Slouching toward the truth to embrace the Smiling Buddha

by

MA Venkataramana

THESIS

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Professor David Lumsdaine and Professor Lee Seung-Joo

Abstract

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Two major influences – indeed causes – were responsible for India's nuclear tests in 1998. I show, by analyzing, and by bringing in empirical evidence when necessary, and to a certain extent by also refuting some of the (other) often suggested causes – to name one, India's quest for great power status – that these are:

(i) India's growing concerns about a nuclear armed China and an untenable taboo India developed toward openly admitting what it saw of China.

(ii) The permanent extension of the nonproliferation treaty in 1995 vis-à-vis the position India grew to occupy within the developments in the nonproliferation regime.

If indeed China were instrumental to India's nuclear tests in 1998, then, we had better evaluate the evolution of India's nuclear program – and figure out in what ways, and how far, it was contingent to the China concern – and yet why it doesn't appear significantly connected. That is the purpose of the section "The trouble China always was", although that section also examines the broader reasons India may have to value.

Insofar as the approaches to advancing disarmament initiatives, and consequently reducing nuclear threat, is concerned, the gulf between India and the nonproliferation regime has been both, widely recognized and longstanding – persisting for three or more decades. Still,

the landmark developments within the nonproliferation regime in 1995 was considerable in that, post 1995, no longer was it possible for India to retain the *option* of acquiring nuclear weapons when needed, while yet not announcing that it was or wasn't acquiring or going to acquire nuclear weapons. Important as this development was, its consequence was even more far-reaching, for India. Far-reaching in the sense that despite widespread support (within India) for disarmament, the incentives for testing (for nuclear weapons) moved out of obscure presence to a manifest recognition. The section "Nonproliferation regime's limbo" investigates the underlying events (linkages) that triggered India's departure from the described option which, in fact, held for long.

To Dalai Lama

Who has cherished peace with a Smile

Preface

Why

For those interested in transnational phenomenon if we listed the world's top ten surprises since the World War II, India's nuclear tests of 1998 will possibly figure prominently. (Several years earlier, when Indira Gandhi received the message "The Buddha Smiles" in May 1974, she knew that India's nuclear tests at Pokhran had been successful.) On that score alone, I felt India's tests are too important to be left solely to policy-makers; here, academics and thinkers share responsibility too, to respond with vigor. In another way, we may learn that surprises needn't always be searched for in the complex, but can also be found within the simple and apparently indistinct. How can these tests be explained? That India conducted these tests *ipso facto* makes explanation harder than one could imagine if India were India. But what is India?

What

In short, reading India is messy as can be. What can one say about a country in which only one thing is certain: it cannot be spoken of in the singular. EP Thompson, the perceptive British historian, gets it right: "All convergent influences of the world run through this society: Hindu, Moslem, Christian, Secular, Stalinist, Liberal, Maoist, Democratic, Socialist, Gandhian. There is not a thought that is being thought in the West or East that is not active in some Indian mind". In recent days, Shashi Tharoor has put it similarly: "How can one portray the present, let alone the future, of an ageless civilization that was the birthplace of four major religions, a dozen different traditions of classical dance, eighty-five political parties and three hundred ways of cooking the potato?" In essence, India is no one way but

a zillion ways. Yet, to just recall one instance, where much against what was convincingly professed in the 1950s—its democratic culture thrived; and indeed the country remained; reminding one of Jawaharlal Nehru's prognosis that India was connected "by strong invisible threads. … About her there is the elusive quality of a legend of long ago; some enchantment seems to have held her mind. She is a myth and an idea, a dream and a vision, and yet very real and present and pervasive". That it somehow functions—and often functions beyond or beside expectation—should caution us from failing to grasp it altogether. To borrow John Kenneth Galbraith's apt and practical description, India is a *functional anarchy*.

How

This thesis captures that *functional anarchy* in an anarchic world that set nuclear tests in 1998—to cull an interpretive study by critiquing how India grew, over time, to outgrow its hate for the "Bomb". In so doing, the effort weaves through a series of relevant evidence using applicable methods: re-reading history; probing policy; provoking thought; looking at the familiar in unfamiliar ways; and through numerous one-on-one interviews as well. For some political scientists, the lesson of theorizing is that nothing succeeds like reality; some others are more tragic than anything one can find in imaginative discourse. This is essentially, an attempt to gain foothold in the former category, because I believe intellect can still draw strength from a finger-hold in the real. Some will disagree with this selection, but here is a feast for those who love to graze in rough pastures.

Acknowledgements

On its genesis, this enterprise has incurred extremely high debts of gratitude. Warping through a whirl-a-bout of dianoetic realms including history, geopolitics, political economy, and strategic complex of the highest order—a topic of this kind—wouldn't have lent itself to cognitive treatment without others' generosity. All along, I received copious encouragement, input, criticism, understanding, lampooning, and kindness. I would like to thank David Lumsdaine for getting the ball rolling as a friend, teacher, scholar, and guide—for incubating my imagination through a rare mingle of *savant-expectation* and *self-assurance*. Lee Seung-Joo's vast knowledge on transnational phenomena turned this into "mission possible", and provided intellectual tour de force. Park Hun-Joo sparked my imagination. Much appreciation goes to Lim Gill-Chin for infusing me with boundless enthusiasm, and granting the needed scholarship money for yet another month of my stay at the School of Public Policy and Management, Korea Development Institute, Seoul, where I began initial research. TN Srinivasan's (Economic Growth Center, Yale University) eight lectures delivered at the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bangalore helped me place India's development process within its historical setting. I am profoundly grateful to him for providing me with his perceptive lectures even before its publication (by Oxford University Press, New Delhi; forthcoming, January 2000). Fred Rosenzweig's introduction to old American classical works evoked virgin flavor that lured me to spot exciting patterns in American polity, in ways connecting and disjointing with India.

Markus Seiler and David Trudel at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), Zurich, in their research through the program on alliance for global sustainability, sponsored by

ETH, University of Tokyo and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, decanted reacts for sustaining peace and reviewed my earlier draft. Flavio Saraiva De Carvalho Fonseca, a brilliant lawyer, drew my attention to the themes behind the legalities of international treaties and commented extensively on earlier drafts. C Raja Mohan, strategic affairs editor of *The Hindu* walked me through the history of India's nuclear policy; as did K Subrahmanyam, India's eminent strategic thinker. Pamela Constable, Bureau Chief of *The Washington Post,* offered invaluable comments on my drafts, and honed me to write the way I think and think the way I write; her other suggestions, as well, came handier than she will remember. Vijay Vancheswar, a communications expert with ABB (Asea Brown Boveri), was a source of honest engagement, encouragement and a frequent provider of dream therapy and hospitality. Byword Editorial Consultants helped me with editing and re-reading the manuscript and in happily putting-up with gruelling demands on quality and time.

Numerous friends and experts at the Tata Energy Research Institute, New Delhi and the Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis, New Delhi readily shared their research findings with me. Officials at the BARC (Bhabha Atomic Research Center), Trombay, and Nuclear Science Center, New Delhi helped me with their archives. Special thanks goes to India International Center, New Delhi, whose officials were kind enough in allowing me to host a number of discussions within short notice, in their excellent office setting. Many others offered insightful views. They include policy-makers, academicians, and statesmen including one present or former Prime Minister of India, one present or former President of India. And a distinguished scholar and present or former Secretary of the State of the US who, for their own reasons, did not wish their names mentioned. My parents, Augusta and Arun, and

my sister Mek showed extraordinary understanding by nourishing my mind and warming my heart in all ways, always.

I am immensely grateful to all these people and other unlisted gurus I came in contact (and still others whose work/s I only read). Many of these *atomized Brahmins* were common only in their pregnant imagination, intellectual nerve, and vigor for dispatch. Finally, I dedicate this effort to a living example of peace during our time—the Dalai Lama. Then, in homage to many great scholars who have devoted noble labors to the cause of peace for which both repose and ability are in deficit to me—I beg that the deficiencies of my too-hurried study be spared. This effort was composed in brief intervals of time, without leisure, but inspired by an abiding desire to aid the understanding that underwrites peace, even as some grace ushers that we wake up in yet another dawn of hope.

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Figures

The Argument

The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counterbombs even as violence cannot be by counterviolence.—MK Gandhi[1]

India championed disarmament for over four decades; vehemently shunned acquiring nuclear weapons; and assumed control on trading of sensitive technologies. How did things then change so much that India turned many heads by conducting nuclear tests in May 1998?

These tests were not India's first; it had tested earlier in 1974, supposedly for peaceful purposes. What began in 1948 as India's modest atomic energy program grew later into a vast scientific establishment[2]. India's nuclear abilities did not have to wait for 1998 for it had long passed the threshold capability for testing, and perhaps making nuclear weapons as well[3].

Nothing seemed to have changed in India's neighborhood. Tensions followed a set pattern, particularly with Pakistan; sporadic exchange of fire along the borders and disagreements over Kashmir continued. India's relations with its biggest neighbor China were reassuring by a whisker[4]. China had conducted its first nuclear test in 1964[5] and, with abilities in intercontinental ballistic missiles, was far ahead of India in the nuclear race. A close ally and India's nuclear security provider USSR had disintegrated nearly a decade before New Delhi's

[1] MK Gandhi, Atom Bomb and Ahimsa, *Harijan*, Pune, July 7, 1946.
[2] See Itty Abraham, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb, Science, Secrecy and the Post Colonial State*.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Though border issues with China remain unresolved, it is argued China has got most of what it wanted if its primary aim was to secure the route from Xinkiang to Tibet.
[5] John Wilson Lewis, Xue Litai, *China Builds the Bomb.*

1998 nuclear tests. Alongside, with Moscow's exit from Afghanistan, Soviet-competing American interests also declined in that troubled state—through and in Pakistan. Neither India nor Pakistan made any attempt to change the nuclear status quo of either giving up or announcing to test for weapons. Rhetoric of "ability" and "caution" continued from both sides, as did deft political maneuvering even as India/Pakistan missed a fourth war by a hair's breadth on at least two occasions[6].

All through the 1990s, India had continually liberalized its hitherto tightly controlled economy to forge its commercial interests with the outside world; setting expectation of buying into the dominant world trend. A trend focusing economic growth and prosperity, as the 1990s considerably devalued the might nuclear weapons had during the peak of the cold war. In 1998 or in the period two to three years before, there was nothing that even remotely suggested as if one of India's neigbhors had acquired a lacked nuclear capability (covert or overt).

The kind of compulsion India had faced for long and resisted the temptation to test (for weapons) is what the world thought India had learned to live wisely with. In the bad old days, big advanced countries like the United States and the Soviet Union might have had no answer to prolonged engagements in expanding and acquiring newer-deadlier breed of nuclear weapons. But between the days of India's defiance to acquire nuclear weapons and the reasonable progress of the START-I treaty, we thought we knew enough—to keep that need for nuclear weapons from happening again. Smaller countries like South Korea in

[6] Since independence in 1947, India has fought three wars, in 1947–48, 1965 and 1971 with Pakistan. In 1987, India and Pakistan almost locked horns into a fourth war over a crisis arising

1950s may have once stood by helplessly as their nation fell under attack from the communists in the north. Nowadays, sophisticated security arrangements (not to mention the nonproliferation treaty) are supposed to quench the thirst for nuclear weapons and halt the spread of security threats. No sensible person thought the age of nuclear anxiety was past; but whatever problems we might have in the future, we were sure they would bear little resemblance to India declaring itself self-styled nuclear power. When the exacerbation expected of a decision to test was nowhere on the horizon, India's tests struck out of clear blue skies.

Did they? What can so terribly have happened in failing to suggest even the remotest clue? What in a long trail of events could have worked against or in favor of India to hit the wall so quickly? That is the overarching argument—and the dependent variable—this work shall investigate and explain.

Key drivers

"Two causes" seem to have provoked the tests of 1998. These were: (i) breaking of India's taboo of speaking the truth about China's behavior, and (ii) the legitimization of the possession of nuclear weapons by nuclear weapons states made plausible through nonproliferation treaty changes in 1995. These causes (and indeed their dynamics)—less understood in India and least thought of by the outside world—had a major role to play as independent variables in the tests. The theme of this effort essentially revolves around positions India assumed vis-à-vis China as well as developments in the nonproliferation regime—sparking the tests.

