian cooperation with Israel in the cyber domain has been rapidly growing in recent years and it is believed that in December 2019, an Israeli-assisted Indian cyber-attack on Pakistan involved targeting the cell phones and electronic equipment of government officials and military personnel.[17]

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Much more dangerous is the use of cyber-attacks on systems related to nuclear Command and Control as well as nuclear weapons and their delivery systems themselves. Such attacks can undermine the very credibility of nuclear deterrence and can, therefore, be highly destabilising. This is particularly dangerous in the Pakistan-India context where the reaction time is extremely short – no more than 3 minutes. India, which is collaborating with the US and Israel in cyber technologies, has incorporated cyber security in its Armed Forces Joint Doctrine of 2017, which recognises cyberspace as an additional domain for warfare capabilities. Recognising the potential impact of cyber technology on strategic stability, Pakistan set up the National Center of Cyber Security (NCCS) at the Air University in 2018,[18] apart from implementing safety protocols in key official and financial organisations. However, these measures are largely defensive and further efforts are needed to develop offensive cyber capabilities for effective deterrence.

Clearly, the increasing use of cyber capabilities as a new warfare domain will change the nature of future conflicts. Those countries with the most advanced and effective cyber weapons would dominate this digital arena. Pakistan will, therefore, need to further develop its cyber warfare capabilities to protect its security.

Outer space is also rapidly emerging as another domain for warfare with the increasing militarisation of this 'global common', in defiance of international agreements such as the Outer Space and Moon Treaties among others. Since space vehicles like satellites and rockets serve a dual purpose, it has been extremely difficult to prevent the militarisation of space. Increasing improvements in space technologies and their acquisition by a growing number of countries have further added to these dangers. The US leads the race in space, with 45 per cent of the world's currently operational satellites while Russia has 15 per cent and China about 7 per cent. India has now emerged with the fifth largest space programme. From a military perspective, satellites not only provide data for Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) systems but also vital intelligence for Command and Control, early warning, ballistic missile guidance, target acquisition and ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) capabilities. Space is further militarised by the development of Anti-Satellite weapons and by Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBMs) that traverse through space while the potential development of the Hypersonic Glide Vehicle by the major powers, will make the confrontation in space even more deadly.

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As considered in previous chapters, the Indian space programme started in the early 1960s with assistance from the US, France and Russia. Indian missiles were copied from the American Saturn rockets for instance, which indicates the dual-use purpose of Indian space capabilities. Space cooperation with the US further intensified with the conclusion of the Indo-US defence partnership during the Bush administration. Currently, out of India's 56 operational satellites, at least 19 satellites are dedicated for military purposes. In March 2019, India conducted an Anti-Satellite Test (ASAT) by using its Agni missile to destroy one of its redundant satellites in space. These capabilities provide India with a major technological advantage over Pakistan in case of conventional or nuclear war since Pakistan's space capabilities are still limited. India has already set up a Defence Space Research Organisation (DSRO) in June 2019 with the dedicated task of creating space warfare weapon systems and technologies. The DSRO is working closely with the Indian Defence Space Agency (DSA) which was created much earlier and includes members of the three armed services. These organisations are working not only to launch more military satellites and develop more accurate ASAT capabilities but also to use space technologies for developing ICBMs and Hypersonic Space Vehicles in future. Another area of development is Directed Energy Weapons (such as Lasers) in addition to the existing Kinetic Energy Weapons.[19] According to some estimates, India allocated 1.9 billion dollars for its Department of Space in 2019, indicating its continued commitment to the modernisation and development of its dual-use space programme.[20]

While cyber and space weapons have already become a part of modern warfare, there are several new cutting-edge technologies under development that would fundamentally change the nature of conflict in the future. These top secret weapons programme can be placed in three broad categories: i) Weapons of Mass Disruption; ii) Weapons using Artificial Intelligence (AI), and, iii) Innovative systems using nanotechnology, biotechnology and bio-synthetic engineering. In the first category, the use of cyber-attacks has already started to disrupt the opponent's operating systems such as electricity grids, functioning of sensitive facilities, banking and communications. An additional weapon for mass disruption is Electronic Warfare – to cause massive nationwide power outages and thereby cripple the country. In the domain of AI, the most significant application is in robots or Lethal

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Autonomous Weapons (LAWs) which has already reached initial stages of development. Other AI applications include military logistics, 'smart' weapons like swarming drones and cruise missiles with self-guidance systems. Further into the future would be autonomous strike aircraft, underwater vehicles and even miniaturised indestructible weapons the size of insects like the 'Mesh worm'. These 'autonomous' weapons would not have any human in the loop and would be designed to choose and eliminate targets on their own using AI. Within the third area of innovative technologies are several types of weapons applications. Quantum technology has military uses for advanced communications for interception and decryption, quantum radar systems, and uses in outer space. Quantum computing is a further application with vast potential. Further innovations include the use of directed energy for weapons such as the 'Microwave Ray Gun' that would create disabling sounds against enemy soldiers that directly enter the head rather than through the ear and are, therefore, immune to earplugs. 3D printing, another evolving technology, can be used to increase weapons production on a cheaper and more massive scale, including components of missiles, engines and digitally designed warheads. Biotechnology could in the future create 'customised humans' through low-cost gene editing – or super soldiers. Bio-synthetic engineering could be used to create highly advanced biological and chemical weapons by creating new genetic codes that do not currently exist, as well as by recreating extinct viruses, diseases and nerve agents, for which there would be no antidotes.

Given its large scientific and technological base, the US is considered to have a major lead in the development of these new warfare capabilities. In 2014, the Obama administration launched the Pentagon's 'Long Range Research and Development Planning Programme' which envisages developments in areas of Robots and AI-based autonomous weapon systems, Miniaturisation, Big Data, 3D Printing and Advanced Manufacturing for the development of hypersonic vehicles/missiles, guided munitions, quantum technology among others. The Trump Administration's National Security Strategy also committed to maintaining the technological edge over China and Russia. Even so, American sources claim that in certain areas, such as AI, the Chinese are equal if not ahead of the US.[21] According to another report, China is projected to invest from 10 to 15 billion dollars over the next five years in quantum computing

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alone.[22] In terms of AI, the US National Security Commission on AI recently claimed that China could soon replace the US as the world leader in AI.[23]

By comparison, India is far behind China and the other major powers in terms of futuristic weapon systems. So far it has developed its capabilities in cyberspace and outer space. It is also collaborating with Russia to develop a hypersonic cruise missile – the BhraMos. But India has an advanced and extensive technological base as well as human resources to make significant strides in the future. In its 2017 Joint Doctrine of the Armed Forces and the 2018 Land Warfare Doctrine, India has clearly declared that "defence technology is an important strategic resource" and in 2018 India launched its National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence. Together with its achievements in the cyber and space domains, India has now certainly embarked on a relentless race to catch up with the major powers, especially China, in pursuit of its goal of becoming a global power. It can also count on the assistance of the US and Israel apart from other western countries to acquire such cutting-edge technologies.

These developments will have far-reaching implications for Pakistan's security and regional stability in the future. Of particular importance will be the need to maintain the continuing credibility of nuclear deterrence. While Pakistan would need to avoid an across-the-board arms race with the far larger and more robust Indian economy, its limited resources would be better spent on technologies that would make a qualititive rather than a quantatative difference. For instance, Pakistan should in the future focus on developing cyber warfare capabilities, anti-satellite weapons for deterrence in space, hypersonic missiles and AI weapons since such weapons can provide a qualitative edge. Other systems, such as Ballistic Missile Defence, are not only expensive but also unreliable as they can be penetrated with Cruise and MIRVed missiles which Pakistan has already developed. Acquisition of such high-tech weapons would require foresight, meticulous planning and buildup of scientific and technological capabilities. This may seem a daunting task, but Pakistan's past achievements in the nuclear and missile realms show that it can be done.

