

**IPCS Media  
Workshop on  
Nuclear  
Disarmament**

# **Nuclear Disarmament and Doctrines: India, China and Pakistan**

---

**IPCS Media Workshop Report**

**22 October 2008**



## IPCS Media Workshop on Nuclear Disarmament

### Nuclear Disarmament and Doctrines: India, China and Pakistan

#### Maj. Gen. Dipankar Banerjee

During the recently concluded Indo-American nuclear deal, while the Indian reportage of the debate was good, it, however, lacked an analysis of the information. Being the responsibility of a think-tank to rectify the case, the IPCS media workshop is intended as a facilitation exercise to help media persons represent nuclear affairs of South Asia more effectively and accurately.

### Nuclear Doctrines of India, China and Pakistan

#### Rear Adm. Raja Menon

China being the most opaque country in South Asia, the Chinese Doctrine needs demands attention. Post Cold War, countries have markedly made many statements and articulated doctrines. However, the composition of their nuclear arsenals has seldom matched the rhetoric. Thus, countries often indulge in declaratory defence and there is no security afforded by such postures, which makes it important to look at their arsenals. During the Cold War, all of China's nuclear weapons were targeted towards the USSR. This can be understood by considering that China then, did not have more than 25 liquid fuel based weapons, which could reach the US. It, however, had reserves of over 400 Nuclear Demolition Munitions. The trend of this category of weapons was started by the NATO against the Warsaw Pact members to protect land borders by putting its control in the hands of the enemy, and has since gone out of fashion. In 1991, the Chinese guardedly welcomed the fall of the USSR as it saw the preservation of Russian nuclear arsenal while its army collapsed, thus reducing dependence on a conventional war. Still, from the mid 1990s onwards, China has begun to decommission mines and is gearing up to build a new arsenal. By 2015, China hopes to have 240 ballistic missiles. Of them 100-120 are slated to be DF 31 A's, an extended version of the DF 31 ICBM (Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile). Another 120 are slated to be IRBM's (Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile), the same carriers which were used in the Anti-Satellite Test. By 2015, China also expects to possess 60 SLBM's (Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile) of a high range. It also hopes to possess 140 Long Range Cruise Missiles, the DF 10, some of them being nuclear tipped. (Pakistan is also developing the Babar I, a version of these missiles.)

Clearly, almost 50 per cent of the Chinese arsenal is incapable of reaching the United States. Whom these are meant for is anybody's guess. India, however, is not the prime focus of the Chinese nuclear doctrine, whose strategy has always been to drag Pakistan along India's path, so as to keep India from interfering in its quest for parity with the US. China's help to Pakistan goes back to 1983 and by 1987 the nuclear assistance was well established. In 1996 the CIA claimed that apart from the MII ready-to-use missiles, there was an entire missile factory being shipped to Lahore. The Chinese provision of a cheap missile factory to Pakistan has been the driving rationale for the nuclearization of the latter. Though in 1998, the Pakistani nuclear ambition was quite modest, they have since



shifted gears and have decided to give India a run for its money, made evident with the testing of Shaheen in 2004 and Babar I in 2005, in surplus to the level required for successful deterrence. Such counterstrike weapons, go against the posture adopted by Pakistan, an issue that India has failed to address. Also of concern is the Pakistani development of the plutonium reactor Kushab II, although Pakistan possesses only a uranium line. But as far as China is concerned, it is naïve for them to assume that they can safely deploy Pakistan (assuming their help for an issue they might not have sufficient stakes in) to create trouble on their behalf in case of hostile relations with India.

### Prof P R Chari

Alongside statistics, conceptual issues also need to be well understood. China, Pakistan and India constitute a strategic triangle. The first such triangle comprised of the US, USSR and China and ran for most part of the Cold War. This former triangle, in which each arm of the triangle confronted each other, is different from the India-China-Pakistan triangle. China does not consider India to be a nuclear adversary; India, however, sees China differently due to China's past efforts to muddle India with its neighbors and the clandestine nature of their nuclear programme. India's nuclear quest was triggered by its defeat to China in 1962 followed by the latter testing its nuclear devices in 1964 and the growing US-China entente. Interestingly, the Pakistan quest for nuclearization was similarly triggered by the defeat rendered by India in 1971 followed three years later by India conducting a PNE (Peaceful Nuclear Explosion).