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from misconception that grew from the conduct of "Brasstacks", independent India's largest

What changed in the way India started to see China that many (including Indians!) were surprised to belatedly learn? The truth is that China's policies have presented a seemingly compelling case of disquiet, whereas its actions have suggested deep concerns for India; while India's attitude toward China has been confusing, because of heightened levels of *taboo* to speak the truth as India saw of China, but prepared in anticipation of China. Barring efforts of a few experts, the lack of serious scholarship within India on the characteristics of its largest neighbor has turned the taboo into a tragedy. Little wonder, views on China have broadly fallen in two categories—China bashers and China defenders. China bashers believe that China is the trouble and trace this way back to the Quing dynasty. China defenders view it as a great power with weaknesses, which it is rightfully fixing and that India is not a major concern for China. A thought-provoking debate congruent to prudent Indian policy on China remained overdue. Thus, India's recent pronouncements[7] on China deserve deep pause even if western reactions[8] on China were lukewarm for reasons other than poor articulation of India's case. The taboo offers no easy way to grasp the dynamics of New Delhi's concerns about Beijing.

The tests have unsettled the mind for an explanation better than overstating or quietly ignoring the China factor. Put differently, such an explanation should resist the influence of

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military exercise. The situation that led to a war-like situation in 1990 remains unclear.

[7] See "George in China Shop", *India Today,* May 18, 1998. A vocal George Fernandes, India's defense minister asserted China as the potential threat number 1. See also Appendix A carrying Prime Minister AB Vajpayee's acquisitions of China in a letter to President Bill Clinton.

[8] According to India, US has hardly shown any appreciation for India's concerns about China. The US readings were suited to the convenience of its postures with the Soviet Union. In later years, the disclosures made by Henry Kissinger's book, *The White House years,* has validated the earlier Indian thinking. In 1996, Varun Sahani has said, "The United States was never likely to apply countervailing nuclear pressure on China, even during the darkest days of the cold war,

hindsight to engage in fatalism, of either demonizing or confessing the reverse of the China cause. Nevertheless, the role of China in the shifts of India's nuclear policy was (will likely be) both profound and inevitable. The "China" part offers the benefit of independent reading.

The largely West-led nonproliferation regime, following the end of the cold war, may have seen the strategic importance of nuclear weapons decline. But the fact that huge stocks[9] of these weapons are still around—resources still committed even if in disguised ways[10]—makes clear that any major power possessing them is unable single-handedly to wish away these weapons. While this has been a *de facto de rigueur*, its converse—that nuclear weapons provide hedge of some kind—whether the theory of deterrence[11] is irredeemably flawed or conditionally fit—still flags attention though it may have lost its earlier lust. In other words: aspiring nuclear powers love to not hate that there is something—though debatable—but an alive thing called deterrence that nuclear weapon states are loathe to give up even for the sake of global disarmament. However, the relevant questions are: what forces within the nonproliferation regime can have triggered India's shift from "no-bomb" to acquiring "option for the bomb"? In what ways did the permanent extension of the nuclear

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and it is almost inconceivable that this would be the case today. The US has lately shown a marked tendency to bend backwards to avoid alienating China."

[9] A decade after the cold war we have no less than 35,000 nuclear bombs.

[10] According to one prominent argument: "In the United States there is growing concern about the 60 billion dollar Stockpile Stewardship Program. Indeed, the US has already started sub-critical testing to improve the reliability and arguably the efficiency of its nuclear weapons. Even more disconcerting is the latest presidential decree, which expands on the potential use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states in retaliation for chemical, and biological attacks. Moreover, the nuclear nonproliferation treaty may begin to crumble even before the NPT Review Conference in 2000. A growing number of non-nuclear states—parties to the NPT—have stated that they might revise their commitment to the treaty if there is no progress on disarmament as envisaged under Article VI of the treaty."

[11] No denial, vast literature on deterrence does suggest how deep a flaw this concept presents. However, moving from theory, practical politics has clearly found difficulties in keeping apart disarmament and deterrence.

nonproliferation treaty force India to give up its "option for the bomb"? As with the treatment of the "China variable", this section can be read independently.

Did "other reasons" matter; How much?

Arguments different from "China" and the "nonproliferation regime" have also claimed support for India's tests. Some argue "domestic compulsions" as being the chief reason behind Indira Gandhi's decision to ask for the 1974 nuclear test, to bolster the sagging faith in her administration. She was at the peak of her popularity at the time of giving her decision. However, given the lead-time required for testing, this argument is unconvincing. Homi Bhabha[12], in a study sought by the Indian government to evaluate possible options following China's first tests in 1964, did indicate that India would be able to conduct a test in about 18 months' time following a decision to do so. It is true that Indira Gandhi started facing internal dissatisfaction from mid-1973 onwards. If she tested[13] to boost her popularity, it does not offer a counterfactual explanation of why the same event couldn't have happened earlier in the 1960s, when she was more politically challenged. What the 1998 tests (conducted barely 55 days after Bharatiya Janata Party took office) will do for the Bharatiya Janata Party in terms of electoral gains remains to be seen; though with not much hope if

[12] Dr Homi Bhabha (hereafter referred to as Bhabha) was the first Chairman of Indian Atomic Energy Commission and a founding figure of India's atomic operations. See K Subrahmanyam, *Indian Nuclear Policy—1964–98* (A personal recollection) appearing in *Nuclear India*, ed. Jasjit Singh, Knowledge World, New Delhi, 1998.

[13] In that case, it must have occurred as reasonable for Indira Gandhi to give decision for testing. The problem here is to establish link between outcome and resonableness. Kenneth Arrow [1951] has shown, through his famous "General Possibility Theorem" [an oddly optimistic name for what is more commonly—and more revealingly—called Arrow's "impossibility theorem"], that in trying to obtain an integrated social preference from diverse individual preferences, it is not in general possible to satisfy even some mild-looking conditions that would seem to reflect elementary demands of reasonableness. See Amartya Sen, "Rationality and Social Choice", *The American Economic Review,* March 1995.

poll surveys are any indication[14]. Thus, even on lenient grounds, "domestic compulsions" are unable to assume an informed view of confirming its role.

Another often stated reason is the boost in power status associated with nuclear tests. Arguers of this preposition report[15] this was a way for India to gain respect and international attention. They reason that India being a great civilization and once-upon-a-time power, it would like to redeem that status now, by acquiring power projection capabilities, including nuclear. If true, this view suffers from at least three fallacies.

First, why did India have to wait so long? India did not become an old civilization in the late 1990s. It was an old civilization even in the 1970s, when nuclear weapons conferred international influence on a nation. Arguers of great power status claim that India now has one billion population and has reached a stage of technical ability it previously lacked. However, this may be argued away as in the case of domestic complusions. Following the first Chinese test in 1964, India could have conducted an explosion within 18 months, if desired. The Indian population of around 400 million in the mid-sixties would then as well have qualified as the one-sixth of humanity that it is today.

Prestige[16] follows quickly from nuclear tests. It could by all means follow from other reasons for the tests. If not a cause, prestige can still turn out to be an inevitable byproduct, whether

[14] According to Indian Market Research Bureau poll, only 41% believed that the Bhartiya Janata Party government had conducted these tests "only to increase its popularity"; while in times of Indian poll just 27% believed that gaining "political advantage" was the primary motivation of the Bhartiya Janata Party government.
[15] See Thomas Friedman, "Both Sides Now", *New York Times*, June 20, 1998.
[16] William Walker has said: "India's nuclear weapon program has always been deeply motivated by the thirst for prestige." Walker does so by citing "Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee's evident emotion on television on May 11, 1998 that 'India is now a nuclear weapons state'." See William

desired or despised. (Think that demands on your time are so great that a car wouldn't do any longer, and a chopper is what you need; so you get one. All that the chopper would do is to serve its utility—and do so perfectly to satisfy its intended purpose—quick transportation needs. But it could also raise apprehensions among others that the chopper enhances your level of prestige which you may simply ignore, shun or may be even seek to benefit from the status elation that happened to follow, anyway.) Be as it may, for some, prestige is anything but the most important consideration within the decision-making loop of India's nuclear tests. It is not to suggest that India fantasizing on the great-power status is baseless. Maybe, its population and democratic tradition aside, India does figure in a major way among the major civilizations. The picture of Western, Orthodox (Russian), Islamic, Hindu (Indian?), Chinese, Japanese is better, despite shortcomings, than seeing it in the traditional terms of the developed-world-and-developing-world[17]. Such an explanation, barring of course overdrawn generalization; fails to satisfactorily show the connectivity between great power status and nuclear weapons. The point was driven home explicitly: "…India is now a nuclear weapons state. This is a reality that cannot be denied. It is not a conferment that we seek; nor is it a status for others to grant"[18].

Second, it would have been naïve to expect Indian planners to have believed that the military prowess that goes with "great power" status (even a power projection capability that would

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Walker, ''International nuclear relations after the Indian and Pakistani test explosions.'' *Internal Affairs* **74**, 3(1998) 505–528, (p. 512).

[17] See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*. In referring to Huntington's thesis I support such a view only to the extent of looking at the world in this fashion as against the present way; and no more than it; for instance Huntington's views on Hinduism doesn't give due thought to Indian history nor to the nonproselytizing nature of Hinduism that made possible such a history.

[18] See s*uo moto* statement by prime minister AB Vajpayee in parliament on May 27, 1998.

subsume the present level of force, strength and structure of China's which is behind the US), would automatically follow from just detonating devices[19].

Third, the western arguments of prestige tend to reflect their view of looking at India's nuclear weapons program with the same mirror they have used to look at their own. Prestige especially strikes a chord with the British and the French for keeping their nuclear weapons; both were vastly influential colonial powers, but suffered massive devaluation in their international influence and stature. Both are now defending their need for nuclear weapons at a time when, since the end of pagan days, Europe has never been more peaceful. With Russia, not many doubt, nuclear weapons serve as a perfect collateral to the mayhem that state is in.

Can the end of bloc-politics, especially Soviet disintegration, have exacerbated India's security calculations? The influences of this effect vary from the obvious to the complicated. The obvious part is the loss of strength of a trusted ally for India. Opportunities that have arisen because of the disintegration of the Soviet Empire for other countries, especially China, should also be discomforting India. The rise of China coinciding with the possibilities that Beijing now has to fill the Soviet vacuum is regarded as disturbing by India's planners in terms of the balance of power within the world or, at least, in Asia for now.

[19] Not many have equated detonating of nuclear devices with achieving far-reaching military prowess. For instance, Bhabha's successor, Vikram Sarabhai, saw little use in just being able to conduct tests. After all, is there anyway to say a country that has conducted tests has failed in its testing; not in the case of any of the seven countries that have tested so far. What each country has scientifically got from its tests may differ, though.

The complicated part is to weigh the risks and rewards to India, emerging from the convoluted relationship between China[20] and Russia. Beyond the veil of complication, lies a compellingly convincing calculation. Indira Gandhi was reluctant to accept Soviet nuclear protection until it became clear that the security pact with Moscow (signed in August 1971) was inevitable, probably to deter China from attacking, especially when Western assistance for India's nuclear protection was not forthcoming[21]. But then, why was the Indo-Soviet treaty expired in 1992 renegotiated by India to exclude the security clause? In retrospect, we do know that Soviet protection deterred China from attacking India; it also deterred the United States, thus exposing India to the unforeseeable dynamics superpower rivalry posed. This argument lends credence to the earlier reluctance Indira Gandhi had shown and, although the Soviet protection was considerable, the underlying need for India to keep neutral had hardly changed. The keenness to be able to decide options on its own only enhanced the drive to self-dependence that Nehru had long[22] emphasized. (See TN Srinivasan for a superb dialogue of India's development-process rooted in historical setting in a series of "Eight Lectures on Indian Economic Reforms" at the Institute of Social and Economic Change in a book being brought out by Oxford University Press, New Delhi sometime in January 2000.) Though Soviet disintegration could admittedly have meant

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[20] See Mao Zedong, G*uanyu guoji xingshi de jianghua tigang* (Speech outline about the international situation), 1959. Criticisms of Soviet Union were: of the despise Mao showed of the Soviet support to India during China/Indian border disputes of 1962; of Soviet involvement in China's local politics (Gao Gang and Rao Sushi (1953–54); among others. Yet Russia has all along been a trustworthy arms supplier to China. Sino-Russian relations, it seems, also depend to a considerable extent on the influences governing the relationship between Russia/US and US/China.