Hybrid Warfare

Over the recent past, especially with the developments in information technology and the growing use of social media, there has been increasing

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use of the term 'hybrid warfare' to describe mainly non-kinetic means used by state and non-state actors to disrupt and destabilise targeted countries. While the use of means short of actual war, such as economic leverage, blockades, sanctions, disinformation, propaganda and destabilisation among others, have been tools of warfare for centuries, also known as the strategy of the 'Indirect Approach', it is the latest technological revolution that has made hybrid warfare much more lethal than ever before. A recent western study describes hybrid war as "the synchronised use of multiple instruments of power tailored to specific vulnerabilities across the full spectrum of functions" of the target country. In its current form, it relies "on the speed, volume and ubiquity of digital technology." Its purpose is to "exploit national vulnerabilities across the political, military, economic, social, informational and infrastructure spectrum."[24]As examples, this study refers to the use of hybrid war by Russia in Ukraine, by Iran in Syria and the Islamic State (ISIL) in Syria in recent years. Since this is a western assessment it does not refer to the use of hybrid war by the US or its partners against Iran, Russia, China, or even Pakistan.

Lately, in Pakistan there have been increasing references to use of Hybrid war techniques by India and the US against Pakistan in official and academic circles. It has been claimed that since nuclear deterrence has negated the option of conventional war, non-kinetic means are being employed to destabilise Pakistan by exploiting its internal vulnerabilities. These include the promotion of terrorism, fuelling religious, sectarian and ethnic differences, manipulating economic challenges and spreading disinformation. Additional tools are sanctions and economic pressure, such as through the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the IMF. Among other targets is CPEC as part of the disinformation campaign alleging a Chinese 'debt trap' being faced by Pakistan. Organised and dedicated use of information technology platforms such as social media is being aggressively used in conjunction with traditional media for spreading disinformation and fake news. As an example, the Indian EU Disinfo Lab and numerous trolling sites on social media are cited for spreading fake news about Pakistan.[25]

There can be no doubt that developments in technology and the digital divide between developed and developing countries place the latter at a tremendous disadvantage in this information age. This disparity has been and will continue to be used as a form of leverage by the more advanced countries

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to further their interests. Pakistan will be no exception. The latest and most blatant form of such manipulation, Hybrid warfare, is now a reality. Used in conjunction with cyber warfare and AI weapons of mass disruption, it will be used to destabilise opponents with devastating impact. For these reasons, Pakistan will not only have to overcome its vulnerabilities that can be exploited, but more importantly, develop its own capabilities to counter hybrid warfare.

Pakistan's Internal Challenges

Throughout its history, as this book points out, Pakistan's major vulnerability has been its domestic instability. Recurring political crises coupled with economic underperformance has not only stymied national development but also made the country susceptible to external pressure. Despite these challenges, the fact that Pakistan has achieved security through credible nuclear deterrence is no small achievement. But, going forward, it will be vital to ensure political stability and economic growth to confront the multiple challenges ahead in a rapidly changing global and regional environment, as considered above.

Despite the second peaceful democratic transition in the country after the 2018 elections, domestic politics remains mired in controversy and confrontation. None of the three major political parties has a clear majority and therefore have to rely on smaller parties for their majority in Parliament. This makes the system inherently unstable and unpredictable. Charges and counter-charges of corruption have added to the confusion. Prime Minister Imran Khan faces continuing challenges from the opposition and after a closely contested Senate election had to get another vote of confidence for his political survival in 2021. Still opposition protests have not abated.

Voted into office on a mandate for change from the corrupt dynastic leaders over the last thirty years, the Prime Minister has been unable to enforce any real change, largely due to entrenched vested interests in the country. The quality of governance has also been abysmal, mainly owing to a stratified bureaucracy and indifferent second-tier leadership.

Past mismanagement and corruption have landed the country under a crushing foreign debt burden of 23 billion dollars which is growing. More than half of the national budget is diverted to debt servicing with precious little left for defence, development and the social sector. Since government resources

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remain far short of expenditure, with hardly any expansion of the tax net, the state has to rely on external borrowing from the IMF and bilateral donors. It is also forced to increase indirect taxes, such as on oil, gas and electricity, thereby placing an increasing burden on the poorer segments of society. This has also retarded industrial and agricultural production, further compounded by the COVID pandemic. As a result, the economy collapsed with a negative growth balance of 0.4 per cent in 2020. However, according to IMF estimates in October 2020, growth is forecasted to resume at one per cent of GDP in 2021 and stabilise at four per cent in 2022. However, IMF conditionalities for its bailout package, such as the devaluation of the Rupee and consequent increase in imported energy prices have accelerated inflation, deeply hurting the common consumer. Pakistan's placement on the 'grey list' of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has added yet another layer to Pakistan's economic difficulties by restricting access to external investments and capital.

While incidents of terrorism have comparatively decreased due to military action against terrorists, the threat has not been fully overcome as yet. Besides, religious extremism still remains a challenge with periodic demonstrations of street power and disruption of civic life in urban areas, especially in large cities.

State institutions have also underperformed, especially in terms of law and order and access to justice. This has repeatedly led to a backlash by disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of society. The judicial system has not worked well either, with the courts overloaded with endless pending litigation, leading to the dubious distinction of the Judiciary being placed among the lowest internationally.

All of these are daunting challenges which would take decades to overcome. Still, Prime Minister Imran Khan's PTI government has made some modest progress such as implementing a social safety network through the Ehsas programme for monetary relief to the extremely poor, funding low-income housing schemes, free health care, funding self-employment opportunities and providing shelters for the homeless. As noted above, growth is also picking up, with promising progress in some sectors such as automobile production and the construction industry. Exports have increased as well which would help to alleviate the country's balance of payments problems. An increase in remittances by overseas Pakistanis and their savings in foreign currency accounts which have gone up, would further help the economy recover.

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Agricultural productivity, which had been declining, has also marked some improvement, while an increase in the wheat support price would encourage greater output of this staple product. Meanwhile, the largely private services sector has remained buoyant and has picked up after the decline in COVID cases, enabling an easing of the lockdown. Further signs of improvement are the strengthening of the Rupee against the dollar and increased confidence in the stock market. In view of these developments, a World Bank report of March 2021 stated that "Notwithstanding, the recent rise in COVID cases, Pakistan has been showing signs of a fragile economic recovery with a gradual resumption of economic dynamism."[26]

The Way Forward

Despite these emerging positive trends, Pakistan has a long way to go domestically in all aspects of national life. The key would be the achievement of political stability. For this, all the national stakeholders need to come together, at least on a minimum common agenda for development which would be vital for the country's security. Fortunately, in the past, Pakistanis have been able to make the right choices and sacrifices for the country's interest, at times in even more daunting circumstances such as after the 1971 war, the earthquake of 2005, or the floods of 2010. These instances demonstrate, above all, the resilience of the Pakistani nation, acknowledged in such studies as *Pakistan: A Hard Country*[27] and *The Pakistan Paradox: Instability and Resilience*.[28] Today, it is much better placed to confront future challenges since it no longer faces an existential threat as in the past due to its nuclear deterrence capability. As a consequence, the present and future governments can afford to pursue policies that place a higher priority on economic development and social progress. In this sense, Pakistan's credible nuclear deterrence provides the space to focus on the economic agenda rather than exclusively on the security imperative.

Fortunately, the economic fundamentals of the country remain strong. It has plentiful natural resources, fertile land and a young labour force. Its market is comparatively large to enable growth and attract investment. Its geographic location at the junction of South, Central and West Asia can also be turned into an opportunity rather than a challenge, as the CPEC project has the potential to do. This project can, moreover, contribute greatly towards the expansion and upgrading of the country's infrastructure and energy

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production, a process that is already underway. With these assets, Pakistan's economic turnaround is certainly possible.

Even so, the hard challenges of the future as considered in this chapter cannot be wished away and would have to be confronted. The country's leadership will have to ensure political stability and sustained economic growth for this purpose. Given the global geopolitical trends and regional dynamics as well as the impact of emerging technologies on security, Pakistan would need to leverage the opportunities and manage the challenges. The foremost opportunity for Pakistan is to strengthen its partnership with China based on the growing strategic convergence between them. Such a partnership will not only contribute towards economic development but also help to better manage Pakistan's relations with the US and India. It would also provide access to the latest generation of military technologies. Moreover, close relations with China could facilitate further deepening of relations with Russia, since both these powers are closely aligned.

Relations between Pakistan and the US are unlikely to improve in any significant manner due to the lack of any strategic convergence now or in the foreseeable future. On the contrary, the growing Indo-US partnership will intensify the differences between Islamabad and Washington. The best that can be expected is that relations do not become hostile owing to the India factor or the American end game in Afghanistan.