While China sees its nuclear programme geared against a global threat, India sees its requirement only as a regional imperative. Thus an evaluation of the situation can be made against five parameters.

**1. No First Use:** China announced its NFU doctrine in 1964 and India in 1998. But these absolute declarations diluted over the years and both countries have modified their doctrines since. Pakistan has very wisely refrained from getting into such semantics. One is indeed skeptical about the practical validity of a NFU as the determination of who struck first would indeed be very difficult at the time of an actual conflict. The NFU is thus, only a political statement.

**2. Foreseeable nuclear test by India, Pakistan or China:** China has signed the CTBT and is thus committed to refrain from testing further. Though the Bharatiya Janata Party has extensively criticized the UPA government for compromising Indian interests by committing to the Indo-US nuclear deal, it was Prime Minister A B Vajpayee who had declared in 1998 that India would not have the need to test in future. Moreover, it was Pranab Mukherjee's declaration in the Parliament on India's self imposed moratorium on testing that swayed the NSG members in India's favour. India, of course, will be driven to test if China or Pakistan tests. China, however, is bound by the CTBT and Pakistan's decision to test hinges on India. This circular alignment reduces the possibility of a test in the South Asian region in the near future.

## IPCS Media Workshop on Nuclear Disarmament



## IPCS Media Workshop on Nuclear Disarmament

**3. Minimum Credible Deterrence:** China believes it needs to confront the US. It thus pursued a two pronged strategy on concealing its nukes in mountains and submarines and in the meantime to increase the number of its weapons. China also intended to ensure mobility by opting for liquid based rather than solid based fuels, which is seen lately, in its concentration from land based to submarine based missiles. Meanwhile, India is moving towards the triad, a rather conventional strategy based on land, water and air delivery capacities. Pakistan has land and air based capacities and is really not concerned with the numbers (or so it claims).

**4. War in space:** This has been triggered by China's Anti Satellite test in 2006, where it demonstrated the capacity to attack and destroy space based weapons. This adds a radically new dimension to the current arms race and it is a considerable dilemma for India as replicating this experiment would put a huge strain on Indian coffers.

**Nuclear Disarmament:** Like all countries, India, China and Pakistan also religiously pay lip service to the idea of global nuclear disarmament. Should the Democrats come to power in the US, they too would be rhetorically more committed to this ideal. With Kissinger and Perry of the quartet coming to meet the Prime Minister of India next month, the issue should gain new momentum. India too, should not just stick to a reiteration of the intentions of the Rajiv Gandhi plan of 1987, but avoid falling anymore, into the trap of the "You first" syndrome and take some concrete steps to this effect.

### Discussion

**What substance is there to the media claim of Chinese developing nuclear bases in Coco Islands and Myanmar?**

The Chinese have a radar in Myanmar and no presence in the Coco Islands.

**Is the string of pearls a real and credible development?**

While China is not creating bases on the sea, it certainly is looking at encirclement from the land. They have declared their intentions to build a rail line from Gwadar to Xinjiang. Thus a continental strategy is more a feasible development for the Chinese than a maritime strategy of militarizing the oceans. Also, as Angola is gradually developed as the primary source of oil replacing even Saudi Arabia, China will not leave the African area unguarded. Thus, in a harking back to the phenomena of Flag following the trade, the Chinese are building Pipelines and Pipeline nodes in Africa.

**Has India lost Africa to China completely? Will this result in a long term loss of resource for India?**

This growing trend may be attributed to the might of Chinese money making a dent on the African scene, while India's coffers are strained to expand too far. We have not even been able to consolidate influence in Myanmar where the Lido road is still under-construction for the past three years. This is a strategic choice guided by the limits of the treasury.



