

# De-nuclearisation

Imagination is more important than knowledge  
— Albert Einstein

## Anti-Nuclear Movement

# Strategizing South Asia within the Global Context

BJP-led coalition government of India detonated five nuclear tests in May 1998 that was followed by well-anticipated six tests by Pakistan. After the blasts, both India and Pakistan declared themselves as nuclear states. And the US Senate, to the utter dismay of the global community, has rejected the ratification of Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1999. Russia and China, as result, have withheld their ratification. All these developments are a definite setback to global nuclear disarmament. However, the nuclearization of South Asia has been most significant and has had two far-reaching ramifications: first, after the tests the potential risk of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan has been enhanced. The nuclear bellicosity like that "they think that they will drop one bomb and they'll win and we lose...they are wrong," of Prime Minister Bajpayee and the fact that there were as many as 13 nuclear threats between India and Pakistan during Kargil make the dooms day scenario very real in South Asia. And second, examples of India and Pakistan as incentives for the aspirant nuclear states to go nuclear. X number of aspirant states may now try to convince the international community that like India and Pakistan they also need their nukes for grave national security reasons. Nuclearization of South Asia has, thus, reversed the hopeful trends towards a total elimination of nuclear weapons. It is indeed tragic that after a decade of great promises in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation - the whole specter of nuclear weapons now seems to be at the center stage. The international community is worried and in a joint ministerial declaration - the foreign ministers of Ireland and Sweden together with their

counter-parts of Brazil, Egypt, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia and South Africa called upon India and Pakistan to "put an end to their test explosives, which run counter to the will of international community as expressed by the 149 signatories of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. They must abandon their nuclear ambitions and accede unconditionally to this treaty and to the Non-Proliferation Treaty."

India has not paid any heed to international community's concerns. And from the declaratory statements, it is discernible that India with Pakistan following the suit would move towards development and deployment of nuclear weapons. And all these will be done under the rubric of national interests and national security. Is national security the only reason for the possible induction of nuclear weapons in the region? Not likely. As it has been noted by a reputed analyst that "India's missiles are a symbol of prestige and domestic pride; are driven by a technical impetus," and then, however, he goes on to say that they "have a valid military rationale, and a legitimate response to the regional and international situation that has a direct impact on India's security concerns." But it is difficult to come to terms with the military rationale and security concerns as the motivating factors behind BJP's nuclear policy, which has been for prestige and grandeur emanating from its jingoism and paranoid nationalism.

### Perils of National Security

First, most analysts believe that the tests were carried out not due to any compelling national security reasons, as indicated by Prime Minister Bajpayee's letter to President Clinton citing China as a poten-

It is astounding to note how the notion of human lives and their stake get lost when the leadership of India and Pakistan talk about militarization and nuclearization of South Asia. It is mind boggling to think that missile program and nuclear warhead are symbols of prestige and domestic pride when they are built specifically to target heavily populated cities.

by Dilara Choudhury

that can make its adversary convinced that it is able to absorb the first shots and still retaliate with nuclear counter punch, the doctrine has envisaged an arsenal that "will be based on a triad of aircraft, mobile land-based missiles and sea-based assets, which can respond in the shortest possible time" and employs a space-based early warning system. So the minimum deterrence called for a vague and open-ended weaponization program, which is based on a whole range of imponderables and uncertainties. Every possible contingency has to be counted that would need constant evaluation and upgrading resulting in an on-going arms race in the region costing billions of dollars. Can India, where half of world's hungry live, afford to undertake such steps? Whose security are we then talking about?

### A Moral Question: Deterrence or Disarmament?

The second issue to be dealt with is the concept of deterrence and what New Delhi means by having a minimum credible deterrence. However, according to most analysts - deterrence theory is a thing of the past. Even during the heydays of cold war it did not work as evidenced by the non-use of nuclear powers by the adversaries. What really worked in case of nuclear-armed superpowers was the stabilization of the rate of such regimes through dialogue and negotiation. Obviously, then the chances of its success are all the more precarious in South Asia in the context of Indo-Pakistan bitter rivalry over the status of Jammu and Kashmir and absence of meaningful CBMs. Even with regard to China with whom New Delhi has a number of meaningful CBMs its effectiveness could prove futile. Moreover, New Delhi has a built-in asymmetry against China. It also calls for expensive and elaborate command, control and communications infrastructure without which the chances of nuclear accidents are high. Actually even with highly developed command and control procedures both super powers experienced nuclear disaster all through out 1970s and 1980s. Without such developed procedures, one wonders about the rate of such accidents or disaster in South Asia.