Despite hopes in Pakistan currently about the resumption of dialogue with India, the fact remains that India is unlikely to concede on any of the bilateral issues to evolve compromise solutions, least of all on Kashmir. Besides, the underlying reality, which many in Pakistan ignore, is that India seeks regional hegemony which is unacceptable to Pakistan. Consequently, the strategic confrontation between Pakistan and India will persist, requiring Pakistan to continue maintaining credible deterrence. As mentioned previously, this should not involve matching India weapon for weapon but responding by closing the gap in qualitative terms such as a credible second strike capability, ability to penetrate Indian BMD systems, development of ASAT missiles for deterrence in space, reliable cyber defence and acquisition of AI weapons capability. The overall objective should be to dissuade India from resorting to a pre-emptive disarming first strike or a Cold Start type conventional attack. Such a credible deterrence would be essential to stabilise relations with India.

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An American withdrawal from Afghanistan without a peaceful political transition in that country is likely to lead to civil war. This would be the worst case scenario for Pakistan. Apart from instability on its western border, this would increase the threat of terrorism by Afghan-based TTP and other terrorist groups as well as the influx of Afghan refugees. India can also be expected to exploit this situation to undermine Pakistani interests. To mitigate such threats, Pakistan will need to work with like-minded regional powers, China, Russia and Iran, to ensure, as far as possible, a peaceful transition in Afghanistan. In case such efforts do not succeed, Pakistan would need to insulate itself from developments in Afghanistan as best it can until stability returns to that country.

In conclusion, it can be said with relative certainty that Pakistan will face considerable challenges in the future. But there will also be significant opportunities. It will depend on a stable Pakistani government and its ability to ensure sustained economic growth which would enable Pakistan to manage the challenges and leverage the opportunities.

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14 | Epilogue

Since the completion of this book by February 2021 far-reaching changes have taken place with a bearing on Pakistan's security which requires this epilogue.

By far the most important development has been the ouster of Prime Minister Imran Khan's government through a vote of no confidence on 7 March 2022 under extremely controversial circumstances that involved charges of American-sponsored "regime change". The consequent polarisation in the country has led to political turmoil and economic uncertainty, thereby undermining national security. To a large extent, this change has been influenced by several external developments, in particular the return of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan, continuing tensions with India, deteriorating relations with the US and the unprecedented confrontation between the major powers, especially after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Given the linkage between these external developments and the political changes within Pakistan, it would be appropriate to begin by examining the impact of these external factors.

Return of the Taliban and Impact on Pakistan

On 15 August 2021, the Afghan Taliban captured Kabul, the Afghan capital, after a lightning offensive against government forces, which, in less than two weeks, led to their control over the whole of Afghanistan. The erstwhile President, Ashraf Ghani, fled the country and his troops surrendered to the Taliban without any significant struggle. The remnants of the Tajik Northern Alliance and other anti-Taliban forces did put up a token resistance in the Panjshir Valley but were eventually overcome. This sudden and unexpected Taliban capture of power effectively scuttled the Intra-Afghan dialogue process even though the Taliban claimed that they would be willing to 'share power' with other Afghan factions. This has not happened so far. While the Taliban have included some non-Pushtoons, mainly Tajiks and Shiite Hazaras, in their administration in what they claim are initial steps towards a more "inclusive" government, this has been contested by the international community which has demanded a more broad-based government as one of the conditions for recognising the new regime.

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Taken totally by surprise by the rapid collapse of the Ashraf Ghani government, the Biden administration scrambled to evacuate its remaining troops and other personnel as well as European and Afghan allies through an airlift that proved to be disastrous. Not only was the major air base at Bagram abandoned before the evacuation, but there was utter mayhem at Kabul airport which was overwhelmed by foreigners and Afghans trying to flee the country. As a result, the American end-game in Afghanistan proved to be an utter debacle instead of an orderly withdrawal according to the administration's extended deadline of 11 September 2021. Reaction in the US was predictably apocalyptic for President Biden, especially from his Republican opponents. He was accused of misjudging the Afghan situation, abandoning Afghanistan and squandering the 'gains' over the last 20 years, apart from mismanaging the withdrawal owing to which America's Afghan supporters and even citizens were abandoned. Attacks by ISIS on fleeing Afghans at Kabul airport and the botched American retaliatory drone strike that killed innocent civilians, made the situation even worse.

While the American ire, expressed in statements in Congressional hearings and media reports, focused on the Biden administration's mishandling of the situation, it also extended to the Taliban and Pakistan. The Taliban continued to be derided as a terrorist organisation posing a threat to the US and its allies, while Pakistan was accused of 'betrayal' and blamed for 'playing a double game' by supporting the Taliban while claiming to help America's counter-terrorism efforts. It was even alleged that Pakistan actively supported the Taliban offensive which would not have succeeded without Pakistani 'interference'. Administration officials implicitly endorsed such charges with Secretary of State Blinken stating in a Congressional hearing that Pakistan's role has been "one that has involved hedging its bets constantly" in Afghanistan for the past 20 years and has "involved harbouring members of the Taliban, including the Haqqanis". He added that Pakistan "has a multiplicity of interests, some of which are in clear conflict with ours" and that "on many occasions, detrimental to our interests".[1] The Chairman Joint Chief of Staff, General Milley, told the Senate that the "accelerated withdrawal (of American troops) would increase risks of regional instability and the security of Pakistan and its nuclear arsenal", thereby raising the usual concerns about the arsenal falling into the hands of "terrorists".[2]

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As a result of these Congressional proceedings, a bill was introduced in the House of Representatives on 23 September, titled the National Defence Authorization Act, which would require the Secretary of Defence to submit a report on the vulnerability of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal to seizure or control by terrorists or extremists including personnel of the ISI.[3] On the Senate side, a draft bill has been tabled entitled "Afghanistan Counter-Terrorism, Oversight and Accountability Act" of 2021, which requires under section 202 on Entities Providing Support to the Taliban, that the administration provide an assessment on Pakistan's state and non-state actors providing support to the Taliban from 2001 to 2020, including support for the 2021 Taliban offensive against the Kabul government and for the Taliban offensive in the Panjshir Valley. The draft law also calls for the suspension of any assistance to a country or organisation providing support for the Taliban as well as the imposition of sanctions against any such country or organisation.[4] Subsequently, Congressman Scott Perry introduced a bill on 10 March 2021 in the House titled "Stopping Pakistan Terror Act", which calls for declaring Pakistan a state sponsor of terrorism.[5]

While such legislative initiatives may not be eventually adopted into law, they clearly demonstrate the deterioration in Pakistan-US relations as a consequence of the developments in Afghanistan. This is in stark contrast to the glimmer of hope in some Pakistani circles that Islamabad's facilitation of the US-Taliban agreement in February 2020 and its encouragement of the intra-Afghan dialogue would have a positive impact on bilateral relations with Washington. However, unlike its predecessor, the Biden administration from the start was not enthused about the deal with the Taliban nor eager to work with Pakistan for a peaceful and orderly transition in Afghanistan. This became quite evident by Biden's reluctance to meet or even speak to Prime Minister Imran Khan on the telephone as he did with several world leaders. Meanwhile, contacts at the level of Secretaries of State and Defence as well as the CIA Director with their Pakistani counterparts were limited to post-US withdrawal counter-terrorism operations which the US envisaged as being conducted 'over the horizon'. This required continuing the earlier agreement with Pakistan for military bases, overflights, ground communications and intelligence sharing which had been allowed by President Musharraf after 9/11. However, Prime Minister Khan publicly stated "absolutely not" to an

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American media outlet when asked about providing such facilities to the US. The Prime Minister further stated that "Pakistan would be a partner in promoting peace, not war". Consequently, the Pakistan-US relationship, which had lost its warmth as a result of differences over Afghanistan ended up in cold storage.

With regard to Afghanistan specifically, there are both positive and negative outcomes of the Taliban victory for Pakistan. On the positive side, the return of the Taliban has ended Indian influence in Afghanistan leading to the easing of the two-front confrontation on the eastern and western borders of Pakistan. Indian ability to use Afghan territory to sponsor terrorism in Pakistan through the TTP and Baloch separatists with the collaboration of the NDS, the intelligence service of the previous Afghan government, has also reduced but has not ceased completely. Moreover, the cessation of the fighting in Afghanistan after nearly 40 years has opened up the possibility of enhancing regional connectivity between Pakistan and Central Asia, although the full potential for such linkages is still to be realised, depending upon the ability of the Taliban to stabilise their country.

