



Research Paper

## History of Indian Nuclear Program: Present Scenario of Indian Nuclear Strategy

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### ABSTRACT

India became a nuclear weapon state after testing five nuclear devices during May 1998, in the Pokhran range, the self-imposed restraints by India for 24 years, after having first demonstrated nuclear capability in 1974, is the unique in the world and displays India's constant great hatred to nuclear weapons, India described the test as peaceful nuclear explosion. Therefore, a policy of nuclear ambiguity or option theory came into existence. The development of nuclear weapons in India has taken decades and involved many governments. The bomb has many fathers: Congress conceived it, the United Front nurtured it, and the BJP delivered it. After the 1998 tests the BJP government released Draft nuclear Doctrine which posits the nuclear policies and posture of India and lays the guidelines for nuclear command and control in India. The Bush Administration has concluded that an Indian shift toward nuclear energy is in the best interest for America to secure. The U.S Congress on October 1, 2008, gave final approval to an agreement facilitating nuclear cooperation between the United States and India. Both the countries released the full text of the 123 agreement.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

India became an independent country on August 15, 1947. India always believed in peace and she has always promoted universal nuclear disarmament by all means. She was never in favour of manufacturing a nuclear bomb which only brings ruin and disaster to millions of people. India has had an uncomfortable relationship with nuclear weapons. Indian leaders, especially Jawaharlal Nehru, took a very public and very vocal stand against nuclear weapons. But Nehru, a modernist, was also convinced that nuclear technology had a role to play in national development. But it would be foolish to suggest that Nehru's perspective on nuclear weapons was the only determinant in Indian nuclear policy. India's nuclear policy was also influenced by India's international security condition as well as by domestic variables such as the unexpected political change and the influence of bureaucratic elites. Indeed, India's decision to build a nuclear force was taken only in the late 1980s, much after it had become clear that Pakistan -with Chinese technological assistance- had made rapid advances in the nuclear weapons programme. As for bureaucratic influence, some defence scientists played a key role in keeping the weapons programme alive even when there was no political support. Indian leaders have generally considered nuclear weapons at best a necessary evil. Writing in Harijan in July, 1946, India's prominent political and spiritual leader Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi said, "The atomic bomb has deadened the finest feeling that has sustained mankind for ages. There used to be so called laws of war which made it tolerable. Now we know the naked truth. War knows no law except that of might. The moral to be ultimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter bombs even as violence cannot be, by counter violence. Mankind has to get out of Violence only through non-violence".

In April 1968, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said in the Lok Sabha, "The choices before us involve engaging in an arms race with sophisticated nuclear war heads and an effective missile delivery system. Such a course does not think would strengthen national security. It may well endanger our own internal security by imposing a very 'heavy economic burden'. Prime Ministers Lai Bahadur Shastri and Rajiv Gandhi sought international solutions to avoid committing to nuclear weapons; Prime Minister Morarji Desai shut down the weapons program for a time. Even Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee, who ordered the nuclear tests in 1998, was more doubtful two decades earlier, siding with Desai in voting against restarting the nuclear weapons program in 1979.

As a number of analysts have concluded, growing nuclear threats and a progressively unaccommodating global nuclear order forced New Delhi to move towards a declared nuclear arsenal in the 1990s. This discomfort with nuclear weapons has defined the manner in which India has viewed nuclear weapons. Obduracy of nuclear powers of the world compelled India to go nuclear. Legitimization of nuclear weapons by international community also contributed towards India going nuclear. Rising trend of intervention by the industrialized nations in the domestic affairs of developing nations, among which India is one, also compelled India to divert its nuclear resources towards nuclear weapons. It was necessary for India to protect the autonomy of decision making in the developmental process and in strategic matter which are non-delegated democratic rights of one sixth of the global population residing in India.