### CTBT as an Instrument for Nuclear Disarmament

It is to be noted that despite some loopholes in the monitoring mechanism CTBT is considered to be an effective instrument in restraining and containing the spread of weapons of mass destruction. It is an irony that New Delhi is, so far, refusing to sign it under the pretext that "India will not sign CTBT under duress." In 1996, New Delhi argued that it would not sign CTBT because it would help continue nuclear apartheid. That argument with regard to foundation does not hold any longer after Pokhran II. By testing and indicating its weaponization program, India has deviated from what New Delhi has been preaching for the last forty years.

Second, India's example of deferring its signing may propel the NWSs and other aspirant states to resume testing and go in full swing with the development and deployment of new generations of nuclear tactical weapons. In that eventuality and in the cauldron of spiral arms race where would the security of the million of impoverished people and their subsequent livelihood. Whose security then New Delhi is talking about under the circumstances. So deterrence as a mechanism to ensure security is hardly acceptable. Moreover, if the deterrence is achieved through CBMs, then why spend so much money for building bombs?

And now one needs to grasp what exactly this "minimum credible deterrence" means and why it is so important. It is likely impact of such a definition what constitute minimum. The problem with this minimum deterrence is that nobody knows the exact number, which can project the credibility. It is actually a mind game. It can be achieved without having the show of a mighty retaliatory power. But the doctrine seems to think otherwise. In order to have a robust, survivable second strike capability

think that missile program and nuclear warhead are symbols of prestige and domestic pride when they are built specifically to target heavily populated cities. Here is an Apocalypse of an apprehended nuclear attack by an Indian citizen: "that could easily wipe off nearly a million of the citizenry of overpopulated Delhi while a similar number may be incapacitated due to the effects of intense radiation wipe out its present populace of approximately ten million. The tremendous heat and unmanageable wind speed after the blast will cripple beyond recognition almost everything - built up areas, communications, electricity, water supply and health services within a five kilometer zone around the epicenter. In such a horrid 'the day after' scenario, not a single building, multi storey or otherwise will remain intact while uncontrollable destructive fires will rage in the crowded areas in the aftermath. The highly radioactive waters of the Yamuna will spread the horrors further along its course contaminating the waters up to the bay of Bengal inclusive of Bangladesh....It will cause severe storms in the adjoining Arabian Sea with radioactivity afflicting the shores as far as Aden and the Persian Gulf." Similar doomsday scenario is easily discernible from an Indian attack on the Pakistani city of Lahore.

Unfortunately, most of South Asian population are quite oblivious of an anticipated nuclear holocaust due to lack of information and knowledge. Initially, however, thanks to BJP's jingoism and nuclear nationalism - there were euphoria among a large section of the population. The celebration by BJP cadres included the construction of a "Shakh (Strength) temple at Pokhran and distinction of its 'holy wars' as theirs. Since then it is all the more heartening to note that the domestic public opinion has swung with 73% expressing concerns about the existence of nuclear weapons in South Asia. This mood has been demonstrated through the peace march on Hiroshima Day (August 6) when 400,000 marched through the streets of Calcutta. The inhabitants of Pokhran and Khetolai gave an emotional welcome to the visiting Japanese peace delegation when they called for abolition of nuclear weapons and tests. And at Chennai Conference, Booker Prize winner Arundati Ray announced, "I am willing to sign any nuclear non-proliferation treaty or nuclear test ban treaty that's going." In Pakistan, representatives from several political parties and labor, women and social organizations formed "the Action Com-

mittee Against Arms Race (ACAAR)" In November 1998 to come together to consider "all kinds of arms race, be it conventional or nuclear, are immoral as they do not only rob the people of their right to health, education, housing, employment and other basic need, but put their progenies' existence as human beings in peril."