China's interest in extending its BRI project into Afghanistan and investing in the country can significantly contribute toward Afghanistan's stabilisation through economic and social development. Russia and the Central Asian States as well as Iran are also keen to encourage stability within Afghanistan while promoting their bilateral relations with Kabul. These developments underscore the convergence of interests between Pakistan and other neighbours of Afghanistan which had evolved even before the US withdrawal and the Taliban take-over for a peaceful transition in Afghanistan and the stabilisation of that country. Now all these neighbours are on the same page with regard to the future of Afghanistan, in particular, to encourage internal peace and security which can facilitate regional connectivity, and overcome the menace of terrorism by ISIS and other groups as well as the problem of narcotics trafficking. Consequently, the developments in Afghanistan have served to potentially promote Pakistan's regional interests through greater political convergence with other regional powers apart from enhancing the prospects for regional linkages with Pakistan playing the pivotal role as the bridgehead for such cooperation, including access to the sea for the land-locked Central Asian countries.

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On the negative side, the primary challenge is posed by terrorist groups such as ISIS, TTP, BLA, ETIM and others which not only continue to threaten Afghanistan but Pakistan, China, Iran, Russia, and the Central Asian countries as well. While the Taliban have declared that they will not allow Afghanistan to be used by terrorists, this has not happened so far. As a result, terrorist attacks within Afghanistan and against Pakistan have in fact increased. To a large extent, this is due to the Taliban's lack of capability to enforce their writ in remote areas such as along the border with Pakistan. It is also possible that some lower-level Taliban commanders have operational and ideological links with terrorist groups such as the TTP which developed during the war against the US and still survive. Therefore, it will take time before the Taliban leadership is able to ensure its writ all over the country and bring about security and stability.

This effort has become all the more complicated due to the residual underground presence of anti-Taliban forces which are believed to be receiving support from India and perhaps even the US and some western countries. In particular, it is known that Indian intelligence operatives are still involved in assisting TTP, BLA, and ISIS to carry out terrorist attacks against Pakistan and the Taliban.

An added challenge is posed by the failure of the Taliban so far to form an inclusive government, protect the rights of women and minorities and establish a fully functional government. This has also proved to be a hurdle in the way of international recognition of the Taliban regime. While the Taliban leadership has promised to move forward on these issues, and some tentative steps have been taken, considerable progress still needs to be made.

Meanwhile, the most urgent challenge for Afghanistan is the ongoing humanitarian crisis owing to which millions of Afghans face famine and starvation. This has been accentuated by the country's economic meltdown, with rampant inflation, cash shortages, growing unemployment, and a refugee crisis within and beyond Afghanistan's borders, including a massive brain drain. To make matters worse, the vengeful American policy of freezing Afghanistan's foreign exchange resources of around nine billion dollars together with the denial of assistance from western donors and financial institutions has deeply aggravated the humanitarian crisis. Due to efforts by Pakistan, China and Russia, the UN has now started some humanitarian assistance such

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as supplies of wheat, medicines, and other urgently needed items, distributed through non-governmental agencies. But the volumes are not sufficient to overcome the humanitarian crisis. Pakistan has also persuaded the OIC to help by setting up a humanitarian assistance fund which is currently in the process of disbursing such assistance.

In view of these circumstances, the return of the Taliban in Afghanistan does hold out the potential prospect of improving Pakistan's security environment and promoting its regional interests but in the short to medium term, the instability in Afghanistan will continue to pose challenges which the Taliban will need to overcome with the help of regional like-minded powers.

Continuing Tensions with India

While with the reemergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Pakistan's security concerns along its western border have comparatively eased, tensions with India on the eastern border have continued to increase.

India views the return of the Taliban and the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan as a major setback for its regional strategic interests. As a result, it has joined forces with the US and its partners to oppose the Taliban regime while fully endorsing the western demand for an inclusive Afghan government and respect for human rights. It is also continuing to use its ties with remnants of the erstwhile Northern Alliance and even some terrorist groups such as the TTP and the BLA to undermine the Taliban government as well as to promote terrorism against Pakistan. Still, India is also making belated efforts to engage with the Taliban, an indication of which is to provide humanitarian assistance. The greatest Indian motivation is that with the return of the Taliban, New Delhi does not want to lose its influence in Kabul which would be replaced by its principal opponents, Islamabad and Beijing.

Meanwhile, tensions with Pakistan on several issues continue to fester. In Indian-occupied Kashmir, despite revoking articles 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution and enforcement of severe Draconian measures, such as widespread arrests, imposition of a lockdown, and media black-out, in August 2019, the Modi government has failed to subdue the popular Kashmiri uprising. Through the rejection of article 35A, India is trying to change the Muslim-majority demography of occupied Kashmir by encouraging non-Kashmiri Hindus to obtain Kashmiri citizenship and acquire property with

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the objective of converting Kashmir into a Hindu-majority area. It has also involved trifurcating the occupied state into Kashmir, Jammu and Laddakh divisions, placing the state directly under Indian central control as a union territory and redrawing electoral boundaries. The result has been further alienation of the Kashmiris, even those who had hitherto been loyal to India.

Such policies have retarded any possibility of normalising Pakistan-India relations, a possibility that appeared when the two countries agreed in February 2021 to revive the earlier agreement for a cease-fire along the Line of Control (LoC) and "address each other's core interests".[6] None of this has happened, though so far the ceasefire has held. But continuing Indian atrocities against the Kashmiris who are now even more committed to their liberation struggle can lead to a flare-up of Pakistan-India tensions as happened in February 2019. There is also the possibility of a false flag Indian operation or an unintended accidental event that would lead to a conflagration.

The intrusion of an Indian BrahMos cruise missile on 9 March 2022 into Pakistani territory which India claimed was an "accidental" launch was exactly such an incident that could trigger a confrontation between the two nuclear powers.[7] This particular incident, resulting from Indian irresponsibility and incompetence, if the Indian narrative is to be believed, could have escalated had Pakistan not responded with responsibility and restraint.

As considered in the last chapter, Indian action in occupied Kashmir of August 2019 has also intensified Sino-Indian tensions along the Line of Actual Control in the Galwan area of Laddakh. The resultant military confrontation between the two sides beginning in June 2020 still continues, despite several rounds of talks to resolve the issue. Consequently, India is now confronted with a two-front challenge – with Pakistan and China simultaneously. While the US, as expected, has fully supported India in this dispute with China, and the Indo-US strategic partnership against China has grown as symbolised by the Quadrilateral Alliance, it is highly unlikely that the US will risk any direct clash with China in this region. As such, Prime Minister Modi's adventurism in Kashmir has placed India in an unenviable geopolitical conundrum.

Modi's continuing use of the ultra-nationalist Hindutva agenda, targeting Pakistan, the Kashmiris and Indian Muslims for populist electoral gain, which he used effectively to win re-election in 2019, has served to further exacerbate Pakistan-India tensions. The mass hysteria whipped up by Modi has given free

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rein to fanatical Hindu vigilantes to persecute innocent Muslims for allegedly slaughtering cows or eating beef; opposing marriages between Hindus and Muslims; converting from Hinduism to Islam or Christianity. Mosques and Muslim worshippers have been attacked while Muslim homes and properties have been destroyed. Even women wearing the hijab or burqa have been targeted. Recently, mobile phone apps have been used to 'auction' Muslim women or put them up for 'sale as maids'. At a Dharma Sansad in Haridwar, Hindu leaders called for the genocide of Muslims[8] just as the Chief Minister in Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, had called for the massacre of Muslims. Such acts of Hindu fascism have been aided and abetted by the BJP's leaders and its government functionaries, such as the police and civilian administration. Most of the Indian media has also cravenly endorsed such repression while even the Judiciary has become complicit as demonstrated by the decision of the Supreme Court to allow Hindu fanatics to build a temple on the site of the destroyed Babari Masjid, even though the court itself ruled that the destruction of the mosque was illegal.

Encouraged by the successes of these fascist policies for political gains, such as the recent BJP victory in the Uttar Pradesh state elections, Modi has pushed forward legislation to further disenfranchise 200 million Indian Muslims. This includes the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens which has already declared thousands of Muslims in Assam as non-Indians since they could not prove their Indian nationality. Protests against these measures by Indian Muslims and secular Hindus have been put down by brute force including police raids, even in student hostels and classrooms.