## IPCS Media Workshop on Nuclear Disarmament

It is indeed largely a matter of money coupled no doubt with other strategic choices. Many small nations in Africa and Asia are seen as coterries by the Chinese who have no qualms in dealing with the corrupt dictators and governments. That apart India also lags behind in the speed of its decision making process, which is no doubt a compromise to be made for running a democracy.

### **Apart from Gwadar, what are the other land nodes in Pakistan that China is developing?**

There is a petrochemical belt conceived on the Iran border where China has promised US\$500 million. In a scenario where Iran has abundance of crude oil and hugely short of the finished product, such a hub will have a ready market. As a consequence, Iran might be more willing to ignore the various international sanctions and the UN. Moreover, there is extensive gas deposits discovered in Turkmenistan, which according to British auditors are the fourth largest in the world. In the event of Russia signing a deal on the transportation of this gas, it needs to be seen, in what manner the energy politics in this area will play out.

While harping on Gwadar, one is forgetting the very parlous state of law and order in Pakistan. Gwadar is accessible only through Balochistan and thus attracting business will be very difficult.

### **What is the influence of the US on Pakistan's nuclear weapons?**

The recent state of affairs in Pakistan have rendered the people quite confused and demoralized. The US is the most hated in Pakistan today, but there is hardly any effort at self introspection. It is thus an Indian imperative to not take advantage of their difficulty and instead to help, as all untoward developments there will have serious consequences for India.

### **Has the Pakistani central government lost control of its regions?**

Yes, they are gradually losing out territory to tribal leaders and fundamentalists. FATA, NWFP, Balochistan and even Sindh is restless. In the event of Jihadi's coming to power, the safety of the nuclear arsenals would be a big worry.

The statistics are indeed revealing. While most of of FATA have slipped out of control of the government, the army is trying still to reclaim Bajaur and parts of North Waziristan.

### **While concerns are being voiced about the advancing Taliban influence from the west of Pakistan, how credible is the news of Taliban delivering justice from the outskirts of Peshawar itself?**

The geographical barrier to the advancing Taliban is posed by the Indus. The US has on occasion warned General Kyani of the possible use of nuclear weapons if the Taliban crosses the Indus.



## IPCS Media Workshop on Nuclear Disarmament

### **Why is the Pakistani army not using its full force to fight insurgency?**

That is indeed the big question. They are not addressing the most potent threats to their state and are instead heaping moral blame on other actors. The Pakistani army is only using its frontier force in FATA. 15-20 per cent of the Army comprises of Pashtuns and these regiments cannot be used; the rest are engaged in other areas. Thus the army is extremely thinly spread in the Western region.

### **Is it due to the Islamization of the Army in Pakistan? Was this a development due from the time of Zia-Ul-Haq?**

Such claims are very difficult to substantiate and the US is trying to find out the same. But the Pakistani relationship with the Taliban is extremely nuanced. Pakistan would not like to lose its strategic depth in Afghanistan and would thus humour them from time to time apart from using them as a leverage to extract concessions from the US.

### **At the time of Musharraf, it was said that he was the most secular leader Pakistan has had; now the same is being said about Kyani. Why this insistence?**

A large part of the Pakistani army has had considerable western exposure. Thus to say that the majority of the Army is fundamentalist is unsubstantiated. One can rather discern a firm nationalistic and Islamic commitment.

### **What is the danger of a failed state in Bangladesh acquiring nuclear weapons on the sly?**

Not an urgent scenario. It is indeed a Chinese strategy to box India with Bangladesh, the HuJI and with the ISI operating there, but Bangladesh so far has only a peaceful nuclear research programme and no country has made any gesture of interest to help Bangladesh to go nuclear.

### **Does China and Bangladesh have a concrete nuclear co-operation programme on the ground?**

Bangladesh has an IAEA certified civilian nuclear programme. China and Pakistan under Zia had signed an agreement for peaceful nuclear co-operation and Bangladesh was one of the first<sup>1</sup> 44 countries to sign the CTBT. They have research reactors but do not generate power currently.