[21] India's then prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri is reported to have made a secret overture to the United States for a guarantee of American assistance for India in the case of nuclear attack from China. See Memo of the Committee on Nuclear Non-proliferation, March 29, 1965, South Asia folder, Nuclear Non-Proliferation documents, National Security Archive, Washington, DC. There are also reports suggesting that LB Shastri was believed to have asked the British prime minister, Harold Wilson, for an extended deterrence by Britain during his visit to that country during December 1964, but there was no favorable British response.

[22] See Appendix B for separate treatment on self-reliance as it appeared in India's context.

different consequences, it still couldn't have held the swing vote in India's decision-making priority for the tests.

Pathetic debates filled with ethnic angst still get acclaim in quality circles in the West. One from America's paper of record said:

> *Near the residence of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, India's new Hindu nationalist leader, in what Indians call a jhuggi—a huddle of tin-and-wood shacks against a brick wall—migrants from the same poverty-stricken area where the nuclear blasts were conducted gathered at dusk to stage a festival of joy.…Not one had a decent pair of shoes; most had never earned more than $1 a day. Yet they lit firecrackers, danced to blaring taped music and thanked the Hindu gods. 'Bharat Mata Jai', they cried 'Victory to Mother India'![23]*

Another publication warned:

> *The Indian subcontinent is the most dangerous place on earth. It is the incubator of racial and religious hatred that is more virulent and persistent than any biological epidemic (though it, too, could be unleashed in a war). The slum of every city of consequence is a purgatory in which rampaging Hindu and Muslim fundamentalists search for their opposite number and kill them. While both sides have invented elaborate excuses for developing nuclear weapons—strategic deterrence, for example—their real purpose is genocide.[24]*

Whatever the "other reasons" for the tests, they seem in India's case to have not stood through various regimes in power during different times. The drive for India to test seems far more fundamental, systemic, continual and reinforced over time than "other reasons" suggest.

This effort was undertaken as events unfolded in mid-1999 with the aim of politicizing an open, healthy debate on a subject of lasting impact to mankind, albeit least exposed to democratic tradition even in robust democracies. To Raimo Vayrynen's observation that:

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[23] See John F Burns, "India charts a perilous course to glory", *The New York Times*, May 17, 1998.

"The average American knows more about nuclear policy than the average British, Chinese, French, or the Russian citizen," I will add India[25] to the non-American list. Eventually, there will be longer analyses and more thorough findings. In the long run we will know better how India got into this mess and what can be done to prevent similar hodgepodge in the future. But as Buddha would have said: "In the long run the world is an empty trifle." This (trifle thing) seems entirely appropriate as major developments like the flaw in India's amazing endurance of the taboo about China can slip attention. Likewise, the unseen trend of the well-known sign of uproar between India and the nonproliferation regime can progress vindictively till too late to fix.

The trouble China always was

China's behavior and its action towards India clearly makes it the single most important component in India's defense calculations. To examine China vis-à-vis India, some assumptions are required. First, despite problems, China would end up becoming an economic and military superpower over the next twenty years. Second, despite regional problems China will remain united[26] and authoritarian under firm control of the Chinese Communist Party, and the People's Liberation Army will remain dedicated to the regime in power. Third, India will also begin to emerge as a regional superpower of some sort. Will China reconcile developments under the above circumstances: by cooperation, competition

[24] See Williams Burrows and Robert Windrem, Critical mass: The dangerous race for super weapons in a fragmented world, Simon and Schuster, London, p. 351.
[25] India's government can and does restrict the availability of information, and even those given access to nuclear secrets are prevented from disseminating them through the special Atomic Energy Act of 1962 or the more pervasive Official Secrets Act. Under Section 18(i) of the Atomic Energy Act, the government has the power to restrict the disclosure of information in any form that relates to an existing or proposed plant for producing, developing, or using atomic energy.
[26] The collapse of Soviet communism, it is argued, should not draw comparison with China. See Ezra F Vogel, ed., *Living with China*.

or conflict; or all three; any two; or the only unlikely—cooperation? There are no certain answers; but some guestimates of plausible scenarios.

A Middle Kingdom heresy

Between Mao Zedong (1949–76) and Deng Xiaoping (1978 onwards), China has undergone sweeping changes. Quansheng Zhao, drawing upon Bernhard Giesen's theoretical model of interpreting evolution summarizes (Table 1) the Micro[27]–Macro linkage model of the Chinese Foreign Policy between 1949 and 1996.

Table 1

The Micro–Macro Linkage Model of the Chinese Foreign Policy (1949–96)

Macrostructures	Macrostructural change (key analytical concepts)	Micro Processes in Beijing
Symbolic macrostructure	From revolution to modernization	Orientational change in the interpretation of the internal and external environments; learning and adaptation; the changing priorities of foreign policy
Institutional macrostructure	From vertical authoritarianism to horizontal authoritarianism	Increased scope and degree of participation in foreign policy-making; changes of rules, norms, and mechanisms in policy-making process
Power/Regime	From rigidity toward macrostructure flexibility	Dynamics of individual leaders' power and authority; regime legitimacy; decision-makers' preference and choices; foreign policy strategies and tactics

[27] Quansheng Zhao's definition of Micro level refers to decision-makers (Whether individuals or small groups), and Macro analysis focuses on the international elements (relating to system and structure) and domestic elements (aspects of society and internal institutions); See Quansheng Zhao, *Interpreting Chinese Foreign Policy, The Micro–Macro Linkage Approach*.

In short, Quansheng Zhao advocates China has transformed, to use some terminology, into *liberal institutionalist*. This shift, to quote Quansheng Zhao in China's foreign policy from Mao to Deng embodies:

- a change from the advocation of the world revolution to the pursuit of peaceful international environment;
- a change from hostility toward existing international norms to membership in the international order;
- a change from an emphasis on political and military build-up to a concentration on economic modernization;
- a change from dogmatic communism to growing pragmatism; and
- a change from the policy of "liberation of Taiwan by force" to a policy of peaceful unification and the notion of one country-two systems.

For many, such transformations were unthinkable even in the initial years when Deng took over in 1978; and that some have happened is indeed astonishing.

Yet China has shown mixed behavior in complying with international regimes. Closer observation indicates its commitments in clearing dues towards loans borrowed from the World Bank and other institutions have been honored; its willingness to permit Taiwan's membership in non-political organizations is encouraging; post-takeover, its noninterference in Hong Kong's free trade principles is commendable. These indications, alas, make perfect sense to "realists"[28] as noted by David M Lampton[29] because these:

> .... *derive maximum benefit from global institutions in terms of resource flow into China; minimize resulting obligations (the free-rider approach); use China's clout to withhold compliance on*

[28] Starting in the immediate post-cold war period, and somewhat beyond, John Herz, George F Kennan, Walter Lippmann and Hans J Morgenthau advocated an immensely appealing and then popular theory called "Realism". "Realism" or "Realist" theory characterized international politics as struggle for 'power' See Hans J Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations, The struggle for power and peace.* Alfred A. Knopf, New York (Starting initial publication in 1948, the book ran into sixth edition by 1978). However, the "realism theory" has in the recent past suffered scathing attacks; see for instance, a masterly explanation by Robert O Keohane (ed.) *Neorealism and its critics.*

[29] See for an excellent discussion on China's obligations, David M Lampton, A Growing China in a Shrinking World: Beijing and the Global Order, (ed.) Ezra Vogel, *Living with China.*

agreements of high value to Washington to secure American compliance on agreements of high value to Beijing; and vigorously seek to safeguard the concept of largely unfettered national sovereignty.

Lampton's observation is hardly a revelation: "Put crudely, by the mid-1990s, China had 20 percent of the UN's veto power and was responsible for less than 1 percent of the budget."

In sum, revolutionary urges may not be there and China's previous penchant for ideological battles may no longer be a menace. But its "realist" tendencies are now evident. Possibly, these tendencies were also a part of Maoist China; so when can India have begun to experience that? The answer lies in understanding the Tibet situation.

Taboo begins with Tibet

The Tibet episode exploded India's taboo to speak openly about China. Independent India's approach over the issue of Tibet was marked with a clear preference for cultivating cooperative relationship with China. Condescension shown by India in 1954[30], following China's claim of suzerainty over Tibet, was done to return autonomy to the Tibetan people (hitherto under British-Indian territorial hold and with deep links to the ancient Indian civilization). India, keeping in mind the need for friendly relations with China, conceded to the demands for Chinese sovereignty over Tibet while foreordaining autonomy for the Tibetan people. (It must be remembered that the Tibetan people we have in mind are basically agrarian in background, ill-prepared for self-protection, and dependant solely upon the "cooperation" that was to have followed from China keeping the promise it made for

[30] The agreement was signed on April 29, 1954 and along with it, the five-principles of coexistence between China and India came into being.

upholding autonomy). Jawaharlal Nehru's thoughts that shaped such a Tibet policy were shared by his nephew and civil servant, BK Nehru are:

> *That human nature being essentially good, one-sided favors done to our neighbors would fill them with gratitude and would cause them to reciprocate. The ease with which, in the Treaty with China, we gave up every single right of ours in Tibet was due not to any fear that China might get its will through force of arms but from the feeling that our rights in Tibet were imperialistic and imperialism being by definition bad we had no right to continue to claim any of the various concessions which had been extracted by imperialists from a weak defenseless country.*[31]

Tibet, in later years, apart from becoming a sad reminder of India's gullibility, reflected perfectly the dichotomy in play and the logic of what would eventually be called realism in international relations. China's military atrocities in Tibet could have undermined New Delhi's cooperation, and even worse, allowed for a permanent menace because China closed up to India's border (unthinkable during British India). In this very sense, independent India was responsible for vaporizing the buffer zone and, in retrospect, raising credible concerns[32] in New Delhi about the specter of such tendency spilling over to the disputed territories bordering India. Nevertheless, at that time India held its silence to serious criticism. India's timidity regarding Tibet could have signaled the first occasion of success for China. On the contrary, this marked the beginning of the taboo to speak against China openly.

Can taboo to speak up to and on China have led to any serious repercussions other than some tepidity, which need not necessarily harm, but could help as well? Moreover, how can such a taboo, from as long ago as Tibet of the 1950s, have reflected in India's calculations in recent years? (After all, there are no permanent enemies or permanent friends, only problems.)

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[31] Quoted in Jaswant Singh, *Defending India.*

[32] Senator Connie Mack on the floor of Senate on June 16, 1998 illustrates the Tibet issue vividly. In addition, he also highlights Sino-Indian border issues. See Appendix C.

The China attack: a stealthy fear—taboo recouped

A totally unexpected aggression[33] of India from China in the late autumn of 1962 upset the cooperative efforts that proudly began in 1954 by bearing a Hindi slogan *Hindi-Chini-Bhai-Bhai* [Indians and Chinese are brothers].