The tests caught the Indian public and the world by surprise. Indian and foreign analysts have asked a number of logical enough questions about New Delhi's nuclear thinking. How does India view nuclear weapons? What are motives for possessing nuclear weapons? What kind of nuclear force does it plan to deploy? Under what circumstances, would India use nuclear weapons? Does India still support the concept of a nuclear free world? What will be India's nuclear strategy and counterstrategy vis-a-vis Pakistan? Can India win a possible nuclear war with Pakistan or China? What will be the outcome of such policies in the regional sector as well as in the international scene? Is there a possibility for the emergence of a stable nuclear proliferation regime in South Asia? What happened to the country's commitment to nuclear weapon-free world and global nuclear disarmament? By late 1998, a number of questions had been answered fairly authoritatively by the Prime Minister and various government spokesmen so that there was a degree of closure on them. Consequently, after the 1998 tests, the BJP government released Draft Nuclear Doctrine (DND) which posits the nuclear policies and posture of India. India became a declared weapon state in May 1998, although it had maintained a capability to assemble nuclear explosive devices and had developed a delivery capability, both interims of aircraft as well as missiles.

In May 1998, this capability was finally translated into clearly and declared nuclear weapon status through a series of nuclear tests. India has publicly committed itself to a "Credible Minimum Deterrent". The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee noted in a major statement on December 15, 1998 that "Just as our conventional defense capability has been employed in order to safeguard the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India against any use or threat of force, the adoption of our nuclear deterrent posture has also followed the same logic.

We have announced our intention to maintain a minimum nuclear deterrent, but one that is credible". New Delhi has stated that it regards nuclear weapons in purely defensive terms. During his government's first major statement in Parliament, Mr. Vajpayee noted, "India, mindful of its international obligations, shall not use these weapons to commit aggression or to mount threats against any country: these are weapons of self defense and to ensure in turn that India is also not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion".<sup>5</sup> He added "India shall not engage in an arms race. India shall not also subscribe to reinvent the doctrines of the Cold War". India's nuclear delivery capability has grown very slowly.

In response to the U. N. Security Resolution 1172 of June 6, 1998, the Prime Minister stated that "the call made in the resolution that we should stop our nuclear programmes or missile programmes is unacceptable". After the test of May 1998, the Prime Minister noted that India's scientists were satisfied with the tests of May 11 and 13 and that no further testing was required. On May 27, 1998, in a paper presented to Parliament on the evolution of India's nuclear policy. Mr. Vajpayee noted that tests had "achieved their stated objective" of maintaining the skills of the younger generation of scientists and engineers and building on the work of the earlier generations. He added, "In terms of technical capability, our scientists and engineers have the requisite resources to ensure a credible deterrent". On May 21, about one week after the nuclear tests of May 13, India declared a moratorium to nuclear testing. India did not cancel its decision even after Pakistan had held its own nuclear tests at the end of May in response to India's tests. Furthermore, India pronounced at the United Nations General Assembly in 1998 that it would not block the CTBT from coming into effect.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the question of the scope of weapons-grade fissile material that should be regulated an additional problem surfaced to stall the beginning of the FMCT negotiations.

This was caused by China and some other countries linking the FMCT with prevention of weaponization in space, probably in order to block the missile defense plans of the United States. It is hard to believe that both India and Pakistan will approach negotiations positively. Pakistan's priority is to produce weapons-grade fissile material that is close to volume possessed by India, and it may be assumed that India believes matching China, which possesses to around 3,200 warheads, as more important than reaching agreement on the FMCT.

After the tests India declared that while its record on exports of proliferation-related items was exemplary, it was prepared to do whatever was necessary to strengthen its export control laws on nuclear, missile and dual-use technologies to bring them into line with global norms.

Thus, in his address to the General Assembly, Mr. Vajpayee noted, "We have an effective system of export controls and shall make it more stringent where necessary including by expanding control lists of equipments and technology to make them more contemporary and effective in the context of a nuclear India".