Such policies have added another layer of tension between Pakistan and India since several thousand divided Muslim families live on both sides of the border. Besides, under the 1950 Delhi agreement between the two countries, the welfare of minority communities in either country is a matter of interest to both sides.[9] Accourdingly, Prime Minister Khan expressed deep concern over the plight of Indian Muslims and termed Modi's policy as "Hindu fascism" in several statements.[10]

The Modi government's discriminatory policies against Indian Muslims along with the issue of continued repression in occupied Kashmir were also raised by Pakistan in the Organisation of Islamic Countries, the United Nations and the Human Rights Council as well as in bilateral contacts with

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the major powers. There was an expectation that the Biden administration in particular would play a more assertive role to restrain Prime Minister Modi in view of the administration's declared policy against human rights violations and criticism of 'authoritarian governments.' While the US State Department's report on human rights did criticise Indian policies[11] and the international watchdog on democracy, The Economist Intelligence Unit, also downgraded its evaluation of Indian democracy,[12] the Biden administration refrained from openly criticising or restraining India. This has obviously been due to the larger American strategic interests with India which Washington does not want to jeopardise for the sake of Indian Muslims or the Kashmiris. This has added to Pakistan's frustrations with the US.

Escalating Global Confrontation

Several chapters have examined the geopolitical compulsions that have led to confrontations between the US and China as well as the US and Russia while contributing to the growing strategic partnership between China and Russia against the US. Over the past year since the completion of this book, such great power confrontation has exacerbated with far-reaching consequences for Pakistan.

In the broader Asia-Pacific region, the Biden administration has continued with the policies of its predecessors to contain and confront China. As examined earlier, the ostensible American purpose has been to ensure a 'rules-based order' in the so-called Indo-Pacific that would provide freedom of navigation and overflights in the maritime and aerial domains. But from the Chinese perspective, this policy is aimed at the containment of Chinese interests in order to perpetuate American hegemony in the Asia Pacific. Accordingly, the Quadrilateral Alliance between the US, Japan, Australia and India has been termed by China as the Asian NATO. The US has now gone further by creating the AUKUS pact involving Australia, the United Kingdom and the US, which is meant to supplement the Quadrilateral Alliance. The transfer of nuclear-powered submarines by the UK to Australia, designed to further strengthen Australian naval power in the region, is viewed with alarm by China and termed as an escalation of the confrontation with Beijing by Washington and its allies as well as a violation of the international non-proliferation regime.

The US has also increased its military cooperation with Taiwan, providing additional modern weaponry, which China has denounced as a violation

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of America's historic 'One China policy'. Accompanied by bipartisan Congressional support, President Biden has, moreover, expressed strong support for Taiwan's independence and warned China against any attempt to intimidate Taiwan.

Similarly, Washington has intensified its criticism of Beijing over the latter's territorial disputes such as in the South China and East China seas as well as with India in Laddakh and Arunachal Pradesh. In addition, the Biden administration has increased its rhetoric regarding China's internal affairs such as alleged human rights violations in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong.

The Chinese reaction has been assertive and even confrontational. Naval exercises have been conducted in close proximity to Taiwan, Chinese military presence in the South China Sea has been increased and clashes have been taking place with Indian troops along the Line of Actual Control, including the occupation of nearly a 1,000 square kilometres of territory in the Galwan sector of Laddakh. Besides, China has increased its outreach through continental routes as part of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to circumvent America's attempts to control the maritime zone in the Asia-Pacific. These Chinese efforts not only involve further enhancement of CPEC with Pakistan as signified during Prime Minister Khan's visit to China in February 2022 but also formally concluding a massive 20-billion-dollar cooperation agreement with Iran, seeking to extend the BRI/CPEC into Afghanistan and promoting greater regional connectivity between South, Central and West Asia.

Even more far-reaching is the Chinese policy of strengthening strategic cooperation with Russia. This has involved collaboration in the fields of nuclear power generation, purchase of Russian energy, and co-production of the latest generation weapon systems as elaborated in the November 2021 Russia-China Road Map for military cooperation.[13] As mentioned in previous chapters, the joint objective is to present a two-pronged strategic challenge to the US and thereby deny American global hegemony. On the diplomatic front, Sino-Russian efforts have been to promote a multipolar global order instead of American unipolar domination which they argue must be based on the principles of the United Nations Charter rather than the "rules-based order" as defined by the US. This was most recently articulated in the China-Russia Joint Statement of 4 February 2022.[14]

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This Sino-Russian joint strategy has been most clearly on display during the current ongoing confrontation over Ukraine between Russia and the US following the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. While Washington and its allies have accused Moscow of aggression against Ukraine and are supporting the Ukrainians through military assistance and wide-ranging sanctions against Russia, the narrative from Russia is vastly different.

While in earlier chapters the fundamental reasons for the US-Russia clash over Ukraine have been considered in detail, a brief recounting of these factors deserve to be made here. In order to reform and revive the dysfunctional Soviet Communist system, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev tried to normalise relations with the West for which he accepted the reunification of Germany, democratisation of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe, and dissolution of the Warsaw military pact. In response, the US and its western allies promised to extend economic assistance and US President Bush (senior) assured Gorbachev that NATO would not extend eastwards towards Russia's borders in view of Moscow's historic security concerns

However, once the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991, and the US emerged as the sole superpower, the succeeding Clinton administration reneged on this verbal assurance by encouraging the expansion of NATO and the European Union (EU) through the inclusion of East European countries as well as some of the erstwhile states that were part of the USSR. Russian leaders such as Yeltsin objected to this NATO expansion as a potential threat to Russia but were too weak to prevent this. It was only after Vladimir Putin became President and ensured the resurgence of Russian power that Moscow began to actually oppose NATO and EU expansion. In 2008, Putin used force to prevent Georgia from coming into the western orbit, and then again in 2014, Putin intervened militarily in Ukraine after the western sponsored 'Orange Revolution' replaced the pro-Moscow government in Kiev, by occupying the Crimea and Donbas regions, especially to protect the Russian Black Sea fleet in Crimea. In the subsequent Minsk agreement of 2015, the West shelved the issue of Ukraine's NATO and EU membership while the Ukrainians agreed to respect Russian interests, including the grant of autonomy to ethnic Russians in Eastern Ukraine. However, by 2021, the US and its NATO allies again instigated the issue of Ukrainian membership in NATO, compelling Putin to ask for written guarantees against such a move. This was rejected by the US,

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which along with other NATO members, started to arm the Ukrainians and deploy additional NATO forces in member countries on Russia's borders, such as in the Baltic States. Eventually, this triggered the Russian attack on Ukraine.

Expectedly, the Ukraine war has caused widespread suffering for the Ukrainian people and greatly increased tensions between Russia and the US-led alliance. Even though severe sanctions have been imposed on Russia, these have not deterred President Putin who continues with his military operations and is demanding Ukrainian neutrality as the price for ending the war. Meanwhile, western sanctions are proving to be a double-edged sword, with their negative impact on Europe, such as the denial of Russian energy, agricultural products, and precious minerals. Besides, these sanctions are not fully effective since numerous countries have refused to impose them, such as China and even India. On the contrary, these large economies have benefited by now acquiring Russian oil at discounted prices.

The main lifeline for Russia in this situation is, of course, China, which has abided by its strategic partnership with Russia. Beijing has refused to criticise Moscow, expressing understanding of Russia's security concerns relating to Ukraine while asking for restraint and dialogue to end the war.[15] China has also extended economic and military support to Russia according to the western media[16] while turning down American efforts to persuade China to criticize Russia in a meeting between US National Security Advisor Sullivan and his Chinese counterpart, Yang Jiechi.[17] In the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council as well, China has refused to join the US and its allies to condemn Russia.[18]

Quite apart from the commitments of the China-Russia Joint Statement of February 2022 on bilateral relations, there is a geopolitical dimension of the Chinese decision to support Russia against the US. This is driven by the Chinese interest in promoting a multipolar order instead of a US-dominated global dispensation which Russia has now openly undermined. This has been the primary objective of the Sino-Russian strategic partnership all along. Moreover, the net beneficiary of the US-Russia confrontation has been China since it will emerge stronger from this conflict at the cost of the other two. Besides, the confrontation with Russia has forced Washington to shift its focus from the Asia-Pacific to Europe.