India's stance has been difficult to comprehend. Based on the Tibet experience, if India had learnt its lessons, the Nehru administration should have made India's security vis-à-vis China the topmost priority with overall policy clearly positing that imperative. Instead, the post aggression parliamentary resolution or any subsequent action failed to support such a position. If any, the resolution is suggestive of reason for pursuing India's development needs more actively than ever before to prevent such recurrence of the experience. Post aggression, moving a resolution in Parliament, Nehru said:

> *What is the war effort? People think of the soldiers on the front, which is perfectly right. They are bearing the brunt of the danger. But in the kind of struggle in which we are involved, every peasant in the field is a soldier. Our war effort essentially, apart from the actual fighting done, is in ever greater production in the field and the factory. It is an effort which depends greatly on our development. Today, we are much more in a position to make that kind of effort in the field and factory than ten or twelve years ago. We are still not adequately developed. I hope this very crisis will make us develop more rapidly.*

Interestingly, Nehru's views post China attack (1962) and post Tibet event (1956) were similar—laying emphasis on development as much as failing to make "the China cause" primarily responsible or a major botheration. Post Tibet, on the floor of Parliament during March 1956, Nehru noted:

[33] Jawaharlal Nehru speaking in the Parliament on 3 September 1963: '…There was enough equipment but spread out all over India. It may not have been available at a particular place, because we had to face the situation rather suddenly and we did not have time. There has been a

> *What is the equation of defense? In what lies the strength of a people for defense? Well, one thinks immediately about defense forces—army, navy, airforce…They are the spear points of defense…How do they exist? What are they based on? The more technical armies and navies and air force get, the more important becomes the industrial and technological base of the country. You may import a machine or an aircraft or some other highly technical weapon and you may even teach somebody to use it, but that is very superficial type of defense because you have not got the technological background for it. Thus in spite of your independence you become dependent on others, and very greatly so…From that point of view probably there are very few countries in the world that are really independent, able to stand on their own feet against the military strength of others. Therefore, apart from the army, navy and so on, you have to have an industrial and technological background in the country. If the country's economy is not sound, it is a weak country. I can give many examples. The equation of defense is your defense forces plus your industrial and technological background, plus, thirdly, the economy of the country, and fourthly, the spirit of the people.*

In all, development, not the China threat, figured preeminently. Such development may have eventually led to what Nehru would have expected, that is, warding off the China threat and also encouraging the possibility for China's better behavior. Nonetheless, Nehru's foreign policy, here, betrayed India by failing to articulate (not exaggerate) the China threat as it existed then to the world. India's officialdom, as a consequence, failed to disseminate the China threat even within India. Policy debates on China did exist but were largely appropriated by a handful of defense secretaries overawed to a greater extent by an infectiously influencing leader, and to a lesser extent, buried within India's suffocating bureaucracy.

It is not surprising, therefore, every defense planning within India after 1962 has meticulously prepared and unwaveringly benchmarked the China threat[34]. [As with most

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slant in our minds that China would not attack us. It is perfectly true. There has been a slant in our minds in the past, not completely but partly.

[34] Based on my investigations from extended interviews with top defense planners. In one instance, during India's involvement in the Bangladesh liberation war, India had made adequate preparations of position forces for use in the Bangladesh and in case China should intervene, also against it. See for more details, K Subrahmanyam, *India's nuclear policy—1964–98, Nuclear India*.

threat assessments, misperception[35] arising from underestimation or exaggeration is a possibility; the point though, is clouding reality in public reporting, but preparing in response to reality discretely and creating a false impression by simply failing to say the truth (or exactness[36])]. So even if the 1962 aggression led to development (and development led preparedness against China, and some immediate conventional military preparedness as well; for instance, the armed tanks at Avadi, near Madras, and several other units under the ordnance factory board took shape following Chinese aggression)[37] it did not lead to a wider debate of India's reasonable threat perceptions of China. One thing remained intact—the taboo to let people know where India really stood on the China concern.

That Nehru should have allowed this in a successfully nurtured democracy of a newborn nation (of which he held its first premiership for 14 years) can be answered only if socio-psychological preferences of Indian leaders are mapped, which is beyond the scope of this discussion.

Post 1962 Takeaways: Hedge for China but keep taboo intact

As few are aware, Nehru's[38] bequest was idolized far beyond his death; fewer understand its significance, though. Idolization explains why India refrained from openly admitting officially the trouble with China. Nehru died an unsatisfied man, more from China's slapdash defeat of the moral philosophy he espoused as a peace-loving international

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35 See for a masterly dialogue, Robert Jervis in *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*.

36 The capacity of extreme cynicism can certainly quarrel about what "exactness" is, to prove otherwise. But will we want it to take us where it can?

37 See for developments in defense production factories, Itty Abraham, *op. cit.*

38 See for an interesting debate on Nehru's leadership, Sir Nirad C Chaudhary, *Three Horsemen of the New Apocalypse.*

statesman, than from defeat and physical loss of territory to China. The Chinese experience taught India to develop faster by becoming self-reliant and harnessing science as a tool for that development process. Fear of China existed, but was never sufficiently articulated. Beijing was not demonized-in the way *realpolitik-diktat* could have then warranted. Venerate with this seminal belief is a line from *The Economist* (August 29, 1998):

> *Unlike the United States and Soviet Union, India was founded by genuine saints: Mohandas Gandhi, who broke the British empire with hunger strikes and a spinning wheel, and Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister, who made democracy, socialism, religious tolerance and non-alignment the pillars of new state.*

Taboo in race with realism

Successive Indian governments maintained the foreign policy of silence on China, just as they let progress in preparations of insurance against China continue. None of this however enunciated either to outside world or even within India, the realist object China presented. The taboo fixated as better than truth for more than three decades. Thirty-four years after Nehru's death, till India's defense minister George Fernandes blurted out a few days before the 1998 tests on a TV talk show that China is India's number one potential foe. The taboo to expose China did not mean the issue had vanished. It took a new twist—the internal debate about India's nuclear plans began for the very first time[39], after Nehru died, in the same year of nuclear tests by China for the first time in 1964[40]. Ironically, the conflict between the "taboo to openly announce the China case" and the "earnest desire to address concerns of China" ran together; and was untenable, especially with the new dimension

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[39] Raj Krishna, a distinguished Indian economist, produced a perceptive analysis that suggested that India faced four choices: creating an independent nuclear deterrent; continuing with the existing policy; aligning with the US; and devising an optimum defense policy. See Raj Krishna, India and the Bomb, *India Quarterly* **21**, no. 2, April–June 1965, 119–37. See also Jayaprakash Narain, *India, China and Peace*, Anarchy 4, no. 8, August 1964: 250–54, and '*India and the Bomb: A symposium'.*

[40] Recall Bhabha's statement stated on earlier occasion based on Indian government asking him in 1964 for a report for the possibility of conducting nuclear tests.

(nuclear) China posed beyond 1964. How did the conflict linger for so long, from 1964 to 1998? The key to this is the bungling in the cause of India's first test in 1974.

1974 Bungled: pedaling taboo in new context

In 1974, India, under the Indira Gandhi administration, conducted the first nuclear test. There is no confirmed account of the reasons for the test. Domestic compulsions were not compelling enough a reason, as was the problem here with counterfactuals. Though popular, there was not enough credence to the usually made argument about American pressure on Indira Gandhi (by no means her own admission) to have asked for the 1974 test. The reason behind such American intimidation is not totally misplaced, but is only partly convincing.

Did Uncle Sam intimidate?

In August 1971, New Delhi signed a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union, incorporating a security clause to protect India from China. The treaty, as India can have anticipated, deterred China from militarily joining Pakistan in 1971 during the liberation war in East Pakistan. But, accession to the treaty was seen by India due as much to its own vulnerability as to the outside country's hedge of India's weakness[41]. Indira Gandhi had been

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[41] It important to see the situation in following context: Indira Gandhi went through this scenario after learning for long about the consequences of underdevelopment, and of course from her father's effort to free India from outside pressure. India's experience of American attitude for help is marked' by a history of disappointment. The earliest of such occasions was when pre-independent India sought American support for the former's independence. At a dinner in New York in honor of Rabindranath Tagore, arranged by Henry Morgenthau, in the presence of Franklin Roosevelt, then governor of New York, Sinclair Lewis, then latest Nobel laureate in literature [and the first American to win], and five hundred others, Tagore said: "The age belongs to the West and humanity must be grateful to you for your science. But you have exploited those who are helpless and humiliated those who are unfortunate with this gift. A great portion of the world suffers from your civilization". At Carnegie Hall a week later, Tagore argued: "Our appeal does not reach you, because you respond only to the appeal of power. Japan appealed to you and you answered because she was able to prove she would make herself as obnoxious as you

refusing to sign the treaty with Soviet Union until it became imperative following Henry Kissinger's visit to China. Kissinger told the Indian Ambassador to Washington, LK Jha, that in case of an Indo-Pakistan war over the Bangladesh issue, if China were to intervene on behalf of Pakistan, then the US would not be in a position to support India[42]. Indeed, the US warning of no support soon turned into a threat for India with the former dispatching Task Force 74 headed by the nuclear aircraft carrier USS Enterprise into the Bay of Bengal. This incident, had exposed Mrs Gandhi to the shape and form that nuclear weapons can give to political deterrence for which India had no answer regardless of Soviet protection; thus veering her opinion to ask for the test. Demonstrating a nuclear capability seemed apt and inevitable, for Mrs Gandhi might have thought, showing capability should keep away the trouble of acquiring the bomb, and yet, leave the country barely a few steps away from actually having one. Hence, driven by the need to level up against the basic plank of signaling "capability", Indira Gandhi must have ordered the Atomic Energy Agency (about 1972) to prepare for testing that followed two years later as peaceful nuclear explosion.

A more recent account gives a far better explanation: It was during Lal Bahadur Shastri's premiership, after the nuclear test by China at Lop Nor test site in Xinjiang on October 16, 1964, that Bhabha is believed to have received the go-ahead to pursue India's nuclear-weapons option, and a small group was set up to study Subterranean Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful purposes (SNEP)[43].

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can." See Andrew Robinson and Krishna Dutta*, Rabindranath Tagore, The Myriad Minded Man*, pp. 300–301.

[42] Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years*.

[43] Amitabh Mattoo, ''India's Nuclear Policy in an Anarchic World'', *India's Nuclear Deterrent: Pokhran II and Beyond*.

Was the 1974 explosion for peaceful purposes only? Raja Ramanna, the architect of the 1974 explosion has lately and contrarily suggested a weapon was tested[44]. This shows that between Lal Bahadur Shastri's okaying in 1964 and Indira Gandhi asking for test (1970–73) a weapon-development effort, in whatever way, was underway following from India's need for a deterrent after China's tests in 1964. Radical socialists still claim dangers of American intimidation as the reason for the1974 test; moderate socialists with more justification cite not alienating Russia as a reason for pedaling American intimidation. But, in truth the heart had long gone out to set a nuclear weapons assemblage that started in reaction to China's tests in 1964, and the taboo of speaking about the China cause stuck in place as before. "American intimidation" was never official; only official part about the 1974 test was it was a peaceful nuclear explosion. But what did the bungling in 1974 lead to?

Taboo turns into bubble

Interestingly, by disguising the China cause for the 1974 test and concealing weapon testing in 1974, India has run into a double bind. A double bind that has legitimized the argument that the China threat does not figure prominently with India because of New Delhi's believably incredible constancy for a tongue-tied response to three major provocations of China in a row. Thus, not declaring the China cause (*taboo*) gained enormous credence internationally and nationally[45] as well. Not Tibet *per se,* not the 1962 China attack in itself nor even the 1964 China test, but the fact that India never voiced the China cause is

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[44] See Raja Ramanna*, Years of Pilgrimage.*

[45] It is no wonder the India-wide poll conducted by Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame in India during end 1994 cited that only 20 percent expressed China as the threat. See India and the Bomb, Public Opinion and Nuclear Options, (ed.) David Cortright and Amitabh Mattoo, p.12,University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana.

haunting India now. Not surprisingly, post 1998 tests, despite extensive dialogue between India and US for more than a year, the US State Department spokesperson, James P Rubin has said:

> *There is nothing new about China having nuclear weapons. They have been having them for long, long time; since about the time that I was born. And that did not generate the need for India to develop and test nuclear weapons… We didn't agree with it. We still don't agree with it. Nothing has changed in our view.*[46]

Bubbles, intrinsically invisible in character that they are, can however piously deflate, or inflate beyond a point to explode. There have been suggestions of India's bubble breaking at two levels—one at the level of India's belief in the strategic culture of China; and another discerned from the pattern of China's behavior.

Dragon's cultural strategy

As shown, Quansheng Zhao's *liberal-institutionalist* view has inconsistencies. Arguments are telling from re-reading of the Chinese strategic culture. The most compelling of the works refuting the *liberal-institutionalist* view is the thought-provoking analysis by Alastair Ian Johnston's *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton University Press, 1995). Digging deep into classical seminal works of Chinese strategy and Chinese history, Johnston persuasively shows that China has historically evidenced a relatively consistent *realpolitik* or *parabellum* strategic culture that has stood through different structural contexts into the Maoist era and beyond. According to Johnston, Confucian paradigm was just put on a pedestal but seldom practised. Contrarily, the *parabellum* strategic culture has been internalized to show a tendency for offensive use of force, "mediated by a keen sensitivity to relative capabilities."

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[46] *The Statesman*, August 20, 1999.