New Delhi was also quite careful about ensuring that its nuclear weapon technology did not reach other non-nuclear weapon states. Though there have been some concerns raised that India might have illegally acquired some technologies and materials, and that it may have been careless in ensuring the security of some of its technology, the Indian record in protecting its technology from leaking is far better than that of most other nuclear powers. In the process, New Delhi built up a reputation as a 'responsible nuclear power' that became an unexpected bonus in dealing with the international community, especially as India sought a waiver from NSG guidelines.

The nuclear doctrine of India was perhaps the first of its kind among the known nuclear weapon states of the world, and India prepared the draft nuclear doctrine document before obtaining capability mentioned in it. Since August 1999, when the doctrine was pronounced by India's national security advisor, the document had not been put before any parliamentary committees or been given a formal title. It was not clear whether the doctrine as presented was a set of recommendations or just simply a set of formulations based on reasoned judgment made by a select group of India's leading academics, bureaucrats, diplomats mostly based in the New Delhi's power corridor.

In January 2003, the government released a brief press statement that revealed some aspects of the 'official' nuclear doctrine. There were at least three variations of note in the new doctrine. First was the introduction of the notion of 'massive retaliation to a nuclear attack on India. The 1999 doctrine had only talked of a 'punitive' retaliation that would cause 'unacceptable' damage.

It is still unclear why this change was introduced, and indeed whether this was a change at all because some key individuals who presumably had a role in drafting the doctrine appeared unaware of the consequence of the change in such key concepts. A cynical but possible interpretation is that this was simply public boasting, especially since the press release came in the wake of India's failed attempt at coercive diplomacy in the aftermath of the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001. The second significant variation was the dilution of both India's NFU pledge as well as the pledge not to attack non-nuclear countries.

The original NFU pledge and NSA pledge not only in the 1999 doctrine but also in various official statements in and out of parliament was without any qualifiers. But in the 2003 version, there is an important qualifier: India will consider the use of nuclear weapons in response to a 'major attack' on India or Indian forces anywhere with chemical or biological weapons. This dilutes the NFU pledge because India could use nuclear weapons first against nuclear powers which decide to use chemical weapons against India.

For example, if Pakistan uses chemical weapons against India. India might use nuclear weapons in retaliation. New Delhi would also be violating its NFU pledge. Similarly it dilutes the NSA because New Delhi could potentially use nuclear weapons against a state that does not have nuclear weapons. If a country such as Bangladesh were to use chemical weapons against India, India leaders might be forced to consider the use of nuclear weapons in retaliation for such an attack, even if it is clear that Bangladesh does not possess nuclear weapons, thus violating India's non-attack against non-nuclear countries pledge.

October 10, 2008 was a historic day in Indo-US relations when the US Secretary of state Condoleezza Rice and her Indian counterpart, Pranab Mukherjee signed the landmark "Agreement for Cooperation between the Government of India and the Government of the United States of America Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy", or the 123 agreement, as it is popularly called, in Washington. The US Congress on October 1, 2008, gave final approval to an agreement facilitating nuclear cooperation between the United States and India. The deal is seen as a watershed in US-India relations and introduces a new aspect to international non proliferation efforts. First introduced in the joint statement released by President Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on July 18, 2005, the deal lifts a three-decade US moratorium on nuclear trade with India.