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Another worrying aspect for the US is the position taken by its strategic ally and 'net security provider' – India. The Ukraine crisis poses a dilemma for both partners because India has to choose between its American ally and its historic friend and major arms supplier, Russia, while the US cannot pressurise its strategic partner, India, and risk their alliance against China. So far, India has chosen to soft-pedal in its reaction to the Russian invasion and desisted from joining the western camp in criticising Russia. It has also abstained in voting against Russia in the United Nations and the Human Rights Council, calling for a negotiated solution to the Ukraine war and recognising Russian interests in this context. The US has also been low-key in its response to the Indian position with Secretary of State Blinken stating that India is "somewhat shaky" on the Russian invasion and the National Security Council spokesperson describing the Indian stance as "unsatisfactory but unsurprising".[19]

The fact that the US is unwilling to jeopardise its relations with India over the latter's ties with Russia for the sake of the larger strategic interest of using India against China is also evident from the restrained American response to the Indian deployment of Russian S-400 missiles earlier this year. This Indo-Russian deal, in addition to several other Indian purchases of Russian weapons, makes India liable to be sanctioned under the American 'Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)' of 2017 but so far Washington has refrained from imposing these sanctions on India. The expectation is that some justification would be found to provide a waiver to India from this law. This underscores the uniquely advantageous position that India enjoys in terms of its relations with both the US and Russia.

Nevertheless, there is growing evidence of some rethinking in Russia about relations with India. Primarily, this is driven by the growing Sino-Russian alliance owing to which Moscow has to be mindful of Beijing's differences with New Delhi. While the Russians have tried to minimise the fallout from their contradictory relations with China and India, they do recognise the limits of such a policy. One of the consequences of this situation is the Russian willingness to improve and broaden their relations with Pakistan. This has been exemplified by growing political, military, and economic relations between Russia and Pakistan, especially under President Putin's leadership.

One of the major areas of convergence between Islamabad and Moscow has been the need for security and stability in Afghanistan which would also

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enhance the shared interest in regional connectivity, as considered above. For this reason, China has also been instrumental in encouraging the realignment in Pakistan-Russia relations. This emerging triangular relationship can also act as a restraining influence on India's aggressive posture in the region at America's behest.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Imran Khan's government enhanced relations with Russia and strengthened the strategic partnership with China even as relations with the US entered a downward trajectory. Stating that Pakistan seeks 'balanced relations' with the three major powers, Khan's government welcomed the emergence of a multipolar world order. One of the pillars of this foreign policy direction is improvement in relations with Russia.

In keeping with this direction, the Prime Minister decided to visit Moscow on 23 February in response to an invitation accepted a month earlier despite the brewing crisis in Ukraine. Since Russia invaded Ukraine the next day, this visit, the first by a Pakistani leader in two decades, became highly controversial both at home and abroad. It subsequently became known that the US had warned against this visit but the Prime Minister went ahead after consulting his advisors to demonstrate both his commitment to relations with Russia and his pursuit of an independent foreign policy. While in Moscow and thereafter, Khan regretted the invasion and called for a diplomatic solution but expressed an implicit understanding of Russian security concerns. Pakistan also decided to abstain from voting against Russia in the United Nations and the Human Rights Council.

This independent stance was not to America's liking and its proxies in the European Union (EU) resorted to the diplomatically unprecedented initiative of issuing a joint press statement through their embassies in Islamabad criticising the government.[20] This was strongly rejected by the Foreign Office as unacceptable and against diplomatic norms.[21] Pakistan's relations with Russia and the Ukraine war thus became yet another point of friction between Pakistan and the US.

Deterioration in Pakistan-US Relations

As anticipated in the last chapter on Future Challenges, there has been a rapid deterioration in Pakistan-US relations ever since the American end-game in Afghanistan. Several factors have contributed to this eventuality which needs to be briefly recalled.

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After Pakistan facilitated the American-Taliban dialogue leading to the agreement between them on 29 February 2020, there was an expectation in Pakistan, perhaps unrealistic, that there would be an improvement in bilateral relations. Following Biden's election as President there was even greater optimism in some Pakistani circles since as Vice-President during the Obama administration, Biden had described Pakistan as being far more important for the US than Afghanistan. But this was a gross misreading of Biden's remark which was meant from a negative rather than a positive perspective. It stemmed from Biden's belief that America's problems in Afghanistan had been caused more by Pakistan's 'double game' against the US rather than the resistance by the Taliban who were being supported by Pakistan. It was this animus rather than any personal hostility to Prime Minister Imran Khan that explains Biden's refusal to reach out to the Pakistani leadership after becoming President. As a result, the much-anticipated telephone call from Biden never came through.

This animosity was aggravated by the stunning Taliban victory over the Kabul regime in August 2021 and the debacle that ensued involving the disastrous American withdrawal. As before during America's 20-year war in Afghanistan, the scapegoat became Pakistan for its 'betrayal' and 'double game' which dominated the American narrative. The consequences of this narrative have been examined above.

When the US subsequently planned to conduct 'over the horizon' counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan, for which it needed continued access to Pakistan air and ground space, it was stunned by Pakistan's refusal to provide such access. Prime Minister Khan asserted that Pakistan would be a "partner in peace but not war" and replied "absolutely not" to a journalist's question whether Pakistan would provide bases to the US.[22] The official American response that the US had not asked for such access was rather lame since the American media itself reported meetings with Pakistani officials on this issue, which was also taken up in the US Congress.[23] The Pakistani refusal amounted to a diplomatic slap in the face for the US.

Later, to signal its displeasure, the Biden administration did not invite Pakistan to the virtual Summit on Climate Change in November 2021, despite the Khan government's focus on environmental issues and the high risks for Pakistan due to climate change challenges. In turn, Pakistan refused to attend the American Summit for Democracy in December 2021, a decision which

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commentators attributed to Pakistan's relations with China which was not invited to the Summit.[24] While this is possible, it is more likely that Pakistan did not participate in a meeting that was for divisive purposes and excluded China and Russia. Yet, another international event, the Winter Olympics in China, became controversial when the US and its allies decided to boycott the opening ceremony in January 2022 owing to alleged Chinese human rights abuses. Prime Minister Khan not only attended the opening ceremony but also undertook an official visit to China thereafter. This visit marked considerable progress in Sino-Pakistan relations in the political, military, and economic fields, especially the launching of the next phase of the CPEC project. Then came the fateful visit by the Prime Minister to Russia in March 2022 as mentioned above.

The rapid decline in Pakistan-US relations over the past year is not surprising given the growing divergence of strategic interests between the two countries which have been discussed in detail in previous chapters. This divergence has been exacerbated by the hostility of the Biden administration towards Pakistan while on the Pakistani side it has been accentuated by the Khan government's pursuit of a 'balanced' foreign policy, entailing further deepening of the strategic partnership with China and realignment with Russia, even as American relations with these countries have steadily deteriorated. Further complications have been added by the strong perception in Pakistan that the US is exerting pressure on Pakistan through the IMF and FATF while denying any form of bilateral assistance to Pakistan. As discussed below, this deterioration in Pakistan-US relations has come to directly impact Pakistan's internal political developments.

Growing Domestic Turmoil

In the last chapter on Future Challenges, it was recognised that going forward it would be vital to ensure political stability and economic growth to confront the multiple challenges ahead in a rapidly changing global and regional environment to ensure the country's security. Unfortunately, neither political stability nor economic growth at the required pace has been possible.

The crucial linkage between security and economic growth which in turn depends on political stability was underscored in Pakistan's first-ever National Security Policy announced on 14 February 2022. In its public version, the policy "places economic security at the core of comprehensive

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national security" and emphasises a "geoeconomic vision to supplement the focus on geopolitics". This would "enable sustainable and inclusive economic growth" and generate "greater availability of resources to bolster traditional and human security". The policy also recognised that sustainable economic growth required "national cohesion through greater unity and stability".[25]

While the National Security Policy provided a much-needed long-term direction, it did not address the more immediate measures needed to overcome the country's dire economic situation created by the growing debt burden, rising inflation, persistent trade gap, and the impact of the COVID pandemic on growth. To be sure, these problems were largely inherited by the Khan government but its overall performance to overcome these issues was mixed at best.