It is discernible that the people across South Asia are coming together to register their protest against nuclear weapons in the region. It is now imperative for the peace activists to mobilize other South Asians in order to make the Anti-Nuclear Movement a formidable one and put a "firebreak between tests and open deployment".

### Strategies

1. Mobilization of domestic public opinion in favor of signing the CTBT by disseminating information through print and electronic media that unlike the NPT, the CTBT is universal and non-discriminatory. The left parties who are opposing its signing under alleged US pressure should also be persuaded. Public should also be informed that Green Peace International, a peace organization truly committed to global nuclear disarmament, has refuted Government claim that there was no radioactive release into the atmosphere from the Pokhran tests citing the official reports on underground tests conducted by the U.S., Russia and Britain.
2. Building coalition with other organizations like Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers and Peace Action in USA, Green Peace International, the Japanese Peace Movement and groups in China working for the ratification of the Treaty.
3. Opening CTBT issues to public forums and educate the public opinion on the pros and cons of nuclear testing and nuclear war in all three countries, the USA, India and Pakistan.
4. Nuclearization of South Asia has been identified as one of the five great security challenges by a number of security analysts at the 13 Roundtable on Asia-Pacific, 1999. As such ASEAN Regional Forum could convene a major seminar in India on CTBT, as was recommended by the RF Track Two seminar on Non-proliferation in Jakarta in December 1996.
5. Building coalition with NGOs like UN NGO Committee on Disarmament, the In-

ternational Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA), the International Physicians For the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) in creating a momentum at the international level about Disarmament issues in South Asia highlighting the dangers, perils and risk of a nuclear war in the region.

6. Campaign to declare South Asia into a Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone under the supervision of a number of non-nuclear states. This would provide opportunities for joint campaigns by the states of South Asia.

7. Organizing mass rallies and marches in the major cities of South Asia on Hiroshima Day (August 6) and linking it with the similar activities of Japanese Peace Movement.

8. Incorporating South Asian Feminist Declaration, Bangalore, 1989, and Declaration of South Asian Women for Peace, Dhaka, 1999, with those of women's International movement and social movement, which since 1975, have become concerned about their international sisters about possible adverse effects of war, effects of their countries' actions and economic development of the women of the Third World countries.

9. Work for a Declaration of South Asian Women in International Security and forge linkage with Women in International Security in the Developed nations of the world. (In India a greater percentage among females expressed "Worry" by the blasts and their implications than males during a public opinion survey following Pokhran II).

10. Use of electronic media for networking and dissemination of information through existing list serves and web sites.

11. Forging links with major electronic news media like CNN and BBC world.

12. Organize International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament in South Asia by inviting leading Nobel Prize Peace Laureates to celebrate the UN proclaimed "International Year 2000 for the Culture of Peace".

13. Establishment of a Regional Peace Institute to do research on Peace and Conflict Resolution and forging links with International Peace Research Institutes.

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# The Dhaka Declaration

MORE than 150 activists and concerned citizens from 14 countries of South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia and the United States, representing a broad cross-section of peoples' movements, civil society organizations, professions and academic institutions, and belonging to varied linguistic, ethnic and religious groups, met at a conference in Dhaka from February 18 to 20, 2000 and deliberated on issues related to the spread of nuclear weaponry and its impact on society and security. The conference was organized by the Community Development Library (Dhaka) and Focus on the Global South (Bangkok and Mumbai). The participants adopted the following Declaration:

By conducting nuclear tests in 1998, embracing the doctrine of deterrence, and undertaking the development of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, India and Pakistan have gravely endangered their own and the region's security and set back the global nuclear disarmament agenda. This nuclearization imitates hegemonic states whose nuclear weapons represent the gravest danger to global security.

regional cooperation and sabotaged SAARC. This must be immediately reversed. Meanwhile, the Conference calls upon the members of SAARC to pressure India and Pakistan to enter into an effective dialogue for peace and security in the region.