However, it took five years for the official start of first Indo-US strategic dialogue which took place at Washington during June 2010 unfortunately, for all these years the dimensions of this strategic relationship which were clearly articulated during July 2005 did not get much of publicity. The Indo-US Nuclear Agreement pledging their governments to actions designed to culminate in a formal nuclear cooperation agreement and the Act known as HR 7081, was passed by the US Congress, October 1, 2008. The signing of the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal has been a typical example shift in US foreign policy. The advantages of the deal outweigh the disadvantages. The deal provides the means by which both India and the US will be able to pursue their political and economic interests. The US plans to create jobs through the export of nuclear reactors from the US to India. India has now been recognized as a nuclear power and can pursue nuclear energy to make up for its energy deficit. The deal has put an end to three decades of international isolation and has made civilian nuclear trade possible with other Nuclear Suppliers Group member countries as well. The deal in a sense has also been symbolic of the vision of Indo-US relations in the 21st century. Closer relations between the two countries have led to cooperation in many other fields such as agriculture, economic development, business, intelligence sharing, and joint military exercises. Thus India's nuclear policy is very much responsible. India's nuclear policy has evolved gradually rather than dramatically. This is unlikely to change. India faces no existential insecurities and is indeed a fairly confident and

secure state dominates its region. The U.S India nuclear deal was essential to India because India's traditional approach towards nuclear cooperation had reached a dead-end.

In January, 2015 U.S. President Barack Obama and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled plans to unlock billions of dollars in nuclear trade and to deepen defense ties. The two countries reached an understanding on two issues that, despite a ground breaking 2006 agreement, had stopped U.S. companies from setting up reactors in India and had become one of the major irritants in bilateral relations.

**The United Nations observes 26 September every year as the International Day for the Total Elimination of nuclear weapons.** The aim of the day is to enhance public awareness about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the necessity for their total elimination. It provides an opportunity to educate the public and their leaders about the real benefits of eliminating such weapons, and the social and economic costs of perpetuating them.

**In 2013, the UN General Assembly (UNGA)** declared September 26 to be the International Day for the Total Elimination of nuclear weapons (Nuclear Abolition Day). The aims of the day are to enhance public awareness about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the necessity for their total elimination.

The UNGA resolution establishing the day (UNGA Res 68 32) also calls for progress on a nuclear weapons convention – a global treaty involving the nuclear armed states in the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons under strict and effective international control.

**September 26 is also the anniversary of the incident in 1983 when a nuclear war** was almost launched due to malfunctions in the Soviet nuclear weapons early warning system, which erroneously detected a US ballistic missile attack against Moscow. The incident is graphically portrayed in the award winning docu-drama 'The Man who Saved the World.'

### **History of International Day for the total elimination of nuclear weapons 2023**

**In 1946**, the General Assembly's first resolution established that the Atomic Energy Commission has the mandate to make specific proposals for the control of nuclear energy and the elimination of not only atomic weapons but also all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction. The General Assembly endorsed the objective of general and complete disarmament in 1959. The first Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament, held in 1978, further recognized that nuclear disarmament should be the priority objective in the field of disarmament.

The international arms-control framework contributed to international security since the Cold War. It also acted as a brake on the use of nuclear weapons. On July 7, 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of nuclear weapons was adopted. This Treaty is so important since it is the first multilateral legally-binding instrument for nuclear disarmament to have been negotiated in 20 years. **On August 2, 2019**, the United States' withdrawal spelt the end of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, though the United States and the Russian Federation had previously committed to eliminating an entire class of nuclear missiles.

## **II. Conclusion**

The Indian nuclear jigsaw puzzle is still incomplete, the question of nuclear weapons in the foreign policy making and maintenance of the highest standards of safety still remains. Have nuclear weapons made India more secure? India continues to modernise its nuclear arsenal and operationalise its nascent triad, the country's nuke strategy, traditionally focused on Pakistan, now appears to place increased emphasis on China, says a 2022 report of federation of American scientists (fas). According to FAS, at least four new weapon systems are under development to complement or replace the country's existing nuclear-capable aircraft, land – based delivery systems and submarine launched missiles – which constitute the triad. India currently operates eight different nuclear – capable systems: two aircraft, four land- based ballistic missiles, and two sea – based ballistic missiles. At least four more systems are in development, most of which are thought to be nearing completion and to be combat- ready soon. Beijing is now in range of Indian Ballistic missiles," says the report, prepared by Hans M Kristensen and Matt Korda of FAS.

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