A well reasoned classical study of the Indian strategic culture, by noted thinker Myron Weiner, *Ancient Indian Political Theory and Contemporary Indian Politics,* concludes that:

> *The absence of analytical continuity among ancient (Indian) political theorists, the relatively small role of political theory in the dense*[47] *fabric of Hindu philosophical and religious writings, the historical break in this literature caused by Muslim invasions, the introduction of European political ideas and institutions in the nineteenth century … all suggest the irrelevance of classical Hindu thought.*

Juxtaposing China's strategic culture discussed above with Weiner's conclusion reflects two points on India. First, even a well-balanced Indian academician analyst as Amitabh Mattoo, expresses concern for Johnston's findings to say:

> *This paradigm views the external environment 'as dangerous, adversaries as dispositionally threatening, and conflict as zero-sum, in which the application of violence is ultimately required to deal with threats'. Most important, this paradigm explicitly embodies a key decision axiom—the notion of quan-bian—which stresses absolute flexibility and conscious sensitivity to changing relative capabilities. The more this balance is favorable, the more advantageous it is to adopt offensive coercive strategies; the less favorable, the more advantageous to adopt defensive or accomodationist strategies to buy time until the balance shifts again. If one accepts this view, and indeed the empirical evidence that Johnston garners is very impressive, then China's present posture cannot be viewed in benign terms. If China was accomodationist, it is only because the balance did not seem to be in its favor.*

Second, India's foreign minister Jaswant Singh has stated that:

> *The Chinese strategic culture remains what it has always been: wedded to domination; not so much through occupation of the (real or potential) adversary's territory as through occupation of the subjugation of mind, an emasculation of adversary's response options*[48].

If the above reflections are any suggestion, India's cause of concern at the strategic level about possible threat from China seems quite serious.

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[47] See in the works below in support of denseness of religious and literary tradition in Indian Strategic Culture: Sri Aurobindo, *The Foundations of Indian Culture*; Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *The Supreme Spiritual Ideal*; and Sir Edwin Arnold's the world classics of great literature in brilliant work (translated from Sanskrit) entitled: *Light of Asia–The Indian Song of Songs.*

[48] See Jaswant Singh, op. cit.

Dragon fangs, and trouble

There are a few caveats to India's perspective.

First, the extent of China/Pakistan nuclear merger is unclear though sufficient evidence exists of an intense and prolonged collaboration. One account puts it: "Nuclear cooperation of this kind is unprecedented in the history of international relations since 1945; indeed, not even the United States and Britain shared such a special relationship." There are doubts as to whether the extensive and prolonged nature of the China/Pakistan nuclear and missile collaboration would end or remain in the near future[49]. A number of sources offer evidence of this. China's transfer of weapons of mass destruction to Pakistan figures prominently in a memorandum issued by the Congressional Research Service, USA as reproduced in Table 2.

Table 2

Memorandum by the Congressional Research Service, US

Subject: China's and India's Ballistic Missiles, Nuclear Warheads, and Nuclear Tests
This memorandum was prepared by the *Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress* in response to US speaker of the house, Gingrich request for a quick comparison of China's and India's ballistic missiles, nuclear warheads, and nuclear tests, as well alleged Chinese technology transfer of mass destruction and missiles.

Introduction

China's nuclear-armed ballistic missiles are believed to be targeted at the United States, Russia, and perhaps, other countries. The White House on May 1, 1998 confirmed this assessment by saying that "there are no Russian nuclear missiles targeted on the United States." China is believed to have only one single warhead on each missile, although it is believed to be working on multiple-independently targeted re-entry vehicles (MVRIs). China's controversial technology or arms transfers have gone to two main recipients: Iran and Pakistan. US sanctions have been imposed to state-owned enterprises for missile technology transfers to Pakistan and chemical weapons-related technology transfer to Iran.

Ballistic Missiles	China (footnote#1)	India
Intercontinental ballistic missiles	43 (DF-4, -5A) (footnote#2)	*(Table continued)*

[49] For a list of Sino-Indian irritants see; Amitabh Mattoo, "India's Nuclear Status quo", *Survival*, Autumn 1996.

Medium range ballistic missiles	50 + (DF-3A, -21)	A few prototypes (Agni)
Intermediate-range ballistic missiles		
Short-range ballistic missiles	? (M-9,-11)	75+ (Prithvi)
Submarine-launched ballistic missiles	12 (JL-1)	
Nuclear Warheads		
Deployed	100+ (footnote#3)	Probably none
Stored	?	20–50 (footnote#4)
Known Nuclear Tests	45 (footnote#5)	6 (footnote#6)

1. CRS Report 97-3914F, China: ballistic and cruise missiles, March 21, 1997, by Shirley Kan and Robert Shuey.
2. Gertz, Bill. "China target nukes at US.," *Washington Times*, May 1, 1998.
3. Secretary of Defense, Proliferation: Threat and Response, November 1997.
4. India is believed to have enough weapons-grade plutonium for 74 warheads.
5. For dates and yields of known Chinese nuclear tests, see table 1 in CRS Report 97–1022F, Chinese Nuclear Testing and warhead development November 17, 1997, by Jonathan Medalia.
6. First Indian test took place on May 18, 1974: Three more on May 11,1998, and two more on May 13, 1998.

Date of Transfer or Report	**Reported Transfer by China**	**Possible Violation**	**Administration's Response**
November 1992	M-11 missiles or related equipment to Pakistan (The Administration did not officially confirm reports that M-11 missiles are in Pakistan)	MTCR Arms Export Control Act Export Administration Act	Sanctions imposed on August 24,1993, for transfers of M-11 related equipment (not missiles); waived on November 1, 1993.
Mid-1994 to mid-1995	Dozens or hundreds of missiles guidance systems and computerized machine tools to Iran.	MTCR Iran–Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act Arms Export Control Act Export Administration Act	No sanctions
2nd quarter of 1995	Parts for the M-11 missile to Pakistan	MTCR Arms Export Control Act Export Administration Act	No sanctions
December 1994 to mid-1995	5000 ring magnets for an unsafeguarded nuclear enrichment program in Pakistan	NTP Export–Import Bank Act Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act Arms Export Control Act	Considered sanctions under the Export–Import Bank Act; but announced on May 10, 1996, that no sanctions would be imposed.
July 1995	More than 30 M-11 missiles stored in crates at Sargodha Air Force Base in Pakistan	MTCR Arms Export Control Act Export Administration Act	No sanctions
September 1995	Calutron (electromagnetic isotope separation system) for uranium enrichment to Iran.	NPT Export–Import Bank Act Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act Arms Export Control	No sanctions *(Table continued)*

		Act	
1995–1997	C-802 anti-ship cruise missiles and C-801 air launched cruise missiles to Iran.	Iran–Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act	No sanctions
Before February 1996	Dual-use chemical precursors and equipment to Iran's weapon program	Arms Export Control Act Export Administration Act	Sanctions imposed on May 21, 1997
Summer 1996	400 tons of chemicals to Iran	Iran–Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act Arms Export Control Act Export Administration Act	No sanctions
August 1996	Plant to manufacture M-11 missiles or missile components in Pakistan.	MTCR Iran–Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act Arms Export Control Act Export Administration Act	No sanctions
August 1996	Gyroscopes, accelerometers, and test equipment for missile guidance to Iran.	MTCR Iran-Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act Arms Export Control Act Export Administration Act	No sanctions
September 1996	Special industrial furnace and high-tech diagnostic equipment to unsafeguarded nuclear facilities in Pakistan	NPT Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act Export–Import Bank Act Arms Export Control Act	No sanctions
July–December 1996	Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) reported "tremendous variety" of technology and assistance for Pakistan's ballistic missile program	MTCR Arms Export Control Act Export Administration Act	No sanctions
July–December 1996	DCI reported "tremendous variety" of assistance for Iran's ballistic missile program	MTCR Iran–Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act Arms Export Control Act Export Administration Act	No sanctions
July–December 1996	DCI reported principle supplies of nuclear equipment, material, and technology for Pakistan's nuclear weapon program	NPT Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act Export–Import Bank Act Arms Export Administration Act	No sanctions *(Table continued)*

July–December 1996	DCI reported key supplies of technology for large nuclear projects in Iran	NPT Nuclear Proliferation Prevention act Arms Export Administration Act Iran–Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act	No sanctions
July–December 1996	DCI reported "considerable" chemical weapon-related transfer of production equipment and technology to Iran.	Export Administration Act Iran–Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act Arms Export Control Act	No sanctions
January 1997	Dual-use biological items to Iran	BWC Export Administration Act Iran–Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act Arms Export Control Act	No sanctions
1997	Chemical precursors, production equipment, and production technology for Iran's chemical weapon program, including a plant for making glass-lined equipment	Export Administration Act Iran–Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act Arms Export Control Act	No sanctions
September – December 1997	China Great wall Industry Corp. provided telemetry equipment used in flight tests to Iran for development of the Shahab-3 and Shahab-4 medium range ballistic missiles.	MTCR Iran–Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act Arms Export Control Act Export Administration Act	No sanctions
November 1997/April 1998	May have transferred technology for Pakistan's Ghauri medium-range ballistic missile that was flight tested on April 6, 1998	MTCR Arms Control Act Export Administration Act	No sanctions

The US Central Intelligence Agency's Annual Report to the Congress in 1997 states that "China has provided extensive support to Pakistan's weapons of mass destruction capabilities". James Woolsey, former Director of the US Central Intelligence Agency, in a testimony to the US Senate Governmental Affairs Committee in February 1993, has stated that "Beijing has consistently regarded a nuclear armed Pakistan as a crucial regional ally and as a counterweight to India's growing military capabilities".

Thus, do China's transfer of weapons of mass destruction to Pakistan mean more than merely assisting that country which may face threat from a bigger neighbor, India? The answer may lie in the counterfactual; that is, if one assumes India and Pakistan to iron out their differences and live quietly next to each other. Even then, it is hard to imagine that India and China which share a long land border, and are major geopolitical rivals with similar strengths (in scientific achievements, large resources, favorable demographics and expanding economies), would in future not face the pressure of competition to influence the landscape of international politics. Competition or even the potential for one could reconfigure the course of conduct for the other along the lines of influence. China's actions suggest that it believes that besides Japan, the greatest long-run threat in Asia would come from India[50] despite New Delhi's loss of Soviet Union as an ally. Perhaps, this explains why pitting Pakistan against India is so important to China. Also, China/Pakistan weapons of mass destruction cooperation is part of the larger nexus of Confusian-Islamic collaboration that has emerged to challenge western interests, values and power[51].

Second, China as the only nuclear weapons state in the region that is expanding its warheads, may pose a direct threat as well. Beijing's nuclear missiles in Tibet, one may reasonably assume, can target India[52], as can China's intercontinental ballistic missiles, placed elsewhere. It has been argued that "the potential political and psychological impact of these missiles—literally a few miles from India's border—during a future conflict cannot be underestimated".

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[50] See *Living with China*, US/China relations in the 21st Century, *The American Assembly*, Columbia University, (ed.) Ezra Vogel, pp.33.

[51] For a well-chronicled argument in support of Sino-Islamic collaboration, see Samuel Huntington, *The clash of civilization?* sub-section—The Confucian-Islamic connection, *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, pp. 45.

Third is the concern emerging from China's shift in no-first-use-of-nuclear-weapons stance that India may face a nuclear attack. In a letter dated April 28, 1982, delivered to the UN, China had stated: *"*At no time and under no circumstances will China be the first to use nuclear weapons, and that it undertakes unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries and nuclear-free zones". China's revised posture on April 5, 1995, and placed in the records of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, stated that China's policy not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons "naturally applied to non-nuclear-weapon states. And to parties to the treaty on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons or non-nuclear weapon states that have undertaken any comparable internationally binding commitments not to manufacture or acquire nuclear explosive devices." Chellaney argues that the shift "from an unconditional to a conditional no first use posture effectively excluded only India, Israel and Pakistan, but in practice, it appeared aimed solely at New Delhi". If not wholly aimed at New Delhi, it is hard to dismiss the above development as discursive with India's concern. After all, it may assume salience in face of the threat to use tactical nuclear arms reported to have been delivered by the local People's Liberation Army (PLA) commander[53] to India's chief of the army staff.

Yet, China may have a valid reason. To repeal its no-first-use posture, admittedly, toward India—for the simple reason that Beijing may have regarded India as a *de facto* if not a *de jure* nuclear power—only makes shallow Chellaney's "repeal" argument. But Beijing's

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[52] See MA Venkat, How shall we deal with India?, *The Hindu*, July 4, 1998.