As for the question of Chinese enabling Pakistan to get an NSG waiver, the chances are slim. In wake of the recent waiver to India, the NSG is still too sore and also the AQ Khan fiasco is still recent. Though China has looked over Chasma I and II for Pakistan at the NSG, the same way India had Russia help it out with Koodakulam, it does not seem certain that China can repeat its influence as easily this time.



**What happens to Pakistan-China relations in the event of the US continually giving more money to Pakistan and Chinese not being able to provide nuclear assistance as well?**

In a situation of monetary crisis, China will weigh its investments judiciously and thus is likely to invest more in Latin America and Africa. Thus its relations with Pakistan will be a matter of strategic choice rather than following a hard imperative.

**Is China participating in India's nuclear program?**

There is co-operation in the civil nuclear sector, in information and scientific exchanges, but not necessarily on nuclear reactors.

There is an enhanced possibility of India seeking enriched uranium from China as it had done before with the Tarapur Plant, but as before, this would purely be an economic transaction.

## Global Nuclear Disarmament

**Amb. Arundhati Ghosh**

Historically, the practice of disarmament consisted of terms imposed from the victor to the vanquished. After the Cold War, the term acquired connotations of total surrender and then, it lent itself to concerns of weapons of mass destruction. Treaties in biological and chemical weapons abolished entire categories of weapons. India has always looked at disarmament from not just a moral but also from a security point of view. India first took up the issue of nonproliferation with the UN, which later developed into the NPT. In 1988-89, India again approached the UN over the issue of China leaking out nuclear information to Pakistan. Simultaneously, Rajiv Gandhi promoted an Action Plan for phased nuclear disarmament. It was only when India's efforts to pause Pakistan's nuclear development were thwarted, did it reluctantly decide to arm, all throughout trying to push the disarmament discourse.

After an interim period when disarmament discourse was totally absent from the International scene, there is a rapid revival in recent times, especially by the nuclear weapons states themselves. The most notable among such initiatives are the two open letters written by the Quartet of Henry Kissinger, William J Perry, George P Schultz and Sam Nunn stressing the need for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The Global Zero initiative by some American think-tanks seeks to work on getting various governments to sign an international agreement to ban nuclear weapons 'within a time frame'. Australia and Japan are also

backing a commission headed by Gareth Evans along the same lines. While India has made proposals at various disarmament conferences, these are largely reiterations of its previous posture which involve 7 stages beginning with delegitimizing nuclear weapons and ending with a nuclear weapons convention. The United Kingdom in the meanwhile has gone ahead and is beating out the process of verification of disarmament, as a gesture to inspire confidence among those reluctant to disarm. A personal view of the current discourse informs that the global efforts are geared up in time for NPT Review Conference due in 2010. It has been often

# IPCS Media Workshop on Nuclear Disarmament



## IPCS Media Workshop on Nuclear Disarmament

observed that the NPT is fragile and close to collapse if nuclear weapons states don't pacify other signatories by committing to disarmament. The stakes of the NPT collapsing are very high at this juncture, involving at least proliferation to other states, leading to belligerency, and the involvement of non-state actors.

It seems that international response to the plea made by the Quartet is not uniform. With its vast conventional weapons capacity, the US can afford to commit to disarmament and would indeed have to make effective declarations in order to initiate the process but Russia, in spite of Putin's occasional stress on the 'need to close the Pandora's box,' is not in a position to commit to deep cuts immediately owing to the precarious position of its conventional arms forces and its rocky relationship with the United States. China has kept quiet on the matter so long maintaining that the big two should first express their seriousness with practical measures before expecting other countries to follow suit. But China does seek a nuclear parity with the US and thus, not specifically looking to disarm. India has a similar attitude vis-à-vis Pakistan and China, while Israel remains ambiguous about the existence of its programme. The ride ahead is thus, rocky and should involve vigorous confidence building, while political will should focus on delegitimization of the weapons.

The situation to change should then include a change in doctrines, dismantling, verifications and a consensus on safe ways to deal with fissile material. The process, if constantly on the burner, would still take a long time.