As the strategic, social and economic repercussions of the nuclearization of India and Pakistan extend beyond their borders, the neighbouring states of Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka must use both their individual and collective influence to bring about the declaration of South Asia as a nuclear weapons-free zone. They should also explore innovative affiliations, such as the possibility of joining the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone (the Bangkok Treaty).

The Conference calls on the U.S., Russia, U.K., France and China to honour their disarmament obligations under Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as re-emphasized by the 1996 World Court Judgement, and to ratify, and live up to the spirit of the CTBT by closing down their test sites and halting development of new weapons designs. They must also immediately undertake further steps towards disarmament such as the fissile materials treaty, taking nuclear weapons off alert and work towards a convention to abolish nuclear weapons. We oppose all proposals for ballistic missile systems, including research. The U.S. and Russia must further the START process. Japan should cease cooperation with the U.S. on Theatre Missile Defence systems. The Conference calls on the people of U.S., Russia, U.K., France and China to pressure their respective governments into adopting these measures and strengthening the call for global nuclear disarmament.

The Conference also appeals to civil society organizations in all South Asian countries to place nuclear disarmament on their agenda and build an effective coalition around this goal.

Nuclear weapons programmes have gravely damaged people's health and environment. Immediate steps must be taken to remedy this. The Conference is also aware that the abolition of nuclear weapons cannot be sustained without ending reliance on nuclear power generation which has damaging social and ecological impacts. It therefore calls for pursuing alternative, sustainable, energy paths in the region.

Nuclear Weapons are immoral, illegal and strategically irrational. It is imperative to adopt a wholly non-militaristic approach to security which is based on the fundamental and inviolable right of all South Asians to peace, sustainable development and justice.

"Peace Builds, Bombs Destroy"

And now one needs to grasp what exactly this "minimum credible deterrence" means and why it is so important. It is likely impact of such a definition what constitute minimum. The problem with this minimum deterrence is that nobody knows the exact number, which can project the credibility. It is actually a mind game. It can be achieved without having the show of a mighty retaliatory power. But the doctrine seems to think otherwise. In order to have a robust, survivable second strike capability

Nuclearization of South Asia has also changed the geopolitical landscape of the region. This is the only part of the world where three nuclear states, India, Pakistan and China, with adversarial relations face each other. Another nuclear state, Federation of Russia, is located only at arms' length. One then should only hope that in the given nuclear landscape the situation does not become desperate. There is now worry and apprehensions about the consequences of newly added nuclear dimension in India-Pakistan conflicts, especially in the given unforgiving political climate of the region. The threats of use of nuclear weapons and nuclearization concerns have now become a regional concern. Bangladesh, for example, is worried about the possible radioactive fall out of India's nuclear tests in its already polluted atmosphere. Development of Gauri III missile with a range of 2,500 km bringing city of Calcutta under its target makes Dhaka look like a sitting duck as well. Possible regional nuclearization with its potential overkill and its overall devastating effects, thus, can hardly be overrated.

The regional strategic in-

# For the Year 2000 and Beyond

Continued from page 8

perceived beyond ideological and doctrinal clouds. It was not difficult for Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, atheists, liberals, Marxists, whites, blacks, yellows, browns or a mixture of these races to support the anti-colonial and anti-racism struggles in Africa, the American civil rights movement, the resistance of the Vietnamese people against U.S. imperialism or even the anti-dictatorship and human-rights movements in the Philippines and South Korea.

rea. Was it because the exigencies of the time forced people to overlook certain impediments? The situation is a great deal more problematic now. While threats to human security are still as brutal and real as before, the presentation or interpretation of said reality for popular consumption has become more sophisticated such that somehow these threats no longer arouse the same gut-wrenching reaction as before. The discipline and preparation required for comprehending the complexities of economic and political warfare also plays a major part as many experts in this field tend to employ largely esoteric language and are unable to translate what is happening in easily understandable terms. Moreover, the arena for effective advocacy has significantly narrowed down due to widespread disillusionment over great ideological and political expectations especially among those not directly involved in the day-to-day struggles for structural change.