[53] See Brahma Chellaney, After the Tests: India's Options, *International Institute of Strategic Studies*, Vol. **40**, no. 4, winter 1998–99. Nuclear threat as reported to have been delivered to India's commander General VN Sharma. The threat followed the 1986–87 India–China border skirmishes, when Indian forces moved forward in the Sumduruong Chu area in response to a Chinese intrusion; the latter having failed to eject the Indian forces. Despite the nuclear threat, it is said, the Indian troops remained there till a bilateral agreement was signed in late 1996. However, independent confirmation is lacking.

assumption of New Delhi as a *de facto* nuclear power is simply baseless if China were to claim it will not entertain talks with India on nuclear issues because of the latter's lack of formal nuclear status. Policymakers have confided in private of Beijing's adamant refusal to entertain India's nuclear-related concerns. If India's political efforts made little headway with the China of the 1980s, such efforts are far more difficult today in the face of economically and militarily stronger, and assertive nuclear China. Hence, India's inability in dealing with China without credible nuclear deterrence does hold substance.

Fourth, the rigidity shown by China to settle bilateral irritants to which India attaches importance hardly thaws India's discomfort. Beijing was not forthcoming in recognizing Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim as part of India. In 1997–98, Beijing violated the letter and spirit of bilateral confidence-building measures on more than a dozen occasions[54].

Finally, many Indian politicians (not necessarily always well-informed of the nuances of India's foreign policy) are also concerned about Chinese encirclement. After Pakistan, Chinese inroads into Myanmar, supposedly including naval facilities on the Coco islands is of substantial strategic concern, supporting the logic of encirclement.

Bubble bursts: direct talks begin

Triumph over three and a half decades of taboo deserves some expressional levity—that is, China is still a formidable "middle-kingdom" in its challenging[55] relationship to India. For India to peacefully absorb the China challenge in a tenable fashion and to deal with and

[54] Amitabh Mattoo, (ed.), *India's Nuclear Deterrent, Pokhran II and Beyond*, Har-Anand Publications, p. 22.

express frankly the situation as it exits, and not otherwise—is what was long overdue. That may exonerate George Fernandes even if his statement on China threat appeared as a gratuitous and unnecessary blurt in trying to put across India's need for hedge[56] against China. Then why all the surprise with India's recent tests?

Few knew about India's concerns of China; fewer knew about the existence of the bubble for an incredibly long period; still fewer saw the bubble expanding beyond the burst point. Therefore, surprise was inevitable when the bubble exploded. Yet the bubble inflated steadily from India's growing concerns it saw in China's behavior that correction was not a question of 'whether' but 'when'.

After all, long before India's excursions with China, Mahatma Gandhi did say: "Those nations who have atom bombs are feared even by their friends." The *correction* India wanted was an 'insurance' in the form of deterrence. The 'when' question, apart from finding some answers within China itself, also draws considerably from our next variable.

Nonproliferation regime[57] in limbo

Overwhelming support in India for disarmament

Decades of evidence exists to suggest the following points straightaway.

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[55] Therese Delpech's treatment of this matter, while reminiscent of our discourse–is far more telling. Appendix D does no more than paraphrasing Therese Delpech.

[56] Renowned US Strategists Robert G Joseph and John F Reichart put India's concerns in a context beyond China. " A principle rationale for maintaining a credible and effective nuclear weapon posture is based on the need to provide a hedge—an insurance policy—against a reversal in relations with Russia and China." See mentioned authors in, "The Case for Nuclear Deterrence Today" *Orbis*, winter 1998, p.14.

[57] The word "regime", unless otherwise stated, appears, here, as the short-form of the nonproliferation regime.

1. As a founding member of the disarmament initiative, as early as 1954, in a message to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Nehru suggested a "Standstill Agreement" to suspend the testing of nuclear weapons[58]. In 1965, five years before the Non Proliferation Treaty took shape, India had proposed a treaty "to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons".
2. Active participation for disarmament efforts for over four decades saw India tabling more initiatives than many other nations. From the 1970s through the 1990s, India vigorosly campaigned for nuclear disarmament. In 1982, during the United Nations second special session on disarmament, Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister, proposed a "Program of Action on Disarmament". Attracting major international attention, in 1988, during the third special session, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi tabled an "Action for Ushering in a Nuclear-Weapon-Free and Non-Violent World Order". India cosponsored[59], in 1993, along with 29 other countries including the USA, a resolution aimed at securing an early global ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.
3. There are no takers for the thesis of gradual proliferation[60].
4. From extreme left to extreme right, political parties of all hues in India support disarmament.
5. Public opinion has always been in support of disarmament.

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[58] See Government of India, Disarmament: India's Initiatives, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, 1988.

[59] See United Nations General Assembly, 48th Session, Resolution 48/75L, December 16, 1994.

[60] See Waltz Kenneth N, The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More may be better, Adelphi Paper 171, London, IISS, 1981. This paper provoked a heated debate when it first appeared because it challenged the conventional wisdom concerning the spread of nuclear weapons.

So with an overwhelming support for disarmament; why India's unease with the regime? After all, both India's and the regime's goal, disarmament, converge for good. Answer demands looking at what influences the regime can have had on India. Whatever the answer, it doesn't seem obvious. Arguably, awareness of the regime's good intensions has reinforced most of the qualities discussed in the previous section. Still, we are interested in specific qualities the regime can have nurtured.

Regime pluses

1. The regime has checked, even if imperfectly, the spread of "nuclear weapons/sensitive technologies" overseas. India's own record of export of sensitive technologies has been consistently impeccable. The regime's appreciation of this behavior of India is regarded by most people as a matter of responsibility they like keeping.
2. The regime's restriction of offering sensitive technologies, at least in the short run, delayed India's development of nuclear weapons capabilities.
3. To test for weapons sake and violate the international norm, though not a treaty, India had greatly feared[61] would attract international opprobrium.

Regime minuses

Here, many arguments have been at work. They have received wide coverage through the media, in Parliament, and in various debates—that some points, most notably "nuclear apartheid", is spontaneous to many.

See also Mearsheimer John, Back to the future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War, *International Security*, **154**:1, Summer 1990.

[61] Ibid.

1. Nuclear apartheid—creating conflict between "haves" and "have nots". Even just one elegant remark shows how vitriolic India regarded the regime's attitude. In a speech before the United Nations, Rajiv Gandhi, then Prime Minister of India, said:

> *We cannot accept the logic that a few nations have the right to pursue their security by threatening the survival of mankind, nor is it acceptable that those who possess nuclear weapons are freed of all controls while those without nuclear weapons are policed against their production. History is full of such prejudices paraded as iron laws: that men are superior to women; that white races are superior to colored; that colonialism is a civilizing mission; [and] that those who possess nuclear weapons are responsible powers and those who do not are not.*

2. Obduracy from restrictions in acquiring nuclear weapons capability has in India's case encouraged, to a greater extent, indigenous efforts and, to a lesser extent, turning dual-use technological imports for military purposes. These imports, particularly nuclear reactors imported from Canada; India also benefited, in whatever way it did, from cooperation with Britain and Canada, very clearly in the 1950s. Post 1974, India was totally cut off from major western inputs including knowledge, crucial technologies, and dual-use hardware/software. This period, however, saw organizations like CDAC (Center for Development of Advanced Computation) set up "Param" India's super-computer; DRDO[62] (Defense Research Development Organization); BARC (Bhabha Atomic Research Center); Institute of Mathematical Sciences, etc. also registered breakthroughs.
3. Nuclear restrictions, as high taxes encourage evasion, increase the "premium" on nuclear possessions and have over time become priced objects of favoritism to cultivate allies. China–Pakistan nuclear cooperation is the most brazen of all; though collaborative nature of US–Britain, US–France and indeed US–Israel efforts have gone relatively noticed. An informed view of what the long-run effect of such cooperation can be is less

clear; there are few takers of the controversial "gradual proliferation thesis". Nuclear restrictions leading to such types of cooperation should be a cause for concern. Luckily, but surprisingly, there is no evidence of Indo-Soviet nuclear cooperation, despite close relationship and cold war situations.

4. The regime's limited success in implementation has questioned its legitimacy, discouraged supporters[63], and encouraged dissenters.
5. The regime's inability in effectively dealing with threshold nuclear countries has encouraged countries to acquire or subsume "covert nuclear weapons' status and pass-off as non-violators of proliferation". India, Israel(?) and Pakistan are good examples of having possessed covert/opaque[64], but *de facto*, nuclear weapons status for ten or more years. (Most arguments here revolve around dangers that secrecy can pose.)
6. The regime has lacked incentives for good behavior and disincentives for noncompliance. If the US, as the most powerful nuclear power, is assumed to set the tone for disarmament; if it strives to achieve a foreign policy consistent with the disarmament objectives of the nonproliferation treaty; and if the US's sanctions were assumed to check proliferation, then the findings of Table 2 fly in the face of nonproliferation efforts. In the same vein, America's NATO doctrine reiterating the need for nuclear weapons, to which even the Green Party of Germany subscribes, is in contrast with the nonproliferation/disarmament initiatives.

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[62] See Leonard S Spector and Jacqueline R Smith, *Nuclear Ambitions: The Spread of Nuclear Weapons 1989–90.* See also, *Defense and Foreign Affairs Weekly*, October 1988.

[63] Non-governmental thrust to get rid of nuclear weapons hasn't been stronger than in the present decade. See Appendix E for more details.

[64] See Frankel Benjamin (ed.), *Opaque Nuclear Proliferation*, London, Frank Cass, 1991.

7. Barring China (and to a lesser extent Russia), the regime's apex body (Security Council) has favored representation of the developed West when "appeals" demand a more equitable representation of the world.
8. The regime's inability to deal with enhancements that nuclear weapon states have made (and are still making) to advance their nuclear weapons is inconsistent with the regime's opposing views on threshold (or non-nuclear weapons states) states. In diplomatic lexicon, threshold nuclear states disdain the regime's views as lax on "vertical proliferation" and serious on "horizontal proliferation".
9. The regime's expectation of member states, that is, their "responsibility" is in conflict with their "obligation". To illustrate the point, the regime expects, in the interest of global security, non-nuclear weapon states not acquire nuclear weapons, but fails to show what they have to do in wake of a nuclear threat.
10. Epistemological difficulties in interpreting the meaning of the word "proliferation", especially, the regime's logic is not convincing that nations which conducted nuclear tests on or before 1964 are not proliferators whereas, those who have after 1964, are. That some date has to be set to get the treaty off the ground is even less convincing; for such states whose circumstances did not need testing before 1964, but asks for one later, find no place. What is most unfortunate, though nobody's deliberate creation, is that India was the next to go after 1964 and China was the last to get in 1964. The western door was open to dictatorial China and shut to democratic India; is the view every government in India has taken.

The trigger

The minuses are far more than the pluses; but that in itself cannot claim responsibility for breaking India's long held tradition of not testing for weapons. India's tradition of not testing for weapons is questionable if one goes by Raja Ramanna's[65] recent assertions that a weapon was tested in the1974 explosion, though it is still officially recognized as "peaceful nuclear explosion". Moreover, few are aware that Indira Gandhi, after ordering for India's first test in 1974, had given orders for further tests in 1982–83, but was pressured to abandon before the test/s were conducted[66]. Further, Subrahmanyam[67], the most influential policy advisor, has said that in 1988–89 Rajiv Gandhi had asked Dr VS Arunachalam, of the DRDO, and Dr PK Iyengar, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, to begin creating an Indian nuclear deterrent. There are also two more instances of efforts to test, though under different governments. In 1995, the US forced the Congress government of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to withdraw from testing[68]. Within the next few years, the National Front led coalition government under the premiership of IK Gujral[69] is also believed to have seriously considered testing, but the government itself collapsed. To quote Mattoo, "…by 1990, India had fully developed nuclear weapons program, with probably a number of assembled nuclear weapons and a rudimentary nuclear deterrent, which every subsequent Prime Minister has, at the very least, tacitly approved of." It is clear that India held itself from not testing a nuclear weapon not because of its principled opposition to weapons testing, but more out of fear of inviting international castigation.