### **Maj. Gen. Dipankar Banerjee**

The next couple of years will see the disarmament discourse occupying a prominent place on the world stage. Though the end of the Cold War saw a freeze in the disarmament debate, the reality of the weapons on the ground had scarcely changed. Currently, the main obstacles to the disarmament process worldwide are deterrence, the fact that nuclear power cannot be dis-invented, differing means of verification and inspections and enormous existing stockpiles. On the positive side, with developments in conventional weapon systems, reliance on nuclear weapons has been made tardy, beset however, as with fears of proliferation into the hands of non-state actors.

The last factor single handedly undercuts any justification for reliance on nuclear weapons. Though India had proposed the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan which spoke of complete disarmament by 2010, it was hardly discussed and even Robert Blackwell, heading the Ground Zero initiative confesses that he had not read the report until a month ago. Significantly the plan had envisioned a comprehensive global security system replacing dependence on nuclear power. At present the Quartet has not gone beyond two open letters, a summit at Oslo and their forthcoming visit to India to impress the benefits of their proposal. Apart from the Australian and Japanese commission and the Global Zero initiative, George Perkovich has written an Adelphi paper detailing the way ahead, which should be publicly available once the IISS decommissions it.





Other commitments were discussed at the Conference on Disarmament Preparatory Committee at Geneva in February 2008 and also by the Indian Prime Minister when he addressed the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary programme of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan. All these initiatives are leading to the NPT Review conference in 2010. It is also significant to note that the intense debate initiated for the real prospects of a nuclear free world are led by previous office bearers.

## Discussion

### **Is there a possibility that the proposals made by the Quartet are intended to maintain the status quo of the US?**

Though the US self interest will always be at work, the motivations of the Quartet seem to be genuine in light of the validity of issues put forth by them. Proliferation, inclination of even more countries to go nuclear, the presence of non-state actors and the inability of the NPT to negotiate and the consequent failure of conventional deterrence strategies makes it imperative for the Quartet to attempt a synthesis of nonproliferation and disarmament efforts in equal measure.

**Dipankar Banerjee:** In light of the whole spectrum of efforts at play, the motivations of the Quartet do not simply seem confined to serve US interests. The Quartet flatly admits that total elimination is a peak that the world cannot yet seek, so the short-term focus must be on deep cuts, while China converges its interests towards the same, when it insists on parity with the US. World opinion is currently hinged on to the outcome of the Global Zero conference in Paris in December 2008 and the report of the Austro-Japanese commission before the NPT Review Conference in 2010

### **Why is the NPT not successful in getting belligerent states like Venezuela to halt their ambitions of going nuclear?**

It is precisely in the light of developments like these that the concerned powers are seeking to uphold the NPT from collapsing.

### **Were Brazil and Argentina on the brink of becoming nuclear power states?**

They were indeed on the brink of going nuclear. Argentina was developing its Condor Missile system while Brazil was already at an advanced stage of research when they exercised restraint, adhered to the Latin American Treaty and abandoned their programme. This is thus, one success story and a precedent for disarming. With the recent discovery of large amounts of oil for export in Brazil, it can emerge as a key energy player in Latin America, thus balancing the power and the ambitions of Venezuela and her allies.

### **Is the rollback of the Nuclear Program in North Korea credible?**

The efforts made at the six-party talks are serious indeed though it continually goes two steps forward and one step back. In light of the recent economic upheavals, global power

## IPCS Media Workshop on Nuclear Disarmament



## IPCS Media Workshop on Nuclear Disarmament

structures are bound to be re-aligned, which makes efforts like these all the more important.

### **Are concerns about the use of suitcase nuclear devices by non-state actors well founded?**

There are some categories of weapons, like tactical nuclear devices and nuclear demolition munitions that fit the bill and can be easily shipped across the world, although their detection is very easy. But more serious is the threat of radio-active or dirty bombs and other crude nuclear devices which are relatively difficult to detect and can also cause massive harm. Although civil society across the world is much more powerful now than it was in the 50s, yet there was more awareness then of radio-activity then; this needs to be revived.