According to the Economic Survey for the financial year 2020-21 issued by the Finance Ministry, the economy had begun to rebound after the economic decline during 2018-19, when it was hit by the COVID pandemic in mid-2020 which slowed down growth. Still, through effective health measures, the impact of the pandemic was largely controlled. As a result, during 2020-21, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased by 3.9 per cent which was still lower than the required rate of 4.8 per cent. Significantly, the services sector grew by 4.43 per cent while agricultural productivity increased by 2.7 per cent. Foreign remittances increased by 29 per cent to 26.7 billion dollars but Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) declined by 32 per cent to 1.55 billion dollars. While exports grew by 6 per cent, imports were still higher, at 8 per cent, mainly due to rising international prices of oil. Still, foreign exchange reserves rose to 16 billion dollars, a four-year-high. After a gap of three years, the country was also able to raise 2.5 billion dollars in Eurobond shares. These favourable conditions were supplemented by the revival of the stalled 6 billion dollar IMF programme. Still, the public debt remained high at 38 trillion rupees of which foreign debt was 12.5 trillion. In the social sector, the government disbursed around 179.3 billion rupees under the Ehsas cash programme for the poor, benefitting 14.8 million families. Under the Kamyab Jawan Employment Scheme, 8.5 million rupees were disbursed and the Health Card Scheme for health accessibility was introduced. These social benefit programmes were highly praised by the World Bank and other international organisations.[26]

However, as a result of the continuing wave of COVID infections worldwide and more recently the Ukraine crisis, the international economy

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suffered severe shocks with serious implications for Pakistan's economy. These were broadly categorised as a three-pronged challenge – increasing prices of essential commodities, oil, gas, wheat, and sugar; high shipping costs for Pakistan's trade; and the fallout from Afghanistan causing an outflow of dollars and decreasing value of the rupee.[27] Added to this was the inflationary impact of the increase in domestic energy prices, partly due to IMF conditionalities and partly as a result of increasing international prices. These higher energy costs raised prices across the board, including of all essential commodities, placing a heavy burden on the public.

Nevertheless, Prime Minister Khan's government insisted that despite all the challenges the economy still made progress and registered impressive growth during 2021. This was validated in the IMF's World Economic Outlook April 2021 report that Pakistan achieved 5.6 per cent GDP growth in 2021 which was unexpected.[28]

The increase in the cost of living came as a boon for Imran Khan's political opponents who were already chafing against his anti-corruption campaign. Even before he became Prime Minister in 2018, Khan's relentless efforts had led to the removal of the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif who was sentenced to prison for corruption and money laundering following the leaked documents called the Panama Papers. His daughter and political heir, Maryam Nawaz, was also sentenced to seven years in jail in the same case. However, she was subsequently granted bail while Nawaz Sharif was allowed to proceed abroad for medical treatment by the courts after Khan was elected Prime Minister. Khan's anti-corruption drive further extended to Nawaz Sharif's brother and former Chief Minister of Punjab, Shehbaz Sharif, and his son, Hamza Shehbaz. Meanwhile, the other leading political family of former President Asif Zardari and his son, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) faced their own charges of corruption in various court cases. Confronted by the legal assault by Khan's government, the erstwhile political opponents from the PML-N and PPP came together with other smaller opposition parties in an alliance called the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) which was created in September 2020.

Sensing an opportunity provided by the worsening economic situation, the PDM launched a nationwide campaign against Prime Minister Khan. By mid-March 2022, the PDM had used monetary and power-sharing incentives to

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ensure defections from Khan's ruling Pakistan Tehreeq-e-Insaf (PTI) and from the government's allied parties to gather more than the 172 votes required in the National Assembly to de-seat the government through a no-confidence motion. What followed was a political train wreck in slow motion.

On 27 March, while addressing a massive public rally in Islamabad, Prime Minister Khan made a startling revelation about a meeting on 7 March between the Pakistan Ambassador in Washington and the US Assistant Secretary of State in which the American official effectively called for regime change in Pakistan. Imran Khan based this charge on a cypher cable sent by Ambassador Asad Majeed according to which the US official, Donald Liu, conveyed that it was no longer possible for America to work with the Prime Minister and that if the no-confidence motion against him (which had not been tabled as yet) failed, then there would be 'consequences' for Pakistan; but if it succeeded, then 'all would be forgiven.' Accordingly, Khan accused the US of interference and conspiracy with his opponents to remove him from power. Further evidence of the 'conspiracy' surfaced when it was made public that US diplomats in Pakistan had earlier been meeting political party leaders of the PDM as well as those from the PTI and allied partners who later defected. The Americans, of course, denied these charges.

Since the opposition challenged the veracity of Khan's assertions, a summary of the cable in question was considered by the National Security Committee while the government also offered to share it with the National Assembly in an 'in-camera' session. The cable itself could not be made public as this would compromise and expose the cypher code. However, the opposition refused to attend the 'in-camera' session.

Khan's government also approached the Supreme Court to give a ruling on the defections from the PTI in violation of Article 63A of the Constitution which bans defections from one party to another. This would have prevented the defectors from voting against their own party. However, the Court delayed giving a ruling.

On 8 March, the opposition tabled the no-confidence motion which was taken up in the National Assembly on 3 April. However, on a point of order under Article 5 of the Constitution relating to treason which was invoked by the government in view of American interference, the Deputy Speaker rejected the motion. The opposition then approached the Supreme Court

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which convened the same day in the evening even though being a Sunday, the Court was not formally in session.

After four days, the Supreme Court passed a stringent verdict that the no-confidence motion must be carried out without any hindrance or delay by midnight on 9 April. However, the Supreme Court decision did not address the issue of Article 5 violation as ruled by the Deputy Speaker nor the issue of defections from the ruling party. The PTI government immediately filed a review petition before the Supreme Court under Article 69 of the Constitution which disallows any interference in the National Assembly's proceedings or decisions. It also asked the Court again to address the violation of Article 5. However, this petition was not accepted on the grounds that the Court had suspended work for the day.

Thereafter, even as the debate on the no-confidence motion on 9 April had not concluded in the National Assembly as the midnight hour approached, the Supreme Court bench met again at around 11 pm and a police van was dispatched to the National Assembly to arrest the Speaker and Deputy Speaker on contempt of court charges if they delayed the voting. Thereafter, in a dramatic move, the Speaker relinquished his position on the grounds that he could not be a party to the US-sponsored regime change and asked the opposition's shadow speaker, to chair the proceedings. Shortly thereafter, by a vote of 174 members, Imran Khan's government was deposed.

The next day, 10 April, the Deputy Speaker also resigned from his post on the same grounds as the speaker, and once again the session was chaired by the PDM's nominee, who enabled the voting for the next Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif of the PML-N as the candidate of the PDM alliance.

These in brief are the dramatic events of March 2022, covered by a hyperactive and highly partisan media as well as on social media. However, the real reasons for this change remain shrouded in mystery. Only the passage of time will uncover the reality. But there are some realities that are self-evident.

The first is that the substance of the cable from the Ambassador in Washington, is genuine and incontrovertible. This has been confirmed by those in the Foreign Office who have seen this cable. This has also been affirmed by the two meetings of the National Security Committee, held during the last days of the Khan government and immediately after Sharif became Prime Minister. Besides, the Ambassador faithfully communicated

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his conversation with American officials which was also recorded verbatim by an accompanying notetaker. It is also relevant to note that while the US has denied any attempt at regime change, the actual exchange with Pakistan's Ambassador has not been contested.

Such American interference in the internal politics of smaller countries to bring regime change is well known. Over 40 such known incidents exist, prominent among which are the 1953 removal of Iranian Prime Minister Mosaddegh, the 1961 ouster and execution of Patrice Lumumba of Congo, and the 1973 coup against Salvador Allende of Chile, apart from the more blatant regime changes in Iraq, Libya and Syria. These are only a few examples of regime change for which the US has been blamed.[29] So, Pakistan would be no exception.

Second and more alarming, is the ongoing campaign in the media and especially social media that has maligned the military leadership which has been accused of interference in the political process and partiality towards the PDM. Recognising the seriousness of this campaign, a meeting of all Corps Commanders, Principal Staff Officers and Formation Commanders was held on 12 April and addressed by the Army Chief. According to the statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) and reported in the media, the meeting "noted the campaign by some quarters to malign the Pakistan Army and create division between the institution and society". The ISPR further stated that the meeting "expressed complete confidence in the leadership's well-considered stance to uphold the Constitution and rule of law at all costs".[30] While this clarification was essential, it remains to be seen whether it will have the desired effect. It is of utmost importance for the security of the country that there is no dissension between the public and state institutions, especially the Armed Forces since such divisions can be manipulated by forces inimical to Pakistan and seriously compromise national security.