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[65] Raja Ramanna, op. cit.
[66] PK Iyengar, former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, quoted in *India Today*, May 25, 1998, p. 34.
[67] See K Subrahmanyam, 'Indian Nuclear Policy—1964–98, in Jasjit Singh (ed.), *Nuclear India*, Knowledge World, p. 34, 1998.
[68] See a report published by the *New York Times* on December 15, 1995, suggesting U.S spy satellites recorded preparations for tests in Pokhran.

The unique characteristic of India's opposition to acquire nuclear weapons also follows from the somewhat inverse proportionality with the international opposition for nuclear weapons as shown in Figure 1.

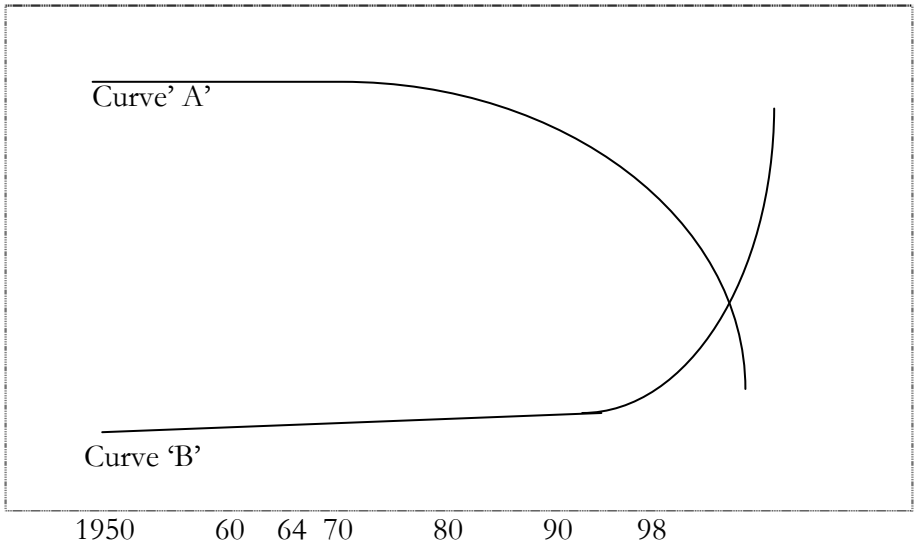

Figure 1—Trend in opposition to nuclear weapons

Curve 'A' shows variation in India's opposition to acquire nuclear weapons. Curve 'B' shows variation in International opposition to nuclear weapons. (Accuracy is not important here to understand the key shifts and the trend between the curves.) The turning point for India occured in 1965[70] after China's first nuclear test in 1964 (for details of how China figured in India's calculation, see discussions on the previous variable.) The turning point also marked

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[69] See Amitabh Mattoo (ed.), India's Nuclear Policy in an Anarchic World, *India's Nuclear Deterrent, Pokhran II and Beyond*.

[70] Superseding a debate on nuclear policy in the Indian Parliament in November 1964, only a month after China tested its first nuclear weapon, then Prime Minister LB Shastri noted: "I cannot say that the present policy to not build a nuclear weapon) is deep-routed, that it cannot be set aside, that it can never be changed. An individual may have a certain static policy… but in the political field we cannot do so… If there is need to amend what we have said today, then we will say, all right, let us go ahead and do so".

India's change from "no weapons" to "option for weapon"; while over time the "option" was overt even as developing a nuclear deterrence was in progress[71]. The shift, however, grew over time with India's growing need for a deterrent. Meanwhile, just the reverse holds true for international opposition to nuclear weapons. During the Cuban missile crisis, the cold war, and earlier periods (early 1960s, late 1950s) atmospheric tests and the icon of mushroom clouds was very common. Any serious opposition met with little use among nuclear powers. During the entire period shown in the above exhibit, India's nuclear position, even after allowing a margin for the 1974 tests, seemed to uphold the trend of the 1950s when it didn't need a deterrent.

The position India had long occupied, ever since the first turning point necessitated change one way or the other. The biggest impetus to that change was the permanent extension of the nonproliferation treaty in 1995 that India had unsuccessfully fought tooth-and-nail against its ratification. India's point was that such a treaty would legitimize the possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear weapon states, which is inconsistent with the regime's objective of achieving disarmament in the foreseeable future[72]. There is no way to prove India's views of "legitimization of weapons" is all that the treaty extension (1995) can do. However, record of disarmament, despite some progress, is far from encouraging; and there is hardly any reason for this belief to change soon. Though disarmament strikes deep resonance, it does not quench India's need for insurance of some kind till disarmament emerges as what it has always stood for, a nuclear threat-free world. Disarmament has turned

[71] That explains the continuous attempts by India since 1990—regardless of which government held power—to test.
[72] See Statement by IK Gujral, Minister of External Affairs, in the Indian parliament on September 11, 1996 which, also states India's objection "Entry into Force" going against Geneva conventions

out to be an *idea* as was the Western culture to MK Gandhi. Nonetheless, India's expression of arrival with deterrence did occur to converge with the world order in which hate for the bomb was *zeitgeist*[73]; though bombs still do exist[74].

It is not surprising, therefore, that the 1995 treaty extension revived and reinvigorated the minuses of the regime in respect of the position India grew to assume over time. A nuclear weaponized India may even be in a better position to accelerate the disarmament it brought to the world for the first time in the 1950s[75]. Overtime, a relatively shrilly India and the regime (a cacophony of influential coalition), in divergent notes though, lent credible commitment to an irresponsible disarmament policy that for India seemed to have rhymed William Randolph Hearst:

> *No peace of injustice will endure even a generation…Make peace, a long and stable peace, reared on the firm foundations of the right—built on the even cornerstones of generosity and justice.*

Conclusion

Slouching toward the truth to embrace the Smiling Buddha

> *If you shut up truth and bury it under the ground, it will but grow, and gather to itself such explosive power that the day it bursts through, it will blow up everything in its way*—Emile Zola: J' *accuse*

India tried the right things in the wrong ways to hedge against China and received no reward for its long silence in not announcing that it sought that hedge. The discovery that India was

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on treaties. See also the Suo Moto statement by above person in the Indian parliament on August 26, 1996, August 2, 1996 and references mentioned therein.

[73] Appendix E represents the spur in disarmament initiatives around the world.

[74] A decade after the cold war, there are still 35,000 nuclear weapons. Russian Duma has indicated nuclear weapons are vital for its security, especially with concerns about its conventional forces. Russia has clearly gone back on no-first-use of nuclear weapons pledge and made known nuclear weapons could be used against conventional attack on its territory.

[75] Ibid.

not yet ready to live next to China without a deterrent was abominable as can be. Yet India cannot afford to stand too much on the pride of its uneasy silence. It needs a way out of this dilemma, and if that way out substitutes taboo for transparency, so be it. K Subrahmanyam[76] places this argument in an international context: "[T]he US by its missile interception test, has indicated that nuclear weapons are here to stay for ever. Those countries which are treated as threats—Russia, China, North Korea, Iran and Iraq—are much closer to India than to US".

India's tests were a result of the time warp from which India vis-a-vis the nonproliferation regime suffered for too long. The regime happily restricted itself to addressing the supply-side of nonproliferation, passing-off the growing needs that over time arose from its demand-side. The regime's recalcitrance to the demand-side has cultivated, to be mild, an anti-democratic tradition. Reminiscent with this is a disturbing but hard-to-avoid reflection from Nehru "History is written by victors". Nearly 40 years down the road, Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs rephrased Nehru and said: "Financial History is written by creditors". Let me add mine—the possessors of nuclear weapons have written its history.

Yet there is an upside to the role the West can and should play. Paul Krugman, the MIT economist has recently offered:

> *The world is an unfair place. Wealthy countries tend to be blessed on all counts. Not only are they rich, but they generally have stable and effective governments. And they fall on the good side of the double standard; investors and markets tend to be willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. All this gives them a freedom of action; an ability to cope with economic problems that poor nations can only envy.*

[76] K Subrahmanyam, *The Economic Times, Global Watch*, October 7, 1999, New Delhi.

Krugman would have said, no less is the dilemma (and fear; and judgment lapse thereof) poor nations face as a deer-in-front-of-a-flashlight. The India-deer can have recklessly strolled the right positions at the wrong times of the nonproliferation-freeway; but the "freeway" (read a western freeway) should not expect a prudent deer as it must engage prudently with an imprudent deer; yet allowing smooth flow of passenger traffic. Alas, the nonproliferation regime has turned out to be an infamy of the highest order, and it continues as before, to rein in *international democracy* (democracy between nations), rather than benefiting from the legitimacy it can offer. Still, the West's aggressive leadership has brought some democratic peace[77] in the past decades and has cherished the tradition of sovereignty[78]. The West strives amid divergence, convergence, coincidence, and conflict, to foster human rights and has shown a capacity for foreign policy with a human-face[79]; this is the basis of my normative hope for its positive role in fomenting international democracy. But in greater probability, it is only a faint hope—of flogging a malnourished international democracy to purge the past legacy of the nonproliferation regime. Nonetheless it is not an impossibility—for if we accept that the US as the most influential democracy has, however imperfectly, brought some democracy *within* some nations—then India, as the largest democracy, may be no less apt to galvanize some democracy *between* nations[80]. Otherwise, if cynical pessimism on

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[77] See Bruce Russett et al. *Grasping the Democratic Peace, Principles for post-cold war World*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993

[78] See discussions on sovereignty and the westphalian order in David Held. *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1995

[79] See for a compelling discourse David Halloran Lumsdaine. *Moral Vision in International Politics: The Foreign Aid Regime, 1949-1989*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1993

[80] Stanley Roth, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, in reference to the failure of the US Senate to ratify nonproliferation treaty, did no more than rhyming India nearly an year ago. He said "... There have been some encouraging public statements to this effect by China and India, and we hope that other countries will join them", *The Statesman, October 20, 1999*. India's reaction that evoked above statement is magnanimous and no less significant especially, when read in light of US reactions to India's self-declared "moratorium" following the 1998 tests. US Secretary Albright's reactions to the "moratorium" were far from understanding how democracies work, let alone showing sensitivity of how they interact between

disarmament prevailed, and if a variant of sultanism[81] is all the nonproliferation regime rebounded to, then we may chime Karl Marx: "History repeats itself, once as a tragedy, and then as a farce". That's why slouching even if notoriously, and not nicely shying away, toward the nasty truth is necessary.

And this brings us to the deepest sense in which the archetypal question (what we can do for disarmament) has returned. The answer may well lie in the opposite, that is, what we can't, perhaps shouldn't, do for disarmament—to understanding which, learning about India's tests is ever more significant than we can have imagined before setting out this dialogue.

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each other to set the tone for the larger world. Secretary Albright said "… There was a sense that we needed to know more about India's bona-fides in terms of following through on these ideas. The moratorium is a partial solution – especially when CTBT exists as a way make sure that there are no additional tests." See Madeleine K Albright, Press conference on the crisis in South Asia. *Palais des Nations, Geneva Switzerland, June 4, 1998*.

[81] See for sultanism and conduct of sultanistic tradition, Linz J Juan and Stepan Alfred, *The Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation—Southern Europe, South America and Post Communist Europe*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996

Appendix A

Text of Prime Minister Vajpayee's letter to President Bill Clinton

Dear Mr. President:

You would already be aware of the underground nuclear tests carried out in India. In this letter, I would like to explain the rationale for the tests.

I have been deeply concerned at the deteriorating security environment, specially the nuclear environment, faced by India for some years past. We have an overt nuclear weapons state on our borders, a state which committed armed aggression against India in 1962. Although our relations with that country have improved in the last decade or so, an atmosphere of distress persists mainly due to the unresolved border problem. To add to the distress that country has materially helped another neighbor of ours to become a covert nuclear weapons state. At the hands of this bitter neighbor we have suffered three aggressions in the last fifty years. And for the last ten years we have been the victim of unremitting terrorism and militancy sponsored by it in several parts of our country, specifically Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir.

Fortunately, the faith of the people in our democratic system as also their patriotism has enabled India to counter the activities of the terrorists and militants aided and abetted from abroad.

The deteriorating security environment, specially the nuclear environment faced by India for some years past has forced us to undertake limited number of tests which pose no danger to any country which has no inimical intention towards India.

I urge you, Mr. President, to show understanding towards India's security concerns.

India's commitment to participate in nondiscriminatory and verifiable global disarmament measures is amply demonstrated by our adherence to the two conventions on biological and chemical weapons.