Nevertheless, the need for militant and effective advocacy at the global level is just as urgent as before. There is the need to form regional and global coalitions, or at least clearing houses and communications points that cut across national boundaries and ideological and political predispositions, bearing in mind that the overriding requirements of human security and survival must necessarily transcend national and ideological differences. Such platforms will need to create conditions which will encourage advocates to root out the causes of conflict such as poverty, economic and political injustice, and marginalization or exclusion of peoples. Venues

need to be created allowing various groups to participate in immediate action such as crisis intervention, medium-term programs such as political and economic advocacy, as well long-term structural change. It goes without saying that these platforms should be based on a real partnership between North and South.

Global cooperation among NGOs and people's organizations will necessarily have to contend with dominant political and economic policies that pose threats to human security as well as the sources of weaponry that prop them up. These policies need to be clearly identified if they are to be addressed at the national, regional and global levels. I have earlier mentioned that one of the current problems faced by many advocates of human security is the lack of a clear target. I happen to work with both church and non-church groups in the Philippines and in some countries in Asia, North America and Europe. A point of unity among us is the necessity to confront the globalization of the unfettered market as it wreaks havoc on peoples' lives, even in the advanced industrial societies. Confronting globalization and its military aspect could be a start for us here. It will also be just as necessary to objectively assess both the strengths and weaknesses of human-security advocates-organizationally and attitudinally - so that whatever gains there are can be consolidated and errors rectified.

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# The Peace Movement

Continued from page 8

I see great potential in such events. The Hindu Right has everything going for it but for one major element: it is utterly humorless, devoid of warmth and joy and relies on the whipping up of hatred. It is my belief that such emotions are unsustainable, and that is why, for example, the Ram Janmabhoomi Movement could not be sustained beyond a point. That is why they need to keep raising other bogies, whether it is Fire or Water or the Christians or cricket matches in order to keep their stew simmering.

This working group session is called 'Generating resources to spread the anti-nuclear message.'

If we get our act together, spell out our vision for the future, have a genuine fund of excitement, creativity and joy within us, the resources, whether material or people will come to us quite automatically.

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# Plan of Action

- National:**
1. Civil society organizations and activists in the countries of South Asia, Southeast Asia and beyond will work towards complete and total nuclear disarmament. In this context, they will work towards a South Asian NWFZ and convince their governments to be committed to this goal. They should also explore innovative and effective affiliations, such as the possibility of joining the Southeast Asian NWFZ (Bangkok Treaty).
  2. Concrete steps should be taken for setting up groups to review and suggest changes in the curricula of all South Asian states, particularly in overcoming communal and nationalistic tendencies.
  3. Provide educational and informational material on nuclear and disarmament issues across the social spectrum. Pamphlets, audio-cassettes, videos, newsletters, educational comics, educational films and posters and slide shows must be made widely available. Wherever possible such material must be translated and distributed.
  4. Network with existing struggles, sensitize and train activists on nuclear issues.
  5. To dialogue with the pro-nuclear and other mainstream lobbies.
- Regional:**
1. Immediate and total freeze on India and Pakistan's nuclear weapons system.
  - a) No assembly of weapons
  - b) No mating of weapons with delivery systems
  - c) No deployment, no induction of nuclear weapons
  - d) No further testing of nuclear weapons
  - e) No further missile tests or acquisition of delivery
- Global:**
1. Dissemination of past experiences of nuclear disasters and the use of data for social awareness.
  2. Linking the movement with anti-nuclear and peace movements and other like-minded civil groups of nuclear states.
  3. Linking up with the peace movements such as Hague Appeal for Peace, New Agenda Coalition countries and other pro-active civil bodies for nuclear disarmament.

The topic of our next issue is: **De-nuclearisation**

II. Creative suggestions are invited from our esteemed readers. Please send your materials to: Dr Imtiaz Ahmed, Executive Director, Centre for Alternatives, Room No 431, Lecture Theatre, Arts Building, Dhaka University, Dhaka-1000. Tel: 9661900-19, Ext 4550; Fax (8802) 8316769; E-mail: imtiaz@bangla.net.