Third, it is amply clear from the massive public support for Imran Khan demonstrated in huge rallies all over the country after his ouster that he remains the country's most popular leader. Several factors contribute to his popularity which has actually grown after the no-confidence motion. The most important reason is that his opponents are seen as corrupt opportunists who have rotated in power over the last 30 years during which time they have enriched themselves by looting the country. Besides, they have repeatedly failed

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to bring economic and social progress to the people. The charge of American regime change has also resonated with the public which over the years has become increasingly anti-American. Khan is also seen as a nationalist who is incorruptible and who will not bow down before the US as was done by past leaders. Consequently, even those who were critical of Khan when he was in power are now flocking to his side.

Meanwhile, the PDM government has been faltering. Increase in TTP and BLA terrorist incidents have created internal chaos while rising inflation and devaluation of the rupee have caused an economic meltdown, threatening default on external debt even as implementation of the IMF bail-out package has stalled. On the external front, the new government has tried to revive relations with the US while also reaching out to China and Russia but, so far, this has not translated into any substantive assistance from any of these major powers. Similarly, Pakistan's Arab friends especially Saudi Arabia and the UAE have made promises of financial support but these have not materialised so far. Meanwhile, relations with India remain frozen even as the terrorist threat from Afghanistan continues to increase.

As a consequence of these recent developments, there can be no doubt that Pakistan is once again in a state of turmoil. Such a crisis is a clear threat to the country's security, not to mention its economic survival. Prolonging the nation's agony will only make matters worse. As a democratic polity, the only solution lies in fresh elections to remove the prevailing uncertainty. The sooner this is done the better. Until such time, Pakistan will remain vulnerable to the 'Perfect Storm' created by the toxic mix of internal and external security challenges. Only the restoration of political stability can ensure Pakistan's security in the future.

On the external front, the instability in Afghanistan is unlikely to end in the foreseeable future. Relations with India will remain tense as long as Modi and the BJP are in power. Kashmir will also continue to be a powder-keg. Globally, the great power rivalry will intensify with negative repercussions for South Asia. This will require Pakistan to strengthen its strategic partnership with China and reset relations with Russia to balance the negative consequences of the growing Indo-US alliance. Those in Pakistan with lingering hopes that 'all will be forgiven' by the Americans are bound to be disappointed since the US has not overcome its humiliation in Afghanistan for which it blames Pakistan's

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"betrayal" nor is an improvement in relations with Pakistan consistent with American strategic interests.

For all these reasons the security imperative will continue to dominate Pakistan's strategic choices in the future. At a minimum, the preservation of credible nuclear deterrence will remain the critical priority of the country.

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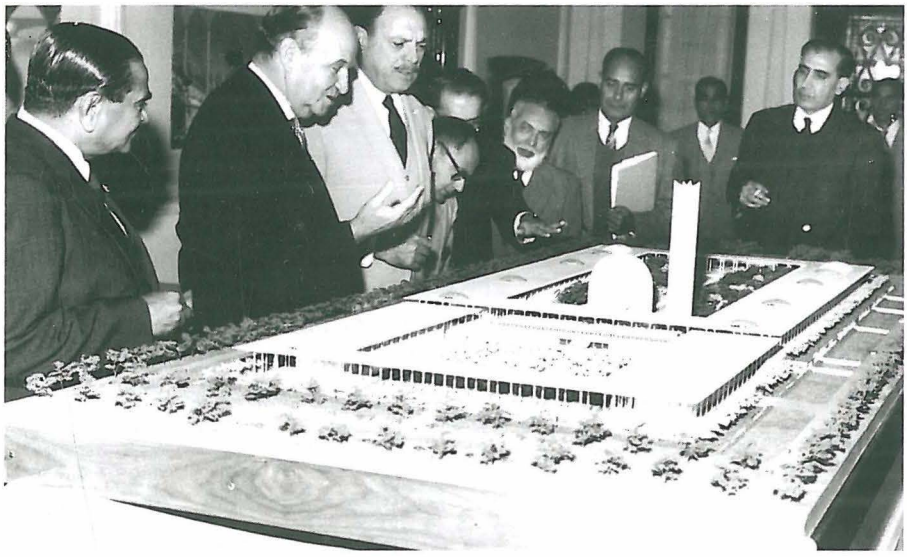
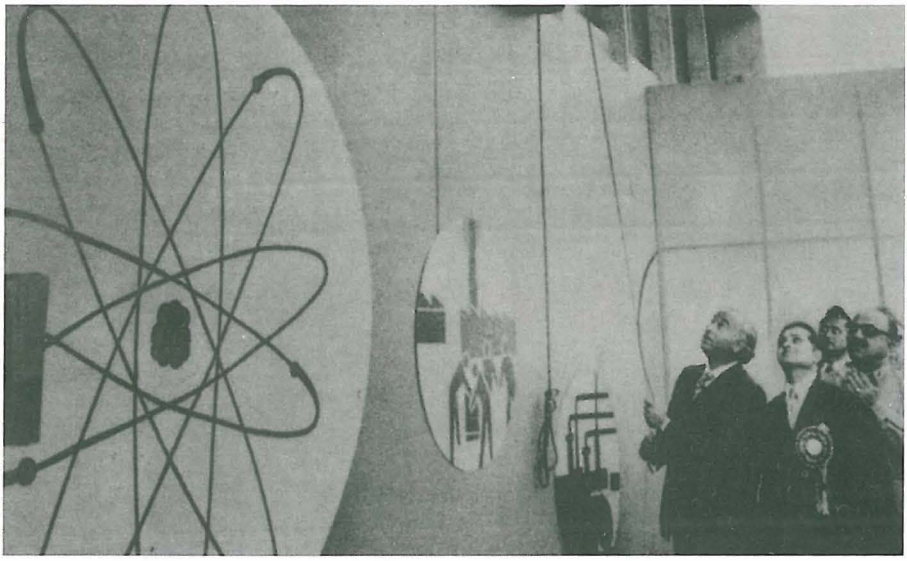
President Ayub Khan, Dr I H Usmani, Chairman PAEC, Ameer Muhammad Khan, Governor Punjeab and Z A Bhutto, Minister for Industries and Natural Resources, after inauguration of Atomic Energy Centre, Lahore on 21 October 1961.
Source: Flickr photostream



Edward Durell Stone, Architect of PINSTECH building briefing President Muhammad Ayub Khan about different features of the building, 1961.
Source: PAEC



President Z A Bhutto inaugurating KANUPP, 1972. *Source: Dawn*

Karachi Nuclear Power Complex (or KANUPP) in Karachi. *Source: PAEC*

KANUPP II and III power stations in Karachi built with Chinese cooperation.
Source PAEC

Chashma Nuclear Power Plants, officially known as Chashma Nuclear Power Complex with four reactors built with Chinese cooperation. *Source: PAEC*

The author addressing the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva in September 2015.

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The author with US Senator Hank Brown and his assistant Carter Pilcher in Washington D.C. in December 1995.

The author with US Congressman Charlie Wilson and Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi in Washington D.C. in December 1995

Pakistan's First Nuclear Test Conducted on 28 May 1998
by Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission

Nasr (HatfIX) Missile *Source: ISPR*

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Babur (Hatf VII) Ground Launched Cruise Missile *Source ISPR*

Shaheen II (Hatf VI) Long Range Ballistic Missile *Source ISPR*

Ghauri (Hatf V) Missile *Source ISPR*

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Ghaznavi (Hatf III) Ballistic Missile *Source: ISPR*

Ababeel Medium Range Ballistic Missile
Source: ISPR

General Kidwai, Director General SPD
with Dr A Q Khan, Chairman KRL
in February 1999

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He joined the Pakistan Foreign Service in 1978 and has served in the (former) Soviet Union, India, the United States, and the United Nations. He has dealt with key issues including Kashmir, Afghanistan, nuclear disarmament, human rights, and counterterrorism in his career. He continues to write articles for major Pakistani newspapers and international journals covering these issues.

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Jacket designed by
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About the Book

Written by one of Pakistan's most distinguished diplomats who served the country with rare capability at the UN in Geneva, ... and other assignments, this book is an unusually distinctive work of research, incisive analysis and fluent narrative on a subject of significance both internationally and for Pakistan.

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ISBN: 978-969-210-917-8
9 789692 109178