In particular, we are ready to participate in the negotiations to be held in Geneva in the conference on disarmament for the conclusion of fissile material cut-off treaty.

May 13, 1998
New Delhi

Appendix B

Development models for Nehru's India

National development and self-reliance[82] were the shibboleths of independent India's effort during the period of its first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and thereafter. Massive import substitution schemes and the creation of a local industrial base that was underway for nearly three or more decades following India's independence, are responsible for advancing the causes of national development and self-reliance. India's expression of development stems from the earlier models applied in the West for development, including that of Rostow's[83] which was very popular. This is evident from Nehru's preference for driving industry and

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[82] Nehru's plans for the development of India coincided with the thoughts of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's, in so far as self-dependence in itself is concerned. Serious distinctions existed between the views of these two men on several other fronts of the issue of development'. For Independent India's planners the importance of self-reliance to security did not have to come as a new concept soon after the British left in 1947. The danger that the World War I posed to Indian industries saw the creation of the Indian Industrial Commission in 1916 and later the Munitions Board in 1917. The Commission was responsible for setting up national scientific laboratories across the country and harnessing the power of science for national security. See Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, 1916–18 [Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1918], p. 56.
The creation of defense factories across the country [there are about 38 of them today that make battle tanks to military vehicles to optical electronics equipment for warfare], under the umbrella of Ordnance Factories Board, followed from reports of Rogers and Chatfield missions, See AL Venkateswaran's (1967) *Defense Organization in India*, New Delhi, Publications Division, Government of India, pp. 291–2.
AV Hill's [Secretary of Royal Society] recommendation following his extensive analysis of India in 1944 was to set up Institutes of Technology all over the country akin to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to foster high quality scientific research within India. Thus were born the highly prestigious institutes of technological learning, the Indian Institute of Technology at Madras, New Delhi, Bombay, Kharagpur, Kanpur and with the recent addition of another at Guwahati. The later years saw a proliferation of institutes and institutions such as the CSIR [Council of Scientific and Industrial Research]. Hill stressed the need for self-reliance and for making possible the scientific/technological means for India's defense by nurturing the institutions of science and scientific learning. See Hill, *Scientific Research in India,* Tracts/695, Royal Society, 1944, p. 32, also Ward Morehouse, *Science in India*, Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) Occasional Papers, Hyderabad, 1971, pp. 23–4.

[83] See Rostow Walt W, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*. Rostow's suggestion depicts the future of societies in the manner of an airplane that speeds to the end of the runway and climbs rapidly skyward above all earthbound obstacles. The 'powerful arithmetic of compound interest' occurs as a major independent variable in the stages of economic growth. He builds his argument around copiously documented historical comparisons between the evolution of industrial societies in Europe, North America, India and China; Friedrich List in 19th century Germany and Alexander Hamilton in 18th century America show how the ideas of the nation state serve as an engine for economic take-off and mercantilism as a strategy for reinforcing the nation state.

economy through the state apparatus[84]. Putting together a strong and independent industry[85] backed by a robust economy would create a healthy balance-of-trade, which in turn is indicative of state power. State power, however, is relative, and it therefore presupposes the existence of an international system made up of states. National development and national power are thus co-terminous. The outcome of evoking state power is state security.

When national development crosses extreme limits, state security follows. Here is how one argument would do it.

> *National security, which officially takes as its purpose the strengthening of the military might of the state, the protection of the territories claimed in its name, and the conservation of the way of life identified as the cultural norm[86], is as much a time-dependent and place-specific ideology as national development. Again a post-War phenomenon, national security has a number of genealogies, but is probably most influenced by the histories of the United States, aptly symbolized by the translation of Department of War into the Department of Defense in 1947. National security in this mode can be summarized as a totalising condition of civilian militarization beyond simply border defense or even inter-state war[87], the indistinguishability of war and peace in relation to the practices of state security institutions and the panoply of legal instruments that support their activities[88], the*

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[84] Jawaharlal Nehru deemed the state as being pivotal in leading India through science's ability. He saw this as the spearpoint of the Industrial revolution that resulted in the wonder of transforming [developing] England [and the West] from a backward to a modern nation. The atom, science's youngest kid of hope in man's travesty, would thus meet with an exigent normative expression around which the question of development evolved. Nehru would argue in a Constituent Assembly debate in 1948 that:

> "But we are on the verge I think of a tremendous development in some direction of the shuman race. Consider the past few hundred years of human history: the world developed a new source of power, that is steam—the steam engine and the like—and the industrial age came in. India with all her many virtues did not develop that source of power. It became a backward country because of that. The steam age and the industrial age were followed by the electrical age, which gradually crept in, and most of us were hardly aware of the change. But enormous new power came in. Now we are facing the atomic age; we are on the verge of it. And this is something infinitely more powerful than either steam or electricity."

[85] Decades later, what the industrial age did to the creation of wealth has been captured well by Angus Maddison's *Monitoring the World Economy 1820–1992*. Maddison calculates that until the industrial revolution, economic growth was paltry. Measured in 1990 dollars, the world gross domestic product rose from $ 565 per person in 1500 to $ 651 per person in 1820 [increase = 27 cents per year]. But after the industrial revolution, total World GDP grew from $ 695 billion in 1920 to nearly $ 28 trillion in 1992. This planet had the same amount of arable land in 1992 as it had in 1820, and, arguably, fewer natural resources, plus an addition in population of 4.5 billion [population in 1820 being 1 billion]. Yet, GDP per person expanded from $ 651 to $ 5145 indicating a rate of $ 26 a year. Wealth has indeed been created as a result of the industrial age, which is what Nehru wanted of science in India.

[86] This follows from the well-known definition used by Walter Lippman. See US Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic [Boston: Little Brown, 1943].

[87] Noam Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy*.

[88] David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*. Bradley Klein, *Strategic Studies and World Order: The Global Politics of Deterrence*.

> *militarization of information and the enormous growth in intelligence agencies, related to which can be observed ever increasing degrees of state surveillance, deeply dependent on technology, which identify social threats to established order both within and without the formal territories of the state*[89]*, and the increasing scientisation of the practices of war to such an extent that the battlefield has become increasingly a virtual space*[90]*. In short, 'national security' expresses the paranoias of the modern state; indeed the extent of the technological penetration of society by the national security apparatus is usually in direct proportion to the wealth of the state.*

While such arguments clearly show Nehru's desire for "sciencitizing" India's development, including, undoubtedly, harnessing the power of the atom, it does not establish producing an atom bomb as the driving force of the "sciencitizing" effort. Moreover, to correlate Nehru's "sciencitization" themes around the "atom" with sinister designs bears little evidence to India's need for a bomb then, and is still grossly inconsistent either with India's non-expansionist history or its contemporary political culture. Such far-drawn, over-read calculations leading to sinister designs from the start may have been possible with Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia or imperial Japan, perhaps not even in the same ilk with imperial Britain, despite the epoch-making *Jallianawalla Bagh* massacre during India's pre-Independence days.

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[89] Michael J Shapiro, 'Warring Bodies and Bodies Politic: Tribal Warriors vs. State Soldiers', in Michael J Shapiro and Hayward R. Alker (eds.), *Challenging Boundaries*.

[90] John Broughton, 'The Bomb's Eye View: Smart weapons and military TC', in Stanley Aronowitz, Barbara Martinsons and Michael Menser, eds., *Technoscience and Cyberculture* [New York: Routledge, 1996], pp. 139–66; Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics* [New York: Semiotext(e), 1986].

Appendix C

Tibet and the border issue with China

"Since independence in 1947, India has understood the importance of good relations with China for its own security. Relations were clouded by China's occupation in 1950 of Tibet, which had been independent until then and served as a stable buffer between the two countries. This occupation brought Chinese expansion to India's border. India sought renewed cooperative relations on the basis of a policy that recognized Tibet's genuine autonomy under Chinese sovereignty in order to maintain a buffer between India and China. Relations completely changed, however, following China's military buildup in Tibet beginning in 1956 and 1957. During this period, China began the systematic oppression of Tibetan religion and culture, forcing the mass migration of Tibetans. The Dalai Lama and thousands of Tibetans were given refuge in India in 1959. After years, the Tibetan oppression continues, the military occupation of Tibet continues, and nearly 200,000 Tibetans remain in India. Between 1957 and 1962, India's relations with China were marred by Beijing's huge territorial claims amounting to 50,000 square miles, and its illegal use of force to occupy 15,000 square miles of that claimed area. Indian attempts to reach a border settlement through negotiations with China failed in 1961, and its attempts to prevent further Chinese encroachment into Indian territory was met by a massive Chinese invasion in 1962. To this day, China continues to occupy 15,000 square miles of Indian territory in Ladakh and it claims sovereignty over the entire 35,000 square miles of India's Northeastern most province (Arunachal Pradesh). This source of tension and deep concern has not been removed despite several rounds of Sino-Indian diplomatic negotiations to resolve the border dispute since 1981."

Appendix D

The unhalting nuclear march of China

"China has been strangely absent from most Western analyses of the future of nuclear weapons. There is, however, much food for thought. A country with growing number of nuclear weapons and increasingly apparent regional and global ambitions could be worrisome in the future. China has never stated that it would place less emphasis on nuclear weapons now that the Cold war is over. Beijing's diplomatic support for nuclear disarmament has been longstanding, but its actual deeds paint a different picture … No slow down has been observed in China's development of two new generations of more advanced, solid fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles with multiple warheads. [These are considered the most destabilizing nuclear weapons; for precisely that reason they will be dismantled in Russia and the US when START II is ratified.] Beijing used its 1992 nuclear test, which was of an unusually high yield of close to one megatonne, to intimidate New Delhi during Indian President Ramaswamy Venkataraman's visit to Beijing. India's 1998 tests suggest that the message was received. In addition, for all its denials and promises, China continues to cooperate with other countries in ways incompatible with its NPT commitments, ratified in March 1992, and with the Missile Technology Control Regime [MTCR], which Beijing regularly claims to respect. Given China's continuing cooperation with Pakistan, Indians were astonished at the US-Chinese joint statement on South Asia made during Clinton's visit to China in July 1998. Among other things, the statement ignored the story of the Khushab nuclear reactor. In 1996, China reportedly sold a high-temperature furnace to Pakistan to mould uranium or plutonium, as well as high technology diagnostic equipment for the unsafeguarded Khushab facility. Senior level Chinese government approval was needed for the deal. The US aims to prevent Beijing from providing reprocessing technology for this facility, but the verification means available to Washington are dubious. Lastly, China's reluctance to make firm public statements on halting the production of weapons-grade fissile material is connected to Indian nuclear developments, despite the fact that Beijing's official nuclear policy is not directed against India. China's acknowledgement of any target in India would legitimize India's frequently expressed concerns."

Appendix E
Shouting "disarmament"

Former US President Jimmy Carter, former Prime Minister of Canada Pierre Trudeau, former Chancellor of Germany Helmut Schmidt numbering over 100 political leaders signed a statement in 1998 calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

In July 1996, the legal advisory opinion handed down by the Internal Court of Justice at The Hague the legality of use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. By a clear majority the Court declared: "the threat and use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and particularly the principles and rules of humanitarian law" except in extreme circumstances of self-defense, in which the very survival of the state was at stake. The Court also asked the nuclear powers to fulfil the commitment to nuclear disarmament made by them in the nonproliferation treaty.

The Canberra Commission on Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, under the auspices of the Australia in wake of French nuclear tests in the South Pacific presented an influential report. The Commission's members included 17 arms control experts and military officers. The report urged nuclear weapon states to immediately and rapidly advance efforts for disarmament by "delineating a succinct and logical plan for abolition".

The Committee on International Security and Arms Control of the US National Academy of Sciences generated its findings in 1997 called, The Future of US Nuclear Weapons policy. Many of the committee members were directly involved with US nuclear policy (included top academics, a Nobel prize winner, and Generals counting Butler) unanimously recommended a regime that would lead to abolishing nuclear weapons.

In 1997, a statement by 61 former generals and admirals from 17 countries, including General George Lee Butler declared: "long-term international nuclear policy must be based on the declared principle of continuous, complete, and irrevocable elimination of nuclear weapons."

Around 1997, the Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs published the book, A *Nuclear Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*—after examining the complications of verification and safeguarding that would be required to, as well, place a regime of elimination